

Research Permitting and Reporting System
Technical Documentation for Investigators

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1 Welcome and Overview

Purpose of this document.

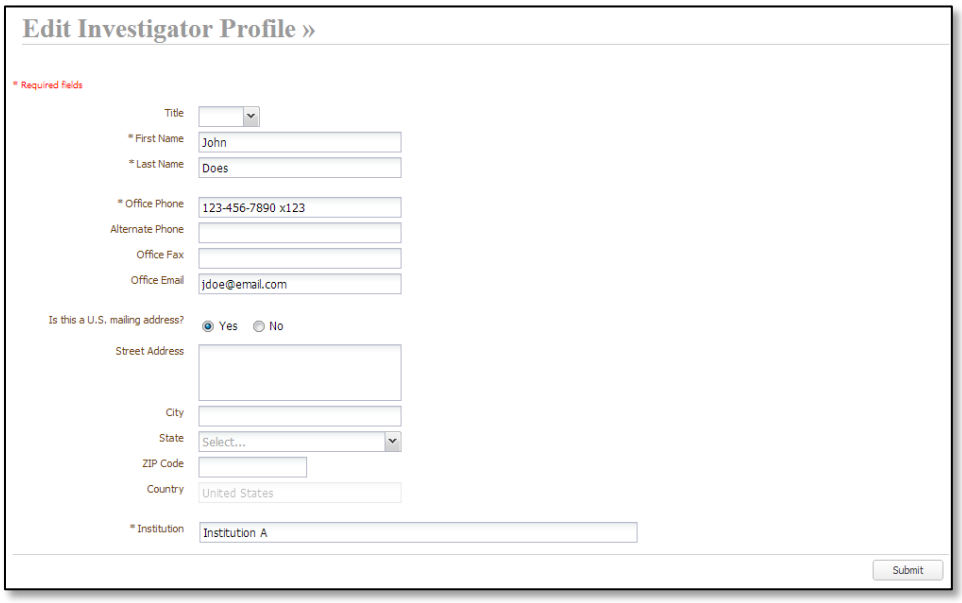
2 Registering and Managing Your Login and Contact Information

2.1 Registering With the National Park Service

The RPRS uses password protected investigator accounts. The benefits of your own password protected investigator account include improved security, privacy, and communication. Account holders will also have the option of drafting applications and Investigator Annual Reports prior to their final submission. RPRS users who wish to conduct scientific research will need to create a password protected investigator account in order to submit applications. Existing RPRS users who have submitted an application in the past will have information in the RPRS which is linked to their transactions (i.e. applications, Investigator's Annual Reports, contact information). The RPRS will to automatically attempt to transfer existing investigator data to the new investigator account. If the RPRS finds no existing data, the account creator will be informed, and provided next step options.

- Access the RPRS home page via this web address: https://irma.nps.gov/RPRS/
- From the RPRS home page, users may log-in once they have created a password protected account, or register if they have not.
- If you do not already have a password protected account, you should choose the Register link. Registration with the National Park Service Integrated Resource Management Application program is the first step to creating your account. The registration page will provide instructions.
- Upon completing the registration process, return to the RPRS web page. (https://irma.nps.gov/RPRS/) to finish creating your RPRS investigator account.
- If you have submitted an application for a NPS Scientific Research and Collecting Permit in the past, the RPRS will attempt to transfer your existing data (contact information, applications, permits, and IARs) into your new investigator account. The RPRS will use the email address you entered in your past transactions to link to your newly created account. If the link is successful, the RPRS will automatically transfer your data into your new investigator account, and you will see the record of your applications, permits, and IARs in your new investigator account. This transfer is required for services which must reference past transactions (i.e. permit renewal application). If the transfer does not occur, please send an email to bill_commins@nps.gov. The email should provide the contact information you believe was entered into your most recent application (name, address, phone number, email). We will use this information to attempt a manual transfer of your data into your new investigator account, and we will inform you of whether we were successful.

