

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT**  
**EVALUATION OF INTERPRETIVE SIGNS LOCATED ALONG THE CALIFORNIA**  
**COASTLINE PART OF THE CALIFORNIA SIGNAGE PLAN INITIATIVE**  
**OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-xxxx**

**A. JUSTIFICATION**

**1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.**

The enabling legislation for the National Marine Sanctuary system, the [National Marine Sanctuaries Act](#) (NMSA), denotes specific educational mandates. Section 309(c)(1) of the NMSA states that one of the purposes of the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) is:

“. . . to enhance public awareness, understanding, appreciation and wise and sustainable use of the marine environment, and the natural historical, cultural and archeological **resources of the national Marine Sanctuary System. Efforts supported, promoted, or** coordinated under this subsection must emphasize the conservation goals and sustainable public uses of national marine sanctuaries and the System.”

In 2005, the planning committee of the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) developed a 10-year strategic plan of operations for the organization. Specific goals and strategies were established to guide the progress of the Education and Outreach program. The Education and Outreach goal is:

“To enhance nation-wide public awareness, understanding and appreciation of marine and Great Lakes ecosystems and maritime heritage resources through outreach, education and interpretation efforts.”

The specific performance measure for evaluating this goal is:

“By 2010 all education programs implemented in national marine sanctuaries will be assessed for effectiveness against stated program goals and objectives and appropriate National and State education standards.”

The ONMS education team has embarked on an ambitious evaluation project, of which this activity is only a part, that will allow the ONMS to assess education program outcomes and impacts across all sites and activities and to link outcome measures to program efforts. The purpose of this effort is to evaluate if current and future education efforts are meeting the goals and objectives of the education and outreach programs and the educational mandates of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act. The application of these findings will assist in adjusting program content, format, and activities mix and targeting audiences to improve overall effectiveness of educational efforts and expenditures.

**Program to be evaluated**

The California Signage Plan, initiated in 2004, uses a systematic approach to interpretive signage among the four California sanctuary sites: Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary, Gulf of Farallones National Marine Sanctuary, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, and Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary. Representatives from the four sanctuaries meet regularly to establish a list of common themes and messages. Each sign has a common look and feel, yet is adaptable to the needs of the partners. Baseline standards and required visual elements have been

identified when producing joint signs with partners. Funding is requested based on the priorities at each site and among sites. The result is an integrated signage plan along the California coastline.

To date, an organized, strategic approach to evaluating interpretive signs produced by ONMS has not been conducted. There are important questions that need to be asked in order to guide us with future development of signs. We need to evaluate these interpretive signs to determine if we are conveying our key messages to our audiences, so that we may make better decisions about additional interpretive signs, interpretation programs and other educational programs that we deliver.

**2. Explain how, by whom, how frequently, and for what purpose the information will be used. If the information collected will be disseminated to the public or used to support information that will be disseminated to the public, then explain how the collection complies with all applicable Information Quality Guidelines.**

The information from this survey will be used to better understand the perception and knowledge gained from the content and design of installed interpretive signs located along the California coastline and to help ONMS better deliver messages to the thousands of visitors that come to the California coastline each year. At this point, we do not plan to conduct the survey more than once. There will be two collection methods, one onsite at the actual location of the signs, and one online—not available to the public at large—but for the convenience of visitors to the site so they have the option of completing the survey at home.

Onsite:

- Questions 1, 2, 3 & 4 provide basic information about the person and their visit to the coastline;
- Question 5 provides some economic information to give insight into the economic level of the coastline visitor;
- Questions 6 & 15 determines if the visitor has seen more than one sign and if s/he recognizes that the signs are part of a system (in many areas where we have placed signs, there are a number of them that interpret different information and types of information);
- Question 7 determines where the visitor saw the sign(s);
- Questions 8, 13 & 16 provide information as to our logo and identity. Do viewers of the sign(s) look to see who made the sign?
- Question 9 provides visitors' overall opinion of the sign(s);
- Questions 10, 11 & 12 provide information as to the content: is the message that we are trying to convey clearly understood and are viewers learning new information?
- Question 14 identifies if there are better ways to communicate this information to the public;
- Questions 17 & 18 provide information about the sign'(s)' content and if they convey priority ocean literacy principles and primary messages about sanctuaries.
- Questions 19, 20 & 21 are all demographic questions that help determine the types of visitors that come to the California coastline.

