

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**Farm Service Agency****Commodity Credit Corporation****Information Collection Request;
Economic Assessment of
Conservation Reserve Program Lands
for Hunting**

AGENCY: Farm Service Agency and Commodity Credit Corporation, USDA.

ACTION: Notice; request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Farm Service Agency (FSA), on behalf of the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC), is requesting comments from all interested individuals and organizations on a new information collection request associated with the "Economic Assessment of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Lands for Hunting."

DATES: We will consider comments that we receive by April 2, 2013.

ADDRESSES: We invite you to submit comments on this notice. In your comments, include date, OMB control number, volume, and page number of this issue of the **Federal Register**. You may submit comments by any of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to <http://regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.

- *Mail:* Skip Hyberg, Agricultural Economist, Economic and Policy Analysis Staff, Farm Service Agency, 1400 Independence Ave. SW., Room 3730, Mail Stop 0519, Washington, DC 20250.

Comments also should be sent to the Desk Officer for Agriculture, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Washington, DC 20503. Copies of the information collection may be obtained from Dr. Skip Hyberg at the above address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Skip Hyberg, (202) 720-9222. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication (Braille, large print, audio tape, etc.) should contact the USDA Target Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Economic Assessment of Conservation Reserve Program Lands for Hunting.

OMB Control Number: 0560-NEW.

Type of Request: New.

Abstract: In accordance with the Food Security Act of 1985 (Pub. L. 99-198), as amended, FSA, on behalf of CCC, administers the CRP to conserve and

improve soil, water, and wildlife resources. Federal investments in the CRP on private cropland enhance essential ecosystem resources, including wildlife, which has been documented to provide improved hunting opportunities in rural areas. As such, hunters from within the state and non-residents outside the state are drawn to CRP lands or other private lands surrounding CRP lands for hunting.

FSA considers benefits from the enhancement of wildlife habitat when selecting CRP offers. As hunting opportunities increase, so too does hunter spending, generating economic activity and employment within the outdoor recreational sector, which is of particular importance to rural communities in the region. FSA is responsible for identifying and quantifying the relationship between job creation and investments in CRP lands, as increased outdoor recreation is among the benefits FSA provides in administering the CRP.

Without data on hunter use and expenditures, the economic contribution generated by federal investments in the CRP cannot be reliably estimated. With this in mind, FSA plans to work with Colorado State University to conduct statewide mail surveys with deer, upland bird, and waterfowl hunters in North Dakota (ND) and South Dakota (SD). There have thus far been no statewide assessments of the CRP program on hunting use, expenditures, and jobs in ND or SD; the only prior studies focused on six small areas in ND and are now more than 10 years old. There have also been significant changes to the CRP since that time. In addition, there is limited generalizability of the six ND areas to the rest of ND and to SD. Therefore, FSA believes that these new statewide surveys will assist it in successfully furthering the goals of the CRP. Each of the six surveys will elicit information on hunters':

- (a) Hunting activity in 2013;
- (b) Use of CRP lands in terms of days spent hunting there;
- (c) Expenditure pattern information; and
- (d) Demographic information.

The primary objective of the surveys is to enable FSA to estimate the economic job and income contribution of current CRP lands on the rural areas within the respective states, and possible changes to jobs and income from potential changes to CRP lands emanating from either changes in the CRP program or farmers' response to non program conditions.

The research proposal has been discussed with the respective State Fish

and Game agencies, and it was decided that mail surveys are the best tool to obtain the data needed to estimate CRP's contribution to rural economies. Mail surveys appear to be the best approach for an unbiased survey because the State Fish and Game agencies do not have email addresses for all hunters, and hunters in many rural locations of ND and SD do not have email access at home.

Collection of the data is necessary to evaluate and improve CRP selection criteria and program implementation, as described above. Having information on recreation-related jobs will help FSA to conduct a comparison of county level impacts of land temporarily going out of crop production via CRP. The data will be analyzed by Dr. John Loomis of Colorado State University's Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this information collection is estimated to average 15 minutes per response.

Frequency of Collection: One time only.

Respondents: Hunters with ND and SD hunting licenses.

Estimated Number of Annual Respondents: 6,000.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 1.

Estimated Total Annual Responses: 6,000.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 1,500 hours.

We are requesting comments on all aspects of this information collection to help us to:

- (1) Evaluate whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of FSA, including whether the information will have practical utility;

- (2) Evaluate the accuracy of FSA's estimate of burden including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;

- (3) Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and

- (4) Minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

All responses to this notice, including name and addresses when provided, will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.

Signed on January 23, 2013.

