

Supporting Statement

A. Justification

1. Information from the questionnaire items for the collection of planning data is needed: 1) to formulate and evaluate alternative water resources development plans in accordance with the *Principles and Guidelines for Water Related Land Resources Implementation Studies*, promulgated by the U.S. Water Resources Council; 2) to determine the effectiveness and evaluate the impacts of Corps projects (P.L. 74-738); and 3) in the case of flood damage mitigation, to obtain information on flood damages incurred, whether or not a project is being considered or exists (P.L. 74-738). In addition, Executive Order 12862, dated September 11, 1993, "Setting Customer Service Standards," requires that Federal agencies monitor public satisfaction with the quality of services that they provide. President Obama's Memorandum on Transparency and Open Government (January 21, 2009), commits Executive Branch agencies to encourage participation and collaboration with the public including the solicitation of information and opinions of the public.

2. The questionnaires are administered either by face-to-face, mail, or telephone methods. The questionnaires may be administered by Corps of Engineers employees, contractors of the Corps of Engineers, or local governments serving as local sponsor for Corps projects. Public surveys are used to gather data for planning and operating Corps projects and facilities. Survey responses have been used to determine the economically efficient flood and navigation plans, public preferences for project alternatives, and customer satisfaction with existing facilities and services.

3. All survey questionnaires are carefully selected to minimize undue burden on the public and are subject to internal controls and pre-testing before actual use. Personal computers are being used, whenever possible to not only reduce the costs of information processing and storage, but also in data collection, as with the use of Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) systems. CATI interviewing reduces the burden hours on the public by automatically displaying the next relevant question to the interviewer, thus making the interviews more efficient.

4. Duplication is avoided by close coordination with state and local agencies as well as other Federal agencies and, whenever possible, participation in joint data collection efforts. Most of the Corps of Engineers civil works survey information is collected for very unique circumstances, such as visitor information at Corps recreation areas or flood damage information related to the Corps evaluation procedures. Much of this information is required to be very current and

must be updated every one to two years.

5. Some of the surveys, especially those concerning flood mitigation (for example, determining the value of damageable property and historical flood damages), may require the interviewing of small businesses. When appropriate, the burden on such establishments is alleviated by such actions as: 1) pre-survey contacts to determine the most advantageous time such surveys can be conducted; 2) provision of pre-survey materials to inform the entities what information will be needed to expedite the survey process; and 3) assistance from experienced and trained staff to complete necessary questionnaires.

6. Surveys are only undertaken in response to a specific study request, for example, when a planning study has been authorized by Congress or during the design of a project when such a survey is absolutely necessary. If the needed information could not be collected for these occasions, the feasibility of a project or its effectiveness could not be determined and Corps resource managers would not know public concerns about the quality of facilities and services that Corps delivers to them.

7. There are no special circumstances requiring information collection inconsistent with guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5(d)(2).

8. The sixty-day Federal Register notice was published on September 29, 2009 (74 FR 49868). No comments were received.

9. No payments or gifts are made to any survey respondents.

10. A statement on confidentiality and the voluntary nature of the responses is always included in printed questionnaires and in the introductory remarks of telephone and face-to-face interviews.

11. No sensitive questions are asked.

12. The estimate of respondent burden is 21,642 hours. This is based on an average of 185,500 surveys per year. Sample sizes for individual survey administrations can range from as small as 50 to over 2,000. As noted in item 6 above, surveys are only undertaken in response to a specific study need. For example, if Congress authorizes the conduct of a feasibility study for a hurricane and storm damage reduction project, then an associated survey of residences and commercial establishments may be required to determine damageable property values (of structures and contents). The burden estimates are based on average sample sizes and times for the various surveys that typically are required. A breakdown of the burden hour estimate is detailed on the attached table.

13. There are no capital or start-up costs associated with this information collection.

14. The estimated annualized cost to the Federal Government is \$3,000,000. Costs include survey preparation, printing, sample design, survey administration (including travel costs, equipment, and supplies), coding, and analysis. Survey administration costs are based on an average GS-7 salary level with overhead. There are no further development costs involved. A detailed estimate of the costs to the Federal is included on the attached table.

15. No programmatic changes have occurred that would require a major change in the annual burden hours. The number of required burden hours has increased because of an increased emphasis on customer satisfaction surveys. There is particular new emphasis on collecting comments on the quality of facilities and services at visitor centers and on the need to monitor the quality of a new recreation reservation service.

16. Results will not be published.

17. The OMB approval number and expiration date will be shown for all questionnaires.

18. No administrative exemptions are required for this survey package.

B. Statistical Methods

1. The potential respondent universe is dependent on the type of project being studied and may vary from a few hundred to the tens of thousands. For instance, surveys for a navigation project may involve a limited number of tow barge companies and industries, while surveys of damages caused by a major flood may cover thousands of residents. A typical survey has an estimated universe of 10,000. One respondent is typically selected to participate in a survey for every 50 potential respondents. Probability sampling methods (simple random, sequential, and stratified designs) are used to select respondents. Response rates for these surveys typically range from 60 to 80%.

2. Stratification is often used to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the sampling design and to reduce the survey burden. For example, for residential flood damage surveys, stratification by residential structure type (e.g., number of floors and with or without basement) is always used. As noted in A6 above, most surveys are conducted in response to a special study need and are, therefore, one-time requests, not requiring annual reporting.

3. Response rates are maximized through careful consideration to detail in the development, not only of the survey questionnaire, but also of the entire survey implementation process. For example, for mail questionnaires, Dillman's "Total Design Method" is typically used including: 1) "wave" mailings of the original questionnaire, postcard reminders, and follow-up mailings to those still not responding; 2) authoritative and informative cover letters; and 3) carefully-formatted questionnaires. In some instances special incentives are included into the design of the survey instrument. For example, in an inventory of residential contents for flood damage analysis, the survey instrument included a carbonless copy of the inventory that respondents could keep for their records. In addition, most of the projects for which the surveys are being conducted have a direct or indirect impact on the respondents. Given this motivation, response rates in excess of 70% are achieved for many projects.

4. Before surveys are conducted the questionnaires and the survey process are carefully reviewed and pretested for simplicity and relevance. Training for interviewers is usually held prior to the implementation of the survey and typically include role-playing and an actual field survey under supervised conditions. Once the interview process is begun, field supervisors periodically debrief interviewers to identify any problems encountered including any unnecessary burdens being placed on respondents. Pretests are primarily done on groups of less than ten respondents.

5. The commander of each Corps Division is ultimately responsible for approval of the sampling strategy, questionnaire, and analysis plan for surveys conducted in his or her division. Corps District staffs will consult with experts from local universities and/or contractors in developing specific survey and analytical plans. Survey design and statistical analysis experts consulted in developing Corps guidance manuals include: Dr. Leonard Shabman, Resources for Future, Washington, D.C., Professor Wesley Wilson, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 541/346-4690, Professor Bilal Ayub of the University of Maryland 301-405-1956 have provided guidance on analysis of questionnaires. Assistance with analysis of recreation surveys has come from Dr. Daniel Stynes, Professor and Dr. Dennis Propst, Associate Professor, Department of Park, Tourism, and Recreation Resources, Michigan State University, East Lansing Michigan, Phone: 517/353-5190, and Dr. Alan Graefe, Professor, Department of Recreation and Park Management, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania, Phone: 814/863-8986.