



## COLLEGE of SOCIAL AND APPLIED HUMAN SCIENCES

Department of Geography, Environment and Geomatics

### **Consent to Participate in Research Survey**

#### **Digital Conservation Practices and Perspectives**

Thank you for considering this invitation to participate in a research project investigating digital conservation practices and perspectives across the US and Canada. The lead researcher for the study is Dr. Eric Nost with assistance from Rhiannon Szewczyk, both based at the University of Guelph's Department of Geography, Environment and Geomatics. The research is funded by Canada's Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC).

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to characterize the scope of digital conservation in the US and Canada. There are no direct benefits to participants in this study. We will share our findings with participating organizations, and they will be posted in a variety of publicly-accessible formats, including at our website [<https://goose.uoguelph.ca/projects/digital-conservation/>]. They will directly inform the development of the Conservation Tools and Technology course in the University of Guelph's Master's of Conservation Leadership professional degree program. We hope to shape the future of digital conservation at all relevant levels (from university training to federal policy) so that conservation organizations can productively and ethically utilize digital tools.

#### **Qualifications**

We are seeking participants who are English speaking, over 18 years of age, and who can speak to the application of data technologies such as big data, artificial intelligence, and web platforms by non-governmental nature conservation organizations.

#### **If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to:**

- Complete an online survey (15-20 minutes) regarding your organization's use of digital conservation technologies.

It is normal practice at the University of Guelph to inform all study participants of their rights and our obligations. Please note the following items:

- There are minimal risks associated with this research:
  - Privacy Risk: Loss of confidentiality is a risk in this Internet-based survey.
  - Social Risk: There may be social risk from sharing controversial uses of new conservation technologies.
  - Economic Risk: There may be economic risk to organizations in revealing certain uses of data technologies.
  - Participants can control the identified risks by not providing any information they would be uncomfortable making public.
- Your name, associated organization, and contact information are linked to your survey responses with a unique URL via a Master List stored in the secure Qualtrics platform. These identifiers are collected for the purposes of tracking survey completion rates and for analyzing results by organization type. The Master List will be destroyed after the study period.
- Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality of any identifying information that is obtained in connection with this study. Directly identifying contact information will only be accessible by the research team and will be destroyed upon completion of the research. Indirectly identifying information

such as survey responses will only be accessible by the research team. Please note that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed while data are in transit over the Internet.

- Survey responses will be published in aggregate except in the case of quotations. However, we will not attribute any quotation to you without your explicit permission, which we would secure through a follow-up email. When quoting you without attribution, we will use general terms like “conservationist” or “programmer” to refer to you rather than your name, title, or employer.
- Your participation in the study is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may withdraw during the survey by closing your browser. If you do not click “submit,” your responses will not be recorded. You may refuse to answer any question and still remain in the study.
- The research team reserves the right to disregard your data should circumstances arise which require this.
- The research team will develop a webpage to present a short summary of results, in aggregate, and recommended best practices. If you consent to this survey and continue to participate in the research, you will be notified when these results are available.

### Rights of the Participant

You may withdraw your consent and information by closing your browser during the survey or by emailing the research team, up until the end of the study period. The study period will end on November 30, 2022.

Withdrawing consent will omit your responses from being analyzed - the data itself will be deleted and your personal information will be removed from the Master List of contacts.

You do not waive any legal rights by agreeing to take part in this study. This project has been reviewed by the Research Ethics Board for compliance with federal guidelines for research involving human participants. If you have questions regarding your rights and welfare as a research participant in this study (REB#21-08-015), please contact:

Manager, Research Ethics, University of Guelph; reb@uoguelph.ca  
(519) 824-4120 (ext. 56606)

You are encouraged to print this and save this form for your records.

**By clicking through to the survey, I am agreeing that I have read the information provided for the study “Digital Conservation Practices and Perspectives” as described herein, that my questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and am consenting to participate in the study.**

**If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:**

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