2.2 Managing Your Investigator Profile



Title

GUI Help Text: Your preferred title. Examples include Dr., Mr., Mrs., etc.

First Name

GUI Help Text: Your first name. This may also be your given, or forename.

Last Name

Your last name. This may also be known as your surname, or family name. Hyphenated last names are acceptable.

Examples/Best Practices: Parks need to identify the specific investigator who is responsible for the research being permitted for a variety of reasons. One reason is to ensure that the person responsible for the research is appropriately qualified to conduct the research. A second is to ensure that there is a clearly designated person who is responsible for all of the research activities conducted under the provisions of the permitted research, who is responsible for all of the research personnel involved, and who has the authority to make decisions about the conduct of that research. A third is to ensure that there is a responsible person who, by signing the permit, has agreed to submit the Investigator's Annual Report and meet the terms and conditions of the permit.

Office Phone

Office phone refers to your business phone. The park should be able to reach you at the number you provide.

Alternative Phone

This is an optional field. The purpose of this field is to give you the option of providing an alternate phone number through which the park may reach you.

Office Fax

If you have a telephone number the park may use to FAX materials to you, enter it in the Office FAX field.

Office Email

Natural Resource Program Center

Office email is your preferred business/professional email address by which the park may reach you.

Is This a U.S. Mailing Address?

If you have an address that is not located in the United States of America, you may enter that address using the fields available and choose “no” to this question.

Street Address

Practices: Do not enter city, state and zip code in the street address field(s).

City

The city where the street address is located.

Examples/Best Practices: Do not enter the city in the “Street Address” field, but in the “City” field.

State

The state where the street address is located.

Examples/Best Practices: Do not enter the “State” in the “Street Address” field, but in the “State” field.

Zip Code

U. S. Postal Service Zip Code

Examples/Best Practices: If the address is not in the United States of America, and the country where the address is located has an equivalent to zip code, this field may be used to record that information.

Country

GUI Help Text: The country where the street address is located.

Full Description:

Examples/Best Practices: Country and address should match. In other words, the question asked is not “what is your nationality?”, but is “the address you are providing is located in what country?”.

Institution

Generally those who wish to conduct scientific research within units of the National Park Service will be associated with an institution. The institution may be academic, governmental, or private. If you are affiliated with no institution, you may leave this field blank.

Examples/Best Practices: If you have an affiliation with multiple institutions, please choose the institution which has the closest relationship to your proposed study. Check listing to see if the institution that you are affiliated with is listed in the pick list. If not, you may enter the name. The National Park Service is interested in affiliation because the applicant’s professional affiliation contributes to the evaluation of the legitimacy of the permit request.

3 Your Home Page in RPRS

Consider this to be your home page.



Draft Applications to Complete

A draft application is an application which has not been submitted to a park. Generally the draft application is incomplete.

Examples/Best Practices: If you enter data into the application form but do not submit that form to a park the application will be saved in draft format. Please note that the draft will automatically be deleted from the data base after 30 days.

