

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT
NOAA RESTORATION CENTER PERFORMANCE PROGRESS REPORT AND
ADMINISTRATIVE PROGRESS REPORT
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0479**

A. JUSTIFICATION

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

This request is for extension of a currently approved information collection.

The [Estuary Restoration Act](#) (ERA) of 2000 (Act) was signed into law in November 2000 and makes restoring our nation's estuaries a national priority by leveraging limited federal resources with state, local, and private funding. As part of the Act, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is required to develop and maintain a database of estuary restoration projects. The purpose of the database is to provide information to improve restoration methods, provide information for reports transmitted to Congress (Section 108(b)), and track the acres of habitat restored. Project information collected and maintained is made available to the public through project summaries. The database contains project information for projects funded through the ERA that meet quality control requirements and data standards established under the Act. This information collection is a requirement only for those parties receiving ERA funds. The submission of estuary restoration project information for projects not funded through ERA is optional and any submissions must meet ERA project requirements for the database.

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 is used to track estuary habitat restoration project success and to improve restoration methods. The information collected by the database may be used by Restoration Center staff and the ERA Work Group for reports transmitted to Congress, briefings to the ERA Council, as well as responses to other inquiries for data. Reports to Congress take place every two years. Reports to Congress consist of an overview of the status of the database and information on the acres of habitat restored, monitoring, and database maintenance efforts. Database project data, e.g., sum of acres restored, may be used in presentations at ERA Council meetings. The information will also be used to respond to requests for information by upper level NOAA management, other federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, and members of the public. The information contained in the database is accessible to the public via summary reports on the ERA website (<http://www.era.noaa.gov>). Parties receiving ERA funds are required to submit information for entry into the database. A summary of the questions asked for the database is below. Data entry is optional for all other parties with projects eligible to be submitted to the database.

The information collection by the database consists of:

(a) General Information – Basic project information such as project title, whether the project is funded by the ERA and if not, whether it meets the specific requirements to be counted as an

ERA project, a topic sentence describing the project, the current status of the project including the implementation start and completion dates and the size of the project. In addition, this area identifies specific questions for ERA-funded projects such as the primary partner, lead federal agency, date of the funding agreement, and whether the project qualifies as an innovative technology project, which is defined by the Estuary Restoration Act.

(b) Abstract – a detailed description of the project with background about the site, historic impacts to the site, project information, and additional information about partners, acres restored, timeline, etc.

(c) Contact Information – basic details necessary to identify and contact project managers such as name, title, address, organization, city, state, zip code, phone and fax numbers, e-mail, and URL for websites.

(d) Geographic Location – details on the physical location of the project site including city, county, state/territory/province (for Canadian projects), region, zip code, United States Geological Survey (USGS) Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC), longitude, latitude, USGS topographic quadrangle, congressional district, and whether a GIS layer is available for the project boundary.

(e) Project Benefits – details on expected benefits of the restoration project including descriptions of benefits (e.g., species, habitat, ecosystem, and/or economic), whether the benefit has been achieved, and additional comments.

(f) Habitat Types and Acreage Restored– a listing of habitat types restored as well as number of acres restored (by acres created, re-established, or rehabilitated) and benefited (acres enhanced or protected) for each habitat type, as well as stream miles (the linear extent of rivers and streams that is made accessible for diadromous and migratory fish passage), and methods used for obtaining acreage and stream mile values. The method for obtaining acreage and stream miles is an important field because it helps to determine the reliability of a reported value.

(g) Restoration Techniques – list of techniques used in the project. Descriptions of each technique and its success are also provided to highlight the benefits and pitfalls of using various restoration methods.

(h) Monitoring and Success Criteria – list of monitoring parameters used in the project. Detailed monitoring information will also be provided including monitoring frequency, methods, start and end dates, as well as success criteria used for determining project success.

(i) Regional Restoration Plans – title, date, lead organizations, URL, and type of restoration plan that the project contributes to.

(j) Partners Information– details on support (e.g., planning, funding, technical assistance) provided by other organizations including partner name, type of partner, and URL.

(k) Budget Information– project support provided by Federal and non-Federal entities as well as the original proposed cost estimate for the project, and the final actual cost of the restoration. This information will allow restoration practitioners to compare the costs of project implementation and how actual costs exceed projections.

(l) Photos and Videos – Images showing the progress of the project such as before, during, and after pictures of the restoration. Each image will contain a caption, credit, and date. These pictures will be used for dynamic project web pages that will be available on the database website. Once the submission has been reviewed for quality control by the NOAA Estuary Habitat Restoration Program manager, the information is made available to the public on-line through the database website. Therefore, the Section 515 Information Quality Guidelines apply to this information collection and comply with all applicable information quality guidelines, (i.e., OMB, Department of Commerce, and NOAA guidelines).

The information collected undergoes a quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) process prior to being disseminated to the public for queries and reports. Each individual project is reviewed by database administrators prior to being made available to the public. Data is currently limited to projects funded through a subset of existing Federal programs that have been incorporated into the application, as well as those to be submitted voluntarily by project proponents. Therefore, much of the data is not completely generated by NOAA, but originates from the project manager or another Federal database. A description of the data collection, information sources, QA/QC, and dissemination processes, as well as an overview of data sources and limitations will be made available upon request.

NOAA Fisheries 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. As described above, 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 collection of information for the database now involves paper or a fillable word form instead of web-based data entry forms, as maintaining the web-based data entry option previously available was no longer cost-effective. Methods of submittal include email of electronic forms, mail, and facsimile transmission of paper forms. Restoration practitioners submit information to be entered into the database from Federal, State, local and tribal governments, not-for-profit institutions, and other entities across the country. Restoration practitioners may have different levels of technical expertise. The data entry form is posted on the ERA website with a comprehensive on-line user's guide, a data dictionary, specific instructions, and examples. Restoration practitioners use personal computers to access the data entry form and then must print it for submission. The information collected is made available in summary reports on the ERA Web site.

The PRA statement, with the OMB Control Number, expiration date, and additional information about the collection, is available for respondents on both the Word form, as well as the database website. To obtain project coordinate information (longitude and latitude), restoration practitioners may choose to use hand-held Global Positioning Systems (GPS) or numerous on-line mapping applications. Users are requested to state how acreage and stream mile measurements were obtained (e.g. GPS, land surveys, aerial photography) in the data entry form.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

NOAA Fisheries' Restoration Center maintains an existing database of restoration projects that is used to track projects funded and implemented by the Restoration Center. Restoration Center staff using materials from progress reports and direct conversations with restoration practitioners populates this database. A separate Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) request for the Restoration Center's Community-based Restoration Program (CRP) is approved under Office of

Management and Budget (OMB) Control Number 0648-0472 (current extension expires 10-31-2018). This request requires recipients of CRP funding to provide information regarding the status and success of funded projects in the form of periodic performance reports and final reports. The information is used to populate the Restoration Center's existing database, the Restoration and Conservation Database (RCDB).

Estuary Habitat Restoration Program projects within the RCDB meet the project requirements for the ERA database. Therefore, relevant data fields from the Restoration Center's database are copied into the ERA database on a regular basis to avoid duplication of effort and unnecessary burden to respondents. The ERA database information request is a similar request for information but since it is a different program, it does not encompass the same projects or the same data fields as the CRP request. Therefore, a separate request is needed for the ERA database.

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

Small entity respondents are not-for-profit entities. Only recipients of Estuary Habitat Restoration Program funding are **required** to submit project information. A pre-formatted word document of the data fields is provided to assist in the collection of information prior to being entered into the database. Specific instructions and definitions for data fields are also provided on the data entry form. Technical support is also available via e-mail. The information to be collected is very basic and should not be a burden for small entities receiving ERA funding to produce.

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

If the information collection is discontinued, the Estuary Habitat Restoration Program's ability to consistently and precisely account for the expenditure of federal funds for estuary habitat restoration activities under the ERA or to validate Government Performance and Results Act 'acres restored' and other agency performance measures, and provide timely responses to Freedom of Information Act requests will be inhibited. There will also be no means to respond to Congressional inquiries in a rapid, accurate, efficient, and cost-effective manner if the information collection is not conducted or conducted less frequently..

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 April 25, 2016 (81 FR 24054) solicited public comment on this information collection. No comments were received. No comments were received in response to the Federal Register Notice, except those submitted directly to NOAA Federal Program Officers (see below).

Members of the Estuary Habitat Restoration Program Working Group, which consist of other federal agencies such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and the Environmental Protection Agency, have provided input on how to improve the information collection and efforts have been made to incorporate the majority of these suggestions into the application. Most of these suggestions involved formatting changes to remove less critical data elements that reduce data entry burden on respondents.

