

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT**  
**A Formative Evaluation of NOAA's Sentinel Site Program**  
**OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-xxxx**

**A. JUSTIFICATION**

This request is for a new information collection.

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

The [NOAA Sentinel Site Program](#) (SSP) is a collaborative effort that leverages existing resources and efforts to promote resilient coastal communities and ecosystems in the face of change. NOAA's 2011 Corporate Portfolio Analysis (CPA) identified 24 key issues that pose the greatest risk to NOAA's core business and abilities. To address perceived shortfalls in NOAA's capacity to support community resilience to sea level rise and coastal inundation, the National Ocean Service (NOS) was asked to "document a strategy for sentinel sites, including the specific locations over time." The Sentinel Site program became active in 2011 with the selection of five initial Cooperatives. These locations were selected based on many factors: the potential for measuring ecological impact of sea level change; socioeconomic factors, such as large population centers; the potential to expand the use of existing NOAA tools, services, and other assets in a given region; and the potential to apply science-based solutions to solve specific regional coastal problems. These are not the only coastal areas in the U.S. that may meet the criteria. Other regions may be added within the next few years. Statutory authorization for programs such as SSP is the [Coastal Zone Management Act](#), 16 U.S.C. 1451 *et seq.*

The primary purpose of the NOAA SSP is to directly engage local, state, and federal managers as part of a cooperative team. By doing so, managers can ensure the types of science conducted, information gathered, and products developed are immediately usable and relevant for better management. With this point in mind, it is critical to determine a baseline of who is actually using and sharing information about the products and services developed by the Sentinel Site Cooperatives (SSC), and to what degree is capacity being built among and between coastal professionals and organizations through communications generated through the SSC. This will ensure that meaningful program-level evaluation can take place throughout the life of the NOAA SSP. The proposed survey will serve as a critical means to document current attitudes, awareness, understanding, and communication patterns so that NOAA can establish a point from which to further evaluate effectiveness and measure success over time.

**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 collected by the survey will be used to achieve a picture of the patterns and relative effectiveness of current sea-level rise science and information communications across the five Sentinel Site Cooperative geographies. Communications among target organizations are a critical short-term indicator of success for this program. These geographies include the Hawaiian Islands, San Francisco Bay, the northern Gulf of Mexico, the central North Carolina

coast and the Chesapeake Bay. This information will help o establish establish a baseline from which NOAA and place-based Cooperative partners can begin developing informed strategies to enhance communications and collaboration.

The survey will be conducted by a NOAA/National Ocean Service (NOS) social scientist via a web-based survey. A survey link will be emailed to known SSP stakeholders and collaborators. An identical, follow-up survey will be conducted within 2 years of the initial survey to measure temporal changes in awareness, attitudes, understanding, and communications.

Survey questions will help NOAA gather critical information, such as: 1) how familiar respondents are with the SSP, 2) what methods are effective/ineffective for engagement, and 3) a comparison of the value of their “sentinel site” network of communication as compared to their personal, “local” network of communication (i.e., their communication network sans SSP engagement).

Questions focus on the various types of perceived value of communication via the SSP. Respondents are asked to rate their use of different resources and information sources, as well as methods they rely on to receive information from and about the SSP and its activities. The survey also includes a section for an open-ended response at the end of the survey to provide participants with an opportunity to submit suggested improvements.

Further detail is as follows (page numbers correspond to page numbers on the accompanying survey document):

- Page 1 – Introductory and OMB/PRA information
- Page 2 – Background information to understand degree of interest in sea-level rise science and primary basis for interest. The SSP is most interested in working professionals in this area. If respondents indicate it as a part of their job then they will be directed automatically to Page 3.
- Pages 3-4 – These questions will afford insight into what types of professionals have primarily come in contact with Sentinel Site activities, and the types of professionals they engage with most, which will afford the SSP an idea of where they may benefit through engagement in the future.
- Page 5 – This question asks about respondents’ sea-level rise information networks at the local/community level. This will give the SSP insight into further refining their niche to maximize product and service utility in the future.
- Pages 6-11 – The question on Page 6 asks about the respondent’s primary geography of interest. If a Sentinel Site Cooperative is located in their geography of interest they will be presented with a small number of geographic-specific questions (distributed across pp. 7-11).
- Pages 12-14 – These questions are similar to those on Page 5, but focus on respondents’ engagement with the SSP, versus their sea-level rise information networks at the local/community level.

The NOAA SSP team will protect the survey responses during analysis, and will only report anonymously, and in aggregate form. The NOAA SSP team will retain control over the information collected, and safeguard it from improper access, modification, and destruction consistent with NOAA standards for confidentiality, privacy, and electronic information. The information collected is designed to yield data that meet all applicable information quality guidelines. Prior to dissemination, the information will be subject to a pre-dissemination review pursuant to [Section 515 of Public Law 106-554](#).

**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.**

This new information collection will be electronic. Surveys will be conducted via the online survey tool *SurveyMonkey*.

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

This is the first stakeholder survey conducted by the NOAA Sentinel Site Program; therefore, there is no duplication.

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

The information collection involves representatives from government agencies, academic institutions, private industry and NGOs only. Additionally, only the minimum data necessary to evaluate SSP communications are requested from participants.

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

If the Program does not collect this information to establish baseline knowledge, there is no way to implement performance metrics to evaluate the success and/or make necessary adjustments to its communications.

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

Not Applicable.

**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 February 13, 2014 (79 FR 8680) solicited public comments. No public comments were received.

Informal, one-on-one, discussions with a limited number of individual stakeholders (fewer than 10) helped inform the survey development.

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

No payments or gifts will be provided to respondents.

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

As stated on the survey instrument, no personal or personally identifiable information will be reported. All survey responses will be submitted electronically. NOAA staff will protect the survey responses during analysis and provide a summary to the Sentinel Site Program staff. Only the survey summary report will be released. Contact information received from respondents are only for the purposes of 1) understanding the types of individuals that are most valued by the sea-level rise scientific community to guide SSP efforts and 2) to derive a meaningful sample for the follow-up survey evaluation to happen within two years of the initial survey.

**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 will be included in the survey.

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

The survey will take approximately twenty minutes to complete. The survey instrument will be emailed to 500 individuals (250\* in the first year survey, and 250 in the follow-up survey within two years)\*\*, with a combined estimated response rate of 50% (125 and 125). Thus the estimated maximum burden is 42 hours each year.

\*Participants in the five workshops held to date.

\*\* There may be duplication of respondents in the second survey. Professionals working in the sea-level rise scientific community are a very targeted, and relatively small community. It is likely that several initial survey respondents will still be communicating about, and engaged in, Sentinel Site Program-related activities two years from now (2016).

**13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to the respondents or record-keepers resulting from the collection (excluding the value of the burden hours in Question 12 above).**

There is no annual recordkeeping/reporting cost.

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

We anticipate 120 hours of staff time (60 per survey year) to collect, review, analyze, and assemble the data. Estimated total cost is \$5,200 for a single staff member at 120 hours.

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

This is a new request seeking OMB approval.

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

The only information made public is a summary report of the survey results and a brief description of the survey methods. No other information is published.

**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.**

Not Applicable.

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

Not Applicable.