Web-Based:

- Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5 provide basic information about the person and their visit to the coastline (includes question about how long ago the visit was);
- Question 6 provides some economic information that will give us insight into the economic level of the coastline visitor;

- Questions 7 & 16 determine if the visitor has seen more than one sign and if s/he recognizes that the sign(s) are a part of a system (in many areas where we have placed signs, there are a number of them that interpret different information);
- Question 8 determines where they saw the sign(s);
- Questions 9, 14 & 17 provide information as to our logo and identity. Do viewers of the sign(s) look to see who made the sign?
- Question 10 provides visitors' overall opinion of the sign(s);
- Questions 11, 12 & 13 provide information as to the content: is the message that we are trying to convey clearly understood and are viewers learning new information?
- Question 15 identifies if there are better ways to communicate this information to the public;
- Questions 18 & 19 provide information about the sign(s) content and if they convey priority messages about sanctuaries and ocean literacy principles.
- Questions 20, 21 & 22 are all demographic questions that help determine the types of visitors that come to the California coastline.

All of this information will help us determine what messages are and are not conveyed in our interpretive signs, and what we need to improve to fulfill the ONMS goals. NOAA ONMS will retain control over the information and safeguard it from improper access, modification, and destruction, consistent with NOAA standards for confidentiality, privacy, and electronic information. See response to Question 10 of this Supporting Statement for more information on confidentiality and privacy. The information collected is designed to yield data that meet all applicable information quality guidelines. Although the information collected is not expected to be disseminated directly to the public, results may be used in scientific, management, technical or general informational publications. Should NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries decide to disseminate the information, it will be subject to the quality control measures and pre-dissemination review pursuant to [Section 515 of Public Law 106-554](#).

We will comply with all OMB [standards](#) for asking questions about race and ethnicity.

**3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological techniques or other forms of information technology.**

The collection of information will consist of intercept interviews, conducted in person by volunteers and paid assistants, and an online survey. Both methods will include the use of a standardized questionnaire. We propose using an online survey in addition to an onsite survey to accommodate visitors who may not have time to complete an onsite survey or who may prefer a less invasive surveying method. Visitors at the two sites who are intercepted but do not wish to take the onsite survey will be given a postcard with the survey URL, and asked for their e-mail addresses so that NOAA can send a reminder e-mail with the survey link.

**4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.**

This is the first effort of its kind to understand the educational value and effectiveness of interpretive signs within the sanctuary system.

**5. If the collection of information involves small businesses or other small entities, describe the methods used to minimize burden.**

This project will not have a significant impact on small entities such as small businesses, organizations, or government bodies. All respondents will be individuals.

**6. Describe the consequences to the Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently.**

If this evaluation were not conducted, we would not be able to assess if we are fulfilling portions of NOAA's mandate to have an informed society that comprehends the role of the ocean, coasts, and atmosphere in the global ecosystem to make the best social and economic decisions. In addition, we would not be able to modify our interpretive signs to best fulfill NOAA's, ONMS' education and outreach goals. Nor would we contribute to our role in fulfilling the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) goal of evaluating all of its programs.

This evaluation has never been conducted before and there is not a plan to repeat this evaluation.

**7. Explain any special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.**

NA.

**8. Provide information on the PRA Federal Register Notice that solicited public comments on the information collection prior to this submission. Summarize the public comments received in response to that notice and describe the actions taken by the agency in response to those comments. Describe the efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.**

A Federal Register Notice published on August 4, 2011 (76 FR 47172) solicited comments from the public. No comments were received.

