

Southeast Coast Network

National Park Service
Inventory & Monitoring Program



Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) #2.1.3

Southeast Coast Network Authorship Guidelines

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Summary

The following Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) outlines the guidelines and responsibilities for authors of products developed by the Southeast Coast Inventory & Monitoring Network based on SECN authorship policies in place since June, 2009. The following should be used as general guidance—each report is potentially unique, and might warrant deviations from the procedures outlined below.

Revision Log

Previous Version #	Revision Date	Author	Changes Made	Reason for Change	New Version #

Introduction

Since June 2009, the authorship of SECN products has followed the guidance below based on agreement of all SECN staff, and has been updated based on experience publishing ~250 products since the Network's beginning. The following should serve as a general guideline for the responsibilities and expectations for authorship of SECN products.

As a general rule, we want to be inclusive with authorship. However, we do not want to get into the habit of adding long lists of coauthors who do not meet the authorship standards below. It is therefore incumbent on all SECN staff to identify opportunities early in the process for potential coauthors to contribute significantly to products. This is especially important for student employees who are on limited appointments and whose careers could be greatly benefited by such opportunities.

It is also recognized that each paper, report, etc., is unique, and there might be diversions from these guidelines. In such cases, deviations should be discussed early in report development among all people involved as well as the Network Program Coordinator to clarify roles and expectations.

General Guidelines Applicable to All Products

1. The primary author should be the person who takes the lead in all aspects of the product's development. Although there might be significant contributions (including authorship) from others, the primary author is responsible for (most of) the following:
 - a. Identifying and clarifying the purpose, theme, venue, audience, etc. for the deliverable where it is not already determined.
 - b. Gathering, synthesizing, or preparing data for analysis (however, this may be done by contractors or other SECN staff).
 - c. Conducting any necessary analyses.
 - d. Interpreting results.
 - e. Outlining the report and writing or preparing the majority of the text.
 - f. Submitting documents to appropriate places for informal peer review.
 - g. Ensuring necessary revisions are made following informal and formal peer review.
2. Secondary (and beyond) authorship is warranted based on contributions such as the following:
 - a. Agency partners who provide analyses, or interpretation in conjunction with our data and analysis.
 - b. GIS / map products *if* they are derivative as opposed to cartographic (they required analysis to generate as opposed to displaying existing data sets).

- c. Production of a significant amount of cartographic products as a part of the report (i.e., distribution maps for all species encountered at a park might warrant authorship if it's 60 maps and might not if it's four).
 - d. Developers of models (unpublished elsewhere) upon which analysis, results, hypotheses, etc. are based.
 - e. Development and implementation of field or analytical methods used for the study that are not published elsewhere. Ideally these authors would be responsible for relevant portions of "methods" sections.
 - f. Writing significant portions of text for reports, articles, posters.
 - g. Developing significant portions / amounts of *new* graphics, slides, etc., for presentations or posters.
3. The following generally do *not* warrant authorship unless there is a compelling reason, but should instead be recognized in an acknowledgements section if appropriate.
- a. Generation of cartographic maps that are not derivative products for text documents.
 - b. Data collection (but development of relevant "Methods" text might be).
 - c. Database management / development / Quality Control (though authorship of databases or data sets might be warranted).
 - d. Literature reviews (but development of relevant "Background / Introduction" text might be).
 - e. Scoping / brainstorming meeting participants (but developers of novel approaches might need to be included).
 - f. Funding
 - g. Consultants (statistical)
 - h. Reviewers
 - i. Editors
 - j. COTR / ATR designation on a project.
 - k. Authorship / contributions to cited references.
 - l. Use of published data (should be cited as a reference).
4. Exceptions / Clarifications:
- a. Contracts. It is generally *not* appropriate to be an author on a product that was developed under a contract since we're not supposed to have a significant contribution to the products (otherwise it should be a cooperative agreement). In cases where staff wish to publish reports based on findings from contracted work, SECN staff should:
 - i. Develop post-contract reports in partnership with project Principle Investigators, where it makes sense and is not duplicative.

