

Southeast Coast Network

National Park Service
Inventory and Monitoring Division



Standard Operating Procedure 3.1.07

Communicating Field Operations with SECN Parks— Version 3.2

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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

Revision Date	Author	Changes Made	Reason for Change	New Version #
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
12/23/2016	Editor	Editorial review	Protocol publication	3.0
3/1/2021	SECN	Minor edits, template update	Annual review	3.1
4/22/2024	SECN	Minor edits	Annual review	3.2

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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
Vegetation Monitoring	Forbes Boyle	Botanist
Wildlife Monitoring	Michael Parrish	Wildlife Biologist
Estuarine Water Quality Monitoring	Eric Starkey	Aquatic Ecologist
Stream Habitat Monitoring	Stephen Cooper	Physical Scientist
Coastal Wetland Monitoring	Ches Vervaeke	Coastal Ecologist
Shoreline Monitoring	Ches Vervaeke	Coastal 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 always. Each field crew is equipped with a cell phone, and sometimes radios are available from the parks (but are not always monitored). The Southeast Coast Network also has multiple Garmin InReach devices available to field crews for emergency use as well as standard park notification and check in. The InReach has universal coverage via satellite. Be aware that cellular coverage may not be available in all locations where SECN fieldwork will occur. Field staff should maintain a backup plan for communication if the primary communication method fails.

Logistical Planning and Advanced Notification

At the beginning of each fiscal year, the network identifies the parks in which each protocol will be implemented and includes this as a part of the annual work plan that is communicated to park staff at annual steering committee meeting. At least one month prior to field work commencing, the protocol communication lead should contact the steering committee member for the park (or their designated park contact person) to discuss the information outlined below.

- When possible, it is desirable to include park personnel in field work activities to foster collaboration and further partnership between SECN and the parks.
- The proposed dates SECN staff will be present at the park.
- A description of planned work activities.
- Information on how to recognize SECN staff and their vehicles.
- Planned work locations within the park.
- Any other information requested by the park in the completed park safety and contact form.
- The network communication lead should request the following information from the park contact:
 - 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 assist with field work.
 - Any other information affecting logistics (e.g., closures or planned burns).
 - Contact information for a designated park emergency contacts

Additionally, if watercraft (including kayaks or canoes) are to be used as a part of the field operations, a float plan must be filed on the SECN server and notification made to the program manager, network safety officer, and park contacts. Notification of the float plan must be made no less than 48 hours prior to field work per SOP 3.1.02 *Safe Operation of Southeast Coast Network Watercraft—Version 2.1* (SECN 2021).

On-Site Communications

Park Check-In

All efforts should be made to check in with the park communications lead on the first day of field activities to provide information on the activities to be conducted and to answer any questions related to the monitoring work or other efforts of the Inventory and Monitoring (I&M) program.

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 protocol communication lead or their designee must:

- Notify the program manager and park contact when beginning and ending field operations for the day. Provide information on where in the park personnel will be conducting work. (This information should also be included on a trip plan.). An expected return time should be included.
- 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 2.1 (SECN 2021) using InReach device or phone.
- If parking on private property or public right-of-ways, place a sign on the driver's side dash of any government vehicles indicating ownership, operator, and points of contact in case of emergency. If access to park property requires private property access prior approval from landowner is required. Written approval is preferred. See Appendix A (field forms) in SECN SOP 3.1.02 (SECN 2021) for the proper sign description.

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 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

Southeast Coast Network (SECN). 2021. Safe operation of Southeast Coast Network Watercraft—Version 2.1. Southeast Coast Network Standard Operating Procedure NPS/SECN/SOP—3.12. Southeast Coast Network, Athens, Georgia. Available at: <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2284674>

EMPLOYEE ACCOUNTABILITY FORM

I certify that I read and am familiar with SECN Standard Operating Procedure 3.1.07 *Communicating Field Operations with SECN Parks—Version 3.1*.

