



## **PRBO Data Sharing Policy**

November 2003; last updated Oct. 8, 2008

PRBO reserves the right to modify, revise or supplement this policy, as it deems appropriate.

It is PRBO policy that data should be shared whenever possible while considering the tradeoffs between widespread distribution of data sets, the need to assure data quality and validity, and the privacy rights of land owners, as applicable. The general rule is that data should be released as soon as possible, along with documentation that can be used to judge data quality and potential usefulness.

PRBO believes that the intellectual investment and time committed to the collection of a data set entitles the investigator to the fundamental benefits of the work. Therefore, publication of descriptive or interpretive results derived immediately and directly from the data is the privilege and responsibility of the investigators who collect the data. This is one of the primary motivations for scientific data collection, and the scientific method is supported by this principle.

PRBO encourages its scientists to anticipate that most data collected will eventually become part of the public domain, and recommends that procedures be employed to facilitate this sharing, such as concurrent metadata generation, data verification, data entry, and data backup.

Data for which there are no associated metadata, or which have not been verified, should not be shared. Data that have not been used for peer-reviewed publication should be shared with caution. Data used in publications should be ready for public distribution at the same time as the actual publication. Data relevant to public policy should be shared as quickly and widely as possible. All PRBO data that have been shared should be maintained in a fashion that facilitates its continued public accessibility. This includes the need for data versioning, informing users when there have been important changes to public datasets. However, PRBO has no obligation to inform anyone who has received data from the organization of subsequent changes (such as corrections, additions, deletions) to those data. Data collected on private lands or vessels may be subject to more extensive sharing restrictions, depending on agreements between PRBO and collaborators. Some contractual agreements may preclude sharing (or publicly posting on a web or FTP site) of some PRBO data.

PRBO maintains numerous datasets, including several with hundreds of thousands of records covering 20 or more years and involving multiple investigators. PRBO

recognizes that these datasets can be used for many purposes, either on their own or through combination with other data. Any researcher making substantial use of a dataset should communicate with the investigators who acquired the data, or those to whom responsibility for the data has been entrusted, prior to publication. In most cases these researchers should anticipate that the data collectors or current managers would be co-authors of published results. PRBO will encourage and facilitate the ethical and courteous use of data within its archives.

PRBO will maintain a record of all data access and will notify those who access the data that the data may be the intellectual property of PRBO. PRBO requests that the appropriate PRBO scientists and PRBO be acknowledged in any publication, report, presentation or the like using data that have been collected by PRBO scientists.

Before any agreements to share PRBO data are reached, including posting on a website or FTP server, the specific case must be discussed with the relevant PRBO Division Director, Science Director and/or Executive Director as appropriate. The requesting party(s) and Division Director or person authorized by a PRBO Director must sign a specifically crafted data sharing agreement, memorandum of understanding, or a copy of this Data Sharing Policy acknowledging that all involved agree to abide by its recommendations. A copy should be filed with the Division Director and with the appropriate PRBO data manager.

Any costs that PRBO incurs in the process of providing or maintaining public access to its datasets should be reimbursed. These costs should be considered at the project proposal stage for new data, and at the data request stage for legacy data. Costs include hourly wages for persons responsible for data maintenance and retrieval, as well as indirect costs for maintenance of computer equipment and backup systems.

-----  
*Developed by Grant Ballard, revised per feedback at PRBO's 2003 Science Retreat and with additional revisions and approval by the PRBO Management Team, November 2003; updated per the PRBO Data Committee, October 1, 2007; updated per the Management Team, May 1, 2008; updated per Chief Scientist and Informatics Division review Oct. 8, 2008.*

PRBO reserves the right to modify, revise or supplement this policy, as it deems appropriate.