

ASWM's checklist of suggestions for state wetland monitoring and assessment work groups to use when deciding on an effective wetland assessment method(s):

1. What is the purpose of the assessment? How will the assessment be used?
 - a. Will the assessment be used for planning purposes? Regulatory? Acquisition? Restoration, other?
 - b. Has this been mandated by a state agency or is it part of guidance or Clean Water Act 404/401 certification program?
 - c. What will be done with the results?
 - d. Will the assessment be compatible with an existing wetland monitoring program?
2. What will be assessed?
 - a. Wetland condition?
 - b. Functions?
 - c. Values?
 - d. Natural hazards?
 - e. What do you want to find out? Be specific. How do you define the terms "condition," "functions," "values?" If an assessment aims to determine "ecological integrity," be sure to define that term. Is it the ability to recover from stressors and disturbance? What is a "healthy wetland?" Make sure everyone on the team is working with the same set of agreed-upon terms, definitions and criteria.
3. How much will be assessed?
 - a. Acreage?
 - b. Watershed, streams and wetlands together, riparian areas?
 - c. Demonstration watersheds or wetlands to be identified as reference sites?
 - d. Is this a snapshot of a regional, state or national condition or wetlands?
 - e. Or is this an assessment of an individual wetland for a permit?
4. If using reference sites, which wetlands will be used?
 - a. Types of wetlands included?
 - b. Reference criteria (see criteria to assess wetlands below)
 - c. Demonstration watersheds?
 - d. Include tributaries and stream reach?
 - e. Are these wetlands in urban areas?
5. What is the context for these wetlands?
 - a. Forest
 - b. Neighborhood, urban
 - c. Rare ecosystem
 - d. Coastal
 - e. Other?
6. Any existing state policies that may help determine a baseline or "yard stick" for wetland assessment?
 - a. How will this assessment fit into the regulatory framework?
 - b. How will it fit into heritage program ecological assessments?
 - c. 404 program?
 - d. State water quality standards?
 - e. Other policies, e.g. an anti-degradation policy, comprehensive plan or guidance?
7. What criteria will be used to assess wetlands?
 - a. Indicators for water quality, mitigation success, flood storage function, etc?

- b. Stressor indicators
 - c. Scales to be used to grade wetlands?
 - d. Biota: algae, macroinvertebrates, aquatic plants
 - e. Hydrology—water levels, water marks, water processes, flooding
8. Which levels of assessments would be useful?
- a. Level 1: Landscape (GIS mapping)
 - b. Level 2: Rapid Assessment Method
 - c. Level 3: Intensive Assessment
9. Are there other methods that would be useful for wetlands in your state or region?
- a. Hydrogeomorphic
 - b. Site Level Assessment Method (SLAM)
 - c. Dual-approach with some combination of the 3 EPA levels
 - d. A sophisticated landscape-based ecological assessment, e.g. CAPS
 - e. Other method specific to needs in the state or region
10. What are the priorities and timelines, perhaps limited by funding?
- a. How much funding is available?
 - b. Is a systematic method needed that does not take a lot of time? (days/weeks, as opposed to months/years)
 - c. Is there funding for a 1-3 year multi-phase assessment?
 - d. Can a portion of the assessment burden be shifted to project applicants?
11. How will other agencies' wetland assessment & monitoring programs help this state assessment endeavor?
- a. U.S. FWS Status and Trends Reports?
 - b. EPA's National Wetland Condition Assessment program?
 - c. Regional or state agency partners?
12. What tools, computer programs and/or staff will be necessary?
- a. Database to store information on reference sites and completed assessments?
 - b. GIS technician(s), mapping program or partnership with a GIS lab

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ASWM