



Natural Resource Condition Assessment (NRCA) Report Drafting General Guidance Document

Version Update: 2017

This guidance document is designed to assist authors in the writing and formatting of NRCA reports.

Steps to Prepare and Submit Your NRCA Report

- 1) **Prepare your NRCA report using Microsoft Word 2010 or later**, adhering to the following:
 - a) **The *content* should be your primary focus.** *Content* refers to the substantive data, information and graphics in your report. Present information and condition findings in a clear, succinct manner and ensure the report flows as a unified, coherent whole. Pay attention to the usage, style, presentation, and consistency of the language, data, and graphics.
 - b) **Format using the NRCA Author Template.** The template provides step-by-step guidance concerning the content and formatting expected to be incorporated by authors of NRCA reports. Required format styles are built into the template as well as described; therefore, entering your content directly into the template¹, reduces the risk of incorrect formatting and the use of unrelated content.
 - c) **Conduct a *final edit* of the complete draft report.** A single individual (working as or with report authors) should complete this step on a single computer. This aids in ensuring overall consistency in presentation style and tone throughout the report. We recommend use of the NRCA Author Checklist to guide this final edit and review of report content and formatting.
- 2) **Coordinate with NPS to undertake the appropriate level of *peer review* for the final draft report.** This includes a technical review of scientific information and findings as well as a management review to ensure consistency with NPS policies, standards, and practices. As a result of this review, a final version of the report is prepared. Coordinate with NPS to complete the Manuscript Submittal Form (MSF), which contains information and links related to peer review requirements.
- 3) **Email the final version of your report to Jeff Albright** for final layout review by a member of the NRCA publication staff. (Note: Disregard this step if you have a dedicated NPS I&M network layout expert.)
 - a) Include your completed Manuscript Submittal Form (MSF).
- 4) **Be prepared and willing, if needed, to provide us with electronic copies of all graphics and images used in your report.** Use a file naming convention that makes it easy to associate digital images with their corresponding placement in the report (e.g., “Fig_1.0.”). This is necessary in case graphics and images need to be resized and/or reformatted by the NRCA publication staff during final publication review and editing. In this event, the publication staff will request the files (as a *.zip* file) from the lead report author.

¹Please note that while you can copy and paste into the template, pasting more than a paragraph at a time results in incorrect formatting.

- 5) **Acceptance of final report and publication to public website.** After the NRCA publication staff completes the final review and formatting corrections (as needed) for your report, we will send the report back to you for your concurrence on any changes made. When you have accepted the final version—or have worked with the NRCA publication staff to address any outstanding issues you identified—your NRCA report is in order. Communicate with your primary NPS project contact (for this report), who has permissions needed to officially publish and post the report to the NPS Integrated Resource Management Applications (IRMA) web portal. Your report is now publicly available.

How to Avoid Document-crashing Scenarios

A *crash* is an unexpected termination of a computer program. Crashes can happen to individual applications, such as MS Word, as well as the operating system itself. Document crashes can be avoided if you adhere to the following guidelines (and use the NRCA Author Template):

- **Avoid *hyperlinked* (or cross-referenced) figures, tables, and chapter numbers*:** Hyperlinking can cause documents to crash, especially in long reports (>300 pages). Use the MS Word cross-referencing (internal hyperlinking) tool judiciously during report writing, and know that, at final processing, we may need to remove links before conversion to PDF. **Note: This is not the same as the automatic internal hyperlinking that occurs when building the tables of contents, figures, tables, and appendices.*
- **Reduce *extremely long documents* (>300 pages) as much as possible:** Consider splitting the Word document (e.g., split appendices from main body of report or identify other logical places to split) prior to submitting the manuscript. The separate pieces will be reassembled into the same MS Word file prior to export to PDF by the NRCA publication team. Check with the NRCA publication staff for guidance.
- **Do not use *text wrapping*:** While text wrapping is visually appealing, it contributes to document instability.
- **Do not use *text boxes*:** Do not use text boxes to cover or hide material; they are hard to detect and make the document more susceptible to crashing.

NRCA Publication Staff Contact Information

Specific questions concerning style, format, grammar, and organization should be referred to the NRCA publication staff:

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