

Sample Distribution Policy

The sample distribution policies outlined on the following pages are intended to encourage effective utilization of nationwide sea floor sample collections funded by NSF. The Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI) Seafloor Samples Laboratory is prepared to furnish samples and data to interested researchers and students within the global scientific community who express a legitimate interest and need.

Statement of Proposed Research

All requests for samples should be accompanied by a concise statement describing the study for which samples are needed, including methods or procedures to be used, the specific scientific problem to be addressed by the study, and the names of collaborating investigators. Additionally, requests should be accompanied by a description of the laboratory facilities available to the requestor and the source of financial support that will fund the related work. All of this information should be provided via the “Sample Request Form”. If these details differ significantly for associated investigators, the nature of their proposed research, facilities, and funding should also accompany the sample request.

Sample Request Review and Proprietary Rights of the Collector

The PI will retain authority to approve sample requests until two years from when samples are logged into the repository database. This restriction is enforced in order that those investigators directly involved with the collection of samples will have adequate time to complete their initial work on the material. With permission of the PI, certain samples may be released for study prior to the end of that period. The curator or lab director may impose special conditions on the distribution of samples in order to ensure effective utilization of the material. Such special conditions would include the storage of samples in either refrigerated or frozen space. Following the period of proprietary access, sample requests will be approved by the curator’s office. All sample requests, during and following the period of proprietary access, must be submitted to the WHOI Seafloor Samples Lab using the online “Sample Request Form”. The curatorial staff will review and approve all sample requests.

Sample Request Details: Location, Identification and Sample Size

All ‘sediment’ requests should specify ship, cruise number, core number, and sample depth in the core. If possible, alternative cores or sampling intervals within specific cores should be provided. For dredge, grab, or other device requests, ship ID, station, and specific sample numbers should be included. In addition, if a request results in a large amount of samples [more than 200], the WHOI Seafloor Samples Laboratory may ask that the requestor make arrangements to visit the curation facility and undertake the sampling process with the assistance of the curatorial staff. If a sample request is defined by regional, bathymetric, or physiographic parameters, the alpha-numeric details specified above will be determined by the results of an in house search, and thus provided to the requestor for review by the curator. The request should indicate the minimum sample weight or volume needed.

Special Note for Core Archive-Half Requests

Following a general rule, sediment cores are split into two identical halves after retrieval, the working half and the archive half. While the working half is available for sampling to facilitate the specific scientific objectives related to the collection strategy, the archive half is intended to remain a pristine untouched record of the material recovered. All non-destructive split-core analyses are usually made on the archive half (e.g. magnetic susceptibility, gamma ray density, line scan images, XRF-scans, CT-scans etc.) leaving it as a permanent record. However, sometimes the need arises to sample the archive half. This is usually because of complete depletion of the working half. In these instances, decisions concerning fulfillment of specific archive half sample requests are made by the curatorial staff and a review of the request will be made to appropriate parties to determine whether the proposed science and sampling plan justifies sampling of the archive half of the core.

Responsibilities of Person Receiving Samples

1. The original alphanumeric samples label should be used to identify individual samples referred to in published papers. Any departure from this scheme should be clearly equated with the original labeling system in the published papers or data summaries. This labeling system will be explained in the information supplied with the samples.
2. Published papers should acknowledge the source of samples and the appropriate grant of funding agency which supported the cruise recovering the samples. This information will be supplied at the time the samples are acquired. These papers should also acknowledge the financial support responsible for maintaining the WHOI Seafloor Samples Laboratory. This information will be provided at the time of sampling.
3. Copies of all published papers, reports or data summaries utilizing samples from the collection should be sent to the appropriate WHOI staff scientist, and the WHOI Seafloor Samples Laboratory. One electronic copy of all published reports, papers, or data where samples have been used should be sent to the WHOI Seafloor Samples Laboratory at seafloorsampleslab@whoi.edu for inclusion in the repository database. This helps track the effectiveness of NSF's investment in national sample archiving facilities as well as justify future sample requests by an investigator.
4. The researcher should return all unused samples or portions of samples to the curator at the completion of the work.
5. Recipients of samples should not co-opt the services of other investigators or undertake research projects which differ substantially from work originally proposed, without obtaining the approval of the curatorial staff.

Materials for Educational and Museum Displays

Requests are welcome for samples by museums or other educational purposes. Each request will be considered on its own merits and reviewed and approved by curatorial staff. Educators and students should submit a brief explanation of how materials were used, and the number of people reached by the use of materials.