Permits to Sign

Permits to sign will show in this list if they have been

- Approved by the Research Coordinator.
- Are not yet signed
- Are not expired

Permits to Renew

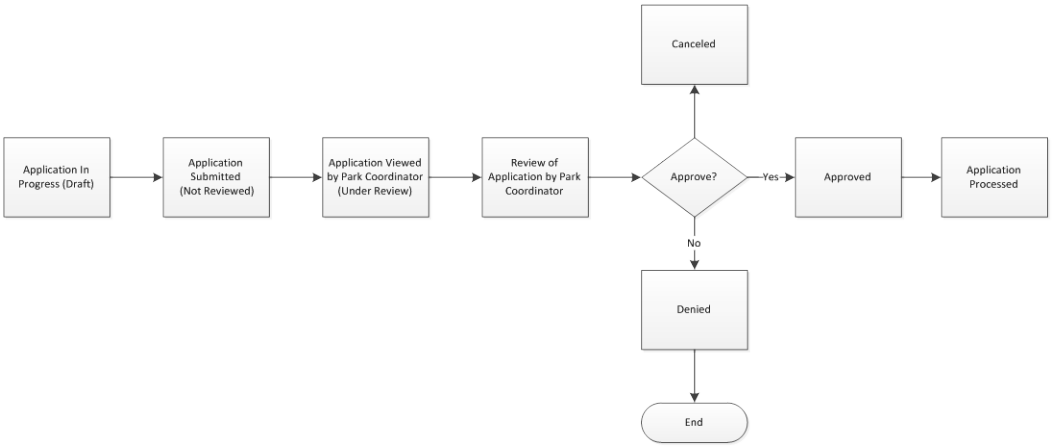
Permits to renew will show in this list if they meet the following criteria:

- They are within four months of expiring
- You are not in the final year of your research study
- The existing permit is either Approved or Cancelled (not revoked)

