ePermits Applicant and Permittee Interview Guide

The following questions are intended to be used as a guide for semi-structured interviews with applicants and permittees who agree to be part of ePermits social science research. The goal of this research is to obtain insights into the perspective of external users of ePermits and learn about the strengths and weaknesses of the system.

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in an interview with us about your experience using ePermits. My name is Levi Novey and I am a social scientist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and a member of the ePermits team. I would also like for my colleagues to introduce themselves.

[Other staff members present introduce themselves]

Thanks everyone. To give you an overview before we start, our goal for today is to talk to you and ask some questions about your ePermits experience. We will use your feedback and insights to help us understand how the system is meeting your needs and how we can improve your experience when applying for and receiving permits from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This research has been approved by the United States Office of Management and Budget under OMB Control No. 1090-0012, which expires on 2/28/2027. You may submit comments on any aspect of this information collection to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 5275 Leesburg Pike, MS PRB (JAO/3W), Falls Church, VA 22041-3803, or via email at Info_Coll@fws.gov.

This interview is expected to take approximately 1 hour. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you may end this interview at any time. We plan to record our interview with you today, so that we can easily develop a transcript that will better enable us to analyze your responses and aggregate them with additional interview data we collect. No personally identifiable information will be associated with your responses if we later incorporate them into our reporting. Please also know that participating in this interview will not have any impact on the evaluation or processing time of any permit applications you or your organization submit. Do you have any questions before we begin? Do you consent to us recording the interview? Thank you. I have clicked record and we will now begin.

1. How long have you or your company or organization been applying for permits? What kinds of permits are you or your business seeking? What is your role in the process?

2. Please tell us about the last time you submitted an application.

   o Can you walk us through how you prepared the application and additional documentation you needed before submitting it?

   o How long did it take you?

3. To what extent do you think permits from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service support conservation?

4. In general, how would you rate your level of satisfaction with the ePermits system? Low, Medium, or High? Why do you rate it that way?

5. Can you talk about the positives of the system?

6. Have you had any challenges with the system? If yes, please tell us about them.

7. What kinds of improvements would be most useful to you?

8. Is there anything else you would want to be able to see or do with your account?

9. Do you use the online payment function? If no, why not? What are the barriers?

10. Have you used the new support request feature to contact our support team? If yes, what did you contact them about? How was your experience?

11. Have you messaged your permit processor within ePermits? If yes, how was your experience?

12. What kind of reminders would you want the system to send you?

13. As far as guidance, how easy or hard is it for you to find the information you need?

14. What kind of help resources would you like to see added to the system?

15. Do you prefer videos or written guides?

16. Is there anything else on your mind that you want to tell us?