

# Southeast Coast Network

National Park Service  
Inventory and Monitoring Division



## Standard Operating Procedure 3.1.07

### *Communicating Field Operations with SECN Parks— Version 3.0*

Please cite this as:

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## Summary

The following standard operating procedure (SOP) outlines the procedure for communicating Southeast Coast Network (SECN) field activities with parks. The purpose of communications is to ensure that all appropriate park personnel are aware of the types and locations of SECN activities, and to ensure that SECN personnel are aware of park emergency response procedures.

## Revision Log

| Previous Version # | Revision Date | Author | Changes Made                             | Reason for Change                                          | New Version # |
|--------------------|---------------|--------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| 0.9                | 1/17/2013     |        | Citation updated                         | Publication of estuarine water quality monitoring protocol | 1.0           |
|                    | 9/23/2014     |        | Updated contact and employee Information | Maintain current park contacts for field communications    | 2.0           |
| 2.0                | 12/23/2016    | Editor | Editorial review                         | Protocol publication                                       | 3.0           |
|                    |               |        |                                          |                                                            |               |
|                    |               |        |                                          |                                                            |               |

## Designated Communication Leads

The Southeast Coast Network has identified one person to serve as the primary communication lead for each primary activity that occurs within network parks (Table 1). It is the responsibility of the communication lead to ensure that the procedures outlined below occur as a part of field efforts. The communication lead may delegate this responsibility to others.

For activities other than those listed in Table 1, the appropriate protocol lead should serve as the communication lead.

**Table 1.** Communication leads for primary areas of Southeast Coast Network operations.

| Activity                               | Communication Lead | Position           |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Terrestrial Monitoring                 | Briana Smrekar     | Wildlife Biologist |
| Fixed-Station Water Quality Monitoring | Eric Starkey       | Aquatic Ecologist  |
| Coastal Water and Sediment Assessment  | Eric Starkey       | Aquatic Ecologist  |
| Stream Habitat Monitoring              | Eric Starkey       | Aquatic Ecologist  |
| Salt Marsh Monitoring                  | Lisa Baron         | Coastal Ecologist  |
| Shoreline Monitoring                   | Lisa Baron         | Coastal Ecologist  |
| Wadeable Stream Monitoring             | Eric Starkey       | Aquatic Ecologist  |
| Wetland Water-Level Monitoring         | Eric Starkey       | Aquatic Ecologist  |

## Voice Communications

Field staff are required to have appropriate voice or text communication equipment with them at all times. Each field crew is equipped with a cell phone, and in some cases radios are available from the parks (but are not always monitored). The Southeast Coast Network also has a Delorme inReach available to field crews for emergency use and standard park notification and check in. The inReach has universal coverage via satellite. Please be aware that cellular coverage is not available in all locations where SECN fieldwork will occur. Make sure that you have means of communication at your field site, as well as a backup plan..

## Planning

At the beginning of each fiscal year, the network identifies the parks in which each of the protocols will be implemented and includes this as a part of the annual work plan.

For field efforts with multi-year or intermittent return intervals (terrestrial monitoring, coastal assessments), the communication lead should contact the park steering committee member and other designated park personnel at least one month prior to field work, with the following information and requests (not all of the following will be applicable):

- The planned/proposed dates during which SECN staff will be present at the park.
- A description of the activity in which SECN staff will be engaged.
- Information on how to recognize SECN staff and their vehicles (cars, boats, coastal shoreline monitoring vehicle).
- Locations where SECN staff plan to be working.
- Any other information requested by the park in the completed park safety and contact form.
- Request for the following information:
  - Confirmation that the dates of field work are approved and do not conflict with any other park activities.
  - Availability of park housing, if needed and logistically feasible.
  - Availability of park staff, if needed to complete field work.
  - Any other information that would affect logistics (closures, events, rocket launches, etc.).
  - Names and contact information for any emergency contacts at the park for the designated time period.

## Advanced Notification

For all field work, including recurring field efforts such as fixed-station water quality monitoring and salt marsh monitoring, the communication lead should contact the park steering committee member prior to field work, with the dates during which SECN staff will be present at the park and what staff will be doing there. At that time, verify the following:

- Presence of conditions that would affect planned activities (e.g., closures).
- Contacts and times for acquiring keys for park housing.
- Availability and/or interest of park staff to participate in field activities, if not already arranged.

Please remember that for all field efforts, it is the desire of both network and park staff to include park personnel in field activities whenever possible. The earlier parks are notified of activities, the greater the likelihood of participation.

Additionally, if watercraft (including kayaks or canoes) are to be used as a part of the field operations, a float plan must be filed with the program manager, the park steering committee member, and any other identified designees no later than 48 hours prior to field work as per SECN boat safety SOP 3.1.02—Version 2.0 (Asper and Curtis 2016).

Note that the steering committee member may delegate this duty to a subordinate staff member, or there may be personnel changes at the park. Stay in contact with park staff when changes occur.

# On-Site Communications

## Park Check-In

All efforts should be made to check in with the park steering committee member or superintendent on the first day of field activities to provide information on the activities being conducted and to answer any questions related to the monitoring activities or other efforts of the Inventory and Monitoring (I&M) program. Please note that some parks (e.g., Fort Sumter) have requested daily check-ins.

Due to the timing of field efforts (often before park hours) or the location of sites to be sampled, this is not always feasible. In such cases, it is the responsibility of the SECN communication lead to make alternate arrangements with the steering committee representative or other designee.

## Daily Requirements

Each day, the communication lead (or someone else participating in the field work) must do the following:

- Notify the program manager and appropriate protocol lead when beginning and ending field operations for the day. Provide information on where in the park you will be conducting work. This information should be included on a trip plan. Also note your expected return time (this is important).
- If using boats, send a text message to or call the designated persons noting the start and completion of that day's boating operations in accordance with boat safety SOP 3.1.02—Version 2.0 (Asper and Curtis 2016) using InReach device or phone.
- Place a sign on the driver's side dash of any government vehicles indicating ownership, operator, and points of contact in case of emergency. See Appendix A (field forms) in SECN SOP 3.1.02: *Safe Operation of Southeast Coast Network Watercraft—Version 2.0* (Asper and Curtis 2016) for the proper sign

## Responsibilities of Protocol Leads and Program Manager

- If the park has identified personnel that they wish notified of daily activities, it is the responsibility of the protocol lead to ensure that this notification occurs (unless notified directly by the field crew).
- In the event that the protocol lead is unavailable or unable to do so, the program manager or designee will notify personnel as appropriate.

## Emergency Procedures

In the event of an emergency, please notify the appropriate people: In all cases 911 should be called **first** to ensure that response is provided as quickly as possible. After calling 911, contact the previously designated park emergency contact, call the program manager, and contact the protocol lead. In areas with no cellular or radio coverage, use the inReach unit to call for help.

## Literature Cited

Asper, J. R., and A. C. Curtis. 2015. Boat Operation Safety—Version 3. Southeast Coast Network Standard Operating Procedure NPS/SECN/SOP—3.1.02. National Park Service, Athens, Georgia.

## EMPLOYEE ACCOUNTABILITY FORM

I certify that I have read and I am familiar with SECN Standard Operating Procedure 3.1.07  
*Communicating Field Operations with SECN Parks—Version 3.0.*

I understand that lack of compliance with this SOP may result in disciplinary action.

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Name

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Date

## Appendix 1. Example Park Notification Letter

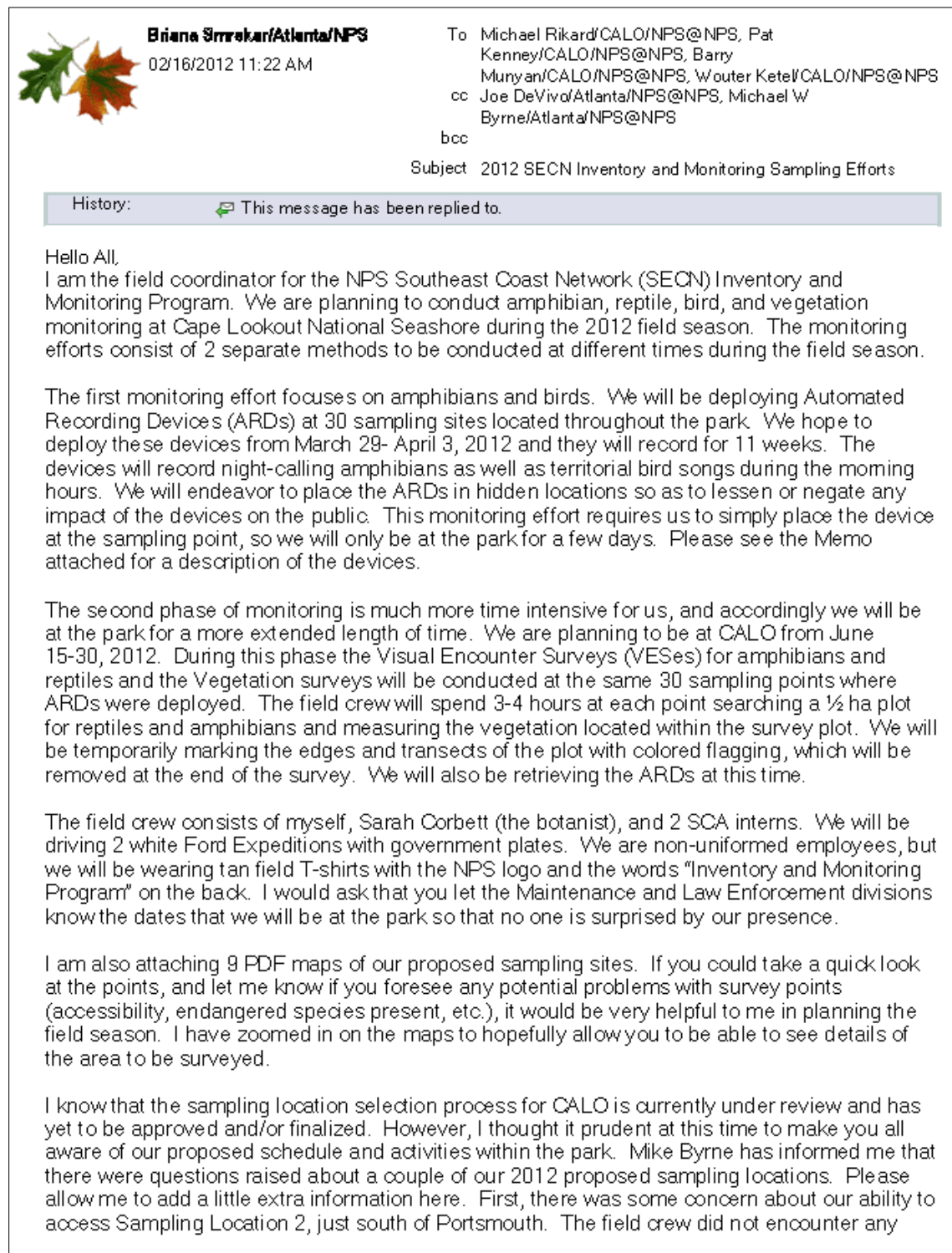


Figure 1. Sample park notification letter, page 1.

difficulties when we surveyed that location in 2010, but please let me know if there has been sufficient storm damage in that area to prohibit us from hiking to that point this summer. Otherwise, we will attempt to access the site and choose an alternative sampling location if we cannot. Secondly, the point has been raised that we do not have any sampling locations located within Portsmouth Village during the 2012 sampling effort. We have chosen to utilize a random method to determine sampling locations within the park boundaries (as described in the SECN document *Appendix 1: Southeast Coast Network Sampling Design for Vegetation, Landbird, Amphibian Communities, and fire Fuels Vital Signs*) with the goal of better understanding of park-wide resources. While we may want to survey specific habitats and locations within a park, we still need to maintain adherence to our sampling design protocol and ensure that all subsequent statistical analyses are sound and inferential to the park as a whole, rather than to a few sites only.

I am also attaching our 2012 field calendar, as was requested by CALO staff. On it you can find when we will be sampling at each separate Island of CALO.

 MEMO for ARD deployment-CALO.docx   
  2012\_Field\_Calendar.docx   
  CALO 2012 Portsmouth Area\_red.pdf  
 CALO 2012 South of Portsmouth\_red.pdf   
 CALO 2012 North of Long Point NC\_red.pdf   
 CALO 2012 Long Point NC\_red.pdf  
 CALO 2012 Great Island Area SC\_red.pdf   
 CALO 2012 Mainland and South of Great Island Area SC\_red.pdf  
 CALO 2012 Shackleford East and South Core\_red.pdf   
 CALO 2012 Shackleford West\_red.pdf   
 CALO 2012 The Cape\_red.pdf

Thanks for your help and we are looking forward to visiting CALO this coming spring and summer!

Sincerely,

Briana Smrekar

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**Figure 2.** Sample park notification letter, page 2.