

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

LANDOWNER CONTACT GUIDELINES TO OBTAIN SITE ACCESS

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April 17, 2000

Acknowledgment:

The information contained in this document is a synthesis of material from several sources. Some was originally prepared in 1994 by Prof. Virginia Lesser, Department of Statistics, Oregon State University, as part of a survey conducted for an EMAP demonstration study of prairie pothole wetlands in North Dakota. Some is from surveys conducted by Western Ecology Division in Oregon and the Mid-Atlantic. The guidelines have been modified to be more generally applicable and to reflect surveys on streams.

LANDOWNER CONTACT GUIDELINES TO OBTAIN SITE ACCESS

How organizations contact a landowner to gain access to an aquatic resource sampling site can impact whether the landowner will give permission. The objective of this document is to describe procedures for contacting landowners and give example letters and questions. This information can then be modified for use in a particular aquatic resource survey conducted by an organization. Additional information on preparing logistics plans for monitoring programs based on probability survey's is available in Baker and Merritt (1991). Information on conducting Field Reconnaissance for the EMAP Western Geographic Study is given by Averill, McAllister, and Bollman (2000).

Four alternative methods are available for initiating contact with the landowner and follow-up to obtain a signed site access consent form. The methods are:

1. Initial contact by mail with background information and access permission form; follow-up by telephone.
2. Initial contact by telephone; followed by mailing of background information and access permission form.
3. Initial contact by letter; followed by telephone call; followed by mailing of background information and access permission form.
4. Initial contact by letter; followed by visit to obtain access permission.

These options involve different amounts of survey personnel time and cost. They also can have a substantial impact the percent of landowners who consent to give access to their land.

Contact by Mail

Each landowner is contacted by mail. The mailing includes a letter summarizing the survey and requesting landowner consent for site access, an enclosure with details of the survey, and a consent form. If a response from the landowner is not received within a specified time (2-3 weeks), then a minimum of three phone calls will be attempted to each landowner before the landowner is denoted as unreachable. If resources are available, six phone calls will be attempted. These phone calls should be attempted over a range of times if possible: morning, afternoon, evening, weekday, weekend. This will reduce the number of not-at-homes due to work or other commitments. The telephone interviewer should be prepared to answer any questions the landowner may have using information in the Interviewer's Guide.

Contact by Telephone Then Mail

Each landowner is initially contacted by telephone. At a minimum, three phone calls will be attempted to each landowner before the landowner is denoted as unreachable. If resources are available, six phone calls will be attempted. These phone calls should be attempted over a range of times if possible: morning, afternoon, evening, weekday, weekend. This will reduce the number of not-at-homes due to work or other commitments. Following a successful telephone

contact and with the landowner's approval, the landowner is mailed a letter requesting permission for site access, an enclosure describing the survey, and a consent form to be signed and returned. If a response from the landowner is not received within a specified time (2-3 weeks), then a minimum of three phone calls will be attempted to each landowner before the landowner is denoted as unreachable. If resources are available, six phone calls will be attempted. These phone calls should be attempted over a range of times if possible: morning, afternoon, evening, weekday, weekend. This will reduce the number of not-at-homes due to work or other commitments. The telephone interviewer should be prepared to answer any questions the landowner may have using information in the Interviewer's Guide.

Contact by Mail Then Telephone

A letter summarizing the survey and the landowner's selection as a prospective participant is mailed to each landowner. The letter will also explain that the organization conducting the survey will phone them in the subsequent weeks to discuss any questions about the survey. With the landowner's approval, details of this survey and a consent form will then be mailed to their address.

At a minimum, three phone calls will be attempted to each landowner before this participant will be denoted as unreachable. If resources are available, six phone calls will be attempted to each landowner. These phone calls should be attempted over a range of times if possible in order to reduce the number of not at homes due to work or other commitments: morning, afternoon, evening, weekday, evenings.

If the landowner has agreed to review the documentation and consent form but has failed to return the signed form, up to three additional calls will be made to that owner to determine why the form wasn't returned. Another mailing of the consent form will be sent to the owner followed by two more phone calls. If no form is signed, this owner will then be denoted as denying access.

Contact by Mail Then Visit

A letter summarizing the survey and the landowner's selection as a prospective participant will be mailed to each landowner. The letter will explain that a representative from the organization conducting the survey will visit with them over the next few months to discuss details about this study with the landowner. The representative will phone a few days before the visit to arrange an appropriate time with the landowner. During this personal visit, the organization representative will ask to obtain permission to access their property and ask the landowner to sign the consent form that is needed to permit the organization to access their property. A copy of the written documentation summarizing this study will be left with the landowner.

At a minimum, three phone calls will be attempted to each landowner before this participant will be denoted as unreachable. If resources are available, six phone calls will be attempted to each landowner.

