

GSSCC - - DNA SIG

by Gail Burk - - November 5, 2024

DNA Projects at Family Tree DNA

Joining a group project at Family Tree DNA is a good way to collaborate with others to advance your research. There are Y-DNA projects, mt-DNA projects, and autosomal-DNA projects. Projects may be established for specific surnames, which usually include a multitude of variant spellings of the name. There are sometimes multiple projects related to the same surname, especially if the surname is a common one. Other projects are established for specified geographic locations. Groups will also be designed for researchers working on a particular family name tied to a specific location. Other projects are centered around DNA haplogroups. Surname groups and haplogroup projects are especially appropriate for Y-DNA testers.

Another useful type of project is the family group project category. These groups are often private and only open to members of the family. As private groups, they are not displayed on the publicly-available list of projects. As members of these groups determine connections to distant cousins, those more distant matches are invited to join the family group project.

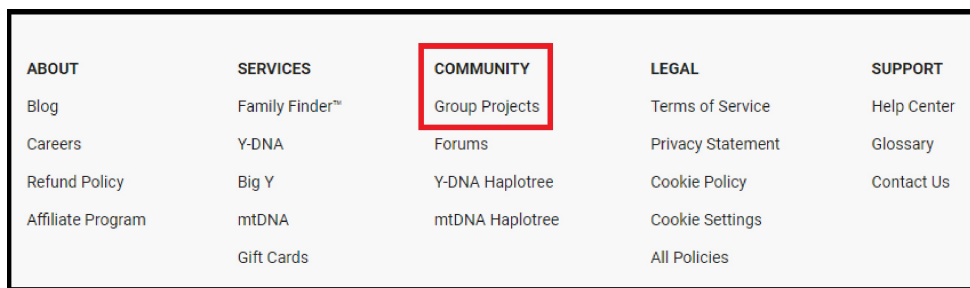
Y-DNA project groups may or may not accept female members with the same surname. Thumbnail descriptions of each project in any category will usually state whether or not the project only accepts Y-DNA testers, or accepts all test-takers. Y-DNA projects may be very tailored and specific, or they may be more general in scope. Some haplogroup projects may include Y-DNA testers together with all mt-DNA testers (including female testers) into a single project.

To facilitate maternal research, mt-DNA projects have been established. Maternal research is often complicated by the fact that, in Western cultures, a female's surname changes with each generation. Y-DNA and mt-DNA haplogroup projects explore more ancient DNA connections.

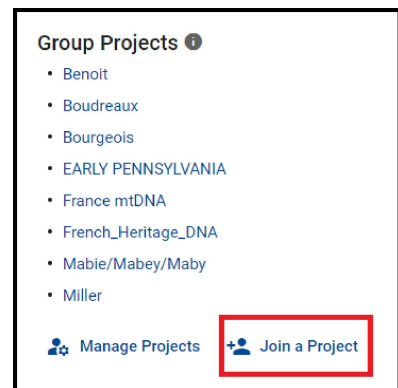
Projects and their goals, and how they are managed, vary considerably. Most projects are public, and public projects only publicly display non-identifying information. The information that is shown in a Y-DNA or mt-DNA project display includes the surname(s) of the project; the name of the most distant ancestor for each test-taker as reported by that test-taker; the country where that ancestor was born, if known; the kit # of the test-taker, and the haplogroup of the test-taker. Some groups have enabled the "activity feed" link. If you've joined several projects, you may want to check the activity feed in each of your groups periodically to see information and comments posed by other members of that respective group.

Volunteer project administrators create, monitor and control DNA projects by defining their goals and determining who is eligible to join the project. Project administrators list the surnames that fall within the parameters of their project description.

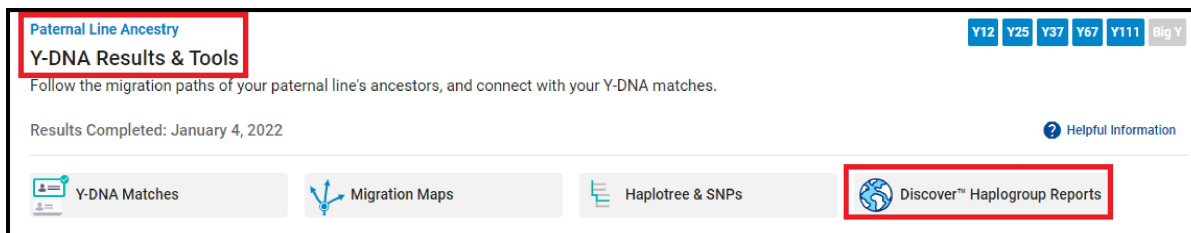
You can search for public projects from the main page of your FT-DNA account. Simply scroll down to the bottom of the page and search for “Group Projects” under the “Community” heading. Searching for a surname of interest will show how many test-takers at FT-DNA with the same surname have tested. You can view projects that might be of interest with regard to that surname. Searching the entire list of projects by surname may lead you to projects that would not be obvious if you only search under “Surname Projects.” Search under all the variant spellings of the surname of interest. You can find the latest posts from group administrators by clicking on “Forums” directly underneath “Group Projects” under the “Community heading.



You can also search for projects on the page for your DNA matches. Just click on “Join a Project” found in the box above your haplogroup badge. → → →



A good way to find a relevant Y-DNA project is to use the “Discover Haplogroup Reports” tool. Enter your Y-haplogroup and click on “Suggested Projects.”



Joining group projects at FT-DNA can lead to new genealogy break-throughs.

Source of information: *The Complete Guide to Family Tree DNA*, by Roberta Estes; pub. by Genealogical Publishing Company, Baltimore, Maryland, 2024; pp. 85-88; 209-214.