

Part 630 – Procedures and Processes

Subpart G – Data Management

630.60 Purpose

- A. Reserved – pending migration of ecological site information to a new corporate database.
- B. Vegetation data are in the National Soil Information System (NASIS), in which data records can be entered, edited, and retrieved (<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/soils/survey/tools/>).

630.61 Responsibilities

Ecological site information is maintained in the NRCS corporate data systems designed for such purposes. It is the responsibility of NRCS to provide these systems, whether development and maintenance is conducted by NRCS employees or contracted with a separate entity. It is the responsibility of NRCS employees to use the corporate data systems. Other data systems may be developed and maintained by partners, States, or individuals, but data stored in these systems may or may not be suitable for integration into the corporate data systems.

630.62 Ancillary Data Storage Plan

The official storage site for all ancillary data pertaining to ecological site (ES) information is the soil survey office (SSO). Working copies may be maintained at the soil survey regional office (SSR), but the data will be transferred to the SSO and become part of the official record when it is approved. Likewise, State specialists and others may maintain working copies and then transfer the data to the official record at the SSO when it is approved. The SSO may establish “read-only” files that can be accessed by technical specialists for ecological site description (ESD) development.

(1) Digital Storage

All ES information should be kept on a separate external hard drive with a large memory capacity because of current limitations in agency information technology. Most workstation computer hard drives do not have sufficient memory to handle the number of photographs and amount of documentation required to conduct ES work. An external hard drive suitable for ES work should be used in these cases. A backup copy should also be maintained at an offsite location. The digital file structure must always be the same, whether an external hard drive or an internal computer hard drive is used.

- The following guidelines must be used for naming files. An underscore will be used to indicate a space. For example, “Ecological Sites” must be “**Ecological_Sites**” as the folder or file name. This is important because some databases do not satisfactorily handle spaces in folder and file names. **Bold** characters are used for the folder and file names. This structure is recommended to ensure that anyone at any time can locate and recognize all information filed for a completed ES project.
- The filing structure should be consistent throughout all offices within an SSR. Two examples of such filing structures are shown in part 630, subpart H, section 630.79. If an office desires a filing structure that is different from the one recommended by the SSR, it must be described in detail in writing. It must then be made available to all individuals who may need to access the files or data and to a State office and SSR contact who has ES responsibility. This ensures that all affected parties have accessibility to all stored data.

(2) Hardcopy Storage

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- (i) A hardcopy, or paper, storage system should follow the same guidelines as those used for digital information. Modification of the filing structure should follow the guidance given for modification of digital filing structures.
- (ii) Commonly, a hardcopy file of ES information is desired, particularly for use in the field or during a review. A six-part folder is suggested for easy, consistent organization. Suggested contents of the folder include the following:
 - Part 1.—Maps, official series descriptions (representative soils), photographs, correlation documents
 - Part 2.—Field and technician notes, correspondence
 - Part 3.—Old ecological, range, forest, and pasture site descriptions
 - Part 4.—Draft ESD, draft S&T diagram, site concept records, rangeland health matrices
 - Part 5.—Technical data, such as transect data sheets, RANGE-417, and WOOD-5, etc.; cited literature
 - Part 6.—Administrative records, project plans, QC and QA reports, location of digital data storage