

***Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council***  
**Data Policy**

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# ***Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council***

## **Data Policy**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

This Policy is to facilitate access to, and the confident use of, data and information used in and produced by projects and programs funded by the *Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council* (EVOSTC or “Trustee Council”). The Policy’s objectives are the preservation and availability of project and program information in well-documented, accessible, and understood formats to scientists and the public in a timely manner; and to protect the right of investigators who collect data, develop models, or who apply models to generate significant new insight to be cited whenever the data, models, or insights are used.

### **II. APPLICABILITY**

- A. This policy applies to all projects or programs which receive any EVOSTC funding, including investigators and staff members and contractors thereof. Such persons agree to follow this policy as a condition of receiving funding.
- B. This policy has been developed in accordance with known current guidelines and standards for environmental data collection activities. In practice, this policy must comply with Federal laws and the laws of the State of Alaska and be consistent with the policies of sponsoring agencies.
- C. The Trustee Council’s Executive Director will be notified of any instances where this policy is not being followed, and which cannot be resolved by the parties directly involved. The Executive Director will review the situation and recommend a course of action to the Trustee Council, which could include notification of parent agencies of principal investigators who have not complied with this policy and/or precluding funding for future projects or programs.

### **III. DATA PRESERVATION**

All documents (including written, electronic, photographic, and magnetic) or physical evidence (such as tissue samples) produced or collected as part of any Trustee Council-funded project or program must be preserved, unless written authorization is given by the EVOSTC Executive Director to destroy items no longer necessary for restoration or other purposes. To submit a request to destroy items:

1. Create an inventory of the items you wish to destroy that contains the following information for each item:
  - a. A description of the item;
  - b. The date the item was created or obtained by the governments or their contractors and the date of destruction under the applicable government agency retention schedule;

- c. A description of any analyses of the item, including the location of those analyses;
  - d. Whether the item is unique or is a copy of a still existing original item.
2. Transmit the inventory to the EVOSTC Executive Director:
  - a. via email at [restoration@evostc.state.ak.us](mailto:restoration@evostc.state.ak.us);
  - b. via mail to 4210 University Dr., Anchorage, AK 99508-4626; or
  - c. via fax to 907-276-7178.

#### **IV. DATA & METADATA PROCEDURES**

- A. **Definition of Data** – For the purposes of this policy, data is defined as quantifiable values that are collected by humans or machines, processed for quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) by a trained observer, likely to be useful for future scientific analysis, and documented with appropriate metadata.
- B. **Data Management Plan (DMP)** – Once the Trustee Council approves project or program funds and the Trustee Council’s Executive Director provides spending authorization, the principal investigator (PI) shall contact the Trustee Council’s Science Coordinator to establish a DMP. The DMP will supplement information in the project or program proposal developed by the PI. The DMP will include procedures to process, format, document, and migrate all data to the chosen archive location, and identify a schedule for delivery.
- C. **Metadata** – A metadata (“data about data”) record must be created for each dataset. The metadata format must comply with the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) Content Standard for Digital Geospatial Metadata (CSDGM). Metadata records may be created using any available method, so long as an FGDC-compliant metadata record (specific to each dataset) is produced. A list of popular metadata creation tools and information on creating FGDC-compliant metadata records can be found on the Trustee Council’s website at <http://evostc.state.ak.us/index.cfm?FA=policies.dataManagement>.

#### **V. DATA & MODEL ARCHIVING**

- A. **Identifying Datasets for Archiving** – Principal investigators are required to work with the Science Coordinator to identify and permanently archive datasets (data and metadata), and to submit metadata for such datasets to the Trustee Council’s data archive. The data itself must be archived in either the Trustee Council’s data archive or in another archive approved by the Science Coordinator. A list of approved data archive locations can be found on the Trustee Council’s website at <http://evostc.state.ak.us/index.cfm?FA=policies.dataManagement>. Principal investigators may request approval of additional data archives from the Science Coordinator.
- B. **Approval of Data Archive** – In approving a data archive for storage of EVOSTC datasets, the Science Coordinator will consider if it:

1. is an appropriate location for the type of data to be archived;
  2. is actively maintained by an agency or organization capable of providing access to datasets for the foreseeable future; and
  3. provides continuous public (unrestricted) access to datasets electronically (e.g. via a website).
- C. **Quality Assurance and Control (QA/QC)** – Before a dataset is shared, an FGDC-compliant metadata record must be provided and proper QA/QC procedures must be applied.
- D. **Data Archiving Formats** –The final version of the data must be archived in one of the following formats: Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Access, CSV, XML, KML, or ESRI Shapefiles. Other formats may be used if approved by the Science Coordinator. For Excel and CSV files, descriptive header information must be included.
- E. **Model Archiving Formats** – Principal investigators of projects or programs producing models are also responsible for archiving those models. Archived computer models must include the computer source code in a commonly-used computer language along with documentation as described above. Documentation which is sufficient to allow use of the model by persons having the knowledge and abilities typical of numerical modelers must be submitted. Model products must include sufficient explanation so that persons having knowledge and abilities typical of Trustee Council-funded principal investigators can understand them.
- F. **Final Versions of Datasets and Models Archived Prior to Submission of Final Report** – Prior to the submission of a project or program final report to the Trustee Council office, principal investigator(s) are responsible for ensuring that final versions of all models and/or datasets (with appropriate metadata) have been archived in the chosen location. After a final report has been finalized and published (in accordance with the Trustee Council’s Procedures for the Preparation and Distribution of Reports), all archived datasets and models will be made available to the public. A project or program will not be accepted as satisfying the requirements of funding until all data associated with the project or program are submitted with the final report document.

## **VI. DATA SHARING, PUBLICATION & CITATION**

- A. **Data is Considered Public** – Data acquired under Trustee Council funding is considered public information and, as such, will be made available to the public via electronic means and otherwise. Copyright to such data is owned by the State and/or Federal agencies sponsoring the project or program.
- B. **Statement regarding EVOSTC Funding** – Following academic courtesy standards, principal investigators must include the following statement with any

publically-distributed or otherwise published datasets or manuscripts, including refereed scientific journals or other public presentations:

"This material is based upon work funded by the *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill Trustee Council under Project/Program No. (enter number). Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of the Trustee Council."

- C. **Principal Investigator Credited** – Principal investigator(s) retain the right to be fully credited for having collected and/or processed the data. Persons who acquire data, models, or model products produced with Trustee Council funding are responsible for communicating with the originating investigator(s). If a substantial use of the data is planned, collaboration and co-authorship with the originating principal investigator(s) is expected for any resulting publications. However, originating principal investigators may not unreasonably impede use or publication of archived data, models, or model products, provided they receive due credit for their contribution.
- D. **Data Sharing** – In the interest of expanding knowledge in the scientific community, principal investigators are encouraged to provide copies of datasets to other national and regional data archives in addition to the requirements of this policy, and consistent with the requirements of their sponsoring agencies. Principal investigators are specifically authorized and encouraged to publish the results of their own research.

## VII. DATA LIABILITY

User bears responsibility for use of data. Datasets are only as good as the methods and QA/QC procedures used for collection. The user bears all responsibility for their use or misuse of information produced or collected with Trustee Council funding, including the use of any and all datasets, models, model products, reports, research, comparisons, or analyses. The Trustee Council, Trustee agencies, principal investigators, project or program personnel, and their staff do not assume liability for any claims, injuries, or damages in any manner related to the use or misuse of such information.