

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
Assessing Public Preferences and Values to Support Coastal and Marine Management
OMB Control No. 0648-NERR

Abstract

This is a request for a new information collection, which will include focus groups and pre-test to help guide revisions necessary to the survey instrument. The National Ocean Service (NOS) proposes to collect data on the opinions, values, attitudes, and behaviors of residents local to National Estuarine Research Reserves (NERRs). This information will be used by NOAA and others to understand human pressures on NERRs, potential barriers to access for underserved communities, and preferences related to management actions. Up-to-date socio-economic data is needed to support the individual NERR sites' conservation and management goals, to strengthen and improve resource management decision-making, to increase capacity, improve access of federally funded management units to underserved communities, and to extend education and outreach efforts. NOAA has a vested interest in this research as it relates to the resilience, well-being, and sustainability of coastal communities.

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.

This request is for a new information collection to directly support decision-makers with the National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR). The purpose of this information collection is to obtain data on the opinions, values, attitudes, and behaviors of visitors to NOS-special places, as well as residents from surrounding areas. The initial surveys will be conducted for the Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in Virginia (CBNERR-VA), Weeks Bay NERR (WBNERR), and Grand Bay NERR (GNDNERR). Specifically, a survey focused on outdoor recreation will be conducted for CBNERR-VA (Coastal VA - Outdoor Recreation) and for WBNERR (Gulf - Outdoor Recreation), and a survey focused on prescribed fires will be conducted for WBNERR and GNDNERR (Gulf - Prescribed Fires). These surveys will be repeated regularly in other NERRs based on information needs and budget.

The NERRS is a federal-state partnership program for the stewardship, education, and research of unique estuarine sites. This data collection supports the NERRS' vision of establishing healthy estuaries and coastal watersheds where human and ecological communities thrive. The NERRS has identified five priority research areas, including a focus on social science and economic processes within each NERR site. However, limited data exists characterizing stakeholder activities, attitudes, knowledge, and preferences, including their spatial aspects. Gathering such data is essential for effective management of stakeholder groups, regulatory proposals, and resource management decisions.

Designated in 1986, WBNERR is located along the eastern shore of Mobile Bay in Baldwin County, Alabama. CBNERR-VA, designated in 1991, comprises four reserve sites within the York River in the southern Chesapeake Bay subregion. Finally, GNDNERR was established in 1999 and is located in the Grand Bay Savannah Complex

along the Mississippi-Alabama state line in Jackson County, Mississippi. All three NERRS prioritize public access and responsible use of resources to protect ecosystems, identifying public sites, minimizing conflicts, and evaluating visitor use. Therefore, information is needed on who uses these NERR sites, their motivations, management preferences, and why some do not visit. This data supports conservation and management goals, strengthens decision-making, increases capacity, and extends education and outreach. It is also required by NOAA to meet objectives related to ocean and coastal planning and management. The data benefits state and local officials as well.

NOAA's mission is to provide science, service and stewardship for, among other activities, management of the nation's oceans and coasts. NOAA supports "comprehensive ocean and coastal planning and management" in order to facilitate use of oceans and coasts, while also ensuring "continued access to coastal areas, sustained ecosystems, maintained cultural heritage, and limited cumulative impacts."¹ NOAA is subject to and supports mandates of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) (16 U.S.C. § 1452 (303)(2)(D)), which encourages the wise use of coastal resources, including energy activity. The CZMA also encourages the inclusion and participation of the public in carrying out the tenets of the act (16 U.S.C. § 1452 (303)(4)). The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (40 C.F.R. § 1502.6) mandates federal agencies to use social science data to assess the impacts of federal actions on the human environment. Consequently, up-to-date sociological data is needed to support federal agency obligations under each of these acts.

Finally, NOAA is responding to Executive Orders 13707 and 13985. Executive Order 13707, Using Behavioral Science Insights to Better Serve the American People, requests federal agencies to, among other actions: "identify policies, programs, and operations where applying behavioral science insights may yield substantial improvements in public welfare, program outcomes, and program cost effectiveness" and "develop strategies for applying behavioral science insights to programs and, where possible, rigorously test and evaluate the impact of these insights."² Executive Order 13985, On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government, requires the federal government to allocate resources "in a manner that increases investment in underserved communities, as well as individuals from those communities."³

This is a request for a new information collection, which will include focus groups and pre-test to help guide revisions necessary to the survey instrument. The proposed data collection involves surveying randomly selected residents (aged 18 years and older) from households in counties surrounding the NERRs.

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.

i. How will this information be used?

Information collected during the focus groups and pretest will be used to ensure the quality of the data and to

1 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office of Program Planning and Integration. NOAA's Next-Generation Strategic Plan. December 2010, 48 p.p. Available online at: http://www.ppi.noaa.gov/wp-content/uploads/NOAA_NGSP.pdf.

2 Executive Order for Using Behavioral Science Insights to Better Serve the American People. 9 Sept 15. Available online at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/09/15/executive-order-using-behavioral-science-insights-better-serve-american>.

3 Executive Order On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government. 20 Jan 2021. Available online at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/20/executive-order-advancing-racial-equity-and-support-for-underserved-communities-through-the-federal-government/>.

test protocol for workflow needed in the full-scale information collection.

The final data collection will provide information on opinions, values, attitudes, and behaviors of residents local to National Estuarine Research Reserves (NERRs). Data are required to understand human pressures on NERRs, potential preferences and barriers to access for underserved communities, and preferences related to management actions.

ii. Who will use this information?

The primary users of this information are natural resource managers from the NERRS, including the Coastal Training Coordinator, the Education Coordinator, the Stewardship Coordinator and the Research Coordinator. The data collected and derived products have the potential for use by regional and local natural resource managers and policy-makers, as well as NOAA.

iii. How frequently will this information be used?

This is an ongoing information collection. Information for each NERR will be used following each data collection. Data will be collected every one to two years pending funding.

iv. For what purpose will the information be used?

Information will be used by resource managers in the selected NERR sites to better understand the nature of visitor use patterns to inform management decisions, such as management plans or programs, outreach/education activities, or policies related to the management of the NERR sites.

v. Summary of Survey Questions

There are three modules: outdoor recreation, prescribed fires, and sociodemographic information. The first focuses on experiences, motivations, and barriers related to outdoor recreation. These questions will be included on the Coastal VA - Outdoor Recreation and Gulf - Outdoor Recreation surveys. The second focuses on opinions related to prescribed fires, a management technique used along the Alabama and Mississippi coasts. These questions will be included on the Gulf - Prescribed Fires survey. The third focuses on socio-demographic information of the respondent and their household. These questions will be included in all three surveys. There is also a non-response follow-up survey, which primarily contains a small subset of questions from these modules. Below are summaries and justifications for questions included in the three modules (see Appendix A for the full list of survey questions).

Outdoor Recreation

- *Looking at the map above, did you take any trips to [study area] for outdoor recreation in 2023?*

This question asks if respondents have visited the study area for outdoor recreation in the last 12 months. If the respondent has not, then they will be asked to skip to a later section of the survey.

- *Approximately, how many trips did you take to [study area] for outdoor recreation in 2023?*
- *When was the last time you took a trip to [study area] for outdoor recreation?*
- *Including yourself, how many people were in your personal group on this trip?*
- *Including yourself, how many of these people were at least 18 years old?*
- *Approximately, how much time did you spend specifically within [study area] during this trip?*

These questions ask respondents how many trips they took to the study area in the last year, when their last trip took place, their group size for their last trip, and the amount of time they spent within the study area.

