

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT
DATA COLLECTION AND VERIFICATION FOR
THE MARINE PROTECTED AREAS INVENTORY
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0449**

A. JUSTIFICATION

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

This request is for revision and extension of this information collection. A survey will be distributed to the partners every two years. In addition, the title of the collection has been changed from “Data Collection on Marine Protected and Managed Areas” to “Data Collection and Verification for the Marine Protected Areas Inventory”.

[Executive Order 13158](#) (EO 13158) directs the Department of Commerce and the Department of the Interior (DOI) to work with partners to strengthen the protection of United States (U.S.) ocean and coastal resources by developing a national system of marine protected areas (MPAs). In order to develop that system, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and DOI have determined that it is necessary to first inventory those areas, in order to comply with EO 13158. The U.S. has different levels of protection and management regimes at many levels of government. State, local, territorial, and tribal governments have different ways in which they protect their marine environment through area-based management.

A comprehensive data collection effort was undertaken to provide the federal government, its partners and the American people with information about their marine resources and the conservation and management of those resources. Information on MPAs throughout U.S. waters has now been centralized or organized in a coherent way into an online spatial database, the MPAs Inventory. This data collection effort has been in progress for the last 13 years and will continue in order to maintain the data set. Participants provide updates or corrections to their data if it changes or as they see appropriate, including the establishment of new MPAs or revisions of existing areas. The number of federal programs, states, and territories submitting information is provided in table, below.

Number of Federal Agencies, States and Territories Reporting Through 3/15

Governmental Level	# of Respondents Through March 2015
Federal	2 federal agencies, 6 programs
States	29 coastal states
Territories	5 coastal territories
Partnerships	1 federal/state partnership program; state/local partnership programs in 7 states; territory/local partnership programs in 2 territories
Tribes	none
Local Governments	none

The online spatial database (MPA Inventory) provides information on MPAs nationwide and is the result of 13 years of data gathering and initial quality assurance/quality control (QAQC). As the status of MPAs is constantly changing, NOAA intends for this database to be updated annually based on feedback from MPA programs and other state, federal, territorial, tribal and local partnerships. These updates will serve to improve the accuracy of the MPA Inventory products and will also provide a verification process to improve the quality and detail of the information provided. Every year, MPA Inventory staff conduct an update based on readily available public information, boundary or regulation changes noted in the Federal Register and state codes, and feedback from partners and programs. An online site data form can be filled out by any MPA Program interested in providing changes, updates or notifications to the current MPA Inventory database.

In addition, under the terms of Executive Order 13158, the MPA Center works to enhance collaboration and capacity development among MPA programs in order to enhance MPA effectiveness. To this end, the MPA Center plans to periodically (approximately every two years) survey federal, state and tribal MPA program managers and staff to identify capacity development needs and gather information to inform MPA management issues, such as managing recreational uses. The first of those surveys is incorporated into this request.

2. Explain how, by whom, how frequently, and for what purpose the information will be used. 1If 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 online site data form is used to assist the MPA Center in evaluating the accuracy of the MPA Inventory data and to provide a mechanism to receive updates, additions or changes to existing database information. The online Inventory form can be used to identify new sites that should be added to the database or to provide clarification on the data stored in the existing version of the online MPA Inventory. The existing MPA Inventory and any subsequent information gathered through the online site form is used: 1) by federal, state, local, territorial, and tribal governments as well as non-governmental organizations, universities, and individuals for scientific research, management, and operational purposes; 2) by industry when seeking federal licenses or permits or preparing environmental impact statements required for various offshore activities; 3) to glean basic information about the U.S.' marine and coastal waters, such as the area that is explicitly managed or protected, what protections exist and where they are located, and how these management areas are related to each other; and, 4) to improve management of these areas and allow for more efficient and effective communication and coordination between management entities.

The data will continue to be provided on the Web site, www.marineprotectedareas.noaa.gov, where information from the federal programs areas and the several states and territories that have responded are available. Through an online data viewer, the general public can view, sort and query the information stored in the database on an interactive map (this viewer is currently being updated). The MPA

Inventory is also served in various spatial data formats for use in existing and planned data portals. The MPA Inventory will also be accessible through the Marine Cadastre (<http://marinecadastre.gov/>) other relevant NOAA data portals. Other examples of how the data will be presented can be seen in the MPA Inventory section of the website at www.marineprotectedareas.noaa.gov/dataanalysis/mpainventory

Specifically, the site data form asks for any relevant updates to a site's existing classification or information. For wholly new sites, it collects: 1) general information about the site, such as name and year established; 2) information about each site's conservation focus and regulatory scope; 3) information about the site's management capabilities as provided through the site's management plan; and 4) information about the availability of geographic information system (GIS) shape files.

Collected information describes attributes of each MPA such as level of protection (e.g. ranging from whether it is a multiple-use area with limited protection to restriction of all uses); whether the protection exists year-round; whether it is focused on protecting natural resources, cultural resources or both; whether and how the site restricts fishing; and its planned management capabilities (e.g. does it have monitoring, research, education, permitting programs, etc.) When completed, the form provides information about each MPA for the database that is comparable across different programs (e.g. parks, refuges, sanctuaries) and levels of government (i.e., federal, state, territorial, partnership) and can be applied at local, state, regional, and national scales.

