

Guide to Shipping SOS Materials



Key Guidelines

Before shipping, ensure your data sheets and vouchers are complete and up to date.

- Include one data sheet – exported from GeoPlatform (GPLAT) after data quality control (QC) is complete – for each collection, inside its corresponding shipping container.
- Email **one copy of each original data sheet** in .PDF format as part of your end-of-season materials to your SOS Agency Coordinator and CC the SOS National Coordinating Office (BLM_HQ_SeedsOfSuccess@blm.gov).
- Send* **one unmounted voucher per collection** to the U.S. National Herbarium at the Smithsonian according to sections 10d, 10e, and 14e of the SOS Technical Protocol.
 - Include a Notice of Transmittal – found on the SOS website (blm.gov/sos) – and herbarium labels, exported from GPLAT (or using the template, also available on the SOS website) and placed with the corresponding specimen.
 - ***NPS/DOI Teams:** For 2026, if collecting within NPS lands, do not send vouchers to the Smithsonian. Create the labels and transmittal notices, then contact Katie VinZant (katharine_vinzant@nps.gov) for storage instructions.
- The sender is responsible for all costs associated with shipping seeds and vouchers.
- Shipping is prohibited until collection data passes QC. Once your data is “Passed” on the data management site, each collection will be assigned a cleaning facility.

How do I finalize data & get a cleaning facility assignment?

You cannot ship seeds until your data has been reviewed at multiple levels. Your collection status must be marked as “Passed” in the QC dashboard of the GeoPlatform data management site before a seed cleaning facility is assigned.

The data finalization and shipping process consists of five steps (Figure 1). For a comprehensive walkthrough, please refer to the “SOS Digital Data QC Guide 2026” document which can be found in each regional GPLAT group’s help documents.

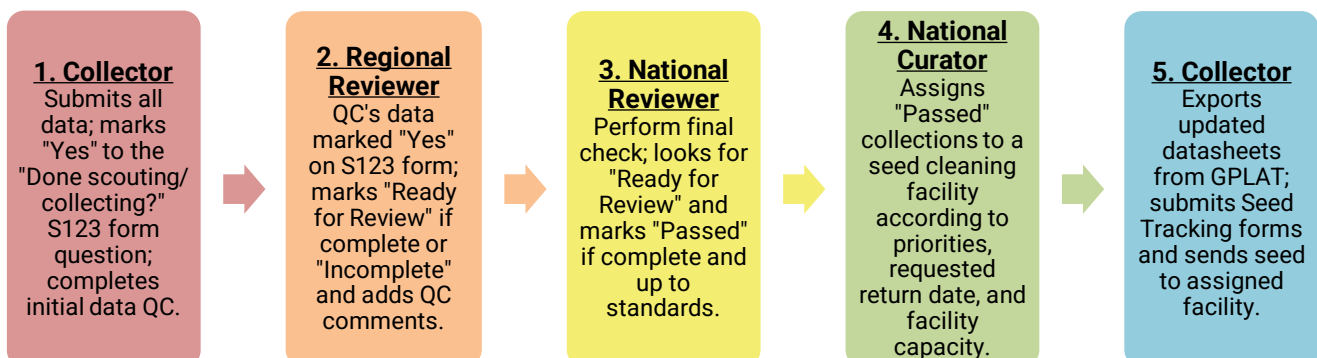


Figure 1. Steps to finalizing data and preparing for seed shipment.

For collections in the lower 48...

You must provide a **final, dry bulk weight** (in pounds) and a **cleaning priority** (Low, Medium, High) to be assigned a cleaning facility.

For collections in Alaska...

Alaska collections may bypass weight and priority requirements and be sent directly to the Palmer Plant Materials Center once the data passes QC.

How do I ship SOS seeds after QC approval & facility assignment?

Once your data has passed QC and your collections have received a seed cleaning facility assignment, use the following protocol to ship your seeds:

Shipping timeline & logistics

- **Fleshy fruit:** Use overnight mail only and notify the seed cleaning facility in advance.
- **Dry seed:** Use shipping methods that ensure arrival within 2 days or less.
- **Avoid weekends:** Ship early in the week to ensure the collection does not sit outside a warehouse over the weekend or arrive on a Friday.

Packaging & labeling

- **Labeling:** Clearly mark each bag with key data and count (Bag 1 of 3, Bag 2 of 3, etc.).
- **Security:** Package the materials securely to prevent seed loss during transit. For more details, consult section 14b of the SOS Technical Protocol.
- **Mandatory paperwork:** Include a copy of each collection's data sheet in its shipping container. Cleaning facilities will not process material without this documentation.

Seed Tracking form

- **Timing:** Complete the seed tracking form at the time of shipping, *never* in advance.
- **Responsibility:** If the individual shipping the seeds does not have access to the form, the collectors must complete it on their behalf. If you encounter issues with accessing or filling out the tracking form, contact Sarah Hill (sehill@blm.gov) for assistance.

Seed cleaning facilities & contacts

Facility	Special Instructions	Contact Information	Shipping Address
Alaska Plant Materials Center	Notify when shipping fleshy fruit only	Lyubomir (Lubo) Mahlev, lyubomir.mahlev@alaska.gov Phone: (907) 745 8782	Alaska Department of Natural Resources Division of Agriculture Plant Materials Center 5310 S. Bodenburg Spur Palmer, AK 99645
Bend Seed Extractory	Notify when shipping fleshy fruit or collection over 50 pounds. FedEx and UPS preferred. <u>NO USPS. Packages could get lost.</u>	Matt Horning, matthew.horning@usda.gov cc Malcolm Howard, malcolm.howard@usda.gov Phone: (541) 383-5646	USDA USFS - Bend Seed Extractory 63095 Deschutes Market Road Bend, OR 97701
National Seed Lab	Add a packing slip with the list of collections in each box. No preference on carrier, teams should track shipments if using USPS. Email victor.vankus@usda.gov, with a CC to SOS Agency Coordinator prior to sending each shipment.	Victor Vankus, victor.vankus@usda.gov , sm.fs.nsl@usda.gov Phone: (478) 751-3551	National Seed Lab 5675 Riggins Mill Road Dry Branch, GA 31020
Southeastern Grasslands Institute	Notify when shipping all collections.	Gus Rasich gus.rasich@segrasslands.org	Southeastern Grasslands Institute, Attn- Gus Rasich 15 Govs Lane #4394 Clarksville, TN 37044
University of Nevada, Reno	Notify when shipping all collections.	Shannon Swim, shannonswim@gmail.com, swim@unr.edu	UNR Shannon Swim/Bio dept 1664 N. Virginia St MS 314 Reno, NV 89557

Where do SOS data sheets go?

Always include a data sheet with your seed shipments, stored with the corresponding collection. Export data sheets from GeoPlatform as outlined in the “SOS Digital Data Collection Guide 2026” help document. You will also email a copy of each data sheet to your SOS Agency Coordinator and CC the SOS National Coordinating Office (BLM_HQ_SeedsofSuccess@blm.gov) as part of your end-of-season materials. If you use paper data forms and digitize the data later, include scans of the original paper data sheets.

Where do SOS vouchers go?

Mandatory Smithsonian shipment*

Send one unmounted voucher specimen per SOS collection to the U.S. National Herbarium using the appropriate address based on the mail carrier. Either way, the point of contact is Erika Gardner (garnere@si.edu, 202-633-0936).

***Note for NPS/DOI Teams:** For 2026, if collecting within NPS lands, do not send vouchers to the Smithsonian. Create the labels and transmittal notices, then contact Katie VinZant (katharine_vinzant@nps.gov) for storage instructions.

USPS:

Smithsonian Institution
NMNH Department of Botany, MRC-166
P.O. Box 37012
Washington, DC 20013-7012

FedEx:

Smithsonian Institution
NMNH Department of Botany, MRC 166
10th and Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20560

Voucher specimens should include labels printed on acid-free paper. Voucher labels can be exported from the GeoPlatform Data Management site or created using the herbarium label template available on the SOS website.

Include a printed Notice of Transmittal with your herbarium voucher shipment(s) to the Smithsonian and email a digital copy to your SOS Agency Coordinator with your end-of-season materials. This document can be downloaded from the SOS website (blm.gov/sos).

Refer to sections 10d, 10e, and 14e of the SOS Technical Protocol for further instructions on herbarium vouchers.

Optional voucher storage

Local office: You may keep duplicates of herbarium vouchers at your local land management office, if they are requested.

Local herbarium: You may send duplicates of herbarium vouchers to a local herbarium (see Appendix F of the SOS Technical Protocol for a list of herbaria). Always reach out to the herbarium to coordinate and confirm their capacity to receive materials before shipping.

Where do SOS photos go?

Please submit the three required photos per collection to your SOS Agency Coordinator as part of your end-of-season materials, and CC the SOS National Coordinating Office. You may use either of the following methods for electronic delivery:

- **Email:** Attach .JPG photo files in a compressed (.zip) folder
- **Cloud storage:** Share access via a Google Drive folder link

Where do SOS permits & permission documentation go?

All collections harvested from non-BLM land must be accompanied by valid permits or other permission documents. Please include these with all end-of-season materials submitted to your SOS Agency Coordinator – and using one of the following methods for electronic delivery:

- **Email:** Attach .PDF files in a compressed (.zip) folder
- **Cloud storage:** Share access via a Google Drive folder link