One of the main objectives of this research is to estimate the economic value of coastal and marine restoration sites by using a travel cost method. This method estimates the number of trips an average person takes to a specific recreation site as a function of average trip expenditure, quality of recreation experience at the site (see visitor experience quality module), and other recreation and demographic characteristics of the respondents (Johnston et al., 2002; Starbuck et al., 2006). Thus, the number of trips respondents took to the study area in the last 12 months is required for this research. In addition, this research also aims to examine recreation users' importance and performance of experience associated with various site attributes and amenities. Research has suggested that respondent's frequency of visit to the site is one of the important factors to consider in correcting biases associated with analysis of importance and performance of site characteristics and amenities (Gill et al., 2010). Information about the tentative date respondent took a trip to the study area and amount of time spent within the study area helps researchers with the validation of expenditure data, such as expenses on gas and calculate relative share of study area on total trip expenses.

Research indicates that adults and youths prefer park amenities differently (Baran et al., 2014) and youth from urban areas prefer park amenities differently than youths from rural areas (Roemmich et al., 2018). Thus, visitors with accompanying children or youths may prefer or use sites and amenities within the park differently than adult only visitors. Thus, it is important to parse whether recreation preferences, trip frequency, and expenses vary by adult-children composition of recreation user groups. Information from this question is also important for research partners to understand who visits their park and what amenities they would prefer. Asking visitor groups' age or adult-children ratio is common in other federal visitor surveys. For instance, Forest Service's National Visitor Use Monitoring, asks respondents to report the age of up to four persons in their group. This information will also allow researchers to calibrate visitation patterns derived from anonymous cell phone data.

Given the lack of similar visitor surveys in the past from both of the study areas (Coastal Virginia and Gulf of Mexico), the questions about number of trips taken to the study area in the last 12 months and time spent within the study area during the last trip will be open ended for the pilot survey. This will allow the researchers to identify the range of these information, which will be used to create binned categories of responses for these questions for the final full sample survey (Bryman 2016). Binned categories in the final survey are expected to result in lower burden to the respondents and lower number of missing values (Reja et al. 2003).

- *How important was visiting [study area] when deciding to take this trip?*

This question determines the relative importance of the study area on the overall trip. A fundamental assumption of the travel cost model is that each trip involves visiting only one site (Haspel and Johnson, 1982). Including multiple sites in a single trip can lead to an overestimation of the value of each site. Common approaches are to 1) distribute the total travel cost based on the proportion of time at each site (Martínez-Espiñeira & Amoako-Tuffour, 2009; Fleming and Cook, 2008), 2) distribute the consumer

surplus estimates based on the proportion of time at each site (Clough and Meister, 1991) and 3) remove multipurpose trips.

- *Did you or your personal group visit any of the following [locations] on this trip?*

This question asks respondents to indicate which areas within the study area they visited while on their most recent trip. This information will be used to either calibrate anonymous cell phone data or, in the absence of this data, will provide insight into key areas of visitation.

- *Did you participate in any of the following activities within [study area] during this trip?*

This question asks respondents to indicate which outdoor recreation activities they participated during their most recent trip to the study area. Recreation visitors could participate in various activities, and activities they participate in could determine how much time they spend in outdoor recreation activities (Grooms et al., 2020). As coastal and marine environments could offer different sets of opportunities for visitors compared to land-based forest and recreation areas, this information along with information of which location respondents visited in the study area will inform researchers about most participated activities and key areas these activities occur for calibration of human mobility data. This information is also useful for park managers to prioritize their budget for amenities that are important for their visitors.

- *Did you or your personal group use any of the following forms of transportation to reach your primary destination on this trip?*

This question asks respondents to indicate which forms of transportation they used to reach the study area. This information will be used in two ways. First, a lack of transportation is a barrier of interest (see outdoor recreation barriers module), so this information will inform researchers on how visitors are accessing the study area. Second, this information will be used to determine travel routes, and therefore travel distance and time, for visitors. The software used to determine travel routes, distances, and time allows for parameter settings related to the form of transportation, which can affect the estimated measure of each of these outputs.

- *Did you purchase a Virginia State Park annual pass in the last 12 months? [Coastal VA only]*
- *How much did you spend on your Virginia State Park annual pass in the last 12 months? [Coastal VA only]*
- *Did you purchase a [study area state] hunting or fishing license in the last 12 months?*
- *How much did you spend on your [study area stat] hunting or fishing license(s) in the last 12 months?*
- *How much did your personal group spend on the following items on this trip? Please mark \$0 if no money was spent on an item.*

These questions ask respondents how much was spent on their most recent trip to the study area. Expenditure items include access (e.g., parking, entrance fees), transportation (e.g., gas, tolls), lodging, and activity related expenses (e.g., bait and tackle, equipment rental fees, and tour or guide fees). Annual expenses on the state park annual pass and the hunting or fishing license will be divided by the number of trips taken by respondents in the last 12 months to calculate per trip expense. This

information will be used to develop estimates for total trip expenditures per person, one of the key information needed for the travel cost model.

- *When participating in water-based activities, such as swimming, kayaking, or boating, did you bring a mobile device, such as a smartphone, tablet, or smartwatch, with you?*
- *When participating in land-based activities, did you bring a mobile device, such as a smartphone, tablet, or smartwatch, with you?*
- *If you brought a mobile device and kept it on, did you use it for any of the following reasons?*

These questions ask if respondents normally bring a mobile device and if they normally leave it on or off when recreating in a coastal and marine area. According to the 2017 Virginia Outdoor Demand Survey, 81.5% of respondents used a smartphone during outdoor recreation activities (Ellis et al., 2017). Similarly, in a study of recreational anglers in the Gulf of Mexico, 84% of the respondents indicated they use mobile apps before, during, or after a fishing trip (Midway et al., 2020). This information will be used to evaluate the representativeness of anonymous cell phone data, which does not contain socio-demographic information.

- *How important to you were the following features when deciding to take this trip?*
- *Looking at this same list of features, how satisfied were you with the quality of each of the following features on this trip?*

These questions ask respondents to indicate how important various features are to them when visiting a coastal and marine area for outdoor recreation, and how satisfied they were with these features on their most recent trip. The features provided in the survey were modified from motivations provided in various State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans (SCORP) (e.g., Rushing et al., 2021; Strickler et al., 2018).

Similar to habitat suitability indices used in wildlife research (Kliskey et al., 1999), recreation terrain suitability index (RTSI) mapping aims to identify specific terrain features or infrastructure that facilitate recreation experiences (Kliskey, 2000). Knowledge about the preferences of different recreation user groups and their spatial distribution will enable stakeholders to adopt their agenda at different levels (e.g., landscape management, spatial planning, development of recreational facilities) in order to meet recreational users' demands and prevent the occurrence of potential conflicts (Bell et al., 2007).

- *Do you intend to visit [study area] for outdoor recreation in the future?*
- *Which of the following are reasons why you may not visit [study area] for outdoor recreation in the next 12 months?*

These questions ask respondents to indicate potential reasons they may not visit the study area in the next 12 months. This information will be used to understand barriers to the study area. Outdoor visitation to federally managed outdoor recreation areas has typically been dominated by Caucasian (traditional) visitors in the U.S (Winter et al., 2020; Ghimire et al., 2016; Krymkowski et al., 2014; Flores et al., 2018; Johnson et al., 2007). As the U.S. population becomes more ethnically and racially diverse, however, it is vital that land managers are aware and understand the various barriers facing these possible non-traditional visitors. Understanding constraints to outdoor recreation participation among different segments of society can provide important information to managers as well as enhance their

ability to attract and tailor their sites to increasingly diverse populations and their respective preferences. The potential barriers provided in the survey were modified from those provided in various State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans (SCORP) (e.g., Rushing et al., 2021; Strickler et al., 2018).

Prescribed Fires

- *Before today, had you heard about prescribed fires within the Gulf Coast region of Alabama and Mississippi?*
- *Have you had any of the following experiences with prescribed fires within the Gulf Coast region of Alabama and Mississippi within the last five years?*

These questions ask respondents whether they had heard of prescribed fires and what types of experience they had with the prescribed fires. Research suggests that awareness and experience with prescribed fires are associated with respondents' support of prescribed fires (Wu et al., 2022). The information collected from these questions will allow researchers to understand awareness and experience of the respondents about prescribed fires, and how awareness and experience relate with prescribed fires beliefs, concern, and support intention.

- *In general, how knowledgeable do you feel about prescribed fires?*

These questions ask respondents about their self-assessed knowledge about this forest management technique.

Research suggests that knowledge is one of the most important factors determining public support for prescribed burning (Blanchard and Ryan, 2003; McCaffrey, 2009). For instance, people who have some knowledge of prescribed burning are less likely to be concerned about negative effects of fires on aesthetics, air quality, and wildlife and their habitat (McCaffrey, 2009). Public perceptions and acceptance related to prescribed fires vary significantly across regions (Fried et al., 2006), between urban and rural residents (Rosen et al., 2022), and between local residents and visitors (Jacobson et al., 2001; Thapa et al., 2008). For instance, Fried et al. (2006) conducted a survey of residents from California, Michigan, and Florida and found significant differences in fire related awareness, attitudes, and acceptance across the regions. However, research reports that focused on the publics' knowledge of the ecological importance of fire and fire management are significantly fewer from the southern United States in comparison to the western United States (Toman et al., 2013).

The information collected from these questions will allow researchers to assess how their self-assessed knowledge relates to concerns about and support for prescribed fires in the study area.

- *Given what you currently know about prescribed fires, what best describes your opinion about prescribed fires within the Gulf Coast region of Alabama and Mississippi?*
- *Even if you have not made up your mind, which way are you leaning?*

These questions ask whether respondents would support or oppose prescribed fires in the study area. Those who have formed an opinion will be identified as having "firm opinions," whereas those who have not made up their minds will be identified as "leaners." (Firestone et al., 2007). This information along with awareness, beliefs, concerns, and trusts, allow the researchers to examine the inter-connected relationships among these variables. The information will be crucial for land agencies and local policy makers to improve community awareness and acceptance of prescribed fires.

- *Prescribed fires are one strategy to achieve management outcomes on public lands. How important are the following management outcomes to you?*
- *Thinking about the same list and given what you currently know about prescribed fires, how effective do you think prescribed fires are at achieving these management outcomes?*
- *Given what you currently know about prescribed fires, how would you rate your concern about the following potential effects?*

These questions measure respondents' perceived importance of various forest management goals, whether they believe prescribed fires will help achieve these management goals and how concerned they are about the risks.

Prescribed burning is a long known and practiced forest management tool that is used to achieve various management goals, such as fuel reduction, wildlife habitat improvement, and enhancement of forest appearance and access (USDA Forest Service, 2018). However, there are also some risks associated with prescribed burning, such as fire being escaped and negative effects on air quality (Rosen et al., 2022; USDA Forest Service, 2018). Research suggests that whether public support the application of prescribed burning largely depends upon how they view its benefits and risks to them (Ascher et al., 2012). For instance, a study conducted in Texas has shown that people who believed that prescribed fire creates wildlife habitat and other positive outcomes were more supportive of prescribed burning than others (Rideout et al., 2003). However, research has also shown that perceived benefits and risks of prescribed burning largely vary between rural and urban residents and also between local residents and visitors. For instance, a study conducted in Flint Hills, Kansas found that rural residents were primarily concerned about prescribed burning being out of control whereas urban residents were more concerned about the smoke exposure (Rosen et al., 2022). Similarly, Jacobson et al. (2001) surveyed residents living in counties that experienced severe wildfire events in Florida, and found that respondents were highly knowledgeable about the role of prescribed burning in improving forest health and creating wildlife habitat (Jacobson et al., 2001). In contrast, Thapa et al. (2008) found only 25% of the visitors to natural areas in Florida supported those natural areas should be burned periodically. The information collected via these questions allow researchers to examine how residents and visitors view prescribed burning and how their perceptions of risks and benefits are associated with their support intention for application prescribed burning in the study area.

- *Thinking about the same list again, how much do you trust that managers within the Gulf Coast region of Alabama and Mississippi are doing their best to achieve these management outcomes?*
- *Thinking about the same list, how much do you trust that managers within the Gulf Coast region of Alabama and Mississippi are doing their best to minimize the potential effects of prescribed fires?*
- *Do you believe enough information is provided to residents about prescribed fires within the Gulf Coast region of Alabama and Mississippi?*
- *How timely do you believe information is provided to residents about prescribed fires within the Gulf Coast region of Alabama and Mississippi?*

These questions ask respondents how much they trust that public land managers are doing their best to achieve public land management outcomes and minimize the negative impacts of prescribed fires, and whether they believe land managers are providing them enough and timely information related to prescribed fires. Research suggests that trust to the land management agency is as equally important as knowledge, beliefs, and concerns in determining the public's acceptance and support for prescribed fires (McCaffrey, 2009; Nelson et al., 2004; Dupéy and Smith, 2018; Vaske et al., 2007; Wu et al., 2022). For instance, most respondents from a sample of homeowners from Minnesota and Florida indicated prescribed fires as acceptable if burns were conducted by professionals who understand the local ecology and fire behavior (Nelson et al., 2004). Similarly, Vaske et al., (2007), from a sample of Colorado residents living in the wildland-urban interface, found residents who trust the public land agency to provide information related to prescribed fires were more likely to have positive attitudes about prescribed fires. Thus, the information collected from these questions will allow the researchers to examine how much residents of study areas trust the local public land agencies and prescribed fire professionals and how that relates to their support of prescribed burning.

Sociodemographic Information

- *Are you (select all that apply)*
- *In what year were you born?*
- *Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?*
- *What is your race? Select all that apply.*
- *How well do you read and speak English?*
- *What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?*
- *Do you own or rent this residence (where this survey was mailed to)?*
- *Is this your primary residence?*
- *How many people, including yourself, live in your household?*
- *How many of these people are at least 18 years old?*
- *How long have you been a resident of your current town?*
- *How long have you been a resident of your current state?*
- *Which best describes your current employment status?*
- *Which category best represents your annual household income (before taxes) in 20XX?*

These questions collect social, demographic, and household information, which will be used to develop weights and estimate the influence of these variables on responses. Population data will be obtained from the 2021 5-Year American Community Survey.

vi. Compliance with Information Quality Guidelines

It is anticipated that the information collected will be disseminated to the public or used to support publicly disseminated information. NOAA National Ocean Service, National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science 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. 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 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.

Survey respondents will be given the option to complete the survey online. Advantages of an online survey for the federal government include ease of data gathering, minimal costs, and automation in data input and handling. Disadvantages include the absence of an interviewer and inability to reach challenging populations. According to the 2021 ACS⁴, an estimated 91.4% ($\pm 1.5\%$) of the households in York County, Virginia, 84.6% ($\pm 1.5\%$) of the households in Mobile County, Alabama, 88.2% ($\pm 1.0\%$) of the households in Baldwin County, Alabama, 78.0% ($\pm 0.4\%$) of the households in Jackson County, Mississippi, and 86.3% ($\pm 0.9\%$) of the households in Escambia County, Florida had a broadband internet subscription (US Census Bureau, 2021). As such, the researchers believe that online administration will be a satisfactory method for surveying residents from these counties (see Part B, Section 3 for more information on maximizing response rates and dealing with nonresponse.)

With the assistance of a contract vendor having expertise in online survey administration, the survey administration tool will be developed to minimize burden for respondents and response bias, while maximizing response rate and data quality, based on best practices for online survey research. There will be an option available for respondents to complete the survey via paper (mail-back) or to request an alternative means for completing the survey.

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 Question 2

Researchers reviewed scholarship and consulted with local partners to identify any duplication of effort. There have been very few recreation studies based in the Chesapeake Bay region or Gulf of Mexico region within the last 20 years. For example, Cottrell (2002) and Lipton (2004) conducted surveys of boaters in the Chesapeake Bay to understand responsible environmental behaviors and to value water quality improvements, respectively. More recently, Kane et al. (2021) used webcam and unnamed aerial vehicle imagery to assess spatial and

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Personal
Use
Personal
Character

temporal beachgoer behaviors in Virginia Beach to understand the impacts of COVID-19, and Usher (2021) conducted an online survey of surfers in Virginia and North Carolina to understand perceptions of beach nourishment. Feagin et al. (2014) used stated preference and replacement cost approaches to determine the recreational value of beaches in Texas. Primary data collections have also been used in the application of travel cost methods in the region. Whitehead et al. (2018) used travel cost methods to estimate the losses in recreational value (focused on recreational fishing) from the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill.

Likewise, there are limited studies based on the public perceptions of fire in the Gulf of Mexico. For example, Jacobson et al. (2001) surveyed rural and suburban Florida residents; Rideout et al. (2003) surveyed recreational area visitors in eastern Texas; Fried et al. (2006) surveyed residents from California, Michigan, and Florida; Thapa et al. (2008) surveyed Florida tourists; and Jarrett et al. (2009) surveyed non-industrial private forest land owners from various states in the Southern United States.

Therefore, according to our literature review and discussions with local partners, our survey is not a duplication of effort. However, each of these studies have been used to inform the development of the proposed survey instrument, including ecosystem service selection and scenario development. We have also formed partnerships with ongoing and planned research efforts so that we can leverage resources and provide complementary information.

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

This collection involves residents. It does not involve small businesses or other small entities.

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 this data collection is not conducted, relevant agencies will not have the information required to fulfill evaluative requirements outlined by NEPA, CZMA, and Executive Orders 13707 and 13985. Further, the absence of updated socio-economic information would limit the site's capacity to assess the social impacts of management proposals and evaluate the effectiveness of existing regulations.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

Data collection will be consistent with OMB guidelines.

8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publications 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.

A Federal Register Notice published on August 25, 2023 (87 FR 59781) solicited public comments.

i. *Summary of Comments Received*

No comments received.

Consultation

As a part of project scoping and development, individuals from the following institutions were consulted for their views on the data collection in terms of priority elements; survey design and proposed implementation; and possible duplication of research effort or collaborative opportunities:

- Gulf study: WBNERR, GNDNERR, South Alabama Land Trust, Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant, Alabama Cooperative Extension System, and the Mississippi State University Coastal Marine Extension Program.
- Coastal Virginia study: CBNERR-VA, Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, Middle Peninsula Planning Access Authority, PlanRVA, Crater Planning District Commissions, Hampton Roads Planning District Commission, Gloucester County Parks and Rec, York County Parks, Rec, and Tourism, and several local, state, and national parks, including Machicomoco State Park, York River State Park, Colonial National Park, Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, New Quarter Park, Back Creek Park, and Gloucester Point Beach Park.

From these individuals, we received review relative to: survey length; appropriate mode of survey administration (i.e., mail-back versus online administration); problematic survey items in terms of utility, clarity, etc.; item order on the survey instrument; item format and presentation; and opportunities to leverage this survey with previous or existing research efforts. Feedback from these consultations was used to better understand, anecdotally, public sentiment regarding the issues as well as the type of data already available on relevant topics, along with data needs from the perspective of local and regional agencies. Information from these consultations was used during project scoping and development and to revise and improve the survey instrument.

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

A \$2 incentive will be provided with a follow-up letter for those who do not complete the survey after initial contact. A substantial literature has shown that monetary pre-incentives (as opposed to promises of money or gifts following participation) are effective at increasing overall response rates. We anticipate this incentive will increase response rates by at least 10%. A more detailed review of the literature and justification for the inclusion of the incentive is contained in Question 3 of Part B.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy. If the collection requires a systems of records notice (SORN) or privacy impact assessment (PIA), those should be cited and described here.

Information gathered from respondents will remain confidential. Access to any raw data collected will be restricted to project managers and lead analysts. In final datasets and products that are released, data provided by individual respondents will remain confidential and will be aggregated where appropriate to ensure confidentiality.

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 questions of a sensitive nature will be asked during this data collection

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information.

The table below provides an estimate of burden hours by data collection phase (see Part B.1 for more details). We estimate a maximum of 96 focus group members and for each focus group to take up to an hour. We estimate a maximum of 2,709 respondents for the pre-test and 3,573 respondents for the full survey implementation and for each survey to take approximately 12 minutes, including time for reading the instructions, reviewing the questions, and completing the survey instrument. These estimates are based on the type of questions asked, length of the survey instrument, and the researchers' experience conducting similar surveys.

Information Collection	Type of Respondent	# of Respondents/year (a)	Annual # of Responses / Respondent (b)	Annual # of Responses (c) = (a) x (b)	Burden Hrs / Response (d)	Annual Burden Hrs (e) = (c) x (d)	Hourly Wage Rate (f)	Total Annual Wage Burden Costs (g) = (e) x (f)
Coastal VA Focus Groups	Individuals	48	1	48	1	48	31.54	1513.92
Gulf Focus Groups	Individuals	48	1	48	1	48	24.34	1168.32
Coastal VA Pretest	Individuals	1,182	1	1,182	12 min	236.40	31.54	7456.06
Gulf - Outdoor Recreation Pretest	Individuals	1,014	1	1,014	12 min	202.80	24.34	4936.15
Gulf - Prescribed Fires Pretest	Individuals	513	1	513	12 min	102.60	24.34	2497.28
Coastal VA Full Implementation	Individuals	1716	1	1,716	12 min	343.20	31.54	10824.53
Gulf - Outdoor Recreation Full Implementation	Individuals	1344	1	1,344	12 min	268.80	24.34	6542.59
Gulf - Prescribed Fires Full Implementation	Individuals	513	1	513	12 min	102.60	24.34	2497.28
Totals				6,378		1,352.40		\$37,436.14

*The mean average for All Professions on the BLS 2020 National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates was used in order to encompass the broad range of occupations in the respondent pool. https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm#00-0000

13. Provide an estimate for 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 already reflected on the burden worksheet).

There are no capital costs or operating and maintenance costs associated with this information collection. No additional cost burden will be incurred by respondents beyond response time.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses (such as equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.

Cost Descriptions	Grade/Step	Loaded Salary /Cost	% of Effort	Fringe (if Applicable)	Total Cost to Government
Federal Positions	ZA-IV	\$238,290	25%-		59,572.50
Contractor Cost					
Survey Vendor		400,000	N/A		400,000 \$133,333 annualized
Contractor Positions		75,000			75,000
Travel					
Other Costs:					
TOTAL					267,905.50

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in ROCIS.

This is a request for a new, ongoing data collection.

16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.

Data will be collected by a contract vendor and analyzed by the NOAA research team. Final products will be determined based on partner and stakeholder needs. Findings may be presented at professional conferences and published in peer reviewed journals.

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.

The agency plans to display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection on all instruments.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions."

The agency certifies compliance with [5 CFR 1320.9](#) and the related provisions of [5 CFR 1320.8\(b\)\(3\)](#).