Juan M. Garica,

*Administrator, Farm Service Agency, and
Executive Vice President, Commodity Credit
Corporation.*

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Motorized Travel Management Plan, Tonto National Forest; Gila, Maricopa, Pinal, and Counties, AZ

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: The Tonto National Forest will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) to disclose the effects of designating a system of roads, trails, and areas for motorized vehicle use, thereby developing a motorized travel management plan. Such a plan is needed to meet National travel management regulations and to improve the management and enforcement of motor vehicle use on National Forest Service lands. This notice describes the components to be included in the motorized travel plan, proposed forest plan amendment, decisions to be made, estimated dates pertaining to the project, information concerning public participation, and the responsible agency official. The project area is defined by the boundaries of the Tonto National Forest, and includes the Cave Creek, Globe, Mesa, Payson, Pleasant Valley, and Tonto Basin ranger districts. **DATES:** Written comments to be considered in the preparation of the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) should be submitted on or before March 4, 2013. The DEIS is expected to be published in June 2013. The final environmental impact statement (FEIS) and record of decision (ROD) is expected to be available by November 2013.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to Neil Bosworth, Forest Supervisor, ATTN: Travel Management, 2324 E. McDowell Rd., Phoenix, AZ 85006. Comments may also be sent via email to comments-southwestern-TMRTonto@fs.fed.us, or via facsimile (602) 225-5295.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Anne Thomas, Tonto National Forest NEPA Coordinator, 2324 E. McDowell Rd., Phoenix, AZ 85006, (602) 225-5213.

Individuals who use telecommunication devices for the deaf

(TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On November 9, 2005, the Forest Service published final travel management regulations governing off-highway vehicles (OHV) and other motor vehicles on national forests and grasslands. The regulations amended part 212, subpart B of part 251, subpart A of part 261, and removed part 295 of title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). These three regulations are referred to together as the Travel Management Rule. This rule was developed in response to the substantial increase in use of OHVs on National Forest System lands and related damage to forest resources caused by unmanaged OHV use over the past 30 years. The regulations implement Executive Orders (EO) 11644 and EO 11989 regarding off-road use of motor vehicles on Federal lands.

The regulations provide “for a system of National Forest System (NFS) roads, NFS trails, and areas of NFS lands that are designated for motor vehicle use. Motor vehicle use off designated roads and trails and outside of designated areas is prohibited” (36 CFR 212.50). Designated routes and areas shall be identified on a motor vehicle use map (MVUM) and made available to the public. Currently, motor vehicles may drive on any open road on the Tonto National Forest. The Tonto National Forest does not currently manage trails for motorized use. In the 1985 Tonto National Forest Plan, approximately 700,004 acres were identified as open to cross-country travel in the Payson and Pleasant Valley ranger districts. In addition, the 1985 Tonto National Forest Plan identified over 2,170,000 acres closed to cross-country OHV travel in the Cave Creek, Mesa, Globe, and Tonto Basin ranger districts.

In order to comply with the travel management regulations, the Tonto National Forest participated in a forestwide travel analysis process beginning in 2007 that was facilitated by a contractor. The intent of this process was to help the forest determine the minimum transportation system necessary to provide safe and efficient travel and for administration, utilization, and protection of NFS lands (36 CFR 212.5(b)). Based on internal scoping, the Forest Supervisor determined that the Tonto National Forest would prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) to complete the analysis required to comply with the Travel Management Rule. In October

2009, the forest released a proposed action. Seven public meetings were held throughout the communities within and proximate in November and December 2009 to gather public comments about the proposed action, including roads and trails proposed for motorized use. Comments to the proposed action were accepted through December 4, 2009. A draft version of the EA was released for public comment on January 6, 2012, for a 30-day comment period. Due to the length and complexity of the Environmental Assessment and requests from the public, an additional 30-day comment period began on February 5, 2012. Approximately 300 letters were received during these two comment periods.

After initiating compliance with the Travel Management Rule under an EA, the Tonto National Forest determined that the level of significance reached a point that environmental analysis for travel management under an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) would be more appropriate. All comments provided throughout the process thus far, including those to the 2009 proposed action, the 2012 Environmental Assessment, and public meetings, will continue to be considered and may be incorporated into either the proposed action for the EIS or alternatives to that proposed action.

Purpose and Need for Action

The purpose of this project is to comply with the Travel Management Rule by providing a system of roads, trails, and areas designated for motor vehicle use by class of vehicle and time of year on the Tonto National Forest. There is a need to determine which, if any, authorized National Forest System (NFS) roads currently open should be closed to motorized travel. In addition, there is a need to determine which, if any, authorized roads currently closed should be open to motorized travel. There is also a need identify any restrictions on allowed uses, classes of vehicles, and/or seasons of use for specific routes. There is also a need to determine which, if any, unauthorized routes should be added to NFS as trails and roads open for motorized access. In addition, there is a need to determine if, when, where, and how far motor vehicles may be driven off designated roads for the sole purpose of motorized dispersed camping or big game retrieval. And finally, there is a need to amend 1985 Tonto National Forest Plan to prohibit motor vehicle use off designated NFS roads, trails, and areas on two ranger districts (Payson and Pleasant Valley) except as shown on the Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) and to