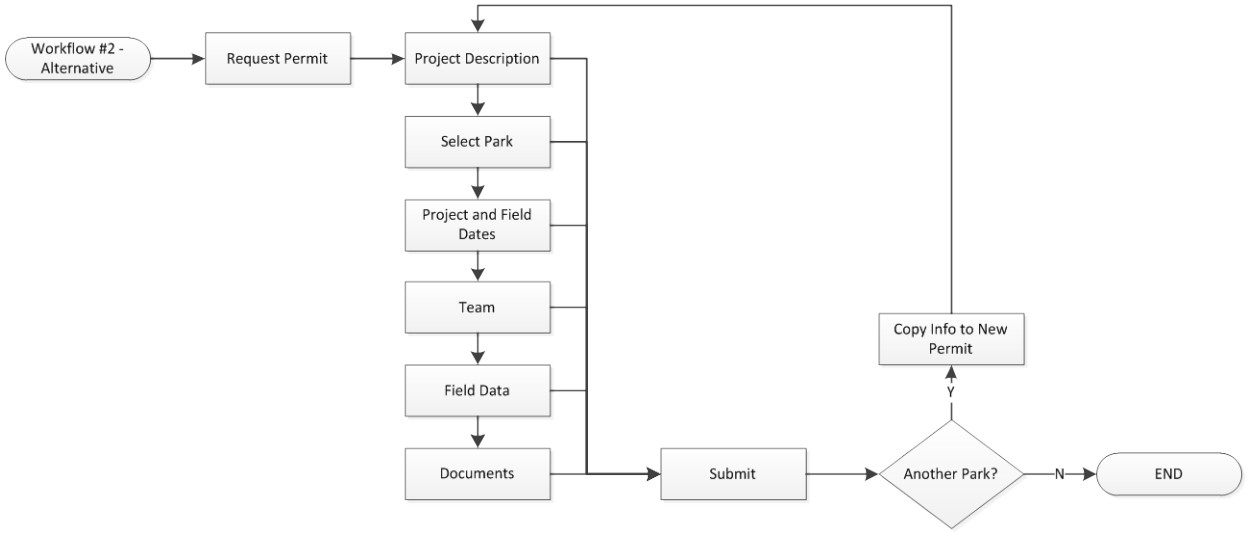
IARs to Submit

4 Research Permit Applications

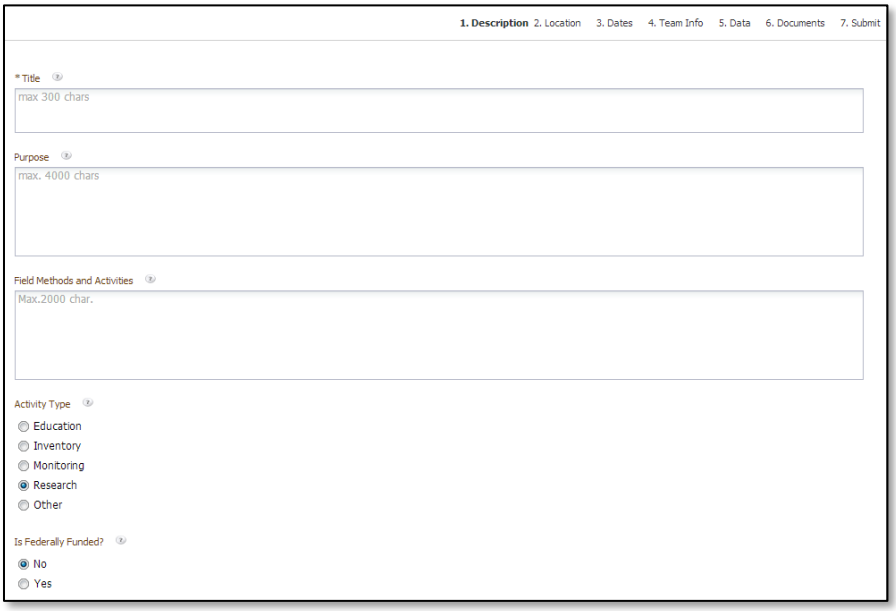
4.1 Overview



4.2 Application Wizard



4.2.1 Description



Title

Create a project title that identifies your proposed research. Keep in mind that it should reflect the project objectives over the full course of your research.

Purpose

Explain the purpose of your proposed study.

Examples/Best Practices: You need to be able to explain fully why your research is so important that we should allow you to do things most people aren't allowed to do. You should try to show benefit to science and/or to park management.

Field Methods and Activities

It is important to provide the park information concerning your proposed field methods and activities. This will help the park evaluate the impact of your project on park resources and visitors.

Activity Type

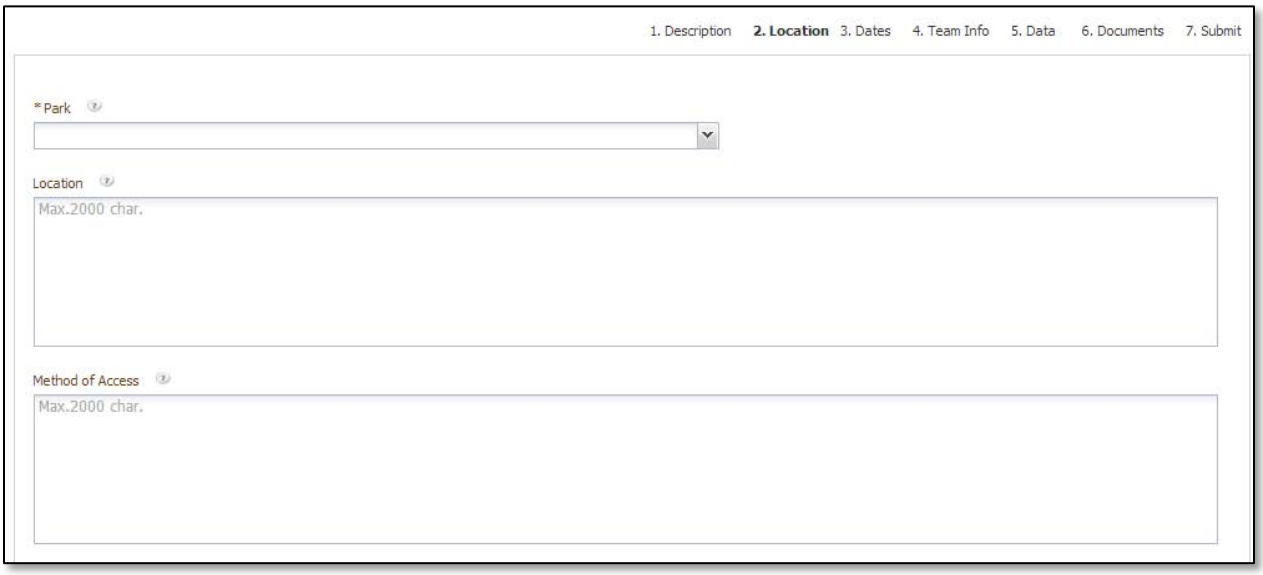
- Research –
- Inventory –
- Monitoring
- Other -

Examples/Best Practices: How to handle things if two options are appropriate?