An additional nomination checklist form is also posted at www.marineprotectedareas.noaa.gov to collect information from eligible federal, state, territorial, local and tribal governments seeking to nominate their MPA to be part of the national system of MPAs. MPA programs (approximately five each year) provide information on how their nominated sites meet the goals and objectives of the national system of MPAs (after their nominations have been reviewed and accepted, these programs continue to provide annual updates as needed for changes to the MPA attributes)

Metadata has been created to order to organize all of the MPA Inventory data, make it more easily retrievable, and further ensure its quality.

Data from periodic surveys of MPA managers and staff, including the effort proposed here, will be used to augment, where appropriate, the Inventory's site records and to assess current management issues at the nation's MPAs. Synthesized summaries of these survey data will be publically available on the MPA Center website, www.marineprotectedareas.noaa.gov. Summaries will also be presented at professional conferences and via conference calls and webinars with MPA managers to discuss options for improving collaboration and management effectiveness.

NOAA's Ocean Service 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 Question10 of this

Supporting Statement for more information on confidentiality and privacy. The information collection is designed to yield data that meet all applicable information quality guidelines. Prior to dissemination, the information will be subjected to quality control measures and 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.

The site data form and the nomination checklist can be accessed online or can be completed: 1) by a site's (respondent) staff and sent via e-mail to the National MPA Center or 2) through the respondent's telephone discussion with National MPA Center staff.

The online forms can be filled out electronically and then returned to MPA Center staff. The current version of the MPA Inventory database is accessible over the Internet at http://www.mpa.gov/helpful_resources/inventoryfiles/mpai_newsiteform.pdf.

The survey of MPA managers and staff will be conducted electronically via Survey Monkey.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

The MPA Inventory is unique, and comparable information is not being collected by other entities. The MPA Center conducts internet searches to determine that such a collection does not already exist. MPA Center staff are also working with the World Commission on Protected Areas' World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) to ensure that information for U.S. MPAs within this global database is accurate and complete. Similarly, there are no existing or ongoing surveys of MPA managers pertaining to recreational uses in their waters.

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

The data collection involves federal agencies, all coastal state and territorial governments, and could involve a few coastal tribal and local governments. The collection does not involve small businesses. Small local governments are provided assistance in filling out the form, when requested, either by the National MPA Center and/or the appropriate state or territorial partner.

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

Data will be collected once for each site; however, respondents are able to provide updates or edits to their data as appropriate. If data are not collected, the public will not

receive complete, vital information about their coastal and ocean resources and the protection and management of those resources, and the Federal government cannot proceed with identifying which existing MPAs are eligible to be a part of the National System of MPAs established under EO 13158.

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

The collection will be conducted consistent with OMB guidelines.

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 2, 2015 (80 FR 5515) solicited public comment on this collection. No comments were received.

Representatives from the Department of the Interior, other federal MPA programs, as well as members of regional fisheries offices have helped shape and review this form in the past. These representatives were encouraged to comment on the usability of the form.

On February 24, 2015, the MPA Center hosted a webinar meeting of federal and state MPA programs attended by 14 MPA programs nationwide. Participants were briefed about the survey's purposes and content and asked if they had any comments 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. They were also invited to provide written comments on this issue if preferred. Two participants representing MPA programs noted verbally on the webinar that they had no comments. No other comments were received.

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

Gifts or payments are not currently planned.

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

As stated on the data entry form, there is no assurance of confidentiality.

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.

There are no questions of a sensitive nature.

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

The initial data collection effort for the MPA Inventory was completed in the first 13 years of the MPA Center's existence. The proposed extension is necessary to maintain accurate and current records and to ensure that all federal, state, commonwealth, and territorial governments, obtain information about new or modified sites. The total estimated responses are 52 for updates or additions of new sites in the next three years.

For new sites, it is estimated to take between 20-30 minutes to research and complete the form. For existing sites needing clarification or modification to one or two fields, this could be substantially less, usually 10 minutes. The MPA Center estimates that there will be approximately 42 updates and 10 responses for new sites over the three year period. For the 10 new sites, assuming a conservative response time of 30 minutes, there will be an estimated five hours required to respond to this information request during this three year extension request, annualized to 1.6 (2) hours. For the 42 existing sites updating information, assuming a response time of 10 minutes, there will be an estimated seven hours required to respond to this information request during this three year extension request, annualized to 2.3 (2) hours.

For bi-annual surveys of MPA managers and staff, responses are estimated to require approximately 20-30 minutes, and an estimated 80-100 individuals may respond. Assuming 30 minutes per survey and 100 respondents, this would require 50 hours to collect the information, or 25 hours per year.

Total responses and hours, annualized: 67 and 29.

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to the respondents or recordkeepers resulting from the collection.

There will be no financial cost associated with completing the online site form.

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

This survey is part of a greater Inventory effort, and as such it will fall under regularly scheduled Inventory activities. The estimated cost of this data collection effort is approximately 5% of an FTE annually, currently performed by a GS-14 (\$7,250 annually).

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

Program Change: The addition of a bi-annual survey of MPA managers and staff will require an additional 25 hours per year to gather this information.

Adjustment: However, due to the number of sites that have already been added to the MPA Inventory over the past decade, the number of responses has decreased from 750 from 2008-2011 to 300 from 2012-2015 to 52 from 2015-2018. Overall, the number of hours for updates and new site additions will be reduced from 50 to 4.

Thus, the net decrease in hours will be -21.

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

Results from the first nine years of data collection are tallied and compiled in a database currently housed at the NOAA Ocean Service's National MPA Center in Monterey, California. The information is currently available on the Web site, www.marineprotectedareas.noaa.gov. New data collected during the extension will be added to this database and made available on the web.

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.