References

Baker, J. R., and G. D. Merritt. 1991. Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program guidelines for preparing logistics plans. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Research and Development, Environmental Monitoring Systems Research Laboratory, Las Vegas, Nevada.

Averill, D., L. McAllister, and M. Bollma. 2000. Data acquisition procedures for site reconnaissance. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Research and Development, National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory, Western Ecology Division. Corvallis, Oregon.

Example Letter sent to landowners contacted by mail.

April 22, 2000

Name of Landowner
Address 1
City, State Zipcode

The Western Ecology Division of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Research and Development in cooperation with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality is requesting your assistance with a field study of over 600 streams and rivers located throughout twelve western states. This study is being conducted between July and September in 2000-2003, and is part of a research effort between the states and EPA to evaluate different approaches for monitoring the condition of streams and rivers over broad geographic areas rather than just individual sites. The specific streams and rivers to be surveyed were randomly selected much like in opinion surveys or the Gallup polls. One of the selected sites is located on or near your property. EPA is requesting permission to access the following site via your property to launch or retrieve two inflatable rafts used to collect samples and field measurement data:

Stream or River Name: Powder River
Sampling site Coordinates: T 8S, R 40E, S 21SW

We want to assure you that this is a research effort and is not connected to any specific regulatory action or activity. The data to be collected during these surveys will be used as part of a larger study called the Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program (EMAP), which was designed to provide an assessment of natural resources at a regional scale. It is very important that we collect data from streams and rivers flowing through private as well as public land so that the results will be relevant to all streams in the region and we can fully evaluate the monitoring approaches we are developing.

The EPA has contracted with Dynamac Corporation to conduct the stream surveys. The crew will conduct physical and biological sampling and measurement activities of the stream and its banks from within the stream channel and will not enter the surrounding property except to reach the stream.

We realize that working on or traveling through your land is a privilege and the field crew will respect your rights as a landowner at all times. The crew will consider any special conditions that you want to impose concerning access to the sampling site. If you wish, you may accompany the field crew and observe the sampling activities. Although your name and property will not be mentioned as part of the published results of the study, you will be eligible to receive a copy of the final data report as well as a summary of the data pertaining to your sampling site. If you have questions, please contact Dr. Phil Larsen (541-754-4362), or Mr. David Peck (541-754-4426), who are EPA employees at our Division working on this project.

Please complete the enclosed Access Permission Form and mail it back to us in the enclosed envelope by June 1, 2000. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Thomas A. Murphy, Ph.D.
Director, Western Ecology Division

Example Pre-letter sent to landowners to be contacted by telephone.

April 22, 2000

Name of Landowner
Address 1
City, State Zipcode

The Western Ecology Division of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Research and Development in cooperation with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality is requesting your assistance with a field study of over 600 streams and rivers located throughout twelve western states. This study is being conducted between July and September in 2000-2003, and is part of a research effort between the states and EPA to evaluate different approaches for monitoring the condition of streams and rivers over broad geographic areas rather than just individual sites. The specific streams and rivers to be surveyed were randomly selected much like in opinion surveys or the Gallup polls. One of the selected sites is located on or near your property. EPA is requesting permission to access the following site via your property to launch or retrieve two inflatable rafts used to collect samples and field measurement data:

Stream or River Name: Powder River
Sampling site Coordinates: T 8S, R 40E, S 21SW

A representative from the Department of Environmental Quality will be calling you over the next few weeks to discuss the details of our study. He will discuss the purpose of our study, the measurements that we wish to make on the stream, and any concerns you might wish to raise with regard to our research.

We want to assure you that this is a research effort and is not connected to any specific regulatory action or activity. The data to be collected during these surveys will be used as part of a larger study called the Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program (EMAP), which was designed to provide an assessment of natural resources at a regional scale. It is very important that we collect data from streams and rivers flowing through private as well as public land so that the results will be relevant to all streams in the region and we can fully evaluate the monitoring approaches we are developing.

Sincerely,

Thomas A. Murphy, Ph.D.
Director, Western Ecology Division

Example Pre-letter sent to landowners to be contacted by personal visit.

April 22, 2000

Name of Landowner
Address 1
City, State Zipcode

The Western Ecology Division of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Research and Development in cooperation with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality is requesting your assistance with a field study of over 600 streams and rivers located throughout twelve western states. This study is being conducted between July and September in 2000-2003, and is part of a research effort between the states and EPA to evaluate different approaches for monitoring the condition of streams and rivers over broad geographic areas rather than just individual sites. The specific streams and rivers to be surveyed were randomly selected much like in opinion surveys or the Gallup polls. One of the selected sites is located on or near your property. EPA is requesting permission to access the following site via your property to launch or retrieve two inflatable rafts used to collect samples and field measurement data:

Stream or River Name: Powder River
Sampling site Coordinates: T 8S, R 40E, S 21SW

A representative from the Department of Environmental Quality will be calling you over the next few weeks to discuss the details of our study. He would like to set up an appointment with you to arrange a visit with you to discuss the purpose of our study, the measurements that we wish to make on the stream, and any concerns you might wish to raise with regard to our research.

