



# NATIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE & WILDLIFE SCIENCE CENTER & CLIMATE SCIENCE CENTERS DATA SHARING POLICY

Prepared by:

NCCWSC/CSC Data Management Working Group  
US Geological Survey

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More Information: [NCCWSC Data Policies](#)

Point of Contact: Emily Fort, Data and IT Coordinator for the NCCWSC & CSCs, [efort@usgs.gov](mailto:efort@usgs.gov)

## BACKGROUND

This document outlines the National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center (NCCWSC) and the Climate Science Centers' (CSCs) policy regarding the sharing of data and products by collaborators funded partially or entirely by the NCCWSC and/or the CSCs. The objective of this policy is to ensure and facilitate full and open access to scientific data and data products. This policy is to be considered a binding condition for all NCCWSC/CSC-supported projects.

As used in this document, the term “data”<sup>1</sup> refers to raw data, processed data, published data, field notes, observations and supporting documents. It includes data generated by experiments, models, simulations and by observations at specific times and locations as well as any custom code or applications that were developed to aid in data analysis or transformation and are necessary to understand the data. Code and applications must include adequate documentation and/or within code comments to understand the function.

In order to provide guidance and support for data sharing, the NCCWSC/CSC Data Management Working Group has developed three documents. This is the first document, a [NCCWSC/CSC Data Sharing Policy](#), and it requires data and associated products be publically shared; it also requires the development of a data management plan. The second document, [NCCWSC/CSC Data Management Plan Guidance](#), provides details to researchers on what should be included in the data management plan that is required as part of the proposal and for funded projects. Finally, the third document, the [NCCWSC/CSC Data Management Manual](#) is intended to provide CSC Data Stewards and researchers funded by the NCCWSC or a CSC information on a variety of topics including roles and responsibilities, metadata, file formats, and data standards. Each CSC has a [Data Steward](#) to work with funded PIs on the development of the Data Management Plan, answer any questions related to data management, and assist with the transition of data and information products into the NCCWSC/CSC repository.

## DATA SHARING POLICY

The NCCWSC/CSCs are committed to the establishment, maintenance, validation, description, distribution, and long-term availability of data. Therefore:

1. Compliance with this data sharing policy is required. Exceptions to this policy sought by the Principal Investigator (PI) must be fully documented by the PI(s) and agreed to and approved by the appropriate NCCWSC or CSC director prior to the funding of the project. PIs will be evaluated based on past performance on USGS and CSC funded projects. Individuals or institutions with problems in timely or effective completion of projects will be eliminated from further consideration until the issues are addressed to the satisfaction of the CSC and NCCWSC.
2. Project proposals submitted to the NCCWSC and the CSCs for funding must include a written data management plan consistent with the [NCCWSC/CSC Data Management Plan Guidance](#).
3. PI(s) are expected to share the data, deliverables, data products, samples, physical collections, and other supporting materials created or gathered in the course of work funded by the NCCWSC/CSC.
  - a. When data are transferred to the NCCWSC repository - ScienceBase - data deemed sensitive or privileged must be identified and appropriately labeled by the PI(s). These data should also be identified in the project's Data Management Plan. Policies for access to these data must be negotiated between the PI(s) and the NCCWSC/CSC when the proposal is accepted for funding.

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<sup>1</sup> Ensuring the Integrity, Accessibility, and Stewardship of Research Data in the Digital Age. National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, and Institute of Medicine 2009, page 22.

- b. PI(s) making use of proprietary data or restricted project data from partners must make clear in their proposal what information, data, and conclusions can and cannot be released to the public upon conclusion of the project or whether there are defined sunset times involved.
  - c. This policy does not supersede the legal requirements imposed upon organizations to restrict public access to data (e.g., endangered species). However, such legal requirements restricting access must be clearly stated in the project proposal and scopes of work. The PI(s) is responsible for ensuring that data sharing does not violate local legal requirements, such as university Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) and informed consent documents for human subjects-related work. Information access restrictions will be taken into account during the proposal review and ranking process.
  - d. For projects with Tribal partners and/or related to Traditional Ecological Knowledge, any restrictions on data sharing should be identified in the proposal and as part of the Data Management Plan.
  - e. The NCCWSC/CSCs will not release data in violation of court decisions or that are part of ongoing court cases.
  - f. If release of the samples or physical collections is not planned, this limitation must be described and explained in the project proposal and the data management plan.
4. Release of data and associated products at the conclusion of the project into the public domain is the de facto policy; requests to limit or delay public access to products must be negotiated with NCCWSC or CSC director and documented in writing, prior to beginning the project. Requests to delay public access cannot extend past one year from the conclusion of the project unless agreed to and approved by the appropriate NCCWSC or the CSC Director during the proposal review. If a delay of public access is approved, data and associated products must be delivered to the NCCWSC/CSC Data Steward at project completion and will be stored in a restricted area until the delay period has expired. Conclusion of the project is defined as the date upon which final deliverables are due for submission to the NCCWSC/CSC as stated in the project agreement.
5. For projects making long-term observations or monitoring, data collected in a calendar year must be made public within 90 days from the end of the calendar year unless an exception is negotiated between the PI(s) and the NCCWSC/CSC director and documented in writing when the proposal is accepted for funding.
6. PI(s) shall be responsible for the quality, completeness, and description of the data, metadata, and associated products. After the data and metadata are deposited with the NCCWSC repository, the NCCWSC assumes responsibility for the archiving, persistence of, and access to, the data, metadata, and ancillary holdings. Data and data products may be deposited in additional repositories if the PI wishes.
7. Robust metadata that fully and accurately describes the dataset and ensures its fitness for use are required when data are deposited with the NCCWSC/CSC. For more information on metadata, see the [NCCWSC/CSC Data Management Manual](#).
8. PI(s) are responsible for depositing appropriate samples and physical collections associated with their research in an established and recognized repository within their discipline.
9. PI(s) are required to preserve and transfer their data and data products to the NCCWSC/CSC in commonly accepted standards needed for long-term climate science research. The NCCWSC/CSCs strongly encourage use of open standards and widely-recognized formats such as delimited plain-text for tabular data, JPEGs for images, and Acrobat PDFs for scanned documents. A complete listing of approved formats by data type can be found in the [NCCWSC/CSC Data Management Manual](#).
10. Data that rely on licensed software for access, evaluation, and use must be identified in the project proposal, and proprietary formats and software must be documented in the metadata. Such data must be extracted from the proprietary software and submitted in a non-proprietary, delimited, "plain-text" format with documentation of character-encoding.

11. Data must be cited and referenced in publications and other media using a bibliographic reference similar to that used for journal articles in a format identified by the [NCCWSC/CSC Data Management Manual](#).
12. University researchers and researchers from non-governmental organizations will retain principal legal rights to intellectual property developed under NCCWSC/CSC research activities in accordance with their funding agreements.