



Data Store User Guide

When to Create References

This section covers how to determine when it is appropriate to create references and who has permission.

When is it Appropriate to Create References

We strongly encourage you to create references in the Data Store if:

- **The information resources was created by/for the NPS** - this is mission critical information that must be preserved and has intrinsic value to the NPS.
- **It is about the National Park Service** - There are many resources that may not be authored by the NPS, but nevertheless contain valuable information about the parks and their resources.
- **Your program/office/park that was responsible for the creation of the information resource** - If you or your cohorts created the information, you have the most knowledge to adequately describe it.
- **It is one-of-a-kind information that is not found in your local library** - Information that is not managed by an enterprise system will get lost, guaranteed!
- **You have a digital copy of the information resource and you intend to upload it** - If you have a digital file, we will take it!

While you must not meet all of the criteria, the more that are met increase its priority.

When is it Better to NOT Add References

In general, we discourage the creation of references if:

- **You have little information about the information resource you are attempting to describe** - If you can't provide a reliable title, date of issue/creation, description, and author/creator, it is questionable whether there is enough information about the information resource to make it useful in the future.
- **You do not intend to upload a digital file** - If you don't upload a digital copy, there is a tremendous risk that the information will be lost through time. Furthermore, it is incredibly frustrating to other users to who want to access the information yet can't. If you are concerned about posting sensitive or copyrighted information, be assured that the Data Store is robust enough to handle it.
- **There is already an existing reference in the Data Store** - Please don't add a duplicate reference - that only confuses people and undermines the credibility of the Data Store and NPS. If you need to edit an existing reference but do not have permission, please contact us for assistance.
- **The information resource is from another program that has a history of publishing their content in the Data Store** - More than likely they will be publishing it. Please contact them to confirm.
- **You are not dedicated to contributing quality information to the Data Store** - If your effort is a duty-as-assigned and you see little value in contributing content to the Data Store, please don't.

When is it Entirely Up to You

That leaves a lot of things in the middle which are neither encouraged nor discouraged. In some cases, you might meet the criteria in both camps. For these, it is entirely up to you. If it helps you manage park resources, it is worth adding.

A Brief Introduction to Producing Quality Content

From experience, here are the key things for you to consider that will go a long way in helping you create quality content:

- **Check to see if the reference already exists** - Let's avoid duplicates!
- **Always add at least the bare minimum metadata** - We consider the bare minimum to be title, date of issue, set of authors/creators, description, and some keywords. Proof them all for accuracy and spelling.
- **Link a reference to a unit only if it contains information about that unit and/or was created by the unit** - Because this is the NPS, people want to find park-specific information. Arbitrarily linking to a unit just because it may be of interest to the unit or because a copy resides at the unit completely degrades the integrity of the unit link. Note that there are other ways to manage content of interest to a unit.
- **All digital attachments that are documents should be in PDFs format** - They are easiest to read and more difficult to edit

Permissions and Ownership

All NPS staff automatically have permission to create references describing information resource¹. The Data Store is open to all, regardless of position or directorate. While the original design of the Data Store evolved out of natural resources, it was done with the full expectation of supporting other directorates and programs, particularly cultural resources.

There is no need to login because it is automatic and through active directory, the Data Store knows your correct set of permissions.

The following rules govern how references are managed:

- If you create a reference, you are automatically added as owner
- As owner, you have permission to edit the reference. You may also remove (i.e., inactivate) it.
- You can add other owners at any time
- You may remove owners, including yourself, as long as there is always at least one owner

¹ Reports, maps, brochures, datasets, etc.