We want to assure you that this is a research effort and is not connected to any specific regulatory action or activity. The data to be collected during these surveys will be used as part of a larger study called the Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program (EMAP), which was designed to provide an assessment of natural resources at a regional scale. It is very important that we collect data from streams and rivers flowing through private as well as public land so that the results will be relevant to all streams in the region and we can fully evaluate the monitoring approaches we are developing.

Sincerely,

Thomas A. Murphy, Ph.D.
Director, Western Ecology Division

Description of Study and Access Enclosure

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Research & Development, Regional Offices 8, 9, and 10, and the western states are conducting research to assess condition of streams and rivers across the west. Our studies will include visiting over 600 sites on streams and rivers to describe their fish communities, benthic invertebrate communities, water chemistry, physical habitat, riparian habitat, and watershed characteristics. We ask your permission for access to a stream site included in this study.

The study will require a visit to the stream site during the summer of 2000. We plan to complete all measurements in one day by 3-5 of our researchers. These measurements will be taken in daylight hours only. We do not ask for your help in taking these measurements; however, you are invited to observe the sampling if you wish. Our visit requires us to transport some field equipment to the stream.

The EPA has contracted with Dynamac Corporation to conduct the stream surveys. The field crew can answer any specific questions you have regarding the stream survey. With your permission to access the stream site, the field crew will visit and sample a designated length of stream centered on the sampling site. The crew will conduct physical and biological sampling and measurement activities of the stream and its banks from within the stream channel and will not enter the surrounding property except to reach the stream.

We realize that working on or traveling through your land is a privilege and the field crew will respect your rights as a landowner at all times. The crew will consider any special conditions that you want to impose concerning access to the sampling site. If you wish, you may accompany the field crew and observe the sampling activities. Although your name and property will not be mentioned as part of the published results of the study, you will be eligible to receive a copy of the final data report as well as a summary of the data pertaining to your sampling site. If you have questions, please contact Dr. Phil Larsen (541-754-4362), or Mr. David Peck (541-754-4426), who are EPA employees at our Division working on this project.

Thank you again for your cooperation in this study. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Interviewer Guide

Most Commonly Asked Questions

1. Who is sponsoring and paying for this survey?

USEPA's Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program(EMAP), the USEPA Regions 8, 9, and 10, and the fourteen States within those Regions: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming

2. What is EMAP?

The Environmental Monitoring Assessment Program was initiated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to address three objectives which are:

- (1) Estimate current status, extent, changes, and trends in indicators of the condition of the nation's ecological resources on a regional basis with known confidence.
- (2) Monitor indicators of pollutant exposure and habitat condition, and seek associations between human-induced stresses and ecological condition that identify possible causes of adverse effects.
- (3) Publish annual statistical summaries and periodic interpretive reports on status and trends to the EPA Administrator and the public.

3. Why are the USEPA regions and States involved?

By working with EMAP the USEPA Regions and State departments responsible for monitoring the quality of aquatic monitoring can improve how they monitor. These improvements will enable them to more accurately evaluate the condition of streams and rivers and do so in a more scientifically defensible and cost-effective way.

4. What is the purpose of this survey?

Purpose is to characterize and estimate the extent of stream and river resources in the West and to determine factors that contribute to their quality.

5. Who is the person responsible for this survey? May I talk to him/her?

Roger Blair is the EMAP coordinator for the study. He is located in Corvallis, Oregon, at the USEPA's Western Ecology Division.

6. How did you select my name (i.e., the stream on my land)?

All stream and river sites were selected using a process that is similar to how people are selected for public opinion surveys. All the streams and rivers in the West are placed in a list and the order of the list is randomized. Sites are randomly selected from this list. Your site is one of these random selections. We determined the landowner for the land near the stream site from local county assessors or Natural Soil Conservation Service offices.

7. How can I be sure this is authentic?

My number is xxx-xxxx and you may call me collect when I get back into my office next week. You can also call my supervisor's number at xxx-xxxx.

8. Why do I need to provide you with written access?

Some States require written permission before state or federal agencies may conduct environmental sampling that involves private land.

9. If tenant is residing at residence, do I need to obtain permission from the owner?

This question only applies when visit to landowner is used to obtain permission. Permission is required from the landowner.

10. Is the information you obtain confidential?

After the site visit is completed and data from all stream sites are analyzed, the data is entered into a computer file. The data will be analyzed and reported as the aggregate of all streams and rivers, not as individual sites. However, by Federal law, data is available through the freedom of information act.

11. Can I obtain a copy of the results?

You may obtain a copy of the results. The field work portion of the study will take place during 2000 through 2003. Usually it takes one year to finish the laboratory analyses. We expect preliminary results to be available in 2004.

Interviewer's Response to Landowner Refusal

REFUSAL IN CAPITALS. Proposed response follows.

1. TOO BUSY. I am sorry to have caught you at a bad time and would be happy to call back (or phone instead of another visit) again. I can mail you some information with regard to this survey and then call back next week. When would be a good time for me to call next week?
2. BAD HEALTH. I am sorry to hear that you are sick right now. I would be happy to call back in a few days. Would that be okay?

3. NOT INTERESTED. It's awfully important that we get information on this stream site or the results will be hard to interpret.
4. ITS NO ONES BUSINESS ABOUT THE STREAM ON MY PROPERTY. Only a sample of streams in _____(State) were selected in this survey. The data collected from each stream represents all streams that are located in the state and thus all streams that we sample are important.
5. OBJECTS TO SURVEYS. We think this survey is very important because this assessment allows us to determine the current status of the streams and rivers in the State. We can answer questions such as:
 - a. Are the streams in the State maintaining viable fish populations?
 - b. Can the benthic invertebrates support the fish populations?
 - c. What is the water quality of streams in the State?
6. I DON'T TRUST THE GOVERNMENT. Yes, many people feel this way. Still, we do need to find out the condition of this major resource because it is critical to understanding how our human activities are influencing it. We depend on streams and rivers for our drinking water, for irrigation, for recreational fishing, and for their natural beauty.

ACCESS PERMISSION FORM

EMAP WESTERN GEOGRAPHIC STREAM AND RIVER STUDY

EPA request permission to access the following site via your property to launch or retrieve two inflatable rafts used to collect samples and field measurement data:

Stream or River Name: Powder River

Sampling site Coordinates: T 8S, R 40E, S 21SW

With your permission to access the stream site, the field crew will visit and sample a designate length of stream centered on the sampling site. The crew will conduct physical and biological sampling and measurement activities of the stream and its banks from within the stream channel and will not enter the surrounding property except to reach the stream.

We realize that working on or traveling through your land is a privilege and the field crew will respect your rights as a landowner at all times. The crew will consider any special conditions that you want to impose concerning access to the sampling site. If you wish, you may accompany the field crew and observe the sampling activities.

___ YES, I grant permission to my land to enable stream sampling to be completed

___ NO, I refuse permission to access my land to enable stream sampling to be completed

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Name of Landowner

Address

Telephone Record Form

EMAP West Study 2000-2003

Hello, this is _____ and I'm calling for the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality in Portland, Oregon. I wrote to you a few weeks ago about a survey we are conducting on the streams in Oregon. Am I speaking to (_____)? (If not), is (he) (she) is available now.

(IF "RESPONDENT" IS NOT AVAILABLE, ASK WHEN YOU MIGHT CALL BACK AND RECORD IN THE TABLE BELOW. WHEN YOU HAVE THE RESPONDENT ON THE PHONE SAY):

Hello, this is _____ and I'm calling for the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality in Portland, Oregon. I wrote to you a few weeks ago about a survey we are conducting on the streams in Oregon. I would like to go over this survey with you to determine if we may have permission to access a stream site on your property for this study.

Interview:

- Go to document in this manual that summarizes this study and read this slowly to the landowner.
- Allow him/her to interrupt at any time if they have questions.
- Indicate that you will mail them a copy for their records.
- Within this packet you will include a consent form. Indicate to the owner that they are asked to please return whether or not they will give consent to site access. The consent form will have lines to indicate whether the landowner does or does not wish to give site access. This will prevent us from trying to contact them again if we have not heard back.
- Ask them if it would be ok with them if you telephoned them if you have not heard from them in a few weeks.

(INTERVIEWER: RECORD DATE, TIME AND RESULT OF EACH ATTEMPT TO CONTACT IN THE TABLE BELOW. NOTE APPOINTMENTS IN THE "TIME OF RECALL" COLUMN)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Call Results</u>	<u>Time for recall</u>	<u>Interviewer</u>	Codes for Call Results:
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	NA = No answer
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	WR = Will return
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	AM = Ans. Machine
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	BSY = Busy signal
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	CB = Call back.
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	DISC = Disconnect
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	WN = Wrong number
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	REF = Refused
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	PIC = Part comp.
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	TERM = Terminate
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	COMP = Completed

Successful phone call Summary:

Time phone call started: _____

Minutes: _____

Stopped: _____

Verified by: _____

Notes: