

SUPPORTING STATEMENT FOR PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT SUBMISSIONS FOR SURVEYS

A. Justification

1. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in the Department of the Interior is the agency primarily responsible for fish, wildlife, and plant conservation. The Service helps protect a healthy environment for people, fish and wildlife, and helps Americans conserve and enjoy the outdoors and our living treasures. To accomplish this mission, the Service employs around 7,500 of the country's best biologists, wildlife managers, engineers, realty specialists, educators, law enforcement agents, and others who work to save endangered and threatened species; conserve migratory birds and inland fisheries; restore habitats; provide expert conservation advice to other federal agencies, industry, private citizens, and foreign governments; and manage millions of acres of wildlife lands. The Service Directorate has made it a high priority to recruit and retain these valued employees. As part of an active career development program, the Service has decided to institute an Employee Exit Survey to collect feedback from former Service employees so that we may discover relevant issues that impact retention. If this survey were not used, there would be no way the Service could analyze the reasons for employee separation without fear of retribution. The collection of information is authorized under the Merit System Principles (5 U.S.C. 2301).
2. The information is to be collected by the Division of Personnel for the purpose of examining the range of reasons that the former employees have chosen to separate from the Service. It will be compiled to examine patterns of separations to create a more educated and focused retention plan and effort.
3. We do not expect to use automated, electronic, mechanic, or other means of automated information collection immediately, due to limited resources; however, we may automate the survey in the future to maximize efficiency in the collection and analyzation of the responses once the monetary and manpower resources are obligated.
4. There is no other component of the Service that will be collecting this information; therefore, we see no identifiable duplication request.
5. The collection of information will only affect the former employees, since they are the only ones asked to submit information. We do not anticipate any impacts to small businesses or small entities. Methods for minimizing burden included reducing the number of responses required. The questions are the minimum necessary to obtain the information.
6. Without completing the survey, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service could not complete the Career Development & Retention Plan that was requested by the Service Directorate. This plan and survey information will improve the Service's ability to retain a quality workforce.
7. There are no special circumstances –
 - requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly;
 - requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;
 - 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 to the universe of 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.

8. No comments were received as a result of the survey being published in the Federal Register, Volume 65, Number 206, Page 63617.

9. We will make no payment or gift to respondents.

10. Assurance of confidentiality is provided to respondents through the Privacy of Information Act. In addition, no personal identifiers are asked with the exception of demographic data, the respondents have the ability to provide as much or as little information they choose. They can decide whether or not the results that are specific to one office or division should be shared with their former manager.

11. We will ask questions on respondents demographic data. The purpose of this collection is to examine the demographic data of the separated employees, and test any demographic patterns that may arise from separated employees. The former employees are not forced to answer the questions if they choose not to.

12. We expect the information requested to vary depending upon the type of information requested from a particular respondent. The information will be collected one time after the employee has separated from the Service. The number of respondents will be approximately 400 per year. Different respondents may provide more or less information than others. Respondents will provide the data on a paper survey, responses are tested to last an average of 15 minutes per respondent. The response time may vary if they opt to provide additional comments. The total annual burden hours is 100 hours.

13. We estimate there is no annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers.

14. The Federal Government will pay 100% of the costs of the survey. It is estimated that the cost of each response will be \$5.30 per response. At 400 surveys, the total cost for the survey will be \$2120.00. This cost is figured to be postage and record keeping support staff. This will be an annual cost during the duration of approval.

15. There will be a program change of 100 hours, because this is a new survey.

16. We will prepare a report of the summary results to the internal Service Directorate within six months of the initial request for responses. After that collection we will continue to report on the results to the Service on an annual basis or as requested for information. We will use no complex analytical techniques. The compilation will show a summary percentage of responses to the questions, and verbatim statements of written responses displayed. The schedule is as follows:

November 15, 2001 - begin survey

February 15, 2002-Develop draft report

March 15, 2002-Submit final report to the Directorate

Annual reports of information to Service Directorate

17. We will display the expiration date for OMB approval.
18. We do not expect any exceptions to "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions".

B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods

1. A questionnaire (Employee Exit Follow-up Form) was designed with the purpose of determining if there are reasons that would explain why employees are leaving the Fish & Wildlife Service. The potential respondent universe consists of all separated permanent employees with the exception of those that were fired, died, RIF'd or were separated for cause. Based on two previous surveys, a response rate of 54 percent is expected (121 surveys returned out of 224 sent.)
2. The questionnaire consists of eight demographic questions, two open-ended questions, and ten questions each with ^{five} ~~six~~ possible responses (1-~~5~~ likert scale.) Responses to the survey will be tallied by question. Both the actual number of answers for each question response and the mean answer for each question will be identified. Question means will be compared to see if there are statistically significant difference between subgroups of interest, primarily race and gender. No unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures have been identified. The survey will be sent out periodically throughout the year as employees are separated from the Service.
3. In order to maximize response rates, our survey will follow a modified version of the protocol of Don Dillman (1978), consisting of two steps: (1) the questionnaire, accompanied by an introductory letter explaining the purpose of the survey, and (2) a reminder postcard mailed 3 days after the questionnaire. If a response rate of at least 52% is achieved, accuracy and reliability of information collected will be sufficient for our purposes.
4. No tests of procedures or methods will be undertaken. The methods used are straightforward and are standard for this type of analysis.
5. Individuals consulted on statistical aspects of the design:
James Caudill, Ph.D., John Charbonneau, Ph.D., Mike Hay, Ph.D.
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, (703) 358-2082
Division of Economics

Dillman, Don A. 1978. Mail and Telephone Surveys: The Total Design Method. New York: John Wiley and Sons.