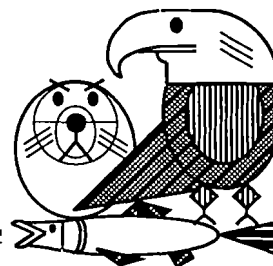


# Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council

Restoration Office

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## MEMORANDUM

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MAR 6 1996

**To:** Restoration Work Force and Liaisons  
**From:** Stan Senner, Science Coordinator *Stan*  
**Date:** March 4, 1996  
**Subject:** Manuscripts, Reports, and Data Archives

EXXON VALDEZ OIL SPILL  
TRUSTEE COUNCIL  
ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD

We need to make progress on policies regarding the submission of manuscripts as reports to the Trustee Council and on long-term archiving of EVOS data. The following are offered for discussion purposes at the Restoration Work Force meeting on Wednesday, March 6.

### Manuscripts and Reports

The Trustee Council encourages principal investigators to publish the results of their work in peer-reviewed journals, and one way to do this is to allow manuscripts to fulfill requirements for reports (both annual and final) to the Trustee Council. The DPD instructions in the *Invitation to Submit Restoration Proposals for Federal Fiscal Year 1997* (Appendix A, p. 7) state: "With approval of the Chief Scientist and the Executive Director, on a project-by-project basis, the publications referenced above may satisfy a portion of the report requirements." We have requests from several PIs pending, and the following is offered as guidance for this option:

Reports are the primary and permanent record of how restoration funds have been used and of what has been learned or accomplished with those funds. Thus, it is necessary that annual and final reports contain complete descriptions of project activities and results. With approval of the Chief Scientist and the Executive Director, on a project-by-project basis, manuscripts may satisfy a portion of the report requirements. Project investigators should contact the Science Coordinator with such requests in advance of submitting a report.

### Trustee Agencies

State of Alaska: Departments of Fish & Game, Law, and Environmental Conservation  
United States: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Departments of Agriculture and Interior

**Every report, regardless of whether it is in standard or manuscript format, must include items A through C** (Report Cover through Study History, etc.) as outlined in the *Procedures for the Preparation & Distribution of Reports* (August 1995).

If a project's activities and results can be **completely** described within one or more manuscripts to be submitted for publication, then a copy of that manuscript(s) may be submitted as the entire body of the report.

If a project's activities and results cannot be described completely within one or more manuscripts, the manuscript(s) may serve as a portion of the report body. In such cases, **the combination of the manuscript and additional report material must present an organized, integrated, and complete account of project activities and results.** In such cases, the report should be prepared in standard format (i.e., according to the guidelines cited above). **The material covered in the manuscript should be cited in the text of the report, and the manuscript itself should be included as an appendix to the report.** Thus, the content of the manuscript is cited and discussed--but not repeated--in the appropriate sections of the report. This saves effort for the PI, but ensures that an integrated report is available for readers.

Finally, when a manuscript is submitted to the Chief Scientist as a report or part of a report, **the manuscript should be submitted as a draft before it has been submitted to a journal.** This will give the PI the benefit of EVOS peer review early in the process and minimize the chance that results published in the peer-reviewed literature are not acceptable to the Chief Scientist and EVOS reviewers. This already has happened more than once and is awkward for all concerned. If an already-published manuscript is submitted, PIs should be aware that the publication may not be acceptable to the Chief Scientist, in which case a full report in standard format will be required. Regardless of the stage of publication at the time of its submission, the manuscript must be in a form that can be duplicated with other reports in the Oil Spill Public Information Center.

**(Note: For this reason alone, conflicts with a journal's copyright may make submission of an already-published manuscript problematic.)**

### Data Archiving

The Trustee Council has not adopted a policy about ownership and retention of data gathered through restoration projects. Even during the Natural Resources Damage Assessment, project reports have been the main product of EVOS projects, and we have given little thought to the databases themselves. This is in contrast to Exxon Corporation, which made clear to its contractors that the data they gathered belonged to the company. The fact that the Trustee Council has no policy on data archiving is of concern because there is life after the oil spill and

Pis move on to other jobs and lives. When this happens, data will be lost because no one will know where the data may be found or no one will be able to access or interpret the data, even if they know where the data are physically. As time passes, this problem will increase.

A discussion of a data policy rests on several assumptions:

- data gathered with public funds belong to the public;
- most EVOS data are of enormous long-term value (e.g., in the event of another oil spill or for monitoring environmental change), but only if they are accessible and useable to people other than the individuals who gather the data; and
- the Trustee Council, including the Restoration Office and OSPIC, may or may not exist beyond the year 2001, and the trustee agencies under which EVOS data are gathered should assume responsibility for archiving these data.

It also is important to note that the issue here is the long-term fate of data--not the right of investigators to use and publish the data they gather. Although the public is the ultimate owner of any data gathered with public funds (e.g., a FOIA request can gain access to any data in the federal trustee agencies), principal investigators traditionally have first right to use and publish data they gather .

There needs to be more investigation of data archiving policies within the trustee agencies and other government agencies, such as the National Science Foundation, but the following is offered for discussion purposes:

**(1) Final reports to the Trustee Council should include a section (an appendix?) briefly describing and defining the data gathered in a given project, the form in which those data are archived, the location of the data, and a permanent institutional contact other than the individual who gathered the data.** For example: data gathered for this project include counts of harbor seals in Prince William Sound based on aerial surveys, plus supporting data on time of day, stage of tide, air temperature... These data are stored in an Rbase format, with an accompanying text file giving more information about their content and the methods used to obtain them (i.e., data about data, including definitions of terms). These are permanently archived at the Division of Wildlife Conservation, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Juneau, Alaska...

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**(2) It is the responsibility of the trustee agency under whose auspices the data were gathered to store and make available copies of these data on a permanent basis.** In many cases, this will involve nothing more than a few computer diskettes, which can be stored by the agency in an envelope with a project's final report. (What about copies of field notes, etc?) The Trustee Council does not expect the agency to retain specimens or other samples gathered by an investigator, unless there is some on-going legal or scientific reason for doing so.

The above should at least get a discussion rolling. Please come prepared to discuss these issues at the next Restoration Work Force meeting, which is now scheduled for Tuesday, March 11. Please bring your comments to the meeting or get them to me in writing in advance (ideally by close of business on Friday, March 8). By copies of this memo, I also invite comments from members of the Scientific Coordinating Committee and Legal Counsel.

Thank you.

cc: Chief Scientist  
OSPIC  
Scientific Coordinating Committee  
Legal Counsel