



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Natural Resource Stewardship and Science

GRSM Standard Operating Procedure: Project Initiation

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Version History		
Version	Update Date	Changes
20160719	20160719	Revised draft to appropriate format

Purpose

To ensure that all of the necessary elements are in place to get the field season started on time with all necessary resources in place. To fully document internal and external projects and ensure the delivery of high quality data.

Scope

These guidelines apply to all GRSM RMS staff involved in the initiation of new projects, studies, and or long-term monitoring protocols.

Introduction

A project generally has a defined start and end date and is not considered long-term monitoring or operational. Projects may originate internally or externally. In either case at the earliest stage of inception, the Data Manager, GIS Specialist, and Research Coordinator should be informed. This notification ensures that the data management portion of the project will support operational needs and the project products will be tracked and deployed in accordance with park needs. Long before field crews begin sampling, project data management should be well-thought out and documented. By doing this work up-front, costly mistakes, wasted resources and rushed products can largely be avoided. The most successful way to assure quality data is to plan.

Internal Projects

When the Data Manager and GIS Specialist are notified that there is a possibility of a new project basic end user requirements will be evaluated and, if applicable, related data (legacy, preliminary) will be assessed. If project initiation is confirmed (e.g., funding is ensured and resources are available) Project Lead will complete a permit application through RPRS (Research Permit and Reporting System) which is a part of IRMA (Integrated Resource Management Applications). The permit application includes such information as purpose of the study as well as summary of proposed field methods and activities (see Appendix 3). The permit application will serve as basic project documentation and a guideline for development of the protocol-specific data management plan and therefore should be populated as completely as possible. In collaboration with the Data Manager and GIS Specialist, a data collection strategy will be developed which will be tested and revised.

External Projects

The external PI will be required to apply for a permit through RPRS. The park contact should notify the external PI of this requirement. External projects that are supported by government funding shall be subject to data management standards outlined in their agreement or contract. The internal contact will work with the Data Manager and GIS Specialist at inception to assess data management requirements, and expected products that will be delivered. The "Great Smoky Mountains National Park Data Delivery Standards and Specifications Template" (DDSST) will be used to evaluate the range of potential data deliverables relevant to the project and to help define the requirements for a data management plan. In return, contractors and cooperators will have clearer understanding of project expectations and their responsibilities. Ideally, the DDSST is finalized before the PI applies for a permit through RPRS.

The DDSST acts as a data management plan for an external project. The DDSST is made up of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and a checklist which, when populated, refers both GRSM and the collaborator to the SOPs that relate to the project. Each checked box indicates that the collaborator will be held accountable for adhering to that specific standard. The DDSST also allows for additional standards to be added for a specific project e.g. data documentation standards for using data loggers such as HOBOs or iButtons. The DDSST must be populated before the Contracting Officer will process a GRSM RMS contract or agreement. The DDSST will be referred to in text of the contract or agreement.

