Curatorial Responsibilities for Researchers

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve

Introduction

If you are issued a research permit that allows collecting on National Park Service (NPS) lands, your signature on the permit indicates that you agree to comply with the NPS policies as well as park- and project-specific conditions of your research permit. One Service-wide stipulation for researchers is that they follow standard protocols for the curation of collections generated during research on park lands. **Any collections from park lands regardless of where they are stored, remain the property of the NPS and subject to curatorial regulations, which may include field notes, photographs, forms or any other original items.** This document is a checklist that can lead you through the processing of collections. ***The curatorial requirements outlined in this document apply to both NPS and non-NPS researchers.*** Park-generated research projects and specimens collected by park staff are not exempt from these requirements.

Your Application

<u>Before your research begins</u> describe in your application and study plan the kind of collections you would like to make (be specific about size or number of specimens to be collected). Also describe your intentions for analysis and what arrangements you will make for the final disposition of the collections.

If specimens will be on a long-term loan or temporarily reside in a place other than a National Park Service facility:

- Please note that the NPS does not loan specimens to individuals—institutional sponsorship is required. Arrange for short- or long-term loan to another institution (even for just during your study)
- Contact the other institution and discuss the loan with that institution's museum curator or person in a similar role
- Print a copy of your NPS research application (at the bottom is a signature line that needs to be signed by the curator of the institution agreeing to the curatorial responsibility while the specimens are on loan)
- Return the signed copy to the park Research Administrator.

When you are collecting:

The following pieces of information are required fields in the NPS collections database and need to be recorded for each specimen collected (in addition to any other information you wish to document). It is highly recommended that you review these fields prior to collection.

- Classification
- Habitat (for biology)
- Collector
- Identified By and Date
- Collection Date
- Locale (general geographic description)
- Collection Number
- Period/System (geology & paleontology)
- Collection Site
- Phylum/Division (for biology)
- Condition
- Preservation and/or preparation
- Description
- Quantity or item count (keep track while collecting)
- Elevation
- Specimen name (scientific and common)
- Family (for biology)
- Lat./Long. (with reference datum
- Formation (for geology)
- Type (if designated)

*** Note the differences by discipline. For further clarification refer to cataloging details.**

When you are finished collecting but before you leave the park:

- Obtain an accession number for your collection from the park curator (see contact information below). This accession number must eventually appear on the label of each specimen collected. Specimens may not leave the park/headquarters until they are accessioned and park staff records the accession number. Please plan sufficient time to complete this step. If you cannot meet this requirement, please call the park curator at 907-822-5234 to make other arrangements for getting accession numbers.
- Report to park staff the number of specimens that were collected. Estimates are acceptable (though not encouraged) for large collections, provided that an actual number is reported as soon as possible. Museum staff will assign you a block of catalog numbers—one number for each specimen that will be permanently retained (not destroyed).
- Obtain an NPS Outgoing Loan Agreement form, to be signed by the individual responsible for the loan. (All specimens, as well as their derivatives and byproducts, remain the property of the United States). NPS policy requires that long-term loans be renewed every 10 years. As part of this agreement the designated institution will be responsible for assisting NPS staff in conducting periodic inventories.
- Obtain from park staff:
  * Cataloging instructions (including the list of required fields and the proper format provided as an Excel spreadsheet template)

Soon after leaving the park:

Call in your specimen count to the Park Museum Program staff (if you did not know this when you left the park), so you can get your catalog numbers over the phone. When you call, please have the following information ready:

- your permit number and accession number
- dates collecting began and ended
- number of specimens collected (Specimens that are consumed in the course of research need not be cataloged.)
- the name of the repository/institution in which the specimens will be housed, and the name, title and contact information of the individual who will be responsible for the specimens

Labeling Specimens

Specimens must be labeled with NPS accession and catalog numbers, either directly on the specimen or on a label that can be reliably associated with a specimen. If you use ICMS labels can be generated electronically.

Labels should be printed on archival quality (acid-free) paper or Tyvek using permanent ink. LaserJet printing is recommended. All labels must contain park accession and catalog numbers in permanent ink. Archival ink and labeling materials may be obtained from the park.

Wrangell-St. Elias numbers begin with WRST, as in the following example:

WRST-01234 [10 characters total for the accession number—including the hyphen]

WRST 99999 [12 characters total for the catalog number—include spaces as necessary]

* **The hyphen placement is necessary to distinguish the accession number from the catalog number. The curator will provide an example specific to the collection.**

Within one year of the final date of collecting:

Submit at least one of the following to the park curator:

- Completed NPS cataloging worksheets or cataloging spreadsheets.
- A printout of your institution's catalog records, including fields showing park accession and catalog numbers; and the institution's catalog or tracking number.

If requested as part of your permit, please send copies of all of project field records (notes, maps, recordings, etc.) to the park at the address below. Please copy notes, maps and other written or printed matter onto acid-free paper. This requirement is a safeguard, in case original materials are accidentally destroyed or lost in the future.

Submit a copy of any associated reports which result from analysis of the collections to the park Curator regardless of where the collection is to be stored.

As soon as practical:

Submit any specimens along with your labels and associated documentation to the park (if they are to be permanently retained there) OR to the repository where they are to be stored (on loan). **Original field records must be retained permanently in association with the collection.**

If you find that you will have trouble meeting these deadlines, call or write the museum curator at the address below to make other arrangements.

Please feel free to contact the curator during this process with any questions.

Attn: Museum Curator
Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve
PO Box 434, Mile 106.8 Richardson Hwy
Copper Center, AK 99573-0434
telephone: 907-822-5234
e-mail us: wrst_tweet@nps.gov