SUMMARY OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL HISTORY COLLECTIONS IN THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE.

The following is a synopsis of current regulations, policies and guidelines for the accountability and preservation of natural history collections in the national park system. This synopsis is not exhaustive. It was prepared to assist the network coordinator when preparing contracts and cooperative agreements to accomplish the inventories. It was also intended to assist parks in the Southeast Coast Network of the Inventory & Monitoring program in issuing collecting permits for inventories and later documenting the collections.

NPS Management Policies (2001)

4.2.1 NPS-conducted or -sponsored Inventory, Monitoring, and Research Studies
Superintendents may authorize National Park Service staff to carry out routine inventory, monitoring, study, and related duties without requiring an NPS scientific research and collecting permit. With or without an NPS permit, Service staff will comply appropriately with professional standards and with general and park-specific research and collecting permit conditions. All research and data and specimen collection conducted by NPS employees will be appropriately documented and carried out in accordance with all laws, regulations, policies, and professional standards pertaining to survey, inventory, monitoring, and research.

4.2.3 Natural Resource Collections
Natural resource collections include non-living and living specimens. Guidance for collecting and managing specimens and associated field records can be found in the Code of Federal Regulations (36 CFR 2.5) and NPS guidance documents, including the museum handbook. Non-living specimens and their associated field records are managed as museum collections. Living collections will be managed in accordance with the provisions of a park's management plan, the Animal Welfare Act, and other appropriate requirements. **Field data, objects, specimens, and features obtained for preservation during inventory, monitoring, research, and study projects, together with associated records and reports, will be managed over the long term within the museum collection.** [emphasis added] Specimens that are not authorized for consumptive analysis will be labeled and cataloged into an appropriate cataloging system in accordance with applicable regulations (36 CFR 2.5). *(See Paleontological Resources and Their Contexts 4.8.2.1; Collecting Natural Products 8.8; Consumptive Uses 8.9; Natural and Cultural Studies, Research, and Collection Activities 8.10; Social Science Studies 8.11. Also see Director's Order #24: Museum Management)*

Code of Federal Regulations
Title 36--PARKS, FORESTS, AND PUBLIC PROPERTY
[Revised as of July 1, 2000]

Sec. 2.5 Research specimens.

(a) Taking plants, fish, wildlife, rocks or minerals except in accordance with other regulations of this chapter or pursuant to the terms and conditions of a specimen collection permit, is prohibited.

(b) A specimen collection permit may be issued only to an official representative of a reputable scientific or educational institution or a State or Federal agency for the purpose of research, baseline inventories, monitoring, impact analysis, group study, or museum display when the superintendent determines that the collection is necessary to the stated scientific or resource management goals of the institution or agency and that all applicable Federal and State permits have been acquired, and that the intended use of the specimens and their final disposal is in accordance with applicable law and Federal administrative policies. A permit shall not be issued if removal of the specimen would result in damage to other natural or cultural resources, affect adversely environmental or scenic values, or if the specimen is readily available outside of the park area.

(c) A permit to take an endangered or threatened species listed pursuant to the Endangered Species Act, or similarly identified by the States, shall not be issued unless the species cannot be obtained outside of the park area and the primary purpose of the collection is to enhance the protection or management of the species.

(d) In park areas where the enabling legislation authorizes the killing of wildlife, a permit which authorizes the killing of plants, fish or wildlife may be issued only when the superintendent approves a written research proposal and determines that the collection will benefit science or has the potential for improving the management and protection of park resources.

(e) In park areas where enabling legislation does not expressly prohibit the killing of wildlife, a permit authorizing the killing of plants, fish or wildlife may be issued only when the superintendent approves a written research proposal and determines that the collection will not result in the derogation of the values or purposes for which the park area was established and has the potential for conserving and perpetuating the species subject to collection.

(f) In park areas where the enabling legislation prohibits the killing of wildlife, issuance of a collecting permit for wildlife or fish or plants, is prohibited.

(g) Specimen collection permits shall contain the following conditions:

(1) Specimens placed in displays or collections will bear official National Park Service museum labels and their catalog numbers will be registered in the National Park Service National Catalog.

(2) Specimens and data derived from consumed specimens will be made available to the public and reports and publications resulting from a research specimen collection permit shall be filed with the superintendent.

(h) Violation of the terms and conditions of a permit issued in accordance with this section is prohibited and may result in the suspension or revocation of the permit.

NPS-77: Natural Resources Management Guideline

Chapter 5, Program Administration and Management (Collections, page 57)
Natural resource specimens preserved and maintained in park museum collections play an important role in the NPS mission to preserve and protect the natural resources within each park. Natural resource collections document park resources for the purposes of information, resource protection and management, and future analysis. Systematically collected specimens are the products and subjects of vital research that provide baseline data necessary for continued and effective park management. Museum specimens collected in the past may provide information that is otherwise unobtainable.

