



Check Before You Collect

Research Permit and Reporting System Guidance



Applying for a permit

- Create an **Investigator account** in [Research Permit and Reporting System \(nps.gov\)](https://research.nps.gov/rprs/) (RPRS)
- Review [General Conditions](#) & [park conditions](#) in RPRS
- Ensure your **study plan** covers any proposed collecting
- **Consult park [Permit Office & Curator](#)** for guidance.
- **Apply for a Scientific Research and Collecting Permit**
 - Determine if you will collect specimens.
 - Determine if collected specimens should be permanently preserved—if so, they must be cataloged in the park museum collection.
 - Complete & submit a signed Appendix A of your application if you propose deposit of specimens in a non-NPS repository.

Reviewing your permit

- **Check your permit for accuracy** to ensure it reflects your proposed project activities & dates.
- **Contact the park [Permit Office](#)** if you have questions.
- **Study the permit conditions** carefully & prepare to comply with ALL conditions.

Permit conditions protect:

- **Park resources**
- **Park visitors & visitor experiences**
- **Park operations**
- **You, the researcher**

Preparing for your field visit

- **Review field protocols & all permit conditions** with your research team.
- **Contact the park [Curator](#)** for instructions on submission of specimens for permanent retention in park collections & copies of project documentation.
- **Review your research safety plan** with your team & confirm that you have personal protective equipment for the whole team.
- **Dress for the conditions.**
- Remember **all collected specimens are federal property**, whether destroyed in or discarded after analysis or permanently preserved in the park museum collection.
- **Contact the [Permit Office](#) with questions.**

Before arriving

Ideally 6-8 weeks in advance of starting field work

- Contact the park [Permit Office](#) if you wish to request field assistance
- Contact the park [Curator](#) to review your obligations & establish a time schedule for
 - Cataloging & labeling of specimens authorized for permanent retention in park museum collections
 - Coordinating with non-federal repository (as applicable)
 - Submission of specimens

When you are about to begin permitted field work

- Check in with the park [Permit Office](#) & use [Check-in/Check Out service](#), if park requires

Carrying permit in the park

- **Carry your fully signed permit & field-related park-provided instructions** while in the field conducting research.
- **Show your permit to receive entrance** into the park when conducting research
- **Reference your permit to check terms & conditions**, e.g., collection amounts, permitted locations, or permit-specific conditions.
- **Show your permit if questioned** by visitors or rangers while in the field.
- **Ensure your vehicle dashboard displays permit.**

Following up after leaving

- **Review your permit conditions & obligations** again.
- **File your IAR** (Investigator's Annual Report) following [online instructions](#) if you held an active permit in the reporting year.
- **Report the status of remaining obligations** in an email to [Permit Office Primary Contact](#) & [Curator](#) **each year after the year of expiration** through the year the study is completed & the park accepts the **“Completed” status**.
- Contact the [Curator](#), as applicable, to confirm protocols to:
 - Send collected specimens outside the project team for analysis
 - Submit cataloging data
 - Label specimens
 - Submit associated documentation
 - Submit specimens for deposit
- **Submit a copy of your published report.**

Key contacts and resources

Go to the [Research Permit and Reporting System \(nps.gov\)](https://nps.gov/research-permit-reporting-system) to:

- Search for the [Park Information Page](#)
- Find the park [Permit Office Primary Contact](#)
- Find the park [Curator Contact](#)
- Contact RPRS Administrator if park contacts are missing:
bill_commins@nps.gov
- Find additional instructions & documents under [Help](#)
- Find [Investigator Help](#) & [Investigator Specimens Help](#)

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National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior