

2019 Supporting Statement for OMB 0596-0231
Post-Decisional Administrative Review Process

A. Justification

- 1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.**

The Forest Service has had some form of appeals process for almost 100 years. The Department adopted an administrative appeal rule at 36 CFR part 251, subpart C (251 Appeal Rule) on January 23, 1989. In this case for the 251 Appeal Rule, the Agency, at its own discretion, provides a process by which holders, operators, and solicited applicants may appeal certain written decisions issued by a Responsible Official involving a written instrument authorizing the occupancy or use of National Forest System (NFS) lands and resources.

On June 5, 2013, the Department issued a final rule to update, rename, and relocate the administrative appeal regulations governing occupancy or use of NFS lands and resources to a new part 214 entitled "Postdecisional Administrative Review Process for Occupancy or Use of National Forest System Lands and Resources" (78 FR 33705). The new part 214 shortens the appeal process, the appeal period, and reduces the cost to the appellant and government of processing the appeal.

- 2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.**

- a. What information will be collected - reported or recorded? (If there are pieces of information that are especially burdensome in the collection, a specific explanation should be provided.)**

The appellant must provide: the appellant's name, mailing address, daytime telephone number, and e-mail address. They must also provide a statement of how the appellant is adversely affected by the decision being appealed; a statement of the relevant facts underlying the decision being appealed; a discussion of issues raised by the decision being appealed; a statement as to whether and how the appellant has attempted to resolve the issues under appeal with the Responsible Official; a statement of the relief sought; the signature of the appellant.

- b. From whom will the information be collected? If there are different respondent categories (e.g., loan applicant versus a bank versus an appraiser), each should be described along with the type of collection activity that applies.**

The information (appeal) will be collected (submitted) from individuals who are holders or operators of a valid written authorization or in some cases an applicant for a written authorization to occupy or use NFS lands and resources. The appellant (holder or operator) voluntarily participates if they

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seek a review of a decision that was made that directly affects their written authorization. This appeal process does not require the services of an attorney; however some respondents choose to use the services of an attorney in preparing their response.

c. What will this information be used for - provide ALL uses?

The information is used to review an agency decision on a written authorization against the issues raised by the appellant and determine whether to affirm or reverse the decision.

d. How will the information be collected (e.g., forms, non-forms, electronically, face-to-face, over the phone, over the Internet)? Does the respondent have multiple options for providing the information? If so, what are they?

The information (appeal) is collected (submitted) through the appeal process and may be delivered in person or by courier, by mail or private delivery service, by facsimile, or by electronic mail. There are no forms associated with the appeal process.

e. How frequently will the information be collected?

There is no regular schedule for this type of information collection. On occasion, the Agency may issue a new authorization or modify an existing authorization (the decision). The holder of the written authorization is informed of the authorization or modification of an existing authorization, at which time the holder may choose to appeal the decision.

f. Will the information be shared with any other organizations inside or outside USDA or the government?

The appeal record is open for public inspection in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, the Privacy Act, and 7 CFR part 1. The collected information is shared only if requested by other organizations or government agencies.

g. If this is an ongoing collection, how have the collection requirements changed over time?

There have been no changes since the last submission.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g. permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.

The collected information (appeal) may be submitted in person or by courier, by mail or private delivery service, by facsimile, or by electronic mail. By offering multiple options for submitting an appeal, including electronic, the agency's intent is to reduce the burden on the public.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any sim-

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ilar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.

The information collected in the appeal is specific to holders of written authorizations and limited to the specific appealable decisions outlined in the rule. Therefore, there is no other Information Collection instrument available.

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities¹, describe any methods used to minimize burden.

Small businesses or other small entities that may hold or obtain authorizations have the opportunity to appeal decisions affecting their particular authorization. The Agency's intent to minimize burden on these entities is the same as for individuals who hold authorizations, which is to offer multiple methods to submit an appeal, including via electronic means.

6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

The agency and public have been using this appeal process for 23 years and to discontinue this process now would result in the agency not providing an open and transparent process for a specific National Forest System user group to appeal decisions that affect them.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:

- **Requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly;**

There is no required reporting. Those choosing to file an appeal must do so within 45 days of the date of the decision.

- **Requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;**

The post-decisional administrative review process has no such requirement.

- **Requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document;**

- The post-decisional administrative review process has no such requirement.

- **Requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records for more than three years;**

There is no requirement, although such records may be necessary to document appeal points.

- **In connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to**

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produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study; N/A

- **Requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB; N/A**
- **That includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or N/A**
- **Requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secret, or other confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law. N/A**

There are no other special circumstances. The collection of information is conducted in a manner consistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.6.

- 8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8 (d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.**

On June 6, 2019, a 60-day notice and request for comments was published in the Federal Register (84 FR 26398). One comment was received. The comment received did not address cost and hour burden relevant to this particular information collection. The comment addressed the criteria used to evaluate a typical prospectus related to the issuance of campground concessionaire special use permits. The commenter was concerned with process used that might result in an appeal.

Describe 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 record keeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

This information collection is specific to the Forest Service decisions and is therefore not duplicated among other Federal agencies. The appeal data (information collection) is based on the the current regulation (36 CFR 214). This is an opportunity for people directly affected by a Forest Service decision to appeal that decision if they are unhappy with that decision.

Consultation with representatives of those from whom information is to be obtained or those who must compile records should occur at least once every 3 years even if the collection of information activity is the same as in prior periods. There may be circumstances that may preclude consultation in a specific situation. These circumstances

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should be explained.

Appeals are dependent on decisions being issued. Decisions on appealable issues are not on a regular schedule, nor are the same people affected. Each appeal is unique and includes unique issues and respondents (appellants).

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than re-enumeration of contractors or grantees.

There is no payment or gift provided to respondents.

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

No assurance of confidentiality is provided. The appeal record, which includes the appellant's submitted appeal, is open for public inspection in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, the Privacy Act, and 7 CFR part 1.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior or attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.

No information is collected that could be considered sensitive or personal in nature.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated.

- **Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form.**
 - a) **Description of the collection activity:**
 - b) **Corresponding form number (if applicable):**
 - c) **Number of respondents:**
 - d) **Number of responses annually per respondent:**
 - e) **Total annual responses (columns c x d):**
 - f) **Estimated hours per response:**
 - g) **Total annual burden hours (columns e x f):**

Table 1- Appeals received by year

(a)	(c) Number of
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Description of the Collection Activity	Respondents			
	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	FY2019
Post-Decisional Appeal	200	150	70	25

It is difficult to estimate the number of respondents because written authorizations are not amended on a regular basis and the holder of the authorization may or may not choose to appeal a decision. Forest Service asked its regional appeal coordinators how many 36 CFR 214 appeals each of the regions received (regional, forest, and district) for the years of 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2019. Currently there is not a database that tracks these appeals that is required to be used. The above figures in Table 1 is an estimate of the numbers of appeals.

The number of appeals are related to the number of Forest Service issued written authorizations that a holder may or may not choose to appeal a decision. In 2019, there was a reduction in the number of appeals to 25.

For calculating the burden estimate represented in Table 2, Forest Service is using the number of appeals received during 2019, which was approximately 25.

Table 2 - Estimated Hourly Burden

COLLECTION ACTIVITY	ESTIMATED ANNUAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF RESPONSES ANNUALLY PER RESPONDENT	TOTAL ESTIMATED ANNUAL RESPONSES	ESTIMATE D HOURS PER RESPONSE	TOTAL ESTIMATED ANNUAL BURDEN HOURS
Preparation and Submittal of Appeal	25	1	25	8	200

- **Record keeping burden should be addressed separately and should include columns for:**

- a) **Description of record keeping activity:**
- b) **Number of record keepers:**
- c) **Annual hours per record keeper:**
- d) **Total annual record keeping hours (columns b x c):**

There are no recordkeeping requirements placed upon the respondents.

- **Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories.**

Table 3 - Estimated Total Annual Cost to Respondents

COLLECTION ACTIVITY	TOTAL ANNUAL RESPONSES	TOTAL ANNUAL BURDEN HOURS	ESTIMATED AVERAGE INCOME PER HOUR ¹	ESTIMATED COST TO RESPONDENTS
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Preparation and Submittal of Appeal	25	200	\$18.58	\$3,716
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¹Hourly wage is from Bureau of Labor statistics for occupation code 00-0000 (all occupations). This wage code was selected because a holder of a written authorization could be from any background and occupation. <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/pdf/2015/salhlr.pdf>

13. Provide estimates of the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information, (do not include the cost of any hour burden shown in items 12 and 14). The cost estimates should be split into two components: (a) a total capital and start-up cost component annualized over its expected useful life; and (b) a total operation and maintenance and purchase of services component.

There are no capital operation and maintenance costs.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government. Provide a description of the method used to estimate cost and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.

Agency labor costs for analyzing, evaluating, summarizing, reviewing, and issuing appeal decision on the collected information (appeal).

The estimated processing times were obtained through discussions with agency appeal coordinators.

The estimated cost to government as shown in Table 4 below was calculated by taking the cost per appeal and multiplying by the estimated 25 annual appeals received, resulting in an estimated total cost to government of \$76,976.50

Table 4 - Estimated Annual Cost to Federal government

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY	TOTAL ANNUAL APPEALS	PERSONNEL	GS-LEVEL	HOURLY RATE ¹	HOURS PER APPEAL	COST TO GOV'T PER APPEAL
Receiving appeal and analyzing issues		Forest Appeals Specialist	GS-11 Step-1	\$33.34	24	\$800.16
Summarizing, reviewing, and preparing appeal response		Regional Appeals Specialist	GS-12 Step-1	\$39.96	20	\$799.20
Summarizing, reviewing, and presenting appeal response		National Appeals Specialist	GS-14 Step-1	\$56.15	24	\$1,347.60
Issuing Final		Deciding	GS-15	\$66.05	2	\$132.10

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Appeal Decision		Official	Step-1			
Cost per Appeal						\$3,079.06
TOTAL	25					\$76,976.50

¹The hourly costs were obtained from the OPM salary table for 2019.
<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/pdf/2019/salhl.pdf>

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in items 13 or 14 of OMB form 83-I.

This renewal submission reflects a decrease of 360 hours from 560 to 200. Reduction in burden is a result of a 45 decrease in respondents/responses from 70 to 25.

16. For collections of information whose results are planned to be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication.

The collected information will not be published.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

Due to the fact that there are no associated documents or forms with this Information Collection, displaying OMB approval and expiration date is not applicable.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in item 19, "Certification Requirement for Paperwork Reduction Act."

There are no exceptions.