

# **2021 Supporting Statement OMB Control Number 0596-0080**

## Volunteer Application and Agreement for Natural and Cultural Resource Agencies

**Terms of Clearance:** None

### **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.**

#### Participating Agencies:

- Department of Agriculture: U.S. Forest Service (USFS), National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- Department of the Interior: National Park Service (NPS), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Bureau of Reclamation (BR), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)
- Department of Defense: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Department of Commerce: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

#### Laws, Statutes and Regulations:

- Public Law 92-300: Volunteers in the National Forest Act of 1972
- 16 USC 558 a-d - Volunteers in the National Forests Program
- 16 USC 583j-4 - Forest Foundation Volunteers
- 16 USC 1246 - Administration and development of national trails system
- 16 USC 1250 - Volunteer trails assistance
- 31 USC 3325 - Authorizes payment of vouchers

Volunteers contribute significant and diverse services on public lands in a wide range of activities, from providing interpretive services, to performing campground host and maintenance duties, to building and repairing trails, to supporting a myriad of research, administration and operational support activities. All public lands agencies provide volunteer opportunities and hundreds of thousands of citizen stewards serve in a volunteer capacity every year. Volunteers represent the broad diversity of the American public and many international communities. They are children, families, and retirees. Their contributions are critical to Federal land management agencies' ability to achieve their missions in a diminishing resource environment and to the broader goal of "working together, to preserve the public lands legacy."

Federal land management agency members of a Federal Interagency Team on Volunteerism (FITV) are authorized to work with volunteers and volunteer organizations to plan, develop, maintain, and manage volunteer projects and

service activities on public lands and adjacent projects throughout the Nation. Agencies may recruit, train, and accept the services of volunteers to aid in interpretive functions, visitor services, conservation measures and development, research and development, recreation, and other activities in nearly all areas of service. Volunteer engagement can be an efficient, effective, and cost-beneficial use of public resources.

In order to effectively engage tens of thousands of volunteers in meaningful service activities annually in at multiple locations, participating agencies must collect information including personally identifiable information from public citizens who are interested in volunteering on public lands. The information collected from volunteers includes contact information, demographic data including ethnicity and veterans, and disability status.

**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 Forest Service has used the current OF-301 Volunteer Application to consider persons for enrollment as volunteers. Persons use this form to express interest in volunteering, list their skills and abilities and desired locations and timeframes. The agency uses the form as a position application, to review and determine if a potential volunteer is a good fit for a particular volunteer position. The agency uses the OF-301a to enroll volunteers, collect their contact information, describe their duties, project locations, schedules and any reimbursements, describe safety requirements, and delineate any other terms of service. This form also collects parent or guardian approval for minor volunteers and records the date on which the volunteer terminates their service. The OF-301b is used to record the name and contact information of the volunteer group, and the names and signatures of volunteers participating in a project.

**Table 1: Itemized Listing of Forms and Information Collected**

Form Number and Name	Volunteer's Name	Information Collected											
		Contact and Emergency	Consent of Parent/Guardian	Social Security Number	Expenses (for reimbursement)	Hours volunteered	Areas of Interest	Physical Limitations	Qualifications/Experience	Gender and Age (optional)	Ethnicity (optional)	Medical Insurance Information	Visa Information

**All Participating Agencies**

OF-301: Volunteer Application for Natural Resource Agencies	X	X		X	X	X			X
OF-301a: Agreement for Volunteer Services	X	X	X				X	X	
OF-301b: Volunteer Sign-Up Form for Groups	X	X	X						

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**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 is collected from potential and selected volunteers of all ages. Those under 18 years of age must have written consent from a parent or guardian.

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

Participating natural resource agencies will use this information to manage agency volunteer programs. Specifically:

- Applications are used to select and assign volunteers to appropriate activities.
- Agreements set forth the details of volunteer assignments and outline the responsibilities of participating individuals and agencies.
- Group sign-in sheets collect information about volunteers serving on a particular project and secures their agreement to serve.

**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 is collected using the forms listed and may be completed electronically or by hand. Electronic submission of form OF-301 is accepted via email or <https://www.volunteer.gov/s/> Form OF-301a must include original signature on a hardcopy, which can then be scanned and emailed if necessary. Form OF-301b is typically used just prior to a volunteer project, often on the day of the event as volunteers arrive at the event so is usually completed in hardcopy. Representatives of an organized volunteer group with whom the agency already has a completed form OF-301a may scan and email the OF-301b if the agency representative has agreed to this method. Each of the forms used in this collection will be available in two different languages (Spanish, and Chinese) in addition to English to accommodate those whose primary language is not English.

**e. How frequently will the information be collected?**

OF-301 *Volunteer Service Application*: Once per year, per respondent.

OF-301a *Volunteer Service Agreement*: Once per year, per respondent.

OF-301b *Volunteer Sign-up for Groups*: Once for each group-performed project; average of 3 per year per respondent.

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

General non-identifying information is shared in reports of participating agencies volunteer programs. This information is also provided to Congress and the public in reports. No information regarding individual volunteers is shared.

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

- Public Burden Statement – updated to a current version.
- Liability for personal property statement in Box 33 of OF-301a has changed from: “I understand that I will not receive any compensation for the above service and that volunteers are NOT considered Federal employees for any purpose other than tort claims and injury compensation” to “I understand that I will not receive any compensation for the above service and that volunteers are NOT considered Federal employees except as otherwise provided by law.”
- The language in the OF-301 “Notice to Volunteers” box has changed from: “Volunteers are not considered Federal employees for any purposes other than tort claims and injury compensation” to “Volunteers are NOT considered Federal employees except as otherwise provided by law.” These edits address the issue that language, as currently exists on the form, is inconsistent with the Volunteers in National Forests Act (16 U.S.C. 558c), which provides that Forest Service volunteers enrolled under the Act are treated as federal employees under the Military Personnel and Civilian Employees Claims Act (“MPCECA”), 31 U.S.C. 3721, which addresses employee claims for personal property damage or loss, in addition to the Federal Tort Claims Act (“FTCA”), 28 U.S.C. 2671, which governs tort claims, and the Federal Employees Compensation Act (“FECA”), 5 U.S.C. 8101, which pertains to injury compensation to federal civilian employees.
- Privacy Act Statement in OF-301 and OF-301a was changed from “The data will be used to maintain official records of volunteers of the USDA and USDI for the purposes of tort claims, and injury compensation” to: “The data will be used to maintain official records of volunteers of the USDA and USDI for the purposes of tort claims, injury compensation, and other volunteer claims allowed by law.”

**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 Volunteer forms are available at the GSA website at these links: Volunteer Service Application ([OF-301](#)), Volunteer Service Agreement ([OF-301a](#)), Volunteer Sign-up Form for Groups ([OF-301b](#)) and are also available at various agency websites including <http://www.fs.usda.gov/volunteer>.

Electronic or hardcopy completion of the OF-301 is offered; the completed form can be emailed or hardcopy mailed to the selected natural resources office.

The OF-301a must include original signature on a hardcopy, and therefore must be printed and mailed, or scanned and emailed.

Form OF-301b is typically completed just prior to a volunteer project, often on the day of the event as volunteers arrive at the event, and therefore is usually completed in hardcopy. Representatives of an organized volunteer group with whom the agency already has an OF-301a may scan and submit by email the OF-301b if the agency representative has agreed to this method.

**4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.**

The OF-301 suite of forms was developed to eliminate duplication of efforts among FITV member agencies by streamlining cumbersome systems for referral between agencies. This suite of forms is available for use by all natural and cultural resource agencies.

OF-301a provides a generic volunteer agreement format for all participating agencies. OF-301b provides a group volunteer sign-in sheet which eliminates the need for multiple OF-301a forms in a group volunteering situation.

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

Information collected is the minimum necessary for program participation. The OF-301b was developed to minimize the number of forms collected from members of non-profit organizations; it eliminates the need for multiple OF-301a forms when a volunteer group, small or large, serves on a project.

**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.**

If the information is not collected, land management agencies will be unable to recruit and/or screen hundreds of thousands volunteer applicants that contribute millions of hours of service valued at hundreds of millions of dollars annually, and subsequently administer and operate volunteer programs. Data is collected as infrequently as possible, given that it is generally collected once and updated only as necessary.

**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;**

Form OF-301b is completed once per volunteer project, and therefore may be collected more frequently than quarterly.

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

Due to the nature of the application process for participation in an event, although not required to do so, respondents typically prepare the applications in fewer than 30 days of receipt.

- **Requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document;**
- **Requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records for more than three years;**
- **In connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized for universal study;**
- **Requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB;**
- **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**
- **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.**

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.**

The Federal Register 60-day Notice for this information collection was published on 05/24/2021 Citation number 86-page number 27825 through 27826. Received and responded to one comment from a Jean Public regarding the partnerships being corrupt and motives of volunteers.

**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.**

The agency consulted with the various Federal agencies partaking in the collection, and those agencies also consulted with outside volunteer.gov partners, which is done on a rolling basis.

**Participating Agencies and Contact Information**

- The following individuals represent the agencies currently participating (or who have participated in the past) as proponents of this information collection. These agencies are members of the Federal Interagency Team on Volunteerism and were contacted to obtain their views on availability of data; frequency of collection; the clarity of instructions and record keeping; disclosure or reporting format; and data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.
- All of the participating agencies use Optional Form 301 (Volunteer Application). Optional Form 301a (Volunteer Agreement) is also in use. These interagency forms are part of an effort by participating agencies to adopt standardized forms.

**Table 2. Participating agencies and contact information**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>
National Park Service	Shari Orr, <a href="mailto:shari_orr@nps.gov">shari_orr@nps.gov</a>
Army Corps of Engineers	Heather Burke, <a href="mailto:heather.d.burke@usace.army.mil">heather.d.burke@usace.army.mil</a>
US Fish and Wildlife Service	Debbie Moore, <a href="mailto:deborah_moore@fws.gov">deborah_moore@fws.gov</a>
Bureau of Reclamation	Christine Dziedzina, <a href="mailto:cdziedzina@usbr.gov">cdziedzina@usbr.gov</a>
US Geological Survey	Pamela R. Agnew, <a href="mailto:pagnew@usgs.gov">pagnew@usgs.gov</a>

Bureau of Land Management	Derrick Baldwin, <a href="mailto:dbaldwin@blm.gov">dbaldwin@blm.gov</a>
US Forest service	Merlene Mazyck, <a href="mailto:mazzie.mazyck@usda.gov">mazzie.mazyck@usda.gov</a>
Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement	Sathiyam Sivakumaran, <a href="mailto:ssivakumaran@osmre.gov">ssivakumaran@osmre.gov</a>
US Department of Agriculture National Arboretum	Anthony Linforth, <a href="mailto:anthony.linforth@usda.gov">anthony.linforth@usda.gov</a>
AmeriCorps	Sandy Scott, <a href="mailto:sscott@cns.gov">sscott@cns.gov</a>
US Department of Agriculture Farm Production and Conservation Business Center	Toni Flax, <a href="mailto:toni.flax@usda.gov">toni.flax@usda.gov</a>
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	Claire Fackler, (805) 893-6429, <a href="mailto:claire.fackler@noaa.gov">claire.fackler@noaa.gov</a>

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**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 should be explained.**

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

When applicable and allowed by agency regulations, volunteers receive per diem and reimbursement for incidental expenses. Agencies may have regulations that allow granting of monetary or non-monetary awards for volunteer service.

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

Privacy Act System of Records OPM/GOVT-1 covers the collection of this information. This system of records was last published in the Federal Register on June 19, 2006, pages 35342-35347, Vol. 71. In addition, Privacy Act System of Records USDA/OP-1 covers Department of Agriculture records (Forest Service, et al); this system of records was last published in the Federal Register on January 28, 1998, page 4213, Vol. 63.

**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.**

There are no questions of a sensitive 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.**

Please refer to supplemental document entitled 0596-0080 2021 Volunteer Forms Burden Spreadsheet for respondent burden and cost estimates.

The respondent burden and cost estimates were compiled with information provided by the National Park Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Bureau of Reclamation, US Geological Survey, USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and US Fish and Wildlife Service.

The estimated number of annual respondents was calculated by the reported number of volunteers by these agencies in 2017.

The frequency of response was calculated by the form type. OF-301 are not collected from every volunteer. OF-301a are collected from every individual volunteer and every volunteer group, so the number of respondents represents the total number of volunteers and volunteer groups serving in a year. OF-301b are collected from volunteer groups for a particular group project or volunteer event; the number was reached by averaging the number of volunteer events per group per year.

The estimated hourly wage estimate is from the Independent Sector ([http://www.independentsector.org/volunteer\\_time](http://www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time)) which establishes the average national value of a contributed volunteer hour in the United States. The current value (for 2021) is \$28.54 per hour.

**Record-keeping burden:**

There is no record-keeping burden placed upon respondents in relation to this Information Collection.

**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 and start-up cost component, nor are there 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. The response to this question covers the actual costs the agency will incur as a result of implementing the information collection. The estimate should cover the entire life cycle of the collection and include costs, if applicable, for:**

- **Employee labor and materials for developing, printing, storing forms**
  - **Employee labor and materials for developing computer systems, screens, or reports to support the collection**
  - **Employee travel costs**
  - **Cost of contractor services or other reimbursements to individuals or organizations assisting in the collection of information**
  - **Employee labor and materials for collecting the information**
  - **Employee labor and materials for analyzing, evaluating, summarizing, and/or reporting on the collected information**
- Preparation of work plans
  - Employee labor (collection, review, and processing of applications and other forms associated with this information collection)

**Table 3. Cost to Government**

<b>ACTION ITEM</b>	<b>PERSONNEL</b>	<b>GS LEVEL</b>	<b>HOURLY RATE*</b>	<b>HOURS</b>	<b>SALARY/COST</b>
Employee labor for printing and storing the forms	Technician	7	\$28.54	4,638	\$132,168
Employee labor, travel, and materials for collecting the information	Technician	7	\$28.54	32,588	\$930,061
Employee labor for evaluating the collected information	Technician	7	\$28.54	59,913	\$1,709,917
Cost of printing and storing of 726,974 forms at \$.20					\$145,395

ACTION ITEM	PERSONNEL	GS LEVEL	HOURLY RATE*	HOURS	SALARY/COST
per form					
<b>Total cost to government</b>					\$2,917,541

\* Hourly rate of \$18.05 from Office of Personnel Management 2021 Pay Tables, for GS-7/Step 1 found at: [https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/pdf/2021/GS\\_h.pdf](https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/pdf/2021/GS_h.pdf) plus \$5.95 cost per hour based 33% in accordance with OMB Memorandum M-08 13.

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

Not applicable.

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

Other than inclusion in general agency reports, there were no plans for publishing or tabulation of volunteer information.

**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.**

To avoid possible confusion and to fully promote the volunteer participation by avoiding situations where the volunteer forms may appear to be expired, the Agency requests that we not display the expiration date on the information collection instruments.

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

There are no exceptions to the certification statement. The agency is able to certify that the collection of information encompassed by this request complies with 5 CFR 1320.