

National Wetlands Inventory

Program Overview

Wetlands are the cornerstone of many of the Nation's most ecologically and economically important ecosystems. The Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986 directs the Service to map our Nation's wetlands and deepwater habitats, and produce scientific information on their characteristics, extent and status. The National Wetlands Inventory has produced digital wetlands maps for about 45 percent of the nation primarily through conservation mapping partnerships. The Inventory provides federal, state, tribal, and local governments, business, and the public with wetlands data over the Internet that is widely used to help conserve and restore wetland resources. This science based wetlands program supports the Department of the Interior's Strategic Plan Resource Protection Goal of improving the health of watersheds, landscapes, and marine resources.

The United States is also on the threshold of potentially achieving key net gains of wetlands for the first time in our Nation's history. The digital maps and habitat assessments produced by the Inventory are crucially important for understanding and scientifically documenting the status and trends of our Nation's wetlands. The President affirmed the strategic importance of the Inventory on Earth Day, by directing the Service to complete an updated National Wetlands Status and Trends report by the end of 2005, instead of the current 2010 time schedule. In addition, the Administration has indicated the desire to have the Service complete more frequent trend updates beginning in 2006. This increase in the frequency of reporting wetlands status and trends will provide planners, resource managers, and decision-makers with the most contemporary data available to help guide national wetlands policy and conservation.

The Inventory is guided by a Strategic Plan approved in 2002 that provides the foundation of all program activities. This Plan mirrors the DOI strategy to improve the scientific information base for resource management, technical assistance and decision-making, and is consistent with the

Use of Cost and Performance Information

The NWI is using key means and strategies to achieve improved results, in conformance with the Departmental Strategic Plan and other Administration directives:

- The 2002 *strategic plan* repositioned the Inventory to produce and distribute updated wetlands information over the Internet to increase public access and utility of our data. Strategic Plan goals have also focused management emphasis toward mission critical wetland information needs and priorities of the Service.
- Contemporary digital wetland information is of fundamental *value* to industry, citizens and decision-makers to collaboratively manage landscapes, watersheds, and marine resources. About 6.2 million users retrieved over 725,000 wetland and riparian habitat data files in FY 2004.
- Interest in *conservation mapping partnerships* is growing as a result of our use of new technologies for strategic digital mapping and the improved distribution of seamless wetlands data via the internet. This has fueled interest from a spectrum of partners that seek our expertise, assistance, and updated wetlands data as key planning and decision support tools to achieve strategic conservation results. These partnerships promote *accountability* and trust in our science-based assessments and conservation planning with others. We have conservation mapping partnerships in over 40 states.
- Strategic accomplishment of information technology *modernization* with the USGS has resulted in key benefits to bureaus, the Department and public. Full *integration* of our national wetlands Geodatabase into the USGS National Map fulfilled a DOI Geospatial One-Stop objective, and simultaneously improved E-Government customer service in support of the President's Management Agenda.
- *Activity Based Costing* has been implemented to help managers make more effective use of appropriated funds to accomplishing critical resource outcomes.

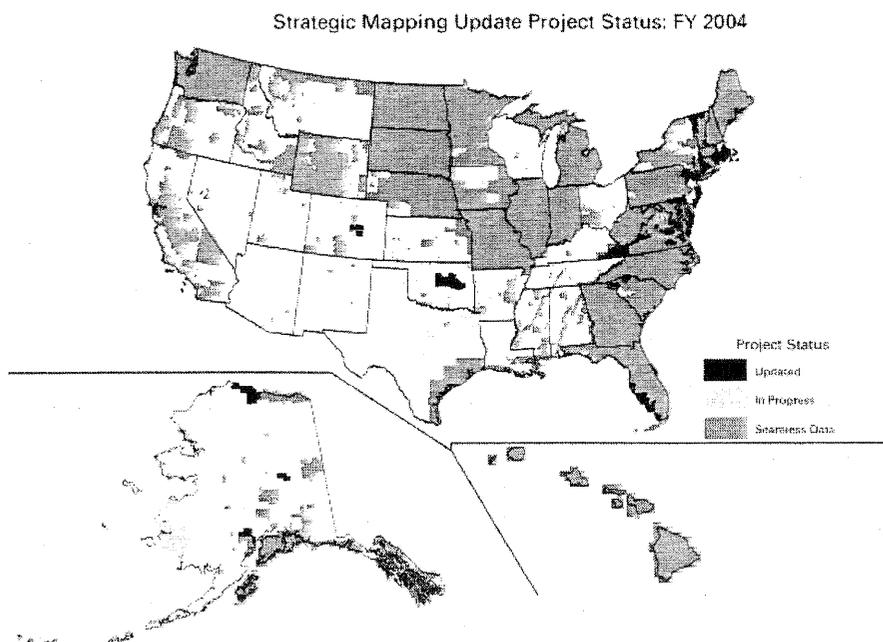
President's Management Agenda and Electronic Government initiatives.

The three goals of the Strategic Plan for the Inventory are as follow:

- Strategic mapping;
- Habitat trend and change analyses; and
- Identification and assessment of threats to aquatic habitats.

The strategic outcome to be achieved by implementation of this Plan is to provide mission critical habitat information in state-of-the-art digital formats to help guide the conservation and stewardship of the Nation's wetlands and aquatic resources for the benefit of the American people.

The Service continues to modernize the Inventory to achieve operational efficiencies and enhance customer service. In FY 2004, the Service implemented a new national Geodatabase to display and provide via the internet all available digital wetlands data in seamless format for the conterminous United States and Alaska, as shown on the map below. This landmark accomplishment provides resource managers, industry, and the public with contemporary digital wetland information that can be used in geographic information systems, as well as key assessment reports to collaboratively address increasingly complex conservation issues.



In FY 2006, the Service will continue to strategically update digital wetland maps for priority landscapes and watersheds of the nation that can be used to address resource management needs of the Service, as well as for planning purposes by our conservation partners and industry. Resource managers, business, and the public are increasingly interested in securing our updated maps for use in environmental reviews for strategic conservation purposes, as well as energy, transportation, water resources development, and habitat restoration. Digital mapping and updating projects needed by resource managers and decision-makers for priority assessments are underway in Alaska, the Everglades, coastal California, the Northeast U.S., and key Southwest River and riparian systems. For example, in the National Petroleum Reserve of Alaska, the Service is completing digital wetlands mapping of about 4.5 million acres of landscape, to assist government and industry in meeting the Administration's priority of energy development. This digital data provides the

Service, the Bureau of Land Management, industry, Native Corporations, and the North Slope Borough with crucial information for use in planning and streamlined project reviews for future oil and gas development, and the conservation of important wetland habitats. The anticipated annual FY 2006 updating of about 700 wetland and riparian maps encompassing an estimated 24 million acres will strengthen and support resource management actions for our National Wildlife Refuges, coastal watersheds, river systems, Indian Reservations, and other priority landscapes across the Nation.

The Service will also complete the Five-Year Update to the 2000 National Wetlands Status and Trends Report, as directed by the President on Earth Day 2004. Accomplishing the President's directive is a critical performance success goal of the Service, and a key component of the Administration's Earth Day initiative to track progress towards achieving net gains of wetlands. This report will provide the conclusive scientific information sought by the Administration and conservation community about the national status and trends of wetlands.

In addition, regional wetland status and trend reports are also underway or planned for Puget Sound, Lake Michigan basin, North Carolina, and Indiana. The Service also anticipates completing the scientific analysis of the prairie pothole wetlands of the United States, culminating in a joint wetland status report with the Canadian Wildlife Service on these crucially important North American wetlands in late 2006. Prairie pothole wetlands are a renowned component of the North American ecosystem, especially for internationally significant populations of migratory birds. This landmark report will provide contemporary wetlands status information on the prairie potholes of North America, in order to plan and conserve wildlife, environmental quality, and socio-economic functions of mutual benefit to the United States and Canada.

2004 Program Performance Accomplishments

The Inventory focused on strategic digital mapping, status and trend, and scientific wetland assessment reports that were implemented consistent with our strategic plan. Many of these mission-focused results were achieved with partners, and all accomplishments support the Department of the Interior's Strategic Plan Resource Protection Goal of improving the health of watersheds, landscapes, and marine resources, by improving the information base, information management and technical assistance.

Major FY2004 Program accomplishments included:

- Launching our national Geodatabase to provide improved E-Government customer service by making all wetland and riparian data and metadata more readily available for GIS and on-line analyses, and custom map printing over the internet.
- Updating of 21 million acres of digital wetlands maps in the lower 48 States, Alaska, and Hawaii, that is focused on Service and partner conservation needs.
- Completing updated digital wetland maps in Alaska, California, Delaware, Georgia, Florida, Idaho, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington.
- Converting wetland maps encompassing 75 million acres into digital data in Colorado, Montana, Nebraska, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Wyoming.
- Completing digital wetland coverage for 26 States, with the addition of Connecticut, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nebraska, and Rhode Island.
- Leveraging approximately \$600,000 in direct support and an estimated \$730,000 in contributed products or services with conservation mapping partners to develop digital data that will be posted on the internet. Partners include the state and county governments; the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, National Park Service, Tennessee Valley Authority, U.S. Geological Survey, San Francisco Estuary Institute, and the California Coastal Conservancy.

- Completing wetland status and trends reports for southern Michigan, Nanticoke River Watershed, and the Reno/Carson City Area, Nevada.
- Completing a cumulative total of about 45% of the United States with online digital wetland maps.

