NEON USER GUIDE TO MICROBIAL METAGENOME SEQUENCES (NEON.DP1.10107; NEON.DP1.20279; NEON.DP1.20281)

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REVISION	DATE	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE
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1 DESCRIPTION

1.1 Purpose

This document provides an overview of the data included in this NEON Level 1 data product, the quality controlled product generated from raw Level 0 data, and associated metadata. In the NEON data products framework, the raw data collected in the field - for example, soil temperature from a single collection event - are considered the lowest level (Level 0). Raw data that have been quality checked via the steps detailed herein, as well as simple metrics that emerge from the raw data are considered Level 1 data products.

The text herein provides a discussion of measurement theory and implementation, data product provenance, quality assurance and control methods used, and approximations and/or assumptions made during L1 data creation.

1.2 Scope

This document describes the steps needed to generate the L1 data product Microbial Metagenomic Sequences, and associated metadata, from input data. Data from the subsamples can be found in the related data products listed below. This document also provides details relevant to the publication of the data products via the NEON data portal, with additional detail available in the file, NEON Data Variables for Soil Microbial Metagenomic Sequences (NEON.DP1.10107) (AD[05]), NEON Data Variables for Surface Water Microbial Metagenomic Sequences (NEON.DP1.20281) (AD[06]), or NEON Data Variables for Benthic Microbial Metagenomic Sequences (NEON.DP1.20279) (AD[07]) provided in the download package for each of the three data products.

This document describes the process for ingesting and performing automated quality assurance and control procedures on the laboratory data from samples generated by the following field sampling protocols: TOS Protocol and Procedure: Soil Biogeochemical and Microbial Sampling (AD[08]) for upland soil samples; TOS Standard Operating Procedure: Wetland Soil Sampling (AD[09]) for wetland soil samples; or AOS Protocol and Procedure: Aquatic Microbial Sampling (AD[10]) for aquatic samples. The raw data that are processed as described in this document are detailed in the file, NEON Raw Data Validation for Microbial Metagenomic Sequences (NEON.DP1.10107) (AD[04]), provided in the download package for this data product. Please note that raw data products (denoted by 'DP0') may not always have the same numbers (e.g., '10033') as the corresponding L1 data product.

2 RELATED DOCUMENTS AND ACRONYMS

2.1 Associated Documents

AD[01]	NEON.DOC.000001	NEON Observatory Design (NOD) Requirements
AD[02]	NEON.DOC.000913	TOS Science Design for Spatial Sampling
AD[03]	NEON.DOC.002652	NEON Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 Data Products Catalog
AD[04]	NEON.DP0.10107.001 _dataValidation.csv	NEON Raw Data Validation for Microbial Metagenomic Sequences (NEON.DP1.10107)
AD[05]	NEON.DP1.10107.001 _variables.csv	NEON Data Variables for Soil Microbial Metagenomic Sequences (NEON.DP1.10107)
AD[06]	NEON.DP1.20281.001 _variables.csv	NEON Data Variables for Surface Water Microbial Metagenomic Sequences (NEON.DP1.20281)
AD[07]	NEON.DP1.20279.001 _variables.csv	NEON Data Variables for Benthic Microbial Metagenomic Sequences (NEON.DP1.20279)
AD[08]	NEON.DOC.000908	TOS Science Design for Microbial Diversity
AD[09]	NEON.DOC.001152	NEON Aquatic Sample Strategy Document
AD[10]	NEON.DOC.014048	TOS Protocol and Procedure: Soil Biogeochemical and Microbial Sampling
AD[11]	NEON.DOC.004130	TOS Standard Operating Procedure: Wetland Soil Sampling
AD[12]	NEON.DOC.003044	AOS Protocol and Procedure: Aquatic Microbial Sampling
AD[13]	NEON.DOC.000008	NEON Acronym List
AD[14]	NEON.DOC.000243	NEON Glossary of Terms
AD[15]	OS_Generic _Transi-tions.pdf	NEON Algorithm Theoretical Basis Document: OS Generic Transitions
AD[16]		NEON's Ingest Conversion Language (NICL) specifications

3 DATA PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

Microbial shotgun metagenomics is a technique for evaluating microbial community structure and functional potential in a sample. These data are intended to allow relationships between genomic content of samples and environmental and biogeochemical parameters to be discerned for understanding and potentially predicting long-term changes in microbial structure and function.

The Microbial Metagenomic Sequences data product provides shotgun metagenomic sequence data and metadata for soil and aquatic (surface water and benthic) microbial samples. The sampling plan implements the guidelines and requirements described in the Science Designs for TOS Terrestrial Microbial Diversity (AD[08]) and Aquatic Sampling (AD[09]). Sample collection methods differ between aquatic and terrestrial samples, but in general samples are minimally processed in order to reduce the introduction of microbial contaminants. For most samples, including soil and epipsammon, native material is processed for analysis; however, certain aquatic sample types have additional processing steps (Figure 1). After field collection, samples are frozen in the field on dry ice and transported to ultra-low freezers at the NEON field laboratories. Samples are shipped to an analytical laboratory where DNA extraction, sample library preparation and DNA sequencing occur.

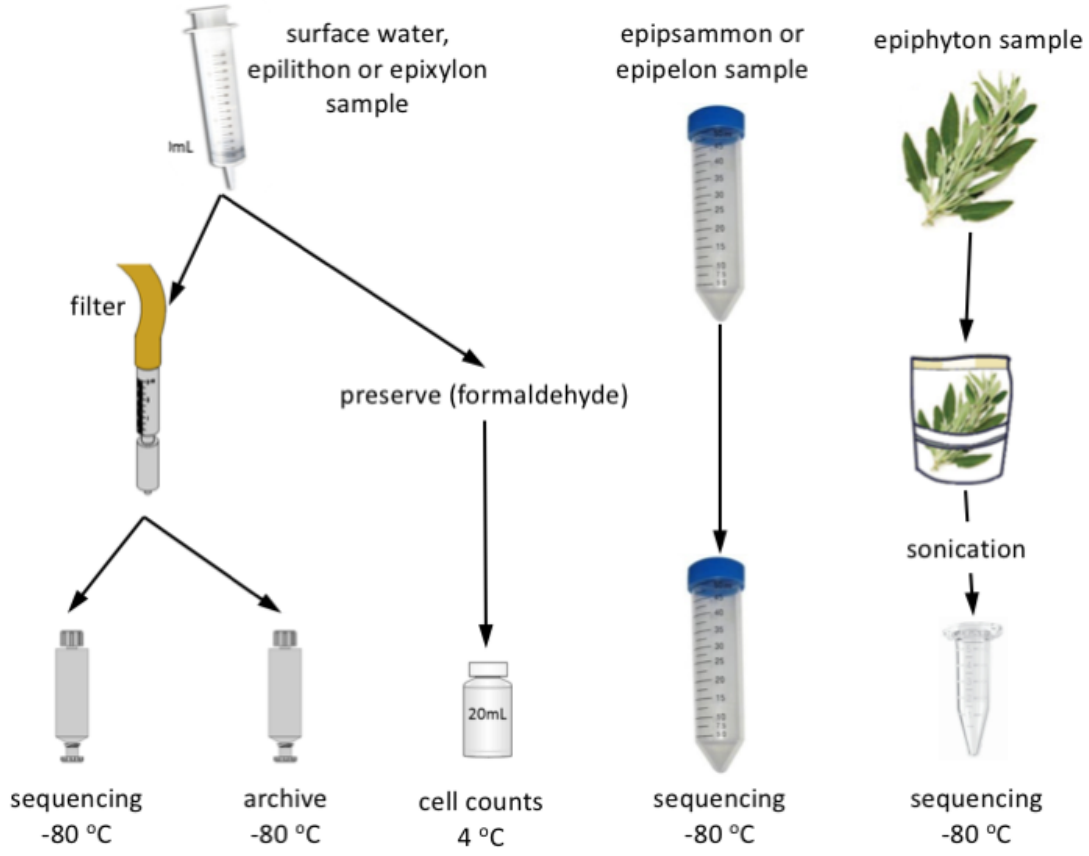

Figure 1: Overview of aquatic microbial field sample types, field processing steps, and analyses. Note that samples destined for cell count analysis are part of a different data product, NEON.DP1.20138.

For soils, a sample can either represent an individual X,Y location, or it can represent a plot-level composite sample of soils collected within a plot for a particular horizon type (Figure 2). NEON designates soil horizons broadly as either organic (O) or mineral (M).

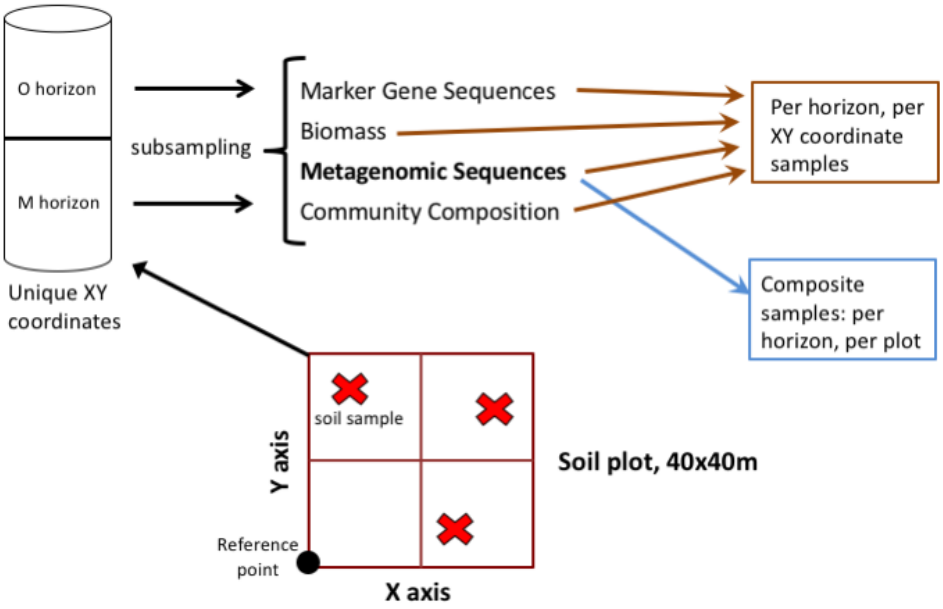

Figure 2: Overview of soil microbial field sampling and analysis workflow

3.1 Spatial Sampling Design

Microbial metagenomics sampling is executed at all NEON sites. A summary of the spatial design for the aquatic and terrestrial sampling is provided here. More comprehensive descriptions for soil (DP1.10086) and aquatic surface water (DP1.20138) sampling can be found in the associated Data Product User Guides.

At terrestrial sites, soils are sampled from three pre-determined, randomly assigned X,Y locations per 40 x 40 meter plot (Figure 2). Ten plots per site are sampled, four within the tower airshed (Figure 3) and six others distributed across the landscape, located in dominant vegetation types. The number of distributed plots within each vegetation type are proportional to the percent coverage of that type See AD[02] for further details on the NEON TOS spatial design.

All accompanying field and non-metagenomic laboratory data are reported at the spatial resolution of a single sampling location, e.g., an X,Y coordinate (+/- 0.5 meters) within a NEON plot. For generating plot-level field data to accompany pooled metagenomic soil samples, a data user should calculate average values for each individual sample used to generate the composite sample. The individual samples used to generate the pooled metagenomics samples are found as a pipe-delimited string in the field **genomicsPooledIDList** located in the data table ***sls_metagenomicsPooling***, which is part of the Soil Physical Properties (distributed periodic) data product

(DP1.10086).

At aquatic sites, microbial surface water samples are collected in conjunction with water chemistry sampling (Figure 4). In lakes, up to 3 locations are sampled: the lake inlet, lake outlet, and profiling buoy. In seepage lakes (no true inlet and outlet), microbe samples are collected only at the buoy for samples collected in 2018 or later. In flow-through lakes (with a true inlet and outle), samples are collected at all 3 lake locations. At large, non-wadeable streams (rivers), the sampling location is near the buoy sensor array. At both lakes and river buoy locations, either 1 or 2 samples are collected depending on whether the lake/river is stratified. In stratified systems, one sample is collected from the surface of the epilimnion, and one sample from the midpoint of the hypolimnion. In non-stratified sites, one surface sample will be collected. In wadeable streams, one surface water sample is collected near the downstream sensor array. In addition, benthic microbial samples are collected in wadeable streams at up to 8 locations throughout the 1 km sampling reach.

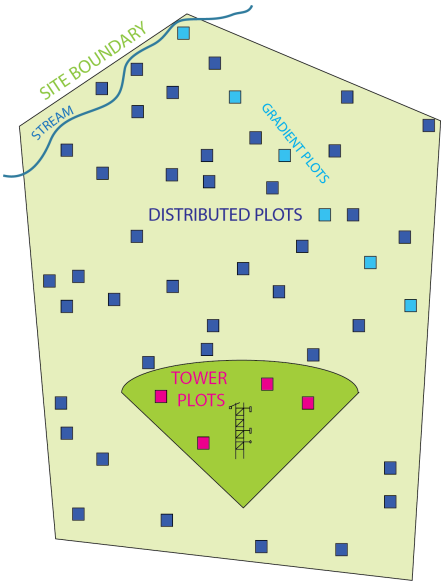

Figure 3: Representation of a NEON terrestrial site with Tower and Distributed plots shown. A subset of six (6) distributed base plots shown here are randomly selected for soil sampling, after accounting for vegetation type.

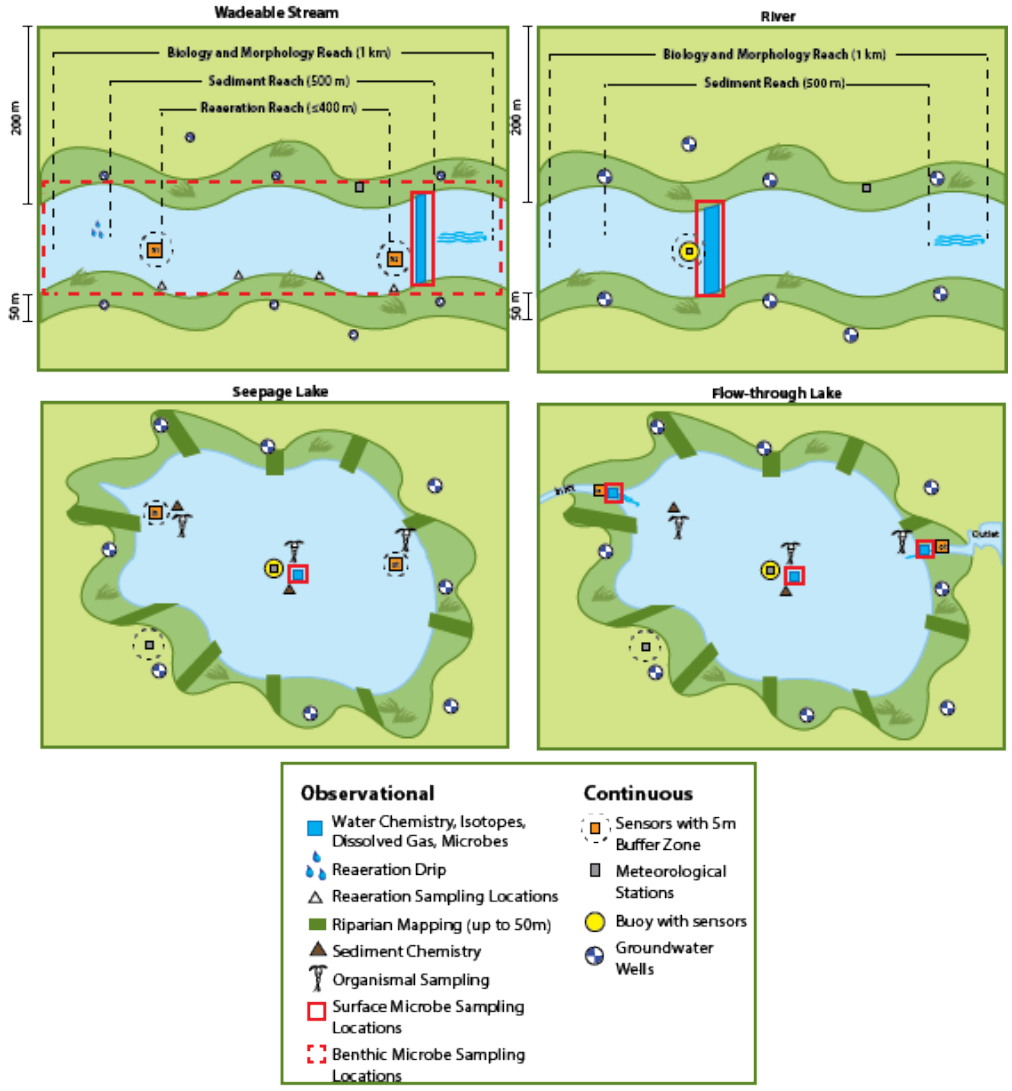

Figure 4: Generic NEON aquatic site layouts with microbial sampling locations highlighted in red boxes.

3.2 Temporal Sampling Design

At terrestrial sites, soil metagenomic sampling occurs annually at each site during the period of peak greenness in conjunction with the soil physical properties data product (DP1.10086). Once every five years, additional biogeochemical and isotopic measurements are made (DP1.10078), along with measurements of microbial biomass (DP1.10104) and nitrogen transformation rates (DP1.10080).

Metagenomics analysis at aquatic sites also occurs annually and approximately during the period of peak productivity. For surface water samples, at wadeable streams one of the monthly water chemistry/microbes sampling events is used for metagenomics, while at lakes and non-wadeable streams (rivers) one of the bimonthly sampling collections is analyzed. Benthic microbial sampling occurs only in wadeable streams, and is on a similar schedule

to periphyton sampling, which occurs 3 times per year (roughly equating to Spring, Summer, and Autumn). The Summer sampling event ("Bout 2") is analyzed for metagenomics.

For all samples, the temporal resolution is that of a single collection date. For a comprehensive description of field methods, refer to TOS Protocol and Procedure: Soil Biogeochemical and Microbial Sampling (AD[10]) or AOS Protocol and Procedure: Aquatic Microbial Sampling (AD[12]) for soil and aquatic sampling protocols, respectively. Descriptions of the upstream field data products for soil (DP1.10086), and aquatic surface water (DP1.20138) can be found in those respective Data Product User Guides.

3.3 Variables Reported

All variables reported from the analytical laboratory (L0 data) are listed in the file, NEON Raw Data Validation for Microbial Metagenomic Sequences (NEON.DP1.10107) (AD[04]). All variables reported in the published data (L1 data) are also provided separately in the following files:

- NEON Data Variables for Soil Microbial Metagenomic Sequences (NEON.DP1.10107) (AD[05])
- NEON Data Variables for Surface Water Microbial Metagenomic Sequences (NEON.DP1.20281) (AD[06])
- NEON Data Variables for Benthic Microbial Metagenomic Sequences (NEON.DP1.20279) (AD[07])

Field names have been standardized with Darwin Core terms (http://rs.tdwg.org/dwc/; accessed 16 February 2014), the Global Biodiversity Information Facility vocabularies (http://rs.gbif.org/vocabulary/gbif/; accessed 16 February 2014), and the VegCore data dictionary (https://projects.nceas.ucsb.edu/nceas/projects/bien/wiki/VegCore; accessed 16 February 2014).

To the extent possible, metadata names and terms are standardized according to the Genomics Standards Consortium, http://gensc.org/ (Kottmann et al., 2008; Yilmaz et al., 2011; Field et al., 2011). Efforts are also made to conform with the ENVO ontology (http://www.obofoundry.org/ontology/envo.html).

NEON TOS spatial data employs the World Geodetic System 1984 (WGS84) for its fundamental reference datum and Earth Gravitational Model 96 (EGM96) for its reference gravitational ellipsoid. Latitudes and longitudes are denoted in decimal notation to six decimal places, with longitudes indicated as negative west of the Greenwich meridian.

Some variables described in this document may be for NEON internal use only and will not appear in downloaded data.

3.4 Spatial Resolution and Extent

The finest resolution at which spatial data are reported is a single sampling location. For soils, this corresponds to a single X,Y coordinate location within a plot. For aquatics, this corresponds to a single station or habitat unit within a site.

3.4.1 Soils

sampleID (unique ID given to the individual soil sampling location and horizon) → **plotID** (ID of plot within site) → **siteID** (ID of NEON site) → **domainID** (ID of a NEON domain).

The spatial data are located in the data product Soil Physical Properties, distributed periodic (DP1.10086), in the table ***sls_soilCoreCollection***. The spatial data are measured at the plot *centroid*, which should be sufficient spatial resolution for plot-level composite samples. For samples that represent a single X,Y location within a plot, a more accurate measurement may be desired. Refer to the User Guide for Soil Physical Properties, distributed periodic, for more information and instructions.

3.4.2 Aquatics

namedLocation (unique ID given to the location within a site) → **siteID** (ID of NEON site) → **domainID** (ID of a NEON domain).

The spatial data can be found in the following Data Products:

- Surface water samples: Surface water microbe cell count (DP1.20138), in the table **amc_fieldSuperParent**.
- Benthic samples: Benthic microbe field data (this data product), in the table **amb_fieldParent**.

3.5 Temporal Resolution and Extent

The finest resolution at which temporal data are reported is collectDate, the date and time of day when the sample was collected in the field.

The NEON Data Portal provides data in monthly files for query and download efficiency. Queries including any part of a month will return data from the entire month. Code to combine files across months is available here: https://github.com/NEONScience/NEON-utilities.

3.6 Associated Data Streams

This section describes the data products that are directly linked or closely related to the metagenomics sequencing data products.

3.6.1 Soils

Soil metagenomic data are derived from subsamples collected during soil biogeochemical and microbial sampling and include numerous related data products:

- Soil Physical Properties, distributed periodic (DP1.10086) - includes all field data associated with a soil sample.
- Soil microbe community composition (NEON.DP1.10081): Microbial community composition data derived from marker gene sequencing. The **dnaSampleID** variable in the tables ***mcc_soilTaxonTable_16S*** and ***mcc_soilTaxonTable_ITS*** may be used to link data in this product to soil metagenomic data.
- Soil microbe group abundances (NEON.DP1.10109): Bacteria/archaeal and fungal abundances as measured by quantitative PCR (qPCR). The **dnaSampleID** variable in the table ***mga_groupAbundances*** table may be used to link data in this product to soil metagenomic data.

- Soil microbe marker gene sequences (NEON.DP1.10108): Microbial 16S and ITS sequence data. The **dnaSampleID** variable in the tables ***mmg_soilDnaExtraction***, ***mmg_soilPcrAmplification*** and ***mmg_soilMarkerGeneSequencing*** can be used to link data in this product to soil metagenomic data.
- Soil microbe biomass (NEON.DP1.10104): Microbial biomass as measured by PLFA. Use information in the Soil Physical Properties data product (NEON.DP1.10086, table ***sls_soilCoreCollection***) to obtain the **biomassID** corresponding to the **sampleID**. The **sampleID** will map to the **genomicsPooledIDList**, which corresponds to a **genomicsSampleID**. This variable can be used to link data in this product to soil metagenomic data via the ***mms_metagenomeDnaExtraction*** data table.
- Soil inorganic nitrogen pools and transformations (NEON.DP1.10080): Measurements derived by field incubations of soil cores or buried bags. As described for soil microbe biomass, use the **sampleID** from table ***sls_soilCoreCollection*** to link data in this product to soil metagenomic data.
- Soil chemical properties (Distributed periodic) (NEON.DP1.10078): Measurements of soil carbon and nitrogen. As with soil microbe biomass, the **sampleID** that generated the soil metagenomic data can be used to link data.
- Soil stable isotopes (Distributed periodic) (NEON.DP1.10100): Measurements of soil carbon and nitrogen stable isotopes. As with soil microbe biomass, the **sampleID** that generated the soil metagenomic data can be used to link data.

3.6.2 Aquatics

Aquatic metagenomic data are derived from samples collected in conjunction with other physical, chemical, and biological measurements. These include:

- Surface water microbes. The field data are found in the Aquatic Cell Counts data product (NEON.DP1.20138). The field **geneticSampleID** within the table ***amc_fieldCellCounts*** can be used to link these data to the metagenomics data.
- Benthic microbes: The field data are part of the download package for the metagenomics data product and do not require downloading additional data products. Tables in this data product can be linked by the **geneticSampleID**.
- Chemical properties of surface water (NEON.DP1.20093): Measurements of chemical constituents in water. The field **parentSampleID** in the table ***swc_fieldSuperParent*** can be used to link these data to metagenomics data.
- Periphyton, seston and phytoplankton collection (NEON.DP1.20166): Field data associated with sample collection. The field **parentSampleID** in the table ***alg_fieldData*** links to the **sampleID** in the table ***amb_fieldParent***.
- Periphyton, seston and phytoplankton chemical properties (NEON.DP1.20163): Measurements of chemical constituents of algal samples. The field **parentSampleID** in the table ***alg_domainLabChemistry*** links to the **sampleID** in the table ***amb_fieldParent***.
- Benthic (NEON.DP1.20086) and surface water (NEON.DP1.20141) microbe community composition: Taxonomic data derived from 16S and ITS marker gene sequencing. The field **dnaSampleID** in the tables ***mcc_benthicTaxonTable_16S***, ***mcc_benthicTaxonTable_ITS***, ***mcc_swTaxonTable_16S*** and ***mcc_swTaxonTable_ITS*** can be used to link these data to the metagenomics data.
- Benthic (NEON.DP1.20277) and surface water (NEON.DP1.20278) microbe group abundances: Bacteria/archaeal and fungal abundances as measured by quantitative PCR (qPCR). Link using the field **genetic-**

SampleID in the tables ***mga_benthicGroupAbundances*** and ***mga_swGroupAbundances***.

- Benthic (NEON.DP1.20280) Microbial 16S and ITS marker gene sequences data. The field **geneticSampleID** in the tables ***amb_fieldParent*** and ***mmg_benthicDnaExtraction*** can be used to link these data to the metagenomic data.
- Surface water (NEON.DP1.20282) Microbial 16S and ITS marker gene sequences data. The field **geneticSampleID** in the tables ***mmg_swDnaExtraction*** can be used to link these data to the metagenomic data.
- Depth profile at specific depths (NEON.DP1.DP1.20254): Secchi depth measurements taken at lakes and non-wadeable streams. Information in **eventID** can be used to link these data to the surface water metagenomic data.

3.7 Product Instances

Soil metagenomic samples are collected at all terrestrial NEON sites. A maximum of 10 plots will be sampled at every site once per year during peak greenness. Most years, the surface soil horizon (organic or mineral) will be collected, while during a coordinated microbes/biogeochemistry bout (which occurs once every 5 years), up to 2 soil horizons will be collected to a maximum depth of 30cm. For each soil horizon sampled, 3 samples per plot are collected. Currently, all of the samples of the same horizon and from the same plot are composited. Thus at most sites, there will be 10 metagenomics samples generated per site per year, with up to 20 samples generated during a coordinated soil microbes/biogeochemistry bout.

Aquatic samples are collected at all aquatic NEON sites. For surface water metagenomics sampling, a maximum of 3 sample locations will be sampled at every site once per year, for a maximum of 3 metagenomics samples collected per site per year. At wadeable stream sites where benthic microbial sampling occurs, up to 8 samples are collected for metagenomics once per year, for a maximum of 8 metagenomics samples per site per year.

3.8 Data Relationships

3.8.1 Soils

The protocol dictates that each X,Y location sampled yields a unique **sampleID** per horizon per collectDate (day of year, local time) in the table ***sls_soilCoreCollection*** for the data product Soil Physical Properties (DP1.10086). Depending on the type of bout and time of year, a record from ***sls_soilCoreCollection*** may have zero or one child records in (Soil Physical Properties, DP1.10086) ***sls_metagenomicsPooling***.

Up to three soil samples from ***sls_coreCollection*** may be composited into a single sample for metagenomics analyses. The list of **sampleID**s from ***sls_soilCoreCollection*** that comprise a composited metagenomics sample (called the **genomicsSampleID**) is provided in the Soil Physical Properties product as the **genomicsPooledIDList** in the table **sls_metagenomicsPooling**. Each **genomicsSampleID** is sent for DNA extraction, generating one or more records in ***mms_metagenomeDnaExtraction*** per **genomicsSampleID** (i.e. the **genomicsSampleID** in ***sls_metagenomicsPooling*** = **genomicsSampleID** in ***mms_metagenomeDnaExtraction***). For each **genomicsSampleID** occurring in the tables **sls_metagenomicsPooling** and ***mms_metagenomeDnaExtraction***, the composited samples are denoted by the string 'comp'.

In some instances, the soil sample is not composited but instead represents an individual X,Y location. This is a subsample of the parent **sampleID** in the table ***sls_soilCoreCollection***, and is sent for DNA extraction

(i.e. **geneticSampleID** in ***sls_soilCoreCollection*** = **genomicsSampleID** in ***mms_metagenomeDnaExtraction***). For each non-composited **genomicsSampleID**, sample names contain the string 'gen' in the table **mms_metagenomeDnaExtraction**.

One or more **dnaSampleID**s is expected per **genomicsSampleID**, depending on the number of DNA extractions that occur on a sample provided to the lab. Duplicate records for an individual **dnaSampleID** should not exist.

One record in table **mms_metagenomeSequencing** is expected per **dnaSampleID**. This table describes the sequencing preparation and analysis metadata. Note that only metadata are available on the NEON data portal. Actual sequence data are available from external public sequence repositories (see Special Considerations section below on how to access).

Duplicates and/or missing data may exist where protocol and/or data entry abberations have occurred; *users should check data carefully for anomalies before joining tables*.

Soil Physical Properties (NEON DP1.10086) sls_soilCoreCollection.csv - > One record expected per sampleID. Depending upon boutType and whether samples are composited. Generates samples used in Soil microbe community composition (NEON.DP1.10081), Soil microbe group abundances (NEON.DP1.10109), Soil microbe marker gene sequences (NEON.DP1.10108), and Soil microbe biomass (NEON.DP1.10104). Additionally, subsamples generated from soil sampleIDs are used in Soil inorganic nitrogen pools and transformations (NEON.DP1.10080). If soils are not composited, the dnaSampleID generated here corresponds to the Soil microbe metagenome sequences (NEON.DP1.10107) mms_metagenomeDnaExtraction genomicsSampleID.

Soil Physical Properties (NEONDP1.10086) sls_metagenomicsPooling.csv - > One record expected per plotID per horizon per collectDate (day of year, local time). Record represents a mixture of the samples collected in a plot (listed in genomicsPooledIDList). Each record generates a single genomicsSampleID, corresponding to the Soil microbe metagenome sequences (NEON.DP1.10107) mms_metagenomeDnaExtraction genomicsSampleID.

Soil Microbial Metagenome Sequences (NEON.DP1.10107) mms_metagenomeDnaExtraction.csv -> One record expected per dnaSampleID. A genomicsSampleID will represent only one extraction per plot/horizon combination and per collectDate (day of year, local time). Generally there will be only one extraction per genomicsSampleID (i.e. one record per collectDate (day of year, local time)), but in some cases multiple extractions will be necessary and will generate multiple **dnaSampleID**s for the same **genomicsSampleID**. Each record generates a single dnaSampleID, corresponding to the mms_metagenomeSequencing dnaSampleID. *Important Note*: The DNA extraction table is generic: samples that may not be relevant to the soil data product may appear in the data table. To limit the DNA extraction dataset to those that are relevant to the metagenomics samples, filter the records in the ***mms_metagenomeDnaExtraction*** table to include only those with a **dnaSampleID** that is also contained in the ***mms_metagenomeSequencing*** table.

Soil Microbial Metagenome Sequences (NEON.DP1.10107) mms_metagenomeSequencing.csv -> One record expected per dnaSampleID. Each record generates a single dnaSampleID, corresponding to the mms_metagenomeDnaExtraction dnaSampleID. Note that only metadata are available on the NEON data portal. Actual sequence data are available from external public sequence repositories (see Special Considerations section below on how to access).

3.8.2 Aquatics

3.8.2.1 Surface Water

The protocol dictates that each namedLocation sampled yields a unique **parentSampleID**, one sample per collectDate (day of year, local time) in Surface water microbe cell count (DP1.20138), in the table ***amc_fieldSuperParent***. Each **parentSampleID** may be subsampled into one **geneticSampleID** that undergoes microbial analyses, and an archive sample, described in the table ***amc_fieldCellCounts*** within the Surface water microbe cell count product. These **geneticSampleIDs** are sent for DNA extraction (i.e. **geneticSampleID** from ***amc_fieldCellCounts*** = **genomicsSampleID** in ***mms_swMetagenomeDnaExtraction***).

Duplicates and/or missing data may exist where protocol and/or data entry abberations have occurred; *users should check data carefully for anomalies before joining tables*.

Surface water microbe cell count (NEON.DP1.20138) amc_fieldSuperParent.csv - > One record expected per namedLocation sampled and collectDate (day of year, local time), generates a unique **parentSampleID**.

Surface water microbe cell count (NEON.DP1.20138) amc_fieldCellCounts.csv - > One record expected per namedLocation per collectDate (day of year, local time). Record represents a subsample (geneticSampleID) of the field-collected samples (parentSampleID). Depending on the time of year, each record generates zero or one geneticSampleIDs, corresponding to the Surface water microbe metagenome sequences (NEON.DP1.10107) variable **genomicsSampleID** in the table ***mms_swMetagenomeDnaExtraction***.

Surface water microbial metagenome sequences (NEON.DP1.20281) mms_swMetagenomeDnaExtraction.csv -> One record expected per dnaSampleID. Generally there will be only one extraction per genomicsSampleID (i.e. one record per collectDate (day of year, local time)), but in some cases multiple extractions will be necessary. Each record generates a single dnaSampleID, which corresponds to the **dnaSampleID** in the table ***mms_swMetagenomeSequencing***. Note that only metadata are available on the NEON data portal. Actual sequence data are available from external public sequence repositories (see Special Considerations section below on how to access).

3.8.2.2 Benthic Habitats

The protocol dictates that each namedLocation sampled yields a unique **sampleID** per collectDate (day of year, local time) in Benthic microbe metagenome sequencing (NEON.DP1.20279), in the table ***amb_fieldParent***.

Duplicates and/or missing data may exist where protocol and/or data entry abberations have occurred; *users should check data carefully for anomalies before joining tables*.

Aquatic benthic microbes field data (NEON.DP1.20279) amb_fieldParent.csv - > One record expected per namedLocation sampled and collectDate (day of year, local time), generates a unique **sampleID**.

Benthic microbe metagenome sequences (NEON.DP1.20279) mms_benthicMetagenomeDnaExtraction.csv -> One record is expected per **dnaSampleID**. Generally there will be only one extraction per genomicsSampleID (i.e. one record per collectDate (day of year, local time)), but in some cases multiple extractions will be necessary. Each record generates a single dnaSampleID, which generally corresponds to the **dnaSampleID** in the table

mms_benthicMetagenomeSequencing, depending on the number of DNA extractions that occur on a single genomics sample provided to the lab. Duplicate records for an individual dnaSampleID should not exist.

Benthic microbe metagenome sequences (NEON.DP1.20279) mms_benthicMetagenomeSequencing.csv -> One record expected per dnaSampleID. Each record corresponds to a single dnaSampleID, which matches the **dnaSampleID** in mms_benthicMetagenomeDnaExtraction. Note that only metadata are available on the NEON data portal. Actual sequence data are available from external public sequence repositories (see Special Considerations section below on how to access).

3.9 Special Considerations

For ease of integration with external data sets, metagenomics sequence data are published on public sequence repositories. The primary data repository is MG-RAST (http://metagenomics.anl.gov, Meyer et al., 2008), which directly synchronizes its data with the European Bioinformatics Institute (EMBL-EBI) database and, through EMBL-EBI, synchronizes with the National Center for Biotechnology Information's Sequence Read Archive (SRA). A suite of metadata, compliant with minimum metadata standards defined by the Genomics Standards Consortium (e.g. MIxS, MIMARKS, MIMS), accompanies the sequence data. While efforts are made to publish comprehensive sequencing metadata with the sequence data stored at public sequence repositories, potentially important data will only be available through the NEON Data Portal. These data include:

- Methods and SOPs
- QA data
- Sample identifiers to enable joining metagenomics data with other related Data Products, such as biogeochemistry data
- Data for other related Data Products

3.9.1 Retrieving Metagenomic Sequence Data from MG-RAST

There are a number of ways to search and retrieve minimally processed metagenomics sequence data.

- From the NEON data portal:
    1. The link "MG-RAST Project: NEON Soil Metagenomes" will take the user to the MG-RAST project page for the queried data. This is a dynamic link and will automatically update based on the user query.
    2. The link "MG-RAST Sample Search" takes the user to the MG-RAST page for searching individual records, pre-populated.
    3. The link "MG-RAST Project, Prototype Data: NEON Soils" will take the user to the project page for soil metatranscriptomic data that were generated as part of an early NEON soil prototyping effort.
    4. The link "MG-RAST Project: NEON Freshwater Benthic Microbe Metagenomes" will take the user to the MG-RAST project page for the queried data. This is a dynamic link and will automatically update based on the user query.
    5. The link "MG-RAST Project: NEON Surface Water Microbe Metagenomes" will take the user to the MG-RAST project page for the queried data. This is a dynamic link and will automatically update based on the user query.

- From MG-RAST directly: Users who are interested in using the MG-RAST data analysis pipeline may want to combine NEON datasets with other datasets. This may be more easily achieved by querying the MG-RAST database directly. Users can analyze samples from a variety of NEON and non-NEON projects. A free user account may be required.
- From SRA directly: Data and metadata are available for download from the SRA using the SRA toolkit. Documentation on how to install and use the toolkit for downloading sequence data is available on the SRA website.

4 DATA ENTRY CONSTRAINT AND VALIDATION

Many quality control measures are implemented on the laboratory data at the point of data ingest into the NEON database. For example, data formats are constrained and data values are controlled through the provision of controlled lists of values (LOV's), which reduces the number of processing steps necessary to prepare the raw data for publication. The product-specific data constraint and validation requirements built into data entry applications and database ingest are described in the document NEON Raw Data Validation for Microbial Metagenomic Sequences (NEON.DP1.10107). This document is provided with every download of this data product. Contained within this file is a field named 'entryValidationRulesParser', which describes syntactically the validation rules for each field built into the data ingest validation. Data entry constraints are described in Nicl syntax in the validation file provided with every data download, and the Nicl language is described in NEON's Ingest Conversion Language (NICL) specifications (AD[14]).

5 DATA PROCESSING STEPS

5.1 Sequencing Data

Metagenomics sequencing data are generated in batches of multiple samples. After sequencing, the multiplexed sequence data are parsed into separate files on a per sample basis. For each sample, minimum quality criteria must be met in order to accept the data for the sample. The general criteria include meeting a minimum sequencing depth (e.g. number of sequences per sample), a maximum number of ambiguous base calls, and a minimum quality score. The actual criteria may change over time as technology evolves and standards change. The per sample QA results are published as part of the metadata package.

Following laboratory submission of metadata into the NEON automated data ingest process, the steps used to process the data through to publication on the NEON Data Portal are detailed in the NEON Algorithm Theoretical Basis Document: OS Generic Transitions (AD[13]).

6 REFERENCES

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