Is Federally Funded?

This question refers to project specific funding. Salary paid through the U.S. Federal Government funds only counts if the salary is specifically dedicated to the study. If you indicate 'Yes' you will need to specify which agency/agencies is/are supplying the funding.

4.2.2 Location



Park

Choose the National Park Service unit where you wish to conduct research. Note that multi-park research projects will require a separate permit application for each park

Location

Clearly and accurately communicate where you propose to conduct field work within the park unit. You can specify watersheds, geographic points, trails, etc.

Examples/Best Practices:

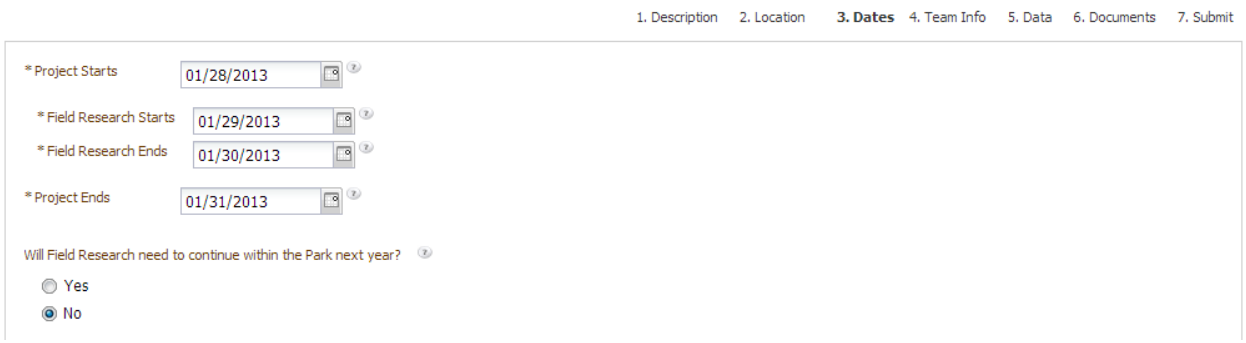
- Uploading maps
- Uploading geospatial points, lines or polygons

Method of Access

By what means do you propose to get to and from the locations within the park unit where you propose to conduct field work.

4.2.3 Dates

This is where you can not only specify the entire length of your research project, but can specify the dates you intend to be in the field. It is common for research projects often extend across many years. As for the field research dates, the most common practice is for the parks to permit field research one year at a time (e.g., January 1 to Dec 31). Thus, we recommend you follow this pattern by detailing the entire length of the research project (e.g., from January 15, 2012 to September 20, 2016) while requesting research permits on an annual basis (e.g., January 15, 2012 to December 31, 2012).



Study Starts

This question asks when your study will begin. The purpose of this question is to inform the park what the overall study schedule will be. It is understood that this may be estimation.

Field Research Starts

It is important to parks that they know when field work will take place. It is important both from a law enforcement perspective, and from a resource management perspective.

Examples/Best Practices: Field research may never begin before the inception of the research project.

Field Research Ends

The last date you expect to be in the field

Full Description:

- Field research may continue beyond the expiration of your Scientific Research and Collecting Permit.
- If you find that you will need to continue field work beyond the end date of your permit, contact the park which issued you the permit. Parks may extend the dates of currently active permits, or may ask you to submit a renewal application.
- Generally parks issue permits by single calendar year, regardless of the length of the project. The Research Permit and Reporting System facilitates the submission of renewal applications, and the park review process will generally be streamlined if the scope of the project has not changed.

