



## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### **Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Review and Approval; Comment Request; Management and Oversight of the National Estuarine Research Reserve System**

The Department of Commerce will submit the following information collection request to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and clearance in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, on or after the date of publication of this notice. We invite the general public and other Federal agencies to comment on proposed, and continuing information collections, which helps us assess the impact of our information collection requirements and minimize the public's reporting burden. Public comments were previously requested via the **Federal Register** on July 16, 2024 (89 FR 57875) during a 60-day comment period. This notice allows for an additional 30 days for public comments.

*Agency:* National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

*Title:* Management and Oversight of the National Estuarine Research Reserve System

*OMB Control Number:* 0648-0121.

*Form Number(s):* None.

*Type of Request:* Regular (extension of a current information collection).

*Number of Respondents:* 30 unique respondents.

*Average Hours Per Response:* Management plan, 1600 hours; site profile, 1800 hours; site nomination documents, 2500 hours; award application, 24 hours; award reports, 14 hours; NEPA documentation, 2 hours.

*Total Annual Burden Hours:* 9,879.

*Needs and Uses:* The National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) is a partnership between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and 24

states and Puerto Rico that protects more than 1.3 million coastal and estuarine acres in 30 Reserves for long-term research, monitoring, education, and stewardship, established under Section 315 of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1451), 16 U.S.C. 1461. The NERRS consists of carefully selected estuarine areas of the United States that are designated, preserved, and managed for research and educational purposes. The Reserves are chosen to reflect regional differences and to include a variety of ecosystem types according to the classification scheme of the national program as presented in 15 CFR part 921. As part of a national system, the Reserves collectively provide a unique opportunity to address research questions and estuarine management issues of national significance. The Reserves also serve to enhance public awareness and understanding of estuarine areas and provide suitable opportunities for public education and interpretation. Regulations provide guidance for delineating Reserve boundaries and additional guidance for arriving at the most effective and least costly approach to establishing adequate state control of key land and water areas. Any qualified public or private persons, organizations or institutions may compete for research funding to work in research Reserves. In fact, applicants are almost always states.

Subsection 315(e)(1)(B) of the CZMA authorizes the National Ocean Service (NOS) to make grants to, or cooperative agreements with, any coastal state or public or private institution or person for purposes of supporting research within the NERRS. This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under "Coastal Zone Management Estuarine Research Reserve, Number 11.420". Applications for such grants follow the provisions of 2 CFR 200. During the site selection and designation process, information is collected from states in order to prepare a management plan and environmental impact statement. Designated Reserves apply annually for operations funds by submitting a work plan; subsequently, progress reports are required every six months for the duration of the award. Each Reserve compiles an ecological characterization or site profile to describe the biological and physical environment of the Reserve, research to date and research gaps. Reserves revise their management plans every five

years. A competitive fellowship program supports opportunities for graduate students to conduct research at each Reserve. This information is required to ensure that Reserves are adhering to regulations and that the Reserves are in keeping with the purpose for which they were designated.

*Affected Public:* Non-profit institutions; state, local, or tribal government.

*Frequency:* On occasion.

*Respondent's Obligation:* Required to Obtain or Retain Funding.

*Legal Authority:* Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1451), 16 U.S.C. 1461.

This information collection request may be viewed at [www.reginfo.gov](http://www.reginfo.gov). Follow the instructions to view the Department of Commerce collections currently under review by OMB.

Written comments and recommendations for the proposed information collection should be submitted within 30 days of the publication of this notice on the following website [www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain](http://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain). Find this particular information collection by selecting "Currently under 30-day Review - Open for Public Comments" or by using the search function and entering either the title of the collection or the OMB Control Number 0648-0121.

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