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

Name

Date

Appendix A. Example Park Notification Letter

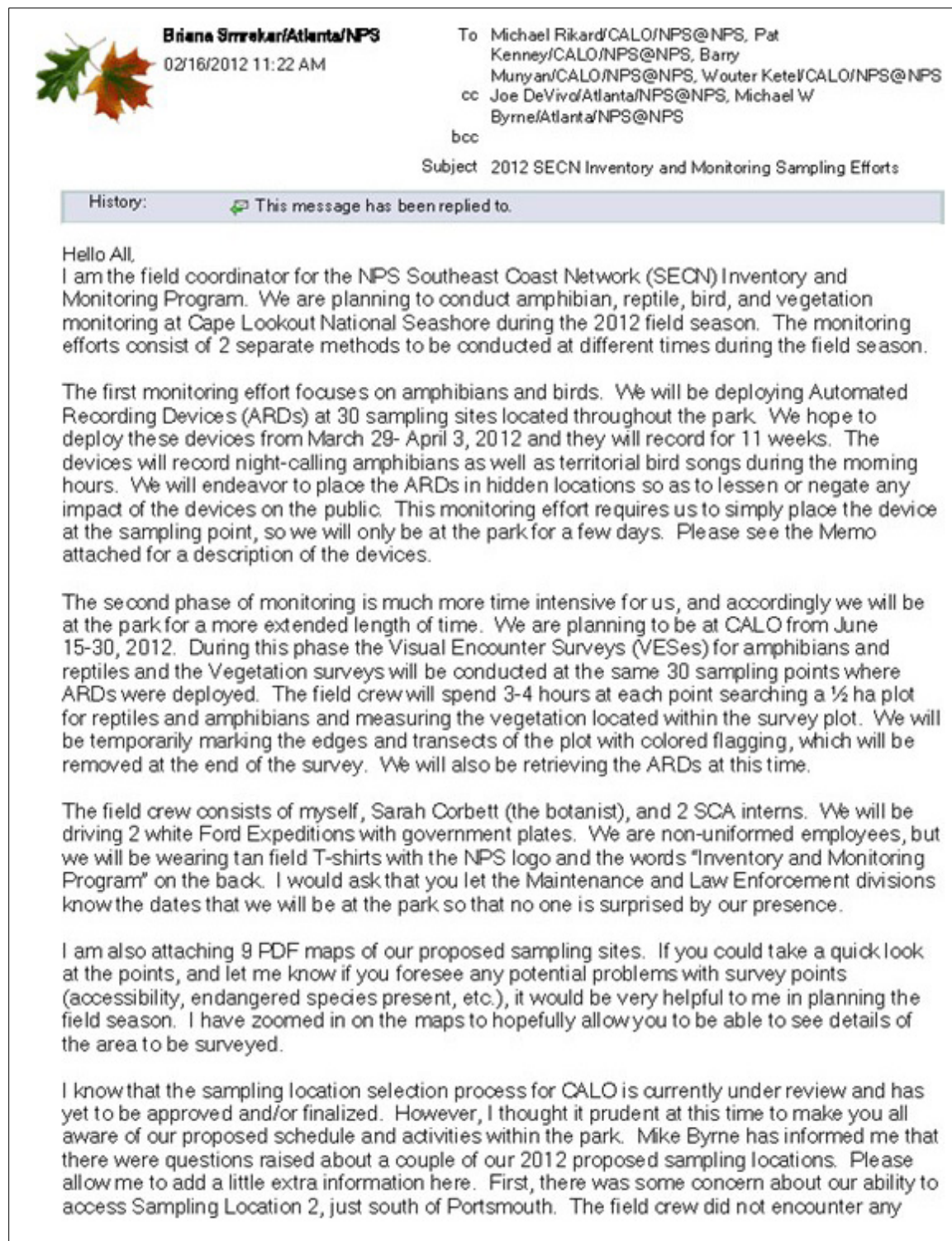


Figure A-1. Sample park notification letter, page 1.

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,

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Figure A-2. Sample park notification letter, page 2.