- ii. Refrain from including reports as project deliverables in contracts if you have a reasonable expectation of wanting to be a primary or co-author of a report at the project's conclusion. It is acceptable in such cases to craft project statements of work to only include data collection and documentation.
- b. Cooperative Agreements: In some cases it *is* appropriate to expect co-authorship on reports from cooperative agreements. In such cases, expectations should be discussed with cooperators during the proposal development stage and should be explicitly mentioned in the agreement. However some limits to NPS authorship are as follows:
 - i. SECN staff should not be coauthors on final reports to the NPS from cooperators. These should be independently written by the cooperator in accordance with the agreement product specifications.
 - ii. It is often appropriate for SECN staff to be co-authors on reports in the NPS publication series or to external outlets (such as journals) if our contribution to those publications meets the authorship standards outlined above. Especially when reports are the result of projects designed by SECN staff.
 - iii. Project oversight does not in and of itself warrant authorship.
- 5. The Network Program Manager will review the list of authors prior to publication and may add or reorder authors in consultation with the primary author.
- 6. In cases where the primary author of the report is unable to meet the responsibilities listed above:
 - a. The Network Program Manager or Regional I&M Coordinator can delegate any or all of those functions to a new product lead.
 - b. Depending on where a product is in the development and publication process, the original author should not expect to remain primary author. Although he or she might remain as such, the contributions of the new product lead might (and often will) warrant primary authorship.
 - c. The original author should remain a coauthor, but his or her place in the order of authors is dependent on the contributions to the final product.
- 7. For official document revisions (typical of standard operating procedures)
 - a. Minor revisions should retain all original authors in their original order, and any additional authors as warranted.
 - b. Major revisions should have a designated primary author before revisions begin, whose responsibilities include all those listed above. This may or may not be the primary author from prior versions. All original authors should be retained in their original order (unless shifted because of a new primary author).
- 8. It is acceptable (and often preferred) for the author to be "Southeast Coast Network." This is particularly true for documents that will be frequently updated as new data become available

such as program summaries, resource briefs, web pages, and some Standard Operating Procedures.

Specific Guidance for Data Summary Reports

1. Data reports include prescribed analyses, which are explicitly prescribed in each protocol (or associated reporting SOPs), are largely “automated,” and include minimal interpretation of results in terms of ecological or management significance. As a general rule, the person who compiles the data report should be the author of the report, with the Branch Chief overseeing the protocol’s implementation serving in a reviewing capacity.
2. In instances where one of the Branch Chiefs compiles a data summary report, the report should be reviewed by one or more of the other Branch Chiefs or the Network Program Manager.
3. In cases where a significant amount of analysis is necessary prior to publishing the report (such as analysis of audio recordings), additional authors might be warranted.
4. Development of figure and table templates as prescribed in the monitoring protocols (draft or published) does not warrant authorship on data summary reports. The protocol and/or reporting SOP(s) should be cited.
5. Development of a report template from prior years does not warrant authorship on future data summary reports.
6. Managing contracts related to data collection, management, and analysis does not warrant authorship of data summary reports.
7. If, in the professional best judgment of the authors or reviewers, there are significant findings that require more in-depth interpretation of results and their significance, the report should be published in one of the other report series (Natural Resource Reports or Natural Resource Technical Reports), and authorship and contributions should be adjusted as necessary.

Other Notes

1. Presentations made at professional meetings, conferences, and symposia generally provide new information to a targeted audience. Because presentations or associated abstracts may potentially be cited, these talks should follow the authorship guidelines above.
2. Presentations made in other venues such as park or other internal briefings, public presentations, should generally be solely authored by the person giving the presentation regardless of whose data and information is being discussed. In cases where discussing the work of someone else in the network, the presenter should direct the audience to the proper person or place (IRMA or the network web page) for more information.
3. The author for resource briefs or program summaries that are published by the network should either the network, or the person who compiles the document.