

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT
APPLICATION FORM FOR MEMBERSHIP ON A NATIONAL MARINE
SANCTUARY COUNCIL
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0397**

A. JUSTIFICATION

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

This request is for revision and extension of this information collection.

Section 315 of the [National Marine Sanctuaries Act](#) (16 U.S.C. 1445a) allows the Secretary of Commerce to establish one or more advisory councils to provide advice to the Secretary regarding the designation and management of national marine sanctuaries. Councils are individually chartered for each sanctuary to meet the needs of that specific site; fourteen councils are currently in existence. Once a council has been chartered, the sanctuary superintendent starts a process to recruit members for that council by providing a notice to the public and asking interested parties to apply for the available seats. An application form has been developed to help ease the application process for the public and facilitate the review process for the sanctuary superintendent.

Revision: the adult application form has been revised to ensure consistency with the new OMB policy regarding the appointment of federally registered lobbyists to government advisory committees, boards, commissions, and related entities. The submitted form is highlighted to show the changes.

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 availability of seats on a council is announced by the appropriate sanctuary through various public channels, including a [Federal Register](#) Notice, local press releases, announcements at local meetings, and posting on the sanctuary's web page. Interested persons can request the application kit (containing the application form, a copy of the council's charter, the council handbook and some information about the sanctuary itself) by phone, fax or email. The applicant then completes and returns the form to the sanctuary office, by mail, fax or electronically. Several sanctuaries per year will have to fill some vacancies on existing councils; new councils may be created if new sites are proposed for designation.

In 2009, a non-voting youth seat application, for interested youth from 14-17, was added.

The specific information requested by the applications will be used in the following ways:

- Seat applying for (applicants are asked to check a box for the seat for which they are applying): This information is used to determine which seat on the council the applicant is interested in holding.

- Name, addresses and phone numbers: This is basic contact information that is necessary in order to notify the applicant about whether he or she will serve on the council; if the applicant becomes a member of the council, this information is used to keep them informed of meeting dates, upcoming events, etc.
- Question 1: Reasons for interest in serving on the council: This information is used to help the sanctuary superintendent determine the nature of the applicant's views on the protection and management of marine and/or Great Lakes resources.
- Questions 2 – 9 (Questions 2-8 youth application): This information is used to determine the qualifications of the applicant for the seat for which he or she is applying, relative to those of other applicants for the same seat.

The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (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 collection is designed to yield data that meet all applicable information quality guidelines. Should NOAA decide to disseminate information other than members' names and addresses, it will be subject to the quality control measures and 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 ONMS provides a broad opportunity for the public to apply for membership on councils. Application kits are available by mail or electronically on the individual sanctuary's web page or in the Council Handbook, at <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/management/ac/acref.html>, and can be submitted through the mail, by fax or email.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

Sanctuary advisory councils are bodies unique to the ONMS; no other collection of information meets the needs of the ONMS for the purpose of selecting members of councils.

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

N/A.

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

Councils serve an important function in the management of sanctuaries, by providing advice to the sanctuary superintendent (from a variety of different perspectives and interests) and helping link the sanctuary to the community. Congress understood this importance and deliberately provided the ONMS with its own authority to have councils, making the councils exempt from

the [Federal Advisory Committee Act](#). Being able to collect this information allows the ONMS to choose the best applicants to serve as members of the council. Without this information collection, council work would not be done effectively.

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

The collection is 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 17, 2015 (80 FR 8289) solicited public comment. No comments were received.

We selected two national marine sanctuaries: Cordell Bank and Gray's Reef, and asked members of their Sanctuary Advisory Councils the following questions:

1. Is the current SAC application form easy to understand, to complete, and to submit?
2. Are the instructions and information provided in the SAC application enough and clear?
3. Do you think enough information is requested from the applicants? Is there other question you think it should be asked to applicants?

We received 4 responses, and overall, comments stated that the form is clear and easy to understand, to complete, and submit. Also, the respondents think the instructions of the form are sufficient and clear. In general, all respondents think the amount of information asked is enough and no additional information should be required. One respondent suggested that perhaps too much information is required but understands that it may be helpful in selecting the advisory council members. On the other hand, another respondent thinks that maybe more information could be required – such as submitting a CV – to demonstrate experience to be member of an advisory council. This survey did not yield a strong call for additional information, but we may consider asking for additional information in the future.

One specific comment received about Question 5 of the SAC application form (*Q5: Describe your formal community and professional affiliations and employment*), asked what word “formal” means in the context of the question. To avoid any confusion to other applicants, we will consider omitting the word "formal" from question 5 in the next revision of the application form.

The next revision will take place within 2-3 years.

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

Applicants are not given payments or gifts. When selected to serve on a council, members are eligible for travel expenses (e.g., per diem) for costs associated with official meetings (per the National Marine Sanctuaries Act).

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

If chosen to serve on a council, members are informed that their names and business contact information (or other contact information as the member prefers) are made available so that constituents from the segment of the community the member represents can contact him or her. Applicants are also informed on the application that other parts of the application may be subject to release under a request from the [Freedom of Information Act](#), through a court order, or in response to a Congressional inquiry.

Protection of applications (for both selected and non-selected applicants) is as follows:

- Council Applications for Selected Applicants: These are retained and filed in a secure location inaccessible to non-staff. When no longer needed, they are shredded. For record-keeping purposes, applications are retained for 5 years beyond the expiration of their seat term.
- Council Applications for Non-Selected Applicants: These applications are retained and filed in a secure location as described above. Applications are filed according to the seat applied for. It is useful to have this information to solicit qualified non-selected applicants to apply again when council seats are vacated. When no longer needed, they are shredded. For record-keeping purposes, these applications are retained for 5 years beyond their application date.

←
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 asked.

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

Approximately 700 applications will be sent out by request or downloaded from the Web site. Of these, approximately 520 are expected to be completed and returned (500 adult and 20 youth), with an estimated time per applicant of one hour for obtaining, completing and returning the application, for a total annual response time of 520 hours.

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 are no capital or start-up costs. No special equipment will need to be obtained for this information collection. The ONMS expects applications to cost about \$2 per person for the cost of a phone call or email request for the application and the cost of electronically returning or mailing the completed application, for a total annual cost to the public of \$1,040.

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

The estimated annual costs to the federal government would include:

- Copying = \$200 (5,000 pages at \$.04 a page for copying applications, council charters, and other information for application packages)
- Mailing = \$700 (mailing 700 applications* at \$1 each)
- Labor = \$20,800 (2 hours per application requested to cover responding to request for application, mailing, copying for review, conducting the review, and responding to applicant, x 520 applications x \$20/hour).

Total = \$21,700.

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

There are no program changes or adjustments.

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

Only the name and contact information for each successful applicant would be published. Such information would likely appear in the individual sanctuary's web page, newsletters, and other usual information outlets for that sanctuary. New council members are usually announced about a month after the deadline for accepting applications has passed. Annually the ONMS also prints a directory of all council members across the program and their contact 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.

No exemptions are being sought.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement.

N/A.

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

This collection does not employ statistical methods.