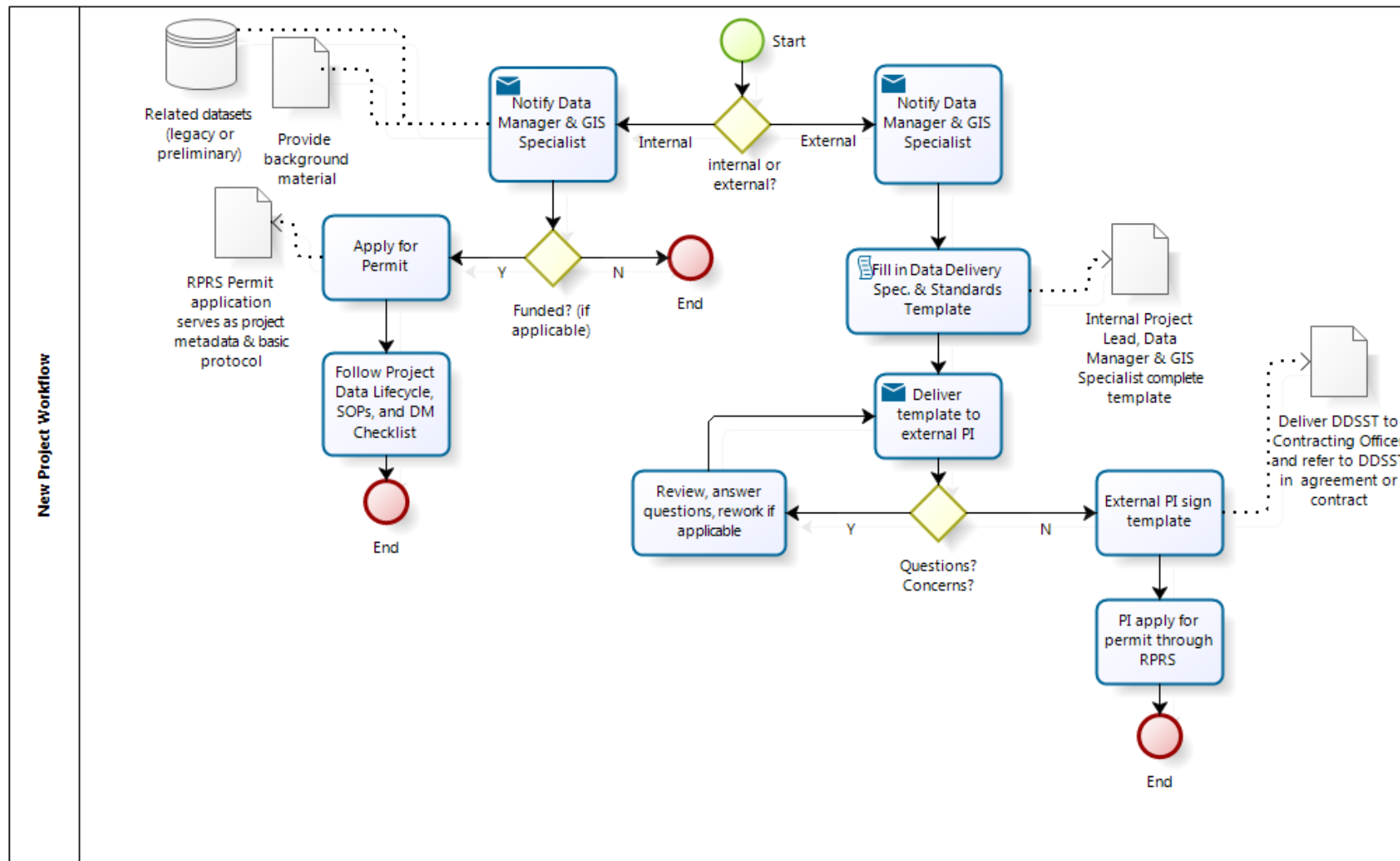


Figure 1. Basic workflow for new internal projects from projects from inception through to implementation of data management practices.

Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
Field crew leader	• Test data collection strategy • Enter data into database and provide feedback to Data Manager and GIS Specialist
GIS Specialist	• Facilitate population of DDSST when applicable • Facilitate development of data collection strategy when applicable • Develop spatial component of database and user interface
Project Lead	• Initiates DDSST completion and permit application by notifying Data Manager, GIS Specialist and Research Coordinator as soon as the external project idea is spawned • Apply for research permit for internal project • Test data collection strategy • Enter data into database and provide feedback to Data Manager and GIS Specialist • Train staff on use of data collection technology
Data Manager	• Facilitate population of DDSST when applicable • Facilitate development of data collection strategy when applicable • Develop non-spatial component of database and user interface
Roles	Responsibilities
Field crew leader	• Test data collection strategy • Enter data into database and provide feedback to Data Manager and GIS Specialist
GIS Specialist	• Facilitate population of DDSST when applicable • Facilitate development of data collection strategy when applicable • Develop spatial component of database and user interface
Project Lead	• Initiates DDSST completion and permit application by notifying Data Manager, GIS Specialist and Research Coordinator as soon as the external project idea is spawned • Apply for research permit for internal project • Test data collection strategy • Enter data into database and provide feedback to Data Manager and GIS Specialist • Train staff on use of data collection technology
Data Manager	• Facilitate population of DDSST when applicable • Facilitate development of data collection strategy when applicable • Develop non-spatial component of database and user interface

