

Glossary and Acronyms



Greg Thompson/USFWS

White-tailed deer yearling

Glossary and Acronyms

Glossary

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| accessibility | the state or quality of being easily approached or entered, particularly as it relates to complying with the Americans With Disabilities Act. |
| accessible facilities | structures accessible for most people with disabilities without assistance; facilities that meet UFAS standards; ADA-accessible [e.g., parking lots, trails, pathways, ramps, picnic and camping areas, restrooms, boating facilities (docks, piers, gangways), fishing facilities, playgrounds, amphitheaters, exhibits, audiovisual programs, and wayside sites]. |
| aggregate | many parts considered together as a whole. |
| agricultural land | non-forested land (now or recently orchards, pastures, or crops). |
| alternative | a reasonable way to fix an identified problem or satisfy a stated need [40 CFR 1500.2] (see “management alternative”). |
| anthropogenic | caused or produced by humans. |
| appropriate use | a proposed or existing use on a refuge that meets at least one of the following three conditions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the use is a wildlife-dependent one. 2. the use contributes to fulfilling the refuge purpose(s), the System mission, or goals or objectives described in a refuge management plan approved after October 9, 1997, the date the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act was signed into law. 3. the use has been determined appropriate as specified in the policy. |
| approved acquisition boundary | a project boundary that the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approves upon completion of the planning and environmental compliance process. An approved acquisition boundary only designates those lands which the Service has authority to acquire or manage through various agreements. The approval of an acquisition boundary does not grant the Service jurisdiction or control over lands within the boundary, and it does not make lands within the refuge boundary part of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Lands do not become part of the Refuge System until the Service buys them or they are placed under an agreement that provides for their management as part of the Refuge System. |
| aquatic | growing in, living in, or dependent upon water. |
| area of biological significance | see “special focus area.” |
| best management practices | land management practices that produce desired results. [N.b. Usually describing forestry or agricultural practices effective in reducing non point source pollution, like reseeding skidder trails or not storing manure in a flood plain. In their broader sense, practices that benefit target species.] |

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| biological diversity or biodiversity | the variety of life and its processes and includes the variety of living organisms, the genetic differences among them, and the communities and ecosystems in which they occur. |
| biological integrity | biotic composition, structure, and functioning at genetic, organism, and community levels comparable with historic conditions, including the natural biological processes that shape genomes, organisms and communities. |
| breeding habitat | habitat used by migratory birds or other animals during the breeding season. |
| categorical exclusion (CE, CX, CATEX, CATX) | pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), a category of Federal agency actions that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment [40 CFR 1508.4]. |
| CFR | the Code of Federal Regulations. |
| community | an assemblage of plants occurring together at any point in time. |
| community type | a particular assemblage of plants and animals, named for its dominant characteristic. |
| compatible use | “The term ‘compatible use’ means a wildlife-dependent recreational use or any other use of a refuge that, in the sound professional judgment of the Director, will not materially interfere with or detract from the fulfillment of the mission of the System or the purposes of the refuge.”—National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 [Public Law 105-57; 111 Stat. 1253]. |
| compatibility determination | a required determination for wildlife-dependent recreational uses or any other public uses of a refuge. |
| comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) | mandated by the Refuge Improvement Act, a document that provides a description of the desired future conditions and long-range guidance for the project leader to accomplish purposes of the refuge system and the refuge. CCPs establish management direction to achieve refuge purposes [P.L. 105-57; USFWS Manual 602 FW 1.4]. |
| concern | see “issue.” |
| conservation | managing natural resources to prevent loss or waste. [N.b. Management actions may include preservation, restoration, and enhancement.] |
| conservation easement | a legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust (e.g., a private, nonprofit conservation organization) or government agency that permanently limits the uses of a property to protect its conservation values. |
| cool-season grass | introduced grass for crop and pastureland that grows in spring and fall and is dormant during hot summer months. |
| cooperative agreement | a usually long-term habitat protection action which can be modified by either party, in which no property rights are acquired. Lands under a cooperative agreement do not necessarily become part of the National Wildlife Refuge System. |

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| critical habitat | according to U.S. Federal law, the ecosystems upon which endangered and threatened species depend. |
| cultural resources | archaeological sites, historic structures, and historic landscapes. |
| cultural resource overview | a comprehensive document prepared for a field office that discusses, among other things, project prehistory and cultural history, the nature and extent of known cultural resources, previous research, management objectives, resource management conflicts or issues, and a general statement of how program objectives should be met and conflicts resolved. [An overview should reference or incorporate information from a field office's background or literature search described in section VIII of the Cultural Resource Management Handbook (cf. USFWS Manual 614 FW 1.7).] |
| database | a collection of data arranged for ease and speed of analysis and retrieval, usually computerized. |
| degradation | the loss of native species and processes due to human activities such that only certain components of the original biodiversity persist, often including significantly altered natural communities. |
| designated wilderness area | an area designated by Congress as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System [USFWS Manual 610 FW 1.5 9 draft]. |
| digitizing | the process of converting maps into geographically referenced electronic files for a geographic information system (GIS). |
| disturbance | any relatively discrete event in time that disrupts ecosystem, community, or population structure and changes resources, substrate availability, or the physical environment. |
| donation | a citizen or group may wish to give land or interests in land to the Service for the benefit of wildlife. Aside from the cost factor, these acquisitions are no different than any other means of land acquisition. Gifts and donations have the same planning requirements as purchases. |
| easement | an agreement by which landowners give up or sell one of the rights on their property (e.g., landowners may donate rights-of-way across their properties to allow community members access to a river). See "conservation easement." |
| ecological processes | a complex mix of interactions among animals, plants, and their environment that ensures maintenance of an ecosystem's full range of biodiversity. Examples include population and predator-prey dynamics, pollination and seed