

Building on BAWWG

The National Wetland Monitoring Strategy

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Biological Assessment of Wetlands Workgroup (BAWWG)

- *Objective:* to improve methods and programs to assess the biological integrity of wetlands
- *Group membership:* wetland scientists from federal agencies, states and universities.
- *Purposes:* peer to peer communication, collaborative projects, develop consistent terminology and methods.

“Methods for Evaluating Wetland Condition” Report Series



Why Monitor Wetlands?

Better information is needed to:

- identify impacts to wetlands
- measure the success of our programs
- better integrate wetland protection into the nation's watershed management programs
- *improve the health of our watersheds!*

Clean Water Act

- “restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of our nation’s waters”
- states and tribes will report on the condition of waters of the U.S., which includes wetlands

National Wetland Assessment and Monitoring Strategy

- EPA convened a Monitoring Strategy Workgroup in Spring 2000
- Wetland monitoring is a priority for the EPA wetlands program
- Building from the foundation of the BAWWG work
- States and EPA have invested much effort already with plans to do more

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Wetland Monitoring Strategy

- Build state/tribal monitoring capacity by coordinating and expanding upon existing monitoring efforts.
- Facilitate the development and implementation of comprehensive state and tribal wetland monitoring programs.
- Use monitoring data to improve decision-making.

Monitoring Approach

- **LANDSCAPE LEVEL:** remote sensing, existing GIS layers, landscape profiling
- **RAPID ASSESSMENT LEVEL:** sub-sample of landscape level, hydrogeologic setting, land uses and stressors
- **SITE-SPECIFIC LEVEL:** sub-sample of rapid assessment level, bioassessment methods, hydrologic measures

Building State and Tribal Capacity

EPA will:

- establish *regional wetland monitoring workgroups*
 - forum for technical support
 - data and methods sharing
- provide *financial support* (Wetland Program Development Grants)
- provide *technical guidance and training*

State and Tribal Goals

*Systematically assess the **chemical, physical, and biological** condition of our Nation's wetlands*

States and tribes:

- define goals and desired products
- assess existing capacity
- identify data and resource needs
- prepare plan for program development, integration, and implementation

Where Are We Headed?


- Fund monitoring pilots in 1 state/region/year and 1 tribe/region/year
- Establish 2 regional monitoring workgroups per year
- All states developing wetland monitoring programs by FY06, *i.e.*, wetlands included (or plan in place for including) in all state monitoring programs by FY06
- States report on capabilities and have strategy for achieving FY06 goal by the end of FY02

Wetland Program Development Grant Guidance

---Commitment of Resources---

- Monitoring is one of 5 “core elements” identified in a comprehensive wetland program
- FY01 grant guidance emphasizes monitoring methods and program development as a funding priority
- More than \$26M spent by EPA, states and tribes on monitoring through grant program since 1990

Pilot Wetland Grant Proposals

- Collaborate with monitoring colleagues on projects
 - Pair wetland data collection and methods development in sites with ongoing monitoring
 - test comparability of results
 - collaborate on sampling
 - Category I watersheds
 - Impaired waterbodies
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- A white lotus flower is in bloom, surrounded by large green lily pads on a pond. The background is a soft-focus image of the pond and foliage.

Technical Guidance

- define elements of an appropriate state wetland monitoring program
- focus on:
 - biological, physical, landscape measures
- build from BAWWG “state of the science” reports
- incorporate existing approaches (e.g., functional assessment)

Adequate Elements of State Ambient Water Monitoring Program

- Better define the elements of an adequate state water monitoring program
- Provide a framework for upgrading monitoring programs
- Assist states identify strengths and weaknesses of programs
- Promote consistent regional assessments of state programs

Why Is It Needed?

- Clean Water Act requires that states receiving 106 funds have “adequate” monitoring programs
- Various reports have cited problems with 305(b) and other EPA information
 - State-by-state differences impede our ability to make credible statements about water quality over time and across the nation

How Will This Be Implemented?

- Regions will work with States to upgrade programs where/if deficiencies exist
- Provide about a ten year time frame for making needed changes
- Milestones negotiated and tracked through 106 workplans/Performance Partnership Agreements

What is CALM?

-Consolidated Assessment and Listing Methodology-

- Concept - Better documented, defensible water quality assessments and decisions about water quality standards (WQS) attainment
- Addresses questions regarding relationship among WQS, 305(b) assessments, and 303(d) lists of impaired under existing regulations

Benefits of CALM

- Improve the completeness and accuracy of 305(b) assessments and 303(d) lists
- Reduce the burden of 2 separate reports
- Expand opportunities for stakeholders to participate in water quality monitoring and assessment
- Address criticisms of current approach

Who to Contact?

- www.epa.gov/ow/owow/monitoring/calm.html
- www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/bawwg
- vetter.doreen@epa.gov



How Will We Know If We Don't Monitor?

"We cannot address problems about which we are not aware"



Damaged

Healthy