**9. Explain any decisions to provide payments or gifts to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.**

Onsite: as a thank you for participating, small tokens of appreciation will be offered, such as pens (25¢ ea.), key chains (99¢ ea.), or sunglasses (\$1.19 ea.). Approximate total value of giveaways is \$511; this is an averaged number since participants will be allowed to choose from items of differing costs.

Online: as an incentive to improve the response rate, only respondents who complete the survey can elect to enter a raffle whereby they have the chance to win one of four \$50 Amazon gift cards; the drawing will take place at the end of the data collection period. Respondents are informed about the raffle when they are given the postcard with the survey URL.

**10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.**

All persons interviewed will be anonymous; no information will be collected that would identify the specific individual (e.g., name, address, phone number, social security number, driver's license number); therefore, no assurance of confidentiality will be required or provided. Demographic information will be used only for statistical analysis and aggregate information about the sample (e.g., age, gender, area of residence, visitor group size and composition).

Online respondents who wish to be entered in the drawing for a gift card will provide an email address, however no other identifying information will be requested. Assurance of confidentiality is provided in the online survey raffle entry instructions.

**11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.**

No questions of a sensitive nature are being asked in this survey.

**12. Provide an estimate in hours of the burden of the collection of information.**

a. Respondent sample: This one-time study will seek one interview each from a sample of 400 on-site visitors randomly selected after they have seen the interpretive signs, approximately 200 of which are expected to agree to onsite interview and approximately 200 who opt to complete a web-based survey at home after visiting the site and seeing the interpretive signs. Participation will be entirely voluntary. Based on her nearly 30 years of experience administering standardized questionnaires, the evaluator managing this project believes that the overall response rate will range from 66% to 70%. Estimates are based on an overall 66%: 80% for onsite interviews and 50% for online survey completion.

Data sought from:	# of respondents	Responses per respondent	Total # Responses	Response Time	Total Burden	Labor Cost to Public *
Visitors to the California coastline, specifically to pre-determined sites with ONMS interpretive signs.	664 visitors approached to obtain a targeted sample of 400	1 interview/online completion	400	7 to 8 min avg. per interview/online completion	50 hrs.	\$1,288

Based on the U.S. Census data from 2009, the average household income is \$49,777 (\$25.92 per hour for adults in household). The average estimated time per respondent is 7.5 minutes (12.5% of an hour). Therefore, the average labor cost per adult answering the questions would be \$3.22, multiplied by the 400 responders, with a total burden of \$1,288.

**13. Provide an estimate of the total annual recordkeeping/reporting cost burden to the respondents resulting from the collection (excluding the value of the burden hours in Question 12 above).**

- a. Capital and start-up costs: none.
- b. Operations and maintenance costs for the public: none.

**14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government.**

We will discuss goals, best practices, and techniques with the contractor (evaluator) who is developing the surveys, and who will prepare us for data collection. We estimate 120 hours of work for the CA Signage Plan coordinator in this capacity as a normal part of her job. Collection of data will be conducted by staff and volunteers at the ONMS sites and overseen by the coordinator. With the estimate of 50 hours of data collection time, we anticipate only 24 hours will be of staff time, with the other 26 hours being conducted by volunteers. Processing of data will be handled by our evaluator. Consultation of results will be with Manager. The evaluator—who is responsible for developing the instrument, training data collectors, processing the data, and analyzing the results—is on contract.

<b>Personnel</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Additional cost</b>
Manager Time	120 hours @ \$25 per hour	Normal job responsibilities
Staff Time	24 hours @ \$20 per hour	Normal job responsibilities
Volunteer Time	26 hours	No cost
Contractor	Approx. 161 hours (various contractor staff)	\$25,174

**15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments.**

This is a new program.

**16. For collections whose results will be published, outline the plans for tabulation and publication.**

Since the primary purpose of this evaluation is to reflect on the level of knowledge provided by these interpretive signs to the general audience, the distribution of results is intended to be primarily intra-governmental. The public is not likely to receive any additional benefits from this evaluation's information.

**17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons why display would be inappropriate.**

NA.

**18. Explain each exception to the certification statement.**

NA.