



# Data Management Plan for the North Coast and Cascades Network Inventory and Monitoring Program (2005)

Natural Resource Report NPS/NCCN/NRR—2009/078



**ON THE COVER**

Royal Basin, Olympic National Park.  
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# **Data Management Plan for the North Coast and Cascades Network Inventory and Monitoring Program (2005)**

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## Executive Summary

The central mission of the National Park Service (NPS) Inventory and Monitoring Program is to provide timely and usable scientific information about the status and trends of park resources to park managers. To meet this challenge, we need an information management system that can effectively produce, maintain and distribute the products of scientific work done in our parks.

Good data management is the means by which a thorough understanding of the value of scientific information about our natural resources can become a part of our National Park Service heritage. Data management refers to the framework by which data are acquired, maintained, and made available. Data management is not an end unto itself, but instead is the means of maximizing the quality and utility of our natural resource information. A robust system for data management is particularly important for long-term programs where the lifespan of a data set will span the careers of several scientists. Seen in this way, it becomes obvious that data management is vital to the success of any long-term monitoring initiative.

The overarching goal of our data management system is to provide timely and usable scientific information about the status and trends of park resources to park managers. The success of our program hinges upon our ability to produce, manage and deliver this information to its intended audience. Our strategy for achieving this goal can be summarized as follows: Ensure the quality, interpretability, security, longevity and availability of our natural resource data. In implementing a data management system we will strive for the following:

- Confidence in the security and availability of natural resource data and related information
- Easy access to most information, and appropriate safeguards for sensitive information
- Awareness of the intended use and limitations of each data set
- Infrastructure and documentation that encourages data exploration
- Compatibility of data sets for exploration and analysis at larger scales and across disciplines
- Implementation of standards and procedures that facilitate information management, and that reinforce good habits among staff at all levels of project implementation – project leaders, technicians, and volunteer data collectors
- A proper balance between the standards needed to ensure quality and usability, and the flexibility to meet specific needs and encourage innovation
- A natural resource culture which views data not as a commodity but as the lifeblood of our work

The North Coast and Cascades Network (NCCN) Data Management Plan outlines how we intend to implement and maintain a system that will serve the data and information management needs of our Inventory and Monitoring Program. This plan reflects our commitment to establishing and maintaining a robust system for data management to ensure the availability and usability of high-quality natural resource information.

The NCCN Data Management Plan describes how our Network will:

- support Inventory and Monitoring Program objectives
- acquire and process data
- assure data quality
- document, analyze, summarize and disseminate data and information
- maintain nationally developed data management systems
- maintain, store and archive data

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