

Supporting Statement B for OMB 0596-0243

Generic Information Collection for Surveys, Interviews, and Focus Groups on Non-timber Forest Products

Note: This is a request for renewal of the Forest Service Generic Information Collection for Surveys, Interviews, and Focus Groups on Non-Timber Forest Products (OMB # 0596-0243). There have been no substantive changes to Supporting Statement B.

B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods

- 1. Describe (including a numerical estimate) the potential respondent universe and any sampling or other respondent selection method to be used. Data on the number of entities (e.g., establishments, State and local government units, households, or persons) in the universe covered by the collection and in the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular form for the universe as a whole and for each of the strata in the proposed sample. Indicate expected response rates for the collection as a whole. If the collection had been conducted previously, include the actual response rate achieved during the last collection.**

The universe of potential respondents is the population of non-timber forest products gatherers in the United States plus land managers, landowners, landscape designers, and others who work on or have an interest in lands in the United States with non-timber forest products. Non-timber forest products gatherers include those who plan specific outings in order to collect non-timber forest products (e.g., mushrooms, berries) whether as a purposeful activity or opportunistically while doing other outdoor recreation activities. Previous research suggests that this may include up to 20 percent of the U.S. population. The actual number of people who collect non-timber forest products in any location is not known since much of this activity takes place privately.

Both purposive and probabilistic samples will be employed for this information collection. Purposive sampling will be used to reach non-timber forest products gatherers in a targeted geographic location. Recruiting and consultations with Tribal governments and cultural and community organizations, as appropriate, will help identify local groups that engage in non-timber forest products gathering. Separate investigations will identify individual and organizational landowners, land managers, landscape designers, and others with an interest or stake in non-timber forest products. In some cases, all identified individuals with an interest in non-timber forest products will be approached to participate in the research.

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Probabilistic sampling will be used when there is a desire to survey a representative sample of a population. For example, the research team may conduct a systematic random sample of national forest managers, public park users, or self-identified non-timber forest products gatherers who use an online social media forum related to non-timber forest products gathering.

2. Describe the procedures for the collection of information including:

- **Statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection,**
- **Estimation procedure,**
- **Degree of accuracy needed for the purpose described in the justification,**

1) Unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures, and

2) Any use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden.

Due to the nature of the non-timber forest products gathering population, we plan to use both qualitative and quantitative information collection methods. Qualitative methods generally rely upon small samples and collect information in open-ended formats. In these studies, samples will be of sufficient size to achieve topic saturation for the purpose of informing decisions about the management of lands with non-timber forest products. In contrast, quantitative methods maximize the generalizability of findings by employing large randomly selected samples and collecting information using closed-ended response formats. Sample sizes for such collections are described below.

Three distinct data collection procedures may be employed under this package: focus groups, in-depth interviews, and/or surveys. Each proposed non-timber forest products information collection will develop a project-specific justification for OMB review and approval, which will outline the procedure for participant consent and provide the proposed interview or focus group guide or survey. Proposed statistical techniques will be described in that justification.

Surveys will be designed to take 25 minutes on average to complete. Interviews will be designed to take 60 minutes on average. Focus groups will be designed to take 90 minutes on average. Each data collection method has well established purposes; for example, focus groups generate new information through interaction among participants, while interviews can delve more deeply into a topic with a respondent. Each project-specific justification will describe the method(s) chosen and why.

Focus Groups

Focus groups are typically developed based on pre-determined characteristics. Participants may be recruited from a specific neighborhood, city, or region, or from

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the population living near a specific national forest or public park. In other cases, individuals who belong to a specific ethnic or cultural group may be recruited in order to collect information on non-timber forest products gathering by that cultural group.

Participants will be recruited by the research team for the study or by local organizations working with the research team and, in some cases, by professional organizations, commercial focus group companies, and through other sources. Eligibility criteria will be established for all focus groups, and potential participants will be screened in person, using a telephone interview, or with self-administered screening form.

Focus group discussions will occur under the direction of a trained moderator. The verbal discussion will be directed in part by the moderator and in part by the comments of other participants. The moderator will address participant consent and will discuss the proposed focus group guidelines and interview format. Focus groups will be conducted in the participants' native language, in some cases with the use of a third-party translator, when needed to collect high-quality data.

In-depth interviews

Participants will be identified and recruited in accordance with the specific purpose of the study. For example, in some cases individuals will be recruited based on their profession (such as public land manager or state environment department employees) and, in the case of non-timber forest products gatherers, based on their level of experience with non-timber forest products gathering.

