

GWFO Data Policy

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GWFO is a provider of pan-Canadian, high-quality water research data from academic institutions and partners that is partly supported by the Canada Foundation for Innovation's Major Science Initiatives (MSI) Fund. As such, all data generated through the *routine* operation of the GWFO facilities (research sites, laboratories, and deployable systems) that are paid for by GWFO are governed by this policy and are regarded as GWFO-owned, *open data*, meaning that the data are machine readable, freely shared, used, and built on without restrictions (including for commercial purposes) under a Creative Commons CC_BY 4.0 License.

Routine data collection includes all observations (automated and/or manual, continuous and/or intermittent) as part of the GWFO supported functioning of the instrumented sites, laboratories, or deployable systems, including, but not limited to hydro-meteorological conditions, cryospheric observations, water quality/quantity, ecological/biological parameters, contaminants, or other water-related variables. These data are fully GWFO-owned. All such data shall be made available free of charge through web services, internet downloads, special requests, and through other internet and user-based access tools, and shall be catalogued in the GWFO central data catalogue, GWFNet.

The metadata in central catalogue shall offer centralized and well-organized access to all GWFO-owned data outputs by providing direct web links to download the data from the actual online database or other long-term repository system where the data reside, as well as links for instant visualization. The central catalogue will also track data access requests for reporting to MSI.

GWFO may offer data owned or co-owned by one or more data partners which may be subject to alternative licensing depending on the established agreement between the partners. For instance, data may be collected from observation sites on Indigenous lands, and these data may be co-owned and subject to additional or alternative licensing and/or protocols, such as OCAP and CARE, which may supersede the CC_BY licensing depending on the agreements made with the partners.

GWFO may collect, store and deliver data owned by others through various collaborations and fee-for-service arrangements. GWFO encourages these owners to follow this GWFO policy.

All forms of data access (WISKI, FRDR, DataStream, etc.) shall provide a prominent link to the GWFO online Data Access Request Form for data users to complete and explanatory text urging users to complete the information and the reason for collecting this information. The information collected will be used to annually report the number of users of the GWFO data outputs along with the geographic and sectoral distribution of these users to CFI. Some GWFO hosted data may not be readily accessible through direct online download (e.g., very large size) and may require a special request to be submitted as described in the central catalogue.

This policy is implemented by GWFO following best practices described in the GWFO Data Policy Implementation Plan. The Implementation Plan is updated periodically as required to ensure that GWFO data management continues to follow best practices.