

Graduate Education Research and Traineeship (IGERT) Program.)

OMB Control No.: 3145-0182.

Expiration Date of Approval: July 31, 2005.

#### Abstract

The National Science Foundation (NSF) requests extension of data collection (e.g., interviews, surveys, focus groups, site visits) measuring NSF's contribution to the Nation's graduate education enterprise and overall science and engineering workforce. This continuation expands the data collection formerly called "The Evaluation of the Initial Impacts of the IGERT Program" most recently approved through July 2005 (OMB 3145-0182).

IGERT began data collection in the late 1990s for use in program research, management and evaluation. Data collection was concurrent with NSF-funding in order to document IGERT's initial impact within individual departments or institutions (often called projects), and on student, faculty and other participants as compared to the educational and training experiences of individuals who were external to IGERT. This request expands data collection to the portfolio of NSF-funded graduate education programs and projects, typically on a program-by-program sub-study basis in order to address long-term impact.

For over fifty years NSF has funded directly and indirectly (e.g. via institutions), tens of thousands of individuals who pursue post-undergraduate education or research training. NSF's graduate education portfolio includes:

- The Integrative Graduate Education Research and Traineeship (IGERT) program. IGERT provides grants to institutions to recruit and support doctoral students in interdisciplinary Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics programs (STEM).

- The graduate Teaching Fellows in K-12 Education (GK-12) program. GK-12 provides grants to institutions to support STEM graduate students' acquisition of skills that will prepare them for careers in the 21st century.

- The Graduate Research Fellowship (GRF) program. GRF provides three years of funding to eligible individuals for graduate study leading to research-based masters or doctoral degrees at an IHE of their choice.

A longer list of NSF's graduate education opportunities and eligibility information is on the NSF Web site under the link: "*Specialized information for Graduate Students*" at:

[http://www.nsf.gov/funding/education/jsp?org=NSF@fund\\_type-2](http://www.nsf.gov/funding/education/jsp?org=NSF@fund_type-2).

Through longitudinal study NSF aims to learn about the long-term impact or legacy of its program strategies in graduate education. A primary goal is to identify and follow-up with individuals who participated in NSF-funded programs or projects, especially students who graduated with masters or doctoral degrees. The primary means of data collection will be surveys. Site visits, focus groups and interviews are used to improve survey instruments, clarify responses or address questions of institutional impact. Typical respondents are former NSF-funded fellows, trainees or to her participants in NSF-funded projects or are professional scientists, engineers, IHE faculty, K-graduate educators, education administrators and K-IHE policymakers. NSF uses the analysis of responses to prepare and publish reports and to respond to requests from Committees of Visitors, Congress and the Office of Management and Budget, particularly as related to the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) and the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART).

The study's broad questions include but are not limited to: What do individuals following post-participation in IGERT or other NSF-funded graduate education opportunities do? Do IGERT or other NSF-funded opportunities provide graduates with the professional and/or research skills needed to work in science and engineering? Are IGERT or other NSF-sponsored graduates satisfied that their NSF-funded graduate education advanced their careers in science or engineering? To what extent do IGERT or other former-NSF-sponsored graduates engage in the science and engineering workforce conduct inter- or multi-disciplinary science? Is there evidence of a legacy from NSF-funding that changed a degree-granting department beyond number of students supported and degrees awarded? To what extent have projects achieved or contributed to individual project goals or the NSF program goals? To what extent have NSF-funded projects or programs broadened participation by diverse individuals, particularly individuals traditionally underemployed in science or engineering, including but not limited to women, minorities, and persons-with-disabilities?

*Respondents:* Individuals or households, not-for-profit institutions, business or other for profit, and Federal, State, Local or Tribal Government.

*Number of Respondents:* 30,000.

*Burden on the Public:* 15,000 hours. This estimate covers three graduate education programs, their participants, and comparison group respondents over a three year period.

Dated: August 27, 2007.

**Suzanne H. Plimpton,**

Reports Clearance Officer, National Science Foundation.