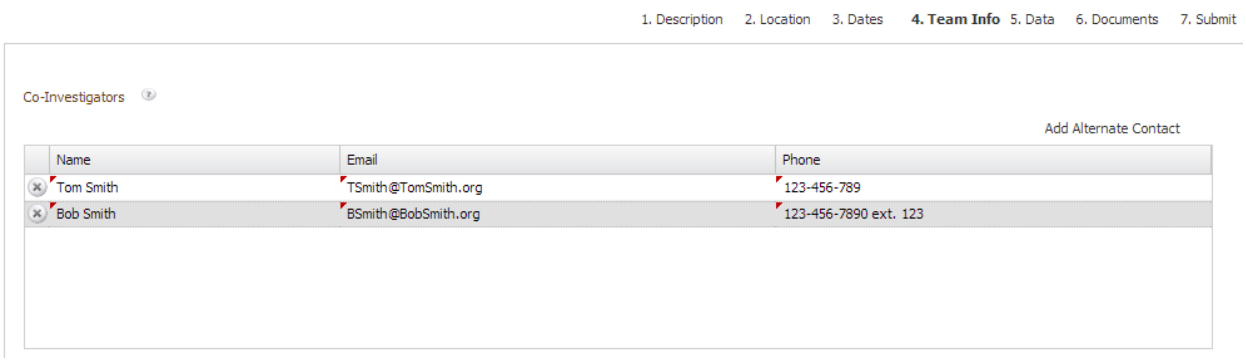
Study Ends

Expected completion date of the entire study

Full Description:

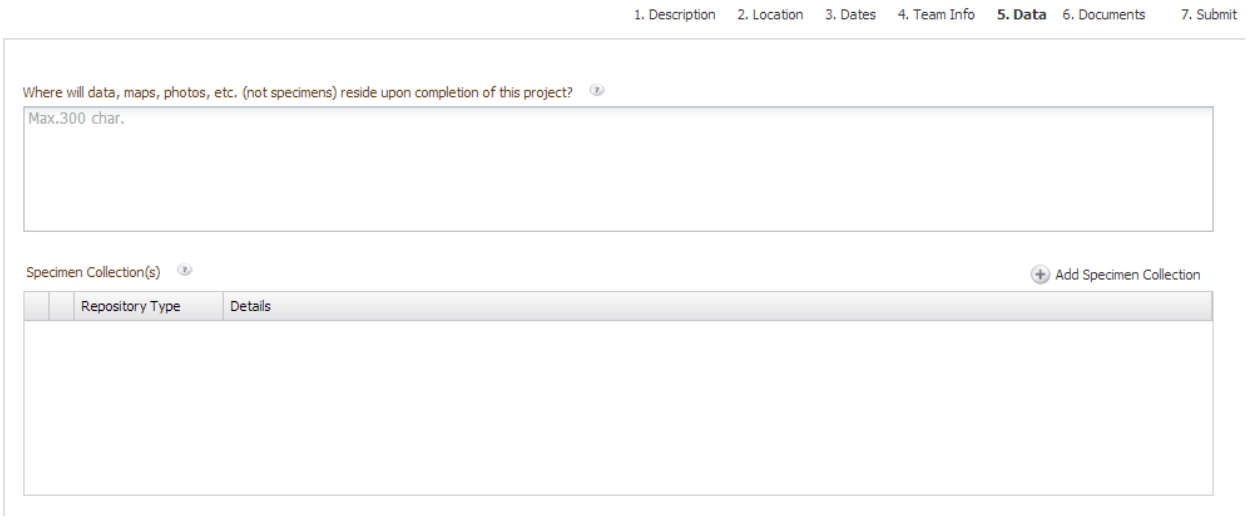
- We recommend that you specify the full duration of the research project, including completion of study work products such as final reports.
- In cases where the end date is undefined (e.g., some monitoring studies), we recommend that you enter an estimation.

