

# FCE LTER Data Release and Access Policy and General Data Use Agreement

Updated December 2017

## 1. FCE LTER Data Release Policy

Data and information derived from publicly funded research at the FCE LTER, totally or partially from LTER funds from NSF, Institutional Cost-Share, or Partner Agency or Institution where a formal memorandum of understanding with LTER has been established, are made available in the Environmental Data Initiative's data repository with as few restrictions as possible, on a nondiscriminatory basis. FCE LTER scientists make every effort to release data in a timely fashion and with attention to accurate and complete metadata.

### a. Data:

There are two data types in the FCE LTER database:

Type I – data are to be released to the general public according to the terms of the general data use agreement (*see Section 3 below*) within 2 years from collection and no later than the publication of the main findings from the dataset and,

Type II - data are to be released to restricted audiences according to terms specified by the owners of the data. Type II data are considered to be exceptional and should be rare in occurrence. The justification for exceptions must be well documented and approved by the FCE lead PI and FCE Data Manager. Some examples of Type II data restrictions may include:

- locations of rare or endangered species or historical or cultural artifacts,
- data that are covered under prior licensing or copyright (e.g., SPOT satellite data),
- data covered by the Human Subjects Act,
- graduate student dissertation or post-doc data, where publication of the data might compromise professional development if released too early, or
- data related to the FCE LTER program but not funded by NSF.

FCE researchers that make use of Type II Data may be subject to additional restrictions to protect any applicable commercial or confidentiality interests.

While the spirit of this document is to promote maximum availability for ecological data in either Type I or II status, there are criteria by which priority for FCE LTER data release may be determined. Primary observations collected for core research activities directly supported by LTER funding receive the highest priority for data release. Data collected by other sources with only partial LTER support or where the LTER program has added value to the resulting data products will also receive high priority for release. Other types of data including non-LTER data that was acquired for LTER research, student thesis data, schoolyard LTER data, or legacy data that already suffer from inadequate documentation or format obsolescence may be ranked a lower priority by a site with justifications provided in their data management policy. Finally, some data may be determined of lowest priority for archiving on the grounds that they are

interim data that led to final products that carry the scientific value. These might include data files created during stages within an analytic workflow, raw or replicate data values that were subsequently aggregated or processed for release, or individual outputs from stochastic models.

## **b. Metadata**

1. Metadata documenting archived/online data sets of all types listed above will be made available when, or before, the dataset itself is released according to the terms above.
2. All metadata will be publicly available regardless of any restrictions on access to the data.
3. All metadata will follow LTER recommended standards and will minimally contain adequate information on proper citation, access, contact information, and discovery. Complete information including methods, structure, semantics, and quality control/assurance is expected for most datasets and is strongly encouraged.

## **2. FCE Data Access Policy**

Access to all FCE LTER Type 1 data is unrestricted and data can be freely downloaded for academic, research, educational, or professional purposes. A Data User has an ethical obligation to cite data appropriately in any publication that results from its use, and to abide by all terms in the FCE LTER Data Use Agreement (below).

## **3. The FCE LTER Data Use Agreement**

FCE LTER data are released under the CC BY-Attribution license (see: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), and we therefore request that the Data User agree to the following terms:

- The Data User must acknowledge use of the data by an appropriate citation (see Citation, below).
- The Data User must acknowledge that these data may be actively used by others for ongoing research and that coordination may be necessary to prevent duplicate publication. The Data User should consider collaboration or coauthorship with the data authors, if appropriate.
- The Data User agrees to contact the authors of these data if any questions about methodology or results occur. The Data User should realize that misinterpretation of data may occur if used out of context of the original study.
- The Data User should be aware that data are updated periodically and it is the responsibility of the Data User to check for new versions of the data.

By using FCE LTER data, the Data User agrees to the terms of this agreement. Thank you.

## **Citation**

Generic Version:

<Dataset reator><Year of Dataset Publication><Dataset Title>Environmental Data Initiative  
<DOI>. Dataset accessed <date of access>

Example:

Fourqurean J. 2018. Florida Bay Nutrient Data, Everglades National Park (FCE), South Florida from August 2008 to Present. Environmental Data Initiative.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.6073/pasta/7fd7b4f3931c622acfa8d905f224190f>. Dataset accessed 2017-12-08.

### **Disclaimer**

While substantial efforts are made to ensure the accuracy of data and associated documentation, complete accuracy of FCE LTER data sets cannot be guaranteed. All data are made available "as is." The data authors and the repository where these data were obtained shall not be liable for damages resulting from any use or misinterpretation of the data.