[FR Doc. 07-4287 Filed 8-30-07; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7555-01-M

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## NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

### Notice of Permit Applications Received Under the Antarctic Conservation Act of 1978 (Pub. L. 95-541)

**AGENCY:** National Science Foundation.

**ACTION:** Notice of Permit Applications Received under the Antarctic Conservation Act of 1978, Public Law 95-541.

**SUMMARY:** The National Science Foundation (NSF) is required to publish notice of permit applications received to conduct activities regulated under the Antarctic Conservation Act of 1978. NSF has published regulations under the Antarctic Conservation Act at Title 45 Part 670 of the Code of Federal Regulations. This is the required notice of permit applications received.

**DATES:** Interested parties are invited to submit written data, comments, or views with respect to this permit application by October 1, 2007. This application may be inspected by interested parties at the Permit Office, address below.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments should be addressed to Permit Office, Room 755, Office of Polar Programs, National Science Foundation, 4201 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, Virginia 22230.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Nadene G. Kennedy at the above address or (703) 292-7405.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The National Science Foundation, as directed by the Antarctic Conservation Act of 1978 (Pub. L. 95-541), as amended by the Antarctic Science, Tourism and Conservation Act of 1996, has developed regulations for the establishment of a permit system for various activities in Antarctica and designation of certain animals and certain geographic areas as requiring special protection. The regulations establish such a permit system to designate Antarctic Specially Protected Areas.

The applications received are as follows:

1. *Applicant:* Andrea Polli, 43–01 21st Street, #300, Long Island City, NY 11101.

*Permit Application No.:* 2008–001.  
*Activity for Which Permit Is Requested:* Enter Antarctic Specially Protected Areas. The applicant is a participant in the Artists and Writers Program and will work with scientists gathering and modeling environmental data as part of the McMurdo Dry Valleys Long Term Ecological Research Project. One aspect of the project relates to the history of the area. Therefore the applicant wishes to visit the McMurdo Sound area historic huts at Discovery Hut (ASPA #158), Cape Evans (ASPA #155) and Cape Royds (ASPA #157) for video and photographic documentation.

*Location:* Discovery Hut (ASPA #158), Cape Evans (ASPA #155) and Cape Royds (ASPA #157).

*Dates:* December 1, 2007 to January 10, 2008.

2. *Applicant:* Robert A. Garrott, Ecology Department, Montana State University, 310 Lewis Hall, Bozeman, MT 59715.

*Permit Application No.:* 2008–016.  
*Activity for Which Permit Is Requested:* Take, Import into the U.S.A. and Enter Antarctic Specially Protected Area (ASPA). The applicant plans to capture, tag, weigh and collect small skin and muscle samples from up to 280 adult and pup Weddell seals, in order to evaluate how temporal variation in the marine environment affects a long-lived mammal's population dynamics. In addition, the applicant proposes to visit the White Island Antarctic Specially Protected Area (ASPA #137) to census and tag seals in this isolated colony.

*Location:* McMurdo Sound sea ice and Northwest White Island (ASPA #127).

*Dates:* October 1, 2007 to February 15, 2012.

**Nadene G. Kennedy,**

*Permit Officer, Office of Polar Programs.*

[FR Doc. E7–17234 Filed 8–30–07; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 7555–01–P**

## NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

### Notice of the Availability of a Draft Environmental Assessment

**AGENCY:** National Science Foundation.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability of a draft Environmental Assessment for proposed activities in the Eastern Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea near Central America.

**SUMMARY:** The National Science Foundation (NSF) gives notice of the

availability of a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for proposed activities in the Eastern Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea near Central America.

The Division of Ocean Sciences in the Directorate for Geosciences (GEO/OCE) has prepared a draft Environmental Assessment for a marine geophysical survey by the Research Vessel *Marcus G Langseth* in the Eastern Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea near Central America, in the Exclusive Economic Zones of Costa Rica and Nicaragua (water depths from <100 meters to >2500 meters) during January–March 2008. The draft Environmental Assessment is available for public review for a 30-day period.

**DATES:** Comments must be submitted on or before October 1, 2007.

**ADDRESSES:** Copies of the draft Environmental Assessment are available upon request from: Dr. William Lang, National Science Foundation, Division of Ocean Sciences, 4201 Wilson Blvd., Suite 725, Arlington, VA 22230. Telephone: (703) 292–7857. The draft is also available on the agency's Web site at: [http://www.nsf.gov/geo/oce/pubs/MGL\\_Central\\_America\\_2008\\_EA.pdf](http://www.nsf.gov/geo/oce/pubs/MGL_Central_America_2008_EA.pdf).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory (LDEO), with research funding from the NSF, plans to conduct a marine seismic survey in the Eastern Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea near Central America during 2008. The research program will take place in the Exclusive Economic Zones of Costa Rica and Nicaragua. The surveys will use a towed airgun array consisting of up to 36 operating airguns with a maximum discharge volume of ~6600 in<sup>3</sup>. They will take place in waters from <100 meters to >2500 meters deep.

LDEO plans to conduct this seismic survey as part of the “Subduction Factory,” or “SubFac” initiative of NSF's MARGINS program. The SubFac initiative will determine the inputs, outputs, and controlling processes of subduction zone systems by obtaining seismic measurements of magma flux, are composition, and lower-plate serpentinization at the Central American Focus Site. Subduction zones, which mark sites of convective downwelling of the Earth's lithosphere, exist at convergent plate boundaries where one plate of oceanic lithosphere converges with another plate and sinks below into the mantle. It is at these subduction zones that the oceanic crust and associated sediments are recycled into the deep mantle. Although this mixing of the Earth's crustal and oceanic materials produces ore deposits and new continental crust in the long term, the immediate result is geological

activity often expressed as deep, very intense earthquakes and extensive volcanism.

The seismic survey will investigate the volcanic arc, back arc, and downgoing plate in the Costa Rican portion of the Central American Focus Site. The study focuses on the central Costa Rican segment of the arc, the site of important transitions in lava chemistry, because the narrow isthmus (~150 km or 93 mi wide) is well-suited for detailed seismic imaging using onshore-offshore techniques. A systemic understanding of subduction must include a thorough knowledge of the volcanic arc, which in turn is essential in understanding the geochemical recycling processes of the Central American SubFac.

To investigate the Central American SubFac, seismic survey transects are proposed across the isthmus in Costa Rica, along the Costa Rican arc and back-arc, the outer rise of the Cocos Plate, and the Nicaragua Rise. The cross-arc transect will involve use of seismic sources in both the Pacific and Caribbean. To understand arc-building processes, the delineation of lateral heterogeneity in crustal thickness and velocity at scales of tens of kilometers is required, both across and along-arc. In order to achieve this, the study will acquire (1) A double-side, onshore-offshore cross-arc profile, (2) an along-arc refraction line, (3) an array of seismometers in the arc to record all onshore and offshore shots and to allow 3-dimensional (3D) tomography, and (4) a refraction survey across the outer rise of the downgoing Cocos Plate.

The marine program will consist of ~2149 km of unique survey lines—753 km in the Caribbean and 1396 km in the Pacific. With the exception of two lines located in shallow to intermediate-depth water, all lines will be shot twice, once at a ~50-m (20-s) shot spacing for multichannel seismic (MCS) data and once at a ~200-m (80-s) shot spacing for ocean bottom seismometer (OBS) refraction data, for a total of ~3980 km of survey lines. There will be additional operations associated with equipment testing, startup, line changes, and repeat coverage of any areas where initial data quality is sub-standard.

LDEO has applied for the issuance of an Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHA) from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to authorize the incidental harassment of small numbers of marine mammals during the seismic survey. The information in this Environmental Assessment supports the IHA permit application process, provides information on marine species not covered by the IHA, and addresses