Contact Information

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Project Initiation

Date: July 20, 2016

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Appendix 1. Checklist for Initiating New Internal Project

Type: Internal

Guidance For: Internal Project Lead

- Notify Data Manager and GIS Specialist
 - o Identify likelihood of project initiation well before project planning has reached mature phase
 - o Identify background information (if applicable)
 - Protocol(s) from related projects
 - Data sets (from related studies, from preliminary data, from study you are revisiting etc...)
 - o Identify whether or not the protocol will generate sensitive information (see Sensitive Data Handling SOP)
 - o Organize background materials into a properly-configured project folder (see Directory Structure SOP and File Naming SOP)
- Follow up with Data Manager and GIS Specialist upon project confirmation
- Complete permit application through RPRS
 - o Be sure to fully explain proposed field methods and activities as well as purpose of the study (see Appendix 3)
- Follow Project Data Lifecycle, all relevant SOPs and Data Management Priorities Checklist

Appendix 2- Checklist for Initiating New External Project

- Notify Data Manager and GIS Specialist
 - o Identify likelihood of project initiation well before project planning has reached mature phase
 - o Identify background information
 - Protocol(s) from related projects
 - Data sets (from related studies, from preliminary data, from study you are revisiting etc...)
 - o Identify whether or not the protocol will generate sensitive information (see Sensitive Data Handling SOP)
 - o Organize background materials into a properly configured project folder (see Directory Structure SOP and File Naming SOP)
 - o Notify the external PI of the requirement to apply for a permit via RPRS.
- Follow up with Data Manager and GIS Specialist upon project confirmation
- Work with Data Manager and GIS Specialist to populate the DDSST
- Deliver the DDSST to external PI and explain its purpose and its intended use
 - o Solicit feedback
- Deliver feedback about DDSST to Data Manager and GIS Specialist
- Work with Data Manager and GIS Specialist to rework DDSST if required
- Deliver new draft of DDSST to external PI if applicable
 - o Facilitate signing of DDSST
 - o Facilitate embedding of DDSST into contract or agreement
- Upon finalization of DDSST facilitate GRSM permit application
- Utilize DDSST as a means of evaluating project milestones and deliverable
 - o Hold external PI accountable to standards set forth in DDSST

Appendix 3- RPRS Application

Study Title	
National Park: Great Smoky Mountains	
Type of application:	Number of permit renewal or modification requests: NPS Study Number: Previous Permit Number:
Contact Information	
Principal Investigator	Office phone #:
Mailing Address	Alternative phone #:
Name of the current institution represented	Office FAX #:
	Office email address of principal investigator:
Additional investigators or key field assistants.	
Name	Phone Email
Scientific Study Information	
Purpose of the study	
Summary of proposed field methods and activities.	
Study Schedule	Field Schedule
Initial starting date of the study:	Date to begin study within the park this application year:
Estimated date the entire study may end:	Date to end study within the park this application year:
	Will field study need to continue within the park next year (Yes/No):
Activity Type:	
Do you anticipate receiving funding assistance from the U.S. Federal Government for this study?	
Agencies:	
Destination of data, maps, photos, etc. following the completion of study.	
Proposed Study Location(s) Within the Park:	
Proposed Method of Access:	
Specimen Collection	
Handling or Collecting Specimens	
Proposed Disposition of Specimens or Materials	
Objects Collected	
Proposed Disposition of Specimens or Materials	
Objects Collected	
Proposed Disposition of Specimens or Materials	
Objects Collected	