4.2.4 Team Info



It is especially important that any person who may conduct field work is identified.

4.2.5 Data



Where will data, maps, photos, etc. (not specimens) reside upon completion of this project?

Where will the study generated products reside. NOTE: Collected specimens are specifically addressed in the next section and do not need to be repeated here.

Specimen Collections

Proposed disposition of specimens identified for handling or collection and material originating from such specimens. If you are not collecting anything, you can leave this blank.

- Released –
- Destroyed –
- Curated --

If you propose that specimens and/or material originating from such specimens be retained permanently, they will become part of National Park Service collections. You may request that such specimens and/or material originating from such specimens be loaned to one or more non-NPS institutions for management. If you do make this request, you accept responsibility for obtaining and submitting to NPS the signature of the official at each proposed repository using the form attached as Appendix A.

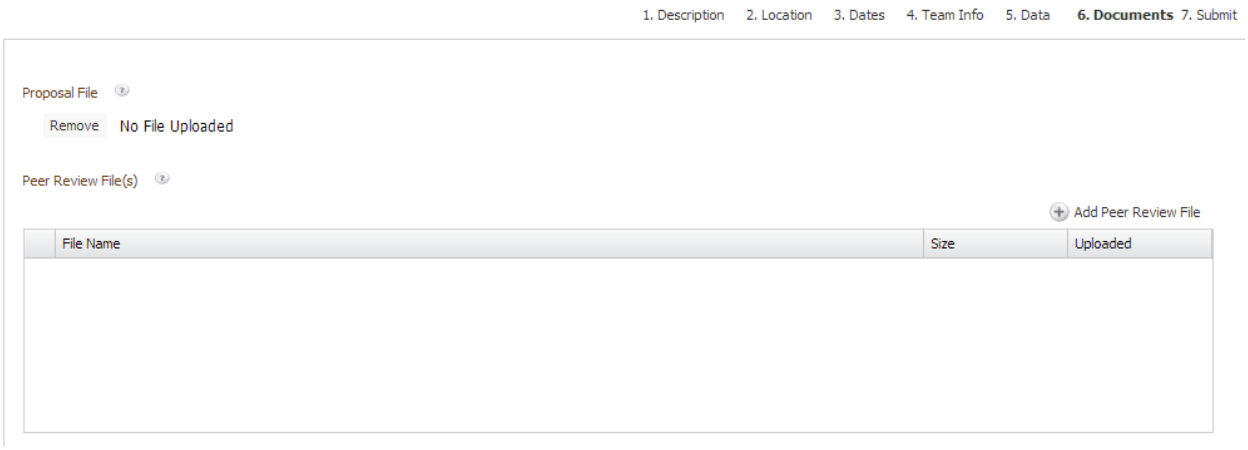
- NPS Repository

Natural Resource Program Center

- Non-NPS -
-

Examples/Best Practices: Any material collected inside NPS boundaries remains federal property in perpetuity? Perhaps even citing 36CFR2.5? I like the idea of informing them clearly up front that there are federal regulations dictating this.

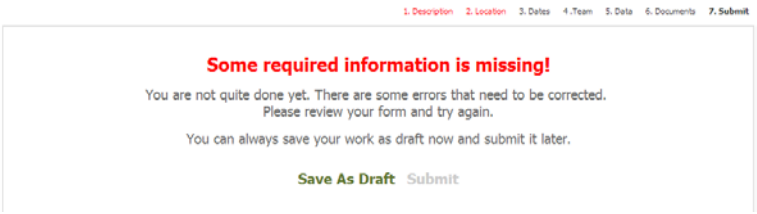
4.2.6 Documents



Proposal File

Peer Reviews and Other Documents

4.2.7 Submit



5 Research Permits

5.1 Signing

5.2 Renewing

6 Investigator Annual Reports

6.1 Overview

Q: What is an Investigator's Annual Report (IAR)?

