

Appendix F: Survey Fact Sheets



Survey of the Nation's Wetlands: A Fact Sheet for Communities



Introduction

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), states, and tribes are conducting a nationwide survey of the condition of the nation's wetlands. This survey, the *National Wetlands Condition Assessment (NWCA)*, is one in a series of studies that will help us measure the health of our waters, take action to prevent pollution, and evaluate the effectiveness of protection and restoration efforts.

Designed to estimate the percentage of wetlands that are in good, fair, or poor condition, this survey will serve as a scientific report card on America's wetlands. It will examine ecological, biological and water quality indicators and assess the extent of key stressors across the country.

This survey is a collaborative effort that involves dozens of state environmental and natural resource agencies, federal agencies, tribes, universities and other organizations. In most states, state water quality staff will conduct the ecological sampling and habitat assessments.

How were wetlands selected?

A total of 904 wetland sites are included in this survey, representing seven wetland

types and distributed across the lower 48 states. EPA selected the wetland sites from the network of plots in the U.S. Fish Wildlife Service's most current National Wetland status and trends report, and National Wetland Inventory (NWI) digitized maps to capture areas where wetlands are present. Sampling sites were selected randomly using a statistical survey to represent the population of wetlands in their ecological region - the geographic area in which climate, ecological features, and plant and animal communities are similar.



Distribution of wetlands in the survey

What about my wetland?

If your wetland is being sampled for this survey, it was selected randomly from the total population of wetlands in your part

of the country. Your wetland was not selected because it exhibits any particular problem or water quality condition, or because it was recommended for sampling by an agency or organization. Data from your wetland will contribute to the regional and national picture of wetland condition. Personal information will not be collected or disclosed for purposes of this assessment.

If your wetland is not being sampled for this survey, it was not omitted for any particular reason, but rather because it was not randomly selected or did not fit into the target population of wetlands (e.g., wetlands that have rooted vegetation and water not greater than one meter in depth).

What will researchers measure?

Field crews will be taking many measurements at each selected wetland site. They will be using consistent procedures at all sites so that results can be compared across the country. They will be measuring such things as:

- The presence and abundance of grassy plants, trees, and shrubs
- Soil properties and chemistry
- Water chemistry (such as nutrients and chlorophyll-*a*)
- Hydrology information
- Condition of the habitat in the area surrounding the wetland

What happens next?

Field crews will sample wetland sites during the spring and summer of 2016. EPA intends to issue a report on the findings in 2018. Between the sampling period and publication of the national report, samples collected in the field will be analyzed by labs and written field observations will be entered into a database. Field and lab data will be analyzed and a draft report written.

A draft report describing the results of the NWCA 2011 survey is available on the following web page:

<http://www.epa.gov/national-aquatic-resource-surveys/nwca>.

For more information on the NWCA and other National Aquatic Resource Surveys, visit:

<http://www.epa.gov/national-aquatic-resource-surveys>

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