The NPS museum program objectives include the commitment to collect, document, and preserve objects, specimens, samples, and associated records. A critical element in the preservation of permanently retained natural resource collections is ensuring that early and continuing consideration of curatorial concerns is an integral part of the park's scientific research planning process. Many park research projects produce specimens that may have inherent long-term preservation value. The responsibility for the curation of such specimens and associated data must be determined by a park's scientific and curatorial staff prior to starting a research project and be written into the conditions of each research proposal, cooperative agreement, contract, or collecting permit. Planning includes determining provisions for field documentation and preparation of specimens, identifying the recipient NPS or non-NPS repository for the specimens, and ensuring that each project funds the cataloging and initial preservation and storage costs.

The value of a natural resource museum collection is in its use or potential use. Some categories of functional unity and utility are: general reference collections, voucher collections, research collections, and exhibit collections.

Chapter 5, Program Administration and Management (Project Documentation, page 53). Data, records, reports, and other related information generated as a result of research activities conducted within a park or on museum specimens collected in a park. Natural resource archives may contain field notes, daily journals, maps, drawings, photos and negatives, slides, videotapes, raw data sheets, remote sensing data, copies of contracts, correspondence, repository agreements, specialists' reports and analyses, reports and manuscripts, collection inventories, field catalogs, analytical study data, sound recordings, computer documentation and data, tabulations and lists, specimen preparation records, conservation treatment records, and reports on all scientific samples lost through destructive analysis.

Museum Handbook, Part I: Museum Collections

Chapter 1, National Park Service Museums and Collections
(Section C.2, Natural History Collections)
Extensive and precise documentation of specimens must be maintained to ensure that information gleaned from specimens is available and useful. For this reason, field records (e.g., field notebooks, photographs, negatives, drawings, maps, raw data sheets, instrument charts, remote sensing materials) should be maintained as integral parts of the collection.

Museum Handbook, Part II: Museum Records

Chapter 2: Accessioning and Chapter 3: Cataloging
Documentation is a continuous process that starts when a specimen is first collected and includes field notes, field cataloging, mapping, photographing, conservation treatment and subsequent annotations, and other information gathered about a specific specimen.

Director's Order 24, NPS Museum Collections Management

Section 4.3.16, Project-generated Collections
Require project budgets to include funding for the basic management of collections that are project-generated. Collections management includes cataloging; labeling; conservation examination and treatment (including specimen preparation); initial storage of objects and specimens; and organization and storage of project documentation, including appraisal, arrangement, description, finding aid production, and appropriate archival housing.

- Before starting, permitting, or contracting a project, specify in writing in the task directive, proposal, agreement, permit, or contract, the parties responsible, the designated NPS or non-NPS repository, the collections management tasks, and a time schedule for completion.

- Fund subsequent ongoing maintenance costs of collections management from the operating base of the responsible park, center, or other repository.
- If project-generated collections cannot be accommodated in available storage space, and new storage space construction is necessary, program to construct new space to accommodate the expanded collection. If interim storage is needed, specify in the project task directive the location of that storage, and state that it must meet NPS standards. Identify the funding source for interim storage.

4.3.17 Systematic Collections

Add collections made through systematic research to the museum collection. House those associated with a single accession at the same repository to facilitate research and use. As appropriate, lend these collections for exhibit, research, conservation, and other approved uses. Superintendents may authorize housing of collections from the same accession at different repositories if by so doing preservation, research, and use will be improved.

Note: Director's Order #12: Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision Making, its attendant Handbook, and draft Director's Order #88, Administrative Records, direct the creation of administrative records and project files for all compliance actions. These files are permanent and so to be retained in perpetuity, as per DO-19. These files should then be linked to the collecting permit project file, the creation of which is outlined in the RPRS Guide "Administrative Guide for Park Research Coordinators" (see below).

Director's Order #19: Records Management

4. General Records Management Requirements

4.4 Records and data that are collected, created or generated by other organizations working for the NPS under contracts, interagency agreements, cooperative agreements or other agreement instruments with the NPS, are considered NPS records unless the contract or agreement specifically states otherwise. All partnership agreements, contracts or other agreement instruments should clearly state this. Copies or originals of all project documents and data generated under these agreements should be obtained and retained by the NPS office managing the project.

4.5 Contracts, interagency agreements, and cooperative agreements and similar agreement instruments should address copyright issues of any material produced under the agreement. Copyright is not necessarily vested with the NPS unless specifically obtained under the terms of the contract or other agreement.

5. Mission Critical Records

5.1 Mission critical records are those records that are most necessary for fulfillment of the NPS mission. Mission critical records are permanent records that will eventually become archival records. They should receive the highest priority in records management activities and resources and should receive archival care as soon as practical in the life of the record.

5.2 Mission critical records include:

All records of natural and cultural resources and their management that contain information that affects the future management of the resource. General management plans and other major planning documents that record basic management philosophies and policies, or that direct park management and activities for long periods of time. All land records regarding legal title, rights, and usage of NPS lands. Any records that directly support the specific legislated mission of a park unit in addition to, or distinct from, the overall NPS mission.

Director's Order 74, Studies and Collecting (in draft as of June 2001)

Administrative Guide for Park Research Coordinators

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND COLLECTING PERMIT

This guidance is provided to assist parks in administering Scientific Research and Collecting Permits in National Parks (36 CFR 2.5). The permit process uses the following documents:

- Application for a Scientific Research and Collecting Permit
- Scientific Research and Collecting Permit
- Application Procedures and Requirements for Scientific Research and Collecting Permits
- Guidelines to Researchers for Study Proposals
- General Conditions
- Investigator's Annual Report
- Cover Sheet

2. Once the completed application form and research proposal are received, park staff should:
e. Assess proposed research for potential impact under NEPA guidelines before a permit is issued. A determination must be made that the proposed project is categorically excluded or that, as a result of conducting an appropriate level of environmental assessment, it may proceed within the framework of any park-specific conditions that may be required.

3. If a permit is approved:
g. In a single folder for each study number, hardcopies of the final application and permit package (including all signed forms) will be filed in a secure location. All relevant information, including permit and application forms, study proposals, peer-reviews, correspondences, or related information including notes, photos, maps, and field data, are placed in the file. These records are considered resource management files and are maintained for long-term use. The park may desire to use laser jet printing on acid-free paper and folders to assist with their preservation. Final disposition within five years of inactivation should include incorporation of the files in the park's museum collection as permanent archives. All copies of field notes, data, reports, and other records associated with the study that are submitted to NPS pursuant to a permit must be accessioned and cataloged.

4. If the permit is not approved:
a. A letter of explanation must be sent to the applicant explaining the grounds for disapproval. Phone or verbal discussions may also take place, but do not replace the need for a written response. The correspondence should clearly state what elements of the proposal are unacceptable. If modifications could make the proposal acceptable, the park may state them at this time. If the permit is to be denied based upon a lack of researcher qualifications or institutional affiliations, copies of written consultation on this issue with qualified scientists or resource specialists should be obtained for the records.

b. A copy of the correspondence and application should be placed in a file identified by Principal Investigator's name and year of application. Rejected application files should be maintained with the study number files in a secure location (See Step 4.g above). If the application pertains to a project that was previously approved and received a prior study number, an additional copy of the rejected application and associated correspondence is also placed in the study number file.

SUGGESTED MUSEUM PROCEDURES FOR PARK MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL HISTORY COLLETIONS

1. Park accessions the project when the collecting permit is issued. Accession as a "field collection". Even if no specimens will be collected, there will be field records that should become an archival collection within the museum collection. For guidance on accessioning procedures, refer to the NPS Museum Handbook, Part II, Chapter 2.

2. The collecting permit states whether or not specimens will be collected. If collected, it states whether or not they will be consumptively used or saved. If saved, why they will be saved and where they will be preserved/stored.

3. During collection it is essential to gather complete information required for cataloging specimens. A museum catalog worksheet (Form 10-254 B) could be used during field work for documenting pertinent data on-site, thus assuring that the collector has recorded all pertinent data. This will also make later data entry in ANCS+ easier and quicker.

4. The collecting permit or contract should identify records to be created as part of the collecting activity and specify the disposition of the field records. Ideally, original records should be obtained by the park and made a permanent part of the museum collection. If original records are not available, high quality "archival" quality copies should be obtained.

5. The preservation of natural resource specimens begins with field collecting techniques. Collecting biological specimens involves several steps that include techniques for killing, fixing, mounting, and preserving. The methods for preserving specimens depend on the intended use and should be spelled out in the contract or cooperative agreement. It is essential for the collector to provide park curatorial staff with documentation on the techniques and materials used in the field collecting activity. Future maintenance of the specimens may depend on this information.

6. Park prepares an outgoing loan for the collection records and specimens during the processing by the collector.

7. Park assigns catalog numbers for collections (data and specimens).

8. Specimens are labeled with NPS labels. NPS labels may be generated from ANCS+ once data has been entered. [36 CFR 2.5(g)1] (For guidance on specific NPS labeling procedures for NH specimens, refer to the NPS Museum Handbook, Part II, Appendix J, Section K. Instructions for printing labels using ANCS+ are Chapter 5 of the ANCS+ User Manual.)

9. Park provides collector with a copy of ANCS+ (software and instructions).

10. Collector catalogs the records and specimens and enters data into ANCS+ thereby making the information available for future accountability, inventory, and research purposes. (Museum Handbook, Part II, Chapter 3, Cataloging, Section F, Natural History Catalog Data Fields, and, Appendix H, Natural History.)

11. Collector provides the completed ANCS+ records to the park along with field records and specimens if they are to be deposited in the park.

12. Park appends ANCS+ data to their existing database.

13. If collections are returned to the park following initial cataloging and preservation, the outgoing loan made to the collector is canceled.

14. If the collections are stored off-site, the park determines that the records and specimens are stored according to museum standards to ensure their preservation and protection. A new outgoing loan may be necessary.

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