A: The IAR is the report the U.S. National Park Service uses to consistently document and track research accomplishments pertaining to natural resources or social sciences. Provision of an IAR is required as a general condition of every Scientific Research and Collecting Permit issued by USNPS. In some cases, park managers may also provide investigators who are leading other types of research activities (Archeology, Ethnography, history, etc.) with the opportunity to contribute documentation of their accomplishments as part of the IAR process.

Q: What period of time and what locations should my report pertain to?

A: Each Investigator's Annual Report (IAR) should pertain to the research accomplishments of a single study, conducted within an individual park, during all or part of the report calendar year. If you do not have accomplishments to report because field work or other planned activities were not conducted, you should still provide an IAR (briefly explaining no activities took place during the reporting year).

An individual report should be prepared and submitted for each study you conducted within the park during the reporting year (please do not consolidate accomplishments for several different permitted studies within one report).

Q: How specific should my report be?

A: Please share as much of the specifics associated with your study objectives and findings as possible within the 4000-character size limit imposed on each of these blocks of information. People reading your report may not have any other information about your study. Thus, the details you provide in your report(s) should serve as a stand-alone abstract of your investigation. Try to include what you can of basic methods, results, and implications or discussion. The following is an example of the type of informative reporting of annual findings that is especially useful:

“To detect changes in home range, we radio-collared 15 wolverines in the Cottonwood and Kantishna Hills in July and recorded their movements at weekly intervals until September (10 weeks). The average home range of wolverines in the Cottonwood Hills (7 wolverines) was 5.7 square miles, and in the Kantishna Hills (8 wolverines) was 4.5 square miles. Both of these home ranges were twice the size of the range recorded in 1998. We attribute the larger home ranges to lowered food supply of moose and marmots. One wolverine traveled more than 20 miles from where it was first collared. Etc., etc. "

A report consisting of very brief documentation such as "We collected data on the movements of wolverines” is not nearly as effective as the previous example.

Q: Can I use a word processor to "Copy / Paste" existing documentation into a new IAR?

A: Yes. If you use this procedure, please avoid or eliminate references that are not specific to your investigation at the individual park you are reporting to. You should also review and modify the tense and content to make sure it pertains to the calendar year reporting cycle you are responding to.

Q: What other considerations should I be mindful of when completing a report?

A: The principal investigator associated with the study is responsible for the content and accuracy of each report submitted. When possible, please avoid the documentation of spatially specific attributes that could jeopardize the security of sensitive resources (caves, fossils, endangered species, etc.).

The general public may read your report on the Internet. It will be helpful if you fully define acronyms and abbreviations within your report(s) the first time such conventions are used. Potential "visitors" to your report are likely to represent a variety of interests and backgrounds. For this reason, it will also be helpful to avoid highly technical jargon when possible. If you do use technical terms, consider including common language explanations in parentheses. For example "movement of the thalweg (deepest part of channel) was shown to occur".

The appearance of your report will be enhanced when you use a mixture of upper and lower case. Please avoid documenting study titles, objectives, or findings entirely in upper case.

Another aspect of the report format will ask you to identify a single activity type that best relates to the overall objectives of your study. It is recognized that every study will not necessarily neatly match with one of the Activity Type choices. If you do not feel comfortable with any of the existing activity choices, please select the choice "Other".

Q: What kind of information will I be asked to provide?

A:

Project Title

The title associated with your study should be brief and remain constant over the life of the study unless otherwise recommended by NPS/park research coordinator. Please do not enter all the information in this field in upper case.

6.2 IAR Wizard

As part of the report format, you will be asked to indicate the status of the study you are reporting on as "Continuing", "Completed", "Suspended", or "Terminated before completion". The study should be identified as completed when the final reports have been completed (not just when the field work is completed).

7 Final Reports and Related Files