Recently, NOAA contacted members of the Estuary Habitat Restoration Program Working Group requesting additional feedback on the ERA database and information collection, with all respondents stating support for the database overall. Respondents concurred that instructions were clear and information was easily accessible and searchable on the ERA website. Data entry is voluntary for organizations which do not receive ERA funding; therefore respondents reasoned the database offered a snapshot of information and is not a comprehensive collection of all agencies' estuarine restoration efforts. Respondents agreed with our estimation; stating the burden of time to maintain a project record in the ERA database to be reasonable.

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.

The information collection does not request any proprietary or confidential information. No confidentiality is provided.

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 information of a sensitive nature is collected.

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

The three-year burden for this collection is estimated to be 40 hours (annualized to 13 hours). However, it should be noted that data collected for the database is intended to provide information to restoration practitioners throughout the country, including those entering the data. Therefore, the burden of data collection is expected to be offset (and in some cases exceeded) by the benefits accrued to restoration practitioners from having access to a national database for project tracking and data queries.

NOAA expects between 1-5 new awards to be made in fiscal years when funding is available. Funded respondents will be required to submit an initial project data form and project updates every year following until project monitoring has been completed. Using these assumptions for projects and assuming that one project is entered or updated by a single respondent, NOAA estimates that in year one of the next three years, up to 5 new projects will be entered into the database. In year two, an additional 5 projects will be entered into the database and an existing 10 projects will be updated. In year three, another 5 projects will be added to the database and an existing 10 projects will be updated. Annualizing over three years (5, 5 + 10, 5 + 10), there would be 15 respondents and responses per year. For new projects, the total response time per project is estimated at four hours: approximately three hours spent collecting project information and writing the project abstract and one hour for entering information into the project entry data form. For projects that are already in the database and are being updated, the total response time per project is estimated at two hours: 1 hour and 30 minutes for collecting new project information and 30 minutes to update the information in the project entry data form. Assuming approximately 5 new projects being entered into the database each year and 10 existing projects updated each year, the annual burden would be 40 plus 20, or 60.

Collection totals include the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, and gathering and maintaining project information (photos, press releases, partner contributions, volunteer hours, tracking of multiple project sites, etc.) needed to answer project questions that awardees should have readily available, and the one-time need to use a GPS or internet URL to determine latitude and longitude coordinates of project sites. Totals also include time to complete (fill out) the information collection tool. Respondents are limited to those organizations that have received funding through the Estuary Habitat Restoration program.

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).

No capital or start-up costs are expected to result from this collection by the respondents. Any need for the purchase of a computer, software, or supplies required for project implementation, or for monitoring and data entry, are included as part of the grant request. Operations and maintenance costs are expected to be limited to writing reports and maintaining financial records; these too are included as part of the grant request. There are no costs for submission of reports, as they can be submitted by email to NOAA's Estuary Habitat Program manager. It is expected that existing computer equipment and Internet connections will be used by respondents at little to no additional cost.

It is expected that no more than two of the 15 annual respondents will use facsimile transmission or mail to submit paper data forms. It is estimated half of those respondents will use mail, resulting in a \$0.49 burden (1 respondents x \$0.49 per stamp), and the remainder of those respondents will use facsimile transmission, resulting in a \$3.00 burden (1 respondent x 3 pages x \$1.00 per page). The overall annual burden to respondents is estimated to be \$3.49 (\$4).

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

One full-time employee (FTE) will devote approximately 10% of his/her time annually for oversight, reporting, QA/QC, and data imports. One contractor will devote 5% of his/her time to implement changes to maintain web links and support GIS and database applications. With an annual average salary of \$100,000 for an FTE at 15% time (\$10,000), and an annual salary for a contractor of \$100,000 at 5% time (\$5,000), the annualized cost to the Federal government to conduct this information collection is estimated to be \$15,000. No significant equipment, overhead, printing or other costs should be involved with the processing of this information collection.

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

Since the 2013 submission, our estimate has been revised from 31 respondents to 15, with a corresponding decrease in hours. Based on the funding stream and status of the program, 15 is a more realistic estimate.

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

The results of this collection will not be published. A subset of the information is however made available to the public on the Restoration Center's Restoration Atlas at <https://restoration.atlas.noaa.gov/src/html/index.html>, where the public can view projects by location or habitat type, see the project location on a map, and review an abstract of the project including funding information, project partners, and a contact for more 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.

Not Applicable.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement.

Not Applicable.

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

This collection does not employ statistical methods.