When to Create References

This document discusses when it is appropriate to create References, and who has permission to do so.

When is it appropriate to create References

References should be created in ServCat when:

- **The information resource was created by/for the FWS** - this information is mission critical, has intrinsic value to the FWS and must be preserved.
- **It is about the US Fish and Wildlife Service** - There are many resources that may not be authored by the FWS, but nevertheless contain valuable information about the land and their resources.
- **The program/office/station was responsible for the creation of the information resource** - If an organization created the information, they will have the most knowledge to adequately describe it.
- **It is one-of-a-kind information** - Information that is not managed by an enterprise system will most likely be lost overtime. ServCat will preserve this valuable information.

When is it better to not Add References

In general the creation of References is discouraged if:

- **There is little information about the information resource** - If there is not enough metadata to provide a reliable title, date of issue/creation, description, and author/creator, then it is questionable whether there is enough information about the information resource to make it useful in the future.
- **A digital copy is unavailable** - If there is no digital copy of the information resource, there is a tremendous risk that the information will be lost through time. Furthermore, it is incredibly frustrating to other users who want to access the information, but are unable.
- **There is already an existing reference in ServCat** - Duplicating References only confuses people and undermines the credibility of ServCat.
- **The information resource is from another program that has a history of publishing their content in the ServCat:** More than likely they will upload their relevant documents. Contact the appropriate office to coordinate.

When Is It Entirely Up to You

Many information resources will fall into that gray zone, which are neither encouraged nor discouraged. In these situations, it is entirely up to the user as to whether or not create a Reference. If it is helpful in managing FWS resources and you are willing to take the time to create the Reference and upload the file, then it is worth adding.

A Brief Introduction to Producing Quality Content

From experience, here are a few key items to consider for creating quality content:

- **Check to see if the reference already exists** - Let's avoid duplicates!

- **At least ad the bare minimum metadata** - We consider the bare minimum to be title, date of issue, set of authors/creators, description, and some keywords. Pay attention to accuracy and spelling.

- **Link a Reference to an organization only if it contains information about that organization and/or was created by the organization** - Users want to find FWS-specific information. Arbitrarily linking to an organization just because it may be of interest to the organization or because a copy resides at the organization completely degrades the integrity of the organization link. Note that there are other ways to manage content of interest to an organization.

- **All digital attachments that are documents should be in PDF format** - PDF is the easiest to read and more difficult to edit.

Permissions and Ownership

All FWS staff automatically have permission to create References describing information resources. ServCat is open to all, regardless of position or directorate. While the original design of ServCat evolved out of natural resources, it was done with the full expectation of supporting other directorates and programs, particularly cultural resources.

There is no need to login to ServCat if on the FWS active directory. Users will be automatically authenticated given the correct set of permissions.

The following rules govern how References are managed:

- If you create a Reference, you are automatically added as owner

- As an owner, you have permission to edit the Reference.

- You can add other owners at any time

- You may remove owners, including yourself, as long as there is always at least one owner