

Public Focus Groups to Assess Fire Weather Services

A. Supplemental Questions for DOC/NOAA Customer Survey Clearance (OMB Control Number 0648-0342)

- 1. Explain who will be conducting this survey. What program office will be conducting the survey? What services does this program provide? Who are the customers? How are these services provided to the customer?**

NOAA's National Weather Service (NWS) monitors, forecasts, and issues weather watches, warnings, and advisories for all weather types across the United States. In the case of fire weather, NWS local offices issue Fire Weather Watches and Red Flag Warnings when weather conditions are conducive to fire development. These watches and warnings are conveyed through websites, NOAA Weather Radio, briefings, broadcasts, and other mechanisms.

Current NWS fire weather products and services were not originally intended for the public. Instead, they were created to alert fire and land management agencies. However, these products are commonly broadcast through public media outlets and displayed on web pages. Therefore, the NWS is seeking input on how the public uses NWS fire weather products and services, including what decisions or actions individuals take based on this information and what other information they may need that is currently not included in the NWS fire weather products and services.

To accomplish this, the NWS seeks to conduct focus groups with members of the public in areas vulnerable to wildfire, particularly in communities along the wildland/urban interface. The NWS's goal with this project is to develop a public-facing fire weather product that will help save lives and reduce impacts to property due to wildfires.

- 2. Explain how this survey was developed. With whom did you consult regarding content during the development of this survey? Statistics? What suggestions did you get about improving the survey?**

The NWS contracted with Eastern Research Group, Inc. (ERG) on the development of the focus group guide. ERG has significant experience in organizing and facilitating focus groups for federal agencies that focus on customer satisfaction and outcome attainment.

To inform the development of the focus group guide, ERG observed six information-gathering sessions with NWS forecasters and Incident Meteorologists (IMETs); broadcast meteorologists and members of the media; and land use and fire management personnel in Riverton, Wyoming; Los Angeles, California; Albuquerque, New Mexico; Medford, Oregon; Missoula, Montana; and Denver, Colorado. The webinars were run by the WFO. Participants included other Federal partners in their respective regions. Non-federal partners did not exceed 9 people. The webinar provided insights into community makeup, vulnerable populations, feedback received to date on NWS fire weather products, and suggestions for alternative language and messaging.

Based on the webinar feedback and subsequent review from the NWS fire weather team, the focus group script was edited to include questions for both longer term residents and rephrased questions

for visitors or tourists. The content of the question remains the same, but required slight rewording. Additionally, the NWS team added a few additional products, namely from the Storm Prediction

Center (SPC) for review in the second half of the focus group script. Although the primary goal is to review the fire weather watch and red flag warning, adding the SPC products in allows us to review for consistency of fire weather products throughout all of the NWS, which is an important component to risk communication.

- 3. Explain how the survey will be conducted. How will the customers be sampled (if fewer than all customers will be surveyed)? What percentage of customers asked to take the survey will respond? What actions are planned to increase the response rate? (Web-based surveys are not an acceptable method of sampling a broad population. Web-based surveys must be limited to services provided by Web.)**

Two focus groups will be conducted at each of the six locations listed above in Question 2: Riverton, Wyoming; Los Angeles, California; Albuquerque, New Mexico; Medford, Oregon; Missoula, Montana; and Denver, Colorado. These locations were chosen for their vulnerability and experience with wildfires as well as their geographic and cultural diversity.

ERG will work with the NWS Incident Meteorologists (IMETS) and/or their Warning Coordination Meteorologist at each location to organize the focus groups. The IMETs will be responsible for developing a list of approximately eight community gatekeepers (such as emergency managers, fire and rescue personnel, park officials, tribal leaders, outdoor recreation groups, ranchers' associations, realtors, and cultural and community groups). These gatekeepers will be chosen for their knowledge and connections to community members that are vulnerable to wildfires. The IMET will then reach out to each community gatekeeper to request his or her help in identifying individuals who might be interested in participating in the focus groups. Each community gatekeeper, in turn, will reach out to up to six individuals to solicit their participation, with a goal of enlisting four of their contacts for the focus groups. Depending on the location, focus group participants could include full- and part-time residents, tribal members, ranchers, retirees, park visitors, outdoor enthusiasts (e.g., campers, backpackers, etc.), and others.

The NWS expects that four out of six participants invited (66 percent) will opt to participate in the focus group, given the strong personal connections of the individual gatekeepers to their communities and the importance and level of interest in this project. Dates will be chosen to maximize participation.

ERG will generate detailed notes from the focus groups.

- 4. Describe how the results of this survey will be analyzed and used. If the customer population is sampled, what statistical techniques will be used to generalize the results to the entire customer population? Is this survey intended to measure a GPRA performance measure? (If so, please include an excerpt from the appropriate document.)**

The NWS will use the information resulting from this data collection to help develop a survey to be disseminated to all states in the NWS Western Region. The survey will gauge general awareness of the fire weather information and products, validate and supplement the identified gaps and services from the focus group results, and test working of key fire weather messages. The information from the focus groups and survey will then be used to guide refinement in fire weather services/products, their use, and messaging from a public perspective.

The NWS will have ERG perform thematic analyses on the detailed focus group notes to identify key findings and recommendations. The NWS is not using any statistical methods to select participants from the population and will select all population members.

The data do not directly contribute to a GPRA measure.

B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods

- 1. Describe (including a numerical estimate) the potential respondent universe and any sampling or other respondent selection method to be used. Data on the number of entities (e.g. establishments, State and local governmental units, households, or persons) in the universe and the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular form. The tabulation must also include expected response rates for the collection as a whole. If the collection has been conducted before, provide the actual response rate achieved.**

The NWS anticipates reaching out to eight community gatekeepers in each of the six locations (46 gatekeepers total). Each gatekeeper will then reach out up to six individuals, with a goal of enlisting four members to participate in the two focus groups in that locality (two individuals per focus group). In all, 32 individuals will participate in each location (eight gatekeepers x four participants). The total sample is 192 individuals (32 participants x 6 locations).

Community	Participants by Location																Total
	Gate-keeper 1		Gate-keeper 2		Gate-keeper 3		Gate-keeper 4		Gate-keeper 5		Gate-keeper 6		Gate-keeper 7		Gate-keeper 8		
Focus Groups	Group 1	Group 2	Group 1	Group 2	Group 1	Group 2	Group 1	Group 2	Group 1	Group 2	Group 1	Group 2	Group 1	Group 2	Group 1	Group 2	
Riverton	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	32
Los Angeles	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	32
Medford	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	32
Albuquerque	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	32
Missoula	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	32
Denver	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	32
Total Sample																	192

- 2. Describe the procedures for the collection, including: the statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection; the estimation procedure; the degree of accuracy needed for the purpose described in the justification; any unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures; and any use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden.**

Statistical Method for Stratification and Sample Selection

For the focus groups, the NWS is not using statistical methods for collecting this data.

Estimation Procedure and Accuracy

For the focus groups, the NWS does not need to extrapolate the results to the population and will therefore not need to estimate population parameters from the collected data.

Unusual Problems Requiring Specialized Sampling Procedures

None are required.

Periodic Data Collection Cycles

This request is for a one-time data collection.

- 3. Describe the methods used to maximize response rates and to deal with nonresponse. The accuracy and reliability of the information collected must be shown to be adequate for the intended uses. For collections based on sampling, a special justification must be provided if they will not yield "reliable" data that can be generalized to the universe studied.**

The NWS office in each location will coordinate with the community gatekeepers to enlist participants for the focus groups. The personal connections that the NWS has to each gatekeeper (and that each gatekeeper, in turn, has with his or her community) will help to encourage response since the request will come from a familiar entity.

The NWS will send out confirmation emails and reminder emails (see Attachment A) to each individual who agrees to participate in the focus groups to further ensure participation. If an attendee who agrees to participate must later drop out of the group (e.g., because scheduling conflicts arise), the NWS will work with the community gatekeeper to identify an alternate participant.

- 4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken. Tests are encouraged as effective means to refine collections, but if ten or more test respondents are involved OMB must give prior approval.**

The NWS consulted with Eastern Research Group, Inc. (ERG) on the development of the focus group guide. ERG has significant experience assessing technical assistance provided by federal agencies through detailed interviews, focus groups, stakeholder engagement, and surveys that focus on customer satisfaction with services. The focus group guide development process was informed through discussions with NWS staff.

- 5. Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on the statistical aspects of the design, and the name of the agency unit, contractor(s), grantee(s), or other person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.**

The NWS has contracted with Eastern Research Group, Inc (ERG) of Lexington, Massachusetts, to design the focus group guide and implement the data collections. ERG's project manager for this work is Gina Eosco (781-704-4458; gina.eosco@erg.com).

Attachment A

Confirmation Email

Dear X,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the NOAA National Weather Service (NWS) Fire Weather Services Focus Group on: X [Date] at X [Time] at X [Location].

A map showing the facility's location is provided below, along with directions.
[INSERT MAP AND DIRECTIONS]

We appreciate you taking the time out of your busy schedule to participate in this focus group. Your participation will help the National Weather Service better understand fire weather messaging and communication needs from the public perspective.

We look forward to seeing you. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Name/Title [NWS IMET]

Reminder Email

Dear X,

We are looking forward to seeing you at the NOAA National Weather Service (NWS) Fire Weather Services Focus Group on: X [Date] at X [Time] at X [Location].

A map showing the facility's location is provided below, along with directions.
[INSERT MAP AND DIRECTIONS]

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Name/Title [NWS IMET]