AskReGIS Data Search

AskReGIS is the database search engine for the CRGIS. Using this tool you can search for specific properties or groups of properties that meet defined search criteria. You can then view the details of the selected properties and/or map their locations. This tutorial will show you the basics for using the various searches available. All searches are available to all users, but the mapping capabilities are determined by your login level.

AskReGIS can be accessed by clicking on the AskReGIS button, found on the main Area Of Interest (AOI) page and in the upper left of the map page.

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Basic Search

This is the main page for AskReGIS. It includes criteria for the most common searches.

There are two basic types of searches: “and” searches that make it necessary for the results to meet ALL specified criteria; and “or” searches that allow the results to include ANY of the specified criteria. All Basic Searches are “and” searches unless otherwise noted, so every criterion you enter limits the number of results. Be careful not to be so specific that you get no results. It is also prudent to limit text searches to as few words as possible. Records will need to match exactly to be returned, so if you enter “Main Street,” and the data recorder said “Main St.” you will not see that record in your results. Just saying “Main” would be better.

Start by selecting the resource group you want to search.

Click the drop down down arrow in Search Type to display the options:

Several different query types are available. The Historic Properties selection searches the entire above ground historic resources database. The Linear Historic Properties, Non-Linear Historic Properties, and Historic Bridges, and Local Historic District selections perform a search designated as each of those resource types. The Archaeological and Historic Survey selection will search for reports produced by federal or state projects that did survey investigations. Some manuscripts and research documents are included in this data set. Selecting Archaeological Site will allow you to search the archaeological data. There are also a variety of archaeological summaries available for selection in the drop down menu.

Notice that your selection appears in the lower Search Description box. This box may not be present in the remainder of the tutorial, but is always shown on the webpage.
After selecting a query type, the first search selection is **Where**.

Two options exist for all search types: either search all of Pennsylvania by selecting the "Statewide" button or limit the query to one or more counties and/or municipalities. You can choose more than one county or municipality by holding the Ctrl key while selecting the names. Selection will be highlighted in gray. To select a range of counties or municipalities, hold down your Shift key. If you do not know which municipality the resource that you are looking for is in, simply leave the default "All Municipalities" highlighted.

When searching for archaeological resources or reports, you have the additional options to search by Drainage or Physiographic Zone. These function in the same manner as the municipality search.

The next choice for limiting your search is **When**.

**Historic Resources**

For historic resources, you have the choice of searching an estimated date within a given amount of years, or a date range between two years. Since many of our files do not have built dates, this search should only be used when you need very specific information. To search the entire data set, just skip this section.
Archaeological Resources

The When search for archaeological sites uses defined cultural periods for the prehistoric sites and date ranges for historic sites.

First select the general category of cultural periods. These must be selected one at a time. Please note that the two “(undefined)” categories will only return records that have that specific code, not all Prehistoric or Historic sites. To see all Prehistoric sites, without any Historic sites, you would need to select all prehistoric categories.

Selection of a category places all of the options in that category in the Period Box.

Next select periods by highlighting the row (use Ctrl or Shift to highlight multiple rows) and then move them to the Selected box using the Arrows. The double arrow moves all.

Again note that the generic “Woodlands” seen above would not return all Woodland Period site, only those that were not designated as “Early,” “Middle,” or “Late.” To see all, you must select all.

Selecting time periods for archaeological survey reports will return reports that have sites from the selected time period linked to them.
The last choice is **Additional Criteria**.

This is the choice that varies the most by resource group, but the selection process it the same for all groups. You can add as many criteria as you want, but remember that it may be better to do a broader search and sort the results than limit the search and not get enough results.

Drop down the first box to see what criteria are available for your search.

You can remove a criterion by clicking the "**Remove**" link.

If the field you select has a picklist, the operand changes to “includes” and you are given a list to select. Use the Ctrl key to select multiple values. Selecting multiple adds them as “or” statements.
So the query these two examples would return a building or structure with the word “furnace” in their name.

When you have made all of your selections, click the “Search” button to run the search. To start over, click “Reset.”
Advanced Search

AskReGIS also includes an advanced search mode that allows you to search most of the fields in our database. Here the caution to not make your searches too complex is even more important. You get to the **Advanced Mode** by clicking on the button in the Search Type box.

The Where and When searches are the same in both modes, but the Additional Criteria selections are greatly expanded and it is possible to build more complex queries. You can drop down the **list** to see all of the options.

Note that you now have the option to request results that do **not** meet certain criteria and your list of **operands** has increased.

As you add criteria, you are also given the option of making each an “and” or “or” search. Note the Search Description below that shows the search you have built.
AskReGIS Data Search

Reading AskReGIS Search Results

This is the Results page. You can see your search in the white box at the top. If you want to change any of the search criteria, you would click the Search tab and return to the search builder.

**Things to note:**

These counts indicate how many records from the database were returned and how many separate resources they represent. One resource may have multiple records in this table if any of the fields shown have multiple values, such as multiple historic names or municipalities.

You can sort the data based on any of the fields shown. Just click on the field name at the top of the column and it will sort the list alphabetically.

You can adjust the number of records you see at one time and advance through pages to see all records.

You can look at more detailed information on any of the resources by clicking on the purple information button 📖 in that row. For more information see Tutorial 4 – Reading Your Results.

You can export your results as a CSV file by clicking the Export to CSV button at the top of the list.
Mapping AskReGIS Search Results

Now that you have your list of resources, you can choose to map some or all of your results. Resources that have map location have a checkbox in front of them on the results list. If there is no checkbox in front of a resource, then the resource has not yet been mapped in the CRGIS. Historic Surveys have no mapping and are searchable only through the database. Public users and Planners can only map historic resources. Archaeological access is necessary to map archaeological sites and surveys from AskReGIS (although both Planners and the public can view surveys on the map). If you do not have the authority to map a resource, the checkboxes will show, but will not be active.

You can click the Map all non-linear button in order to highlight every resource on the list except the linear resources. All resources appear on the map that is generated with your selected resources highlighted in red. Linear resources are excluded from this option so that their extent will not control the size of the map returned. They will still be visible on your map. **There is a mapping limit of 1000 resources.**

To map a subset of resources, select the checkboxes next to the resources you wish to map.

Once you have selected the resources, click on the Map Selected button to build your map.

To see a list of the selected resources, click the View Selected List button.

The resources you selected will be visible on the map with a red highlighted boundary.
Another choice is to turn your selection into a custom layer to be displayed on the map. Individually select the resource you want to include. (A quick way to select all the records is to first choose **Map All Non-linear** button. Then, when you return to the Ask ReGIS window, all the resources will have a checkmark.)

Next, click on **Create New Layer** button. You will be prompted with a box to enter a name and choose a color for that layer.

Your results will show on the map window with a highlighted boundary of the color you selected and your new layer will be included in the legend. New layers stay active until the end of your session. There is a limit of 1000 resources per layer.

This concludes CRGIS Tutorials #3 AskReGIS Data Search.