2005 Planned Program Performance

The Inventory will achieve focused performance gains and accomplishments that are aligned with the three goals of our strategic plan. These activities are: (1) the strategic updating of digital wetland maps in support of habitat assessments needed by the Service and our partners, (2) the continuation and completion of wetland status and trend studies, and (3) scientific assessment publications focused on specific wetland ecosystems and vulnerable habitat types.

A critical goal for FY 2005 will be continued progress towards completion of the Five-Year Update of the 2000 National Wetlands Status and Trends Report requested by the President. The Service, in concert with the Department of Interior, will continue to implement the contributed federal agency funding strategy for the updated report. This strategy entails an innovative partnership between the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Interior, and the Environmental Protection Agency to contribute funds to help ensure the updated wetlands report by the Service can be completed as initially scheduled by December 2005.

Other major planned FY2005 Program performance accomplishments will include:

- Updating of 20 million acres of digital wetlands maps in the lower 48 States, Alaska, and Hawaii, that is focused on Service and partner conservation needs.
- Completing digital wetland maps in Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Georgia, Idaho, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, South Carolina, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and additional strategic digital map updating projects awarded in FY 2005.
- Completing digital wetland maps with riparian habitats for Arizona for the San Juan and San Pedro Rivers and the Tonto National Forest.
- Converting 42 million acres of wetland maps into digital data in Mississippi, Tennessee and Kentucky.
- Completing digital wetland coverage for 28 States, with the addition of Tennessee and Kentucky.
- Leveraging an estimated \$450,000 in direct support and nearly \$800,000 in contributed products or services with conservation mapping partners to develop digital data that will be posted on the internet. Our partners include the many states, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, National Park Service, Tennessee Valley Authority, and U.S. Geological Survey, and other organizations such as Ventura County – California, and California Coastal Conservancy.
- Publishing the wetland status and trends reports for Florida, the middle Rio Grande in New Mexico, the metropolitan New York City area watersheds, southeast Virginia, and Fairbanks, Alaska.
- Release the revised National List of Wetlands Plants for public review and comment.
- Completing a cumulative total of about 48% of the United States with online digital wetland maps in seamless format.

Justification of 2006 Program Changes

Subactivity		2006 Budget Request	Program Changes (+/-)
National Wetlands Inventory	\$(000)	4,777	+65
	FTE	32	0

The FY 2006 budget request for the National Wetlands Inventory is \$4,777,000, and 32 FTE, with a net program increase of \$65,000 from the 2005 enacted level.

General Program Activities (+\$65,000)

The fiscal year 2005 Omnibus Appropriation (P.L. 108-447) included two across the board rescissions, netting a 1.3 percent reduction to all Service programs. An increase of \$65,000 will restore funding to the 2004 enacted level and will allow the Service to maintain performance and base program capability. This increase will enable the Service to accomplish the strategic digital updating of an additional 25 quadrangle maps for priority landscapes and watersheds throughout the nation, thereby maintaining overall program performance at the planned FY 2005 level of about 19,000,000 acres annually.

Program Performance Summary

End Outcome Goal: Improve Health of Watersheds, Landscapes, and Marine Resources							
	FY 2003 Actual	FY 2004 Actual	FY 2005 Plan/ Budget	FY 2005 Revised Final Plan	FY 2006 Plan	Change in Performance - 2005 Plan to 2006	Long-term Target (2008)
Intermediate Outcome: Improve information base, information management and technical assistance							
Intermediate Outcome Measures (Key and Non-Key) and Bureau and PART Outcome Measures							
Status and Trends: Acres of land digitally mapped annually (BUR)							
NWI	5,350,400	19,300,000	19,500,000	17,000,000	19,000,000	2,000,000	20,000,000
Status and Trends: Cumulative percent of lands with digital maps available (BUR)							
NWI	27,751/ 65,562	30,006/ 65,562	31,047/ 65,562	31,047/ 65,562	31,702/ 65,562	655/ 65,562	32,781/ 65,562
NWI	42.3%	45.8%	47.4%	47.4%	48.4%	1.0%	50.0%
Status and Trends: Cumulative percent of lands with digital maps 10 years old or less (BUR)							
NWI	1,254/ 65,562	1,465/ 65,562	1,919/ 65,562	1,846/ 65,562	2,063/ 65,562	217*/ 65,562	3,000/ 65,562
NWI	1.9%	2.2%	2.9%	2.8%	3.1%	0.3%	4.6%
Expand Science Base: Number of Individuals Trained (BUR)							
NWI	215	102	100	100	100	0	200
Expand Science Base: Number of scientific/ technical publications (BUR)							
NWI	11	4	5	5	5	0	5

*The Service estimates that it will produce 543 updated maps in FY 2006. However during FY 2006, 326 maps will become older than 10 years. This reduction is reflected in the total.

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