



01001100 01010100 01000101 01010010
LTER DataBits
Information Management Newsletter of
The Long Term Ecological Research Network
01001100 01010100 01000101 01010010

Place, Location, and Geographic Conventions

- *Karen S. Baker (PAL & CCE) and Robert Thombly (CCE)*

Chapman, A.D. and J. Wiecek (eds). 2006. **Guide to Best Practices for Georeferencing**.
Copenhagen: Global Biodiversity Information Facility.

<http://www.gbif.org/prog/digit/Georeferencing>

When we are there, we have a sense of place. When sampling in the field, we observe and are part of the context within which measurements are recorded - although how to capture this experience in metadata is the subject of ongoing research. A georeferencing guide deals with one aspect of metadata - that of location as designated by geographic coordinates. A ninety-page report on georeferencing best practices has been published by the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) drawing from more than a half dozen other initiatives and illustrating that there is more to capturing location than a simple documentation of degrees and minutes for latitude and longitude. There's accuracy, reliability, and transparency in addition to place names, feature classes, and reference systems. A geographic dictionary, sometimes called a gazetteer, is an index of geographic names, but draws on all of these components to accurately portray a given location. This particular guide contains useful context and geographic topic summaries as well as references to tools, online applications, and links to previous programs that focused on georeferencing. Additionally, the guide is peppered with real world examples, with the latter half containing a recipe book of standard ways to georeference various locales and features.