Similar to the focus groups, participants will be recruited by the research team for the study or by local organizations working with the research team, and in some cases by professional organizations, or through other sources. Eligibility criteria will be established for all interview participants, and potential participants will be screened using a telephone interview or self-administered screening form.

Interviews will be conducted by trained interviewers, in-person or over the telephone or via other electronic format (e.g. FaceTime, Skype, Zoom, Teams). The conversation will be directed by the interviewer, but the content and focus will depend, in part, on the responses of the interviewee. Interviews will be conducted in the participants' native language, in some cases with the use of a third-party translator, when needed.

Surveys

Information collections may employ large-sample self-administered mail surveys, telephone surveys, in-person surveys, or electronic surveys. Ease of providing information will be a key factor in deciding among these options. Sampling frames will be created by a variety of methods that will include the use of commercial

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survey panels, publicly available property tax records, civic groups, or other means as appropriate for the target population. Potential participants will be randomly selected from the sampling frame and screened for appropriate demographics or other characteristics as indicated by the research purpose. Surveys will be translated from English to the language(s) of the target population if needed for ease of the respondent and to gather reliable data.

Estimation procedure

Data analysis will be conducted under the advice of a statistician/data analyst, as needed, and will involve estimation of descriptive statistics. Other methods (e.g., regression analysis, and various multivariate techniques) will be used as needed to answer specific questions, and as supported by the data (i.e., sufficient sample size to reliably use a given analytic technique). Linking collected data to existing data sources by non-personal identifiers (e.g., state, county, city name) will be used to increase the overall utility of a proposed data collection. When required, the planned sample sizes will also permit sub-analyses that may include analyzing knowledge, attitude, and perceptions among different populations. Corrections will be made for over/under sampling, non-response, non-standard distributions, etc.

Degree of Accuracy

We will assess the accuracy for studies under this information collection.

Unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures

Not applicable.

Any use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden.

Not applicable.

3. Describe methods to maximize response rates and to deal with issues of non-response. The accuracy and reliability of information collected must be shown to be adequate for intended uses. For collections based on sampling, a special justification must be provided for any collection that will not yield "reliable" data that can be generalized to the universe studied.

Following is a list of techniques we may use to maximize response rates:

- Using bilingual and bicultural interviewers and culturally and linguistically appropriate data collection instruments.
- A token of appreciation for a respondent's time and interest may be given.

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- Addressing data security, Indigenous data management, and anonymity with respondents.
- Minimizing the time for participation in the proposed non-timber forest products study.
- Informing respondents how much time the information collection will take so that they know what to expect.
- Utilizing deadlines, reminders, and follow-ups to remind respondents and encourage participation.
- Providing easy access to survey instruments, regardless of method. When appropriate for the audience being studied, research instruments will be designed to be easily accessed by electronic means, from a link in an e-mail or on a website.
- Potential respondents will be informed about the importance of these non-timber forest products studies and encouraged to participate through a variety of methods, including newsletters from professional associations or community organizations and letters of support from key individuals.
- When appropriate, a dedicated toll-free number and e-mail account will be established to allow potential respondents to confirm a research activity's legitimacy, ask questions, and voice concerns.
- Over-sampling if necessary to address potential for non-response.
- Analyze data by subgroup and compared to population universe to assess likelihood of nonresponse bias. (See for example, Groves. 2006. Nonresponse rates and nonresponse bias in household surveys. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 70.5, 646-675.)

4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken. Testing is encouraged as an effective means of refining collections of information to minimize burden and improve utility. Tests must be approved if they call for answers to identical questions from 10 or more respondents. A proposed test or set of tests may be submitted for approval separately or in combination with the main collection of information.

Before each Information Collection is implemented, instruments and method of data collection will be pilot tested, as appropriate. Lessons from the pilot test will be identified, and changes may be incorporated into the instrument and method. All pre-tests will involve no more than nine individuals unless we obtain OMB approval for pre-testing.

5. Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on statistical aspects of the design and the name of the agency unit,

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contractor(s), grantee(s), or other person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.

The following individual will be available to provide advice about the design of statistical and sampling procedures undertaken as part of these data collection activities:

Dr. Kristin Floress, Research Social Scientist, USDA Forest Service Northern Research Station. kristin.m.floress@usda.gov.

Also, as per a USDA requirement, the following statistician with the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, reviewed this generic information collection and did not request any changes:

Richard Hopper, Survey Statistician; National Agricultural Statistics Service Methodology Division, Standards and Survey Development Methodology Branch; United States Department of Agriculture; 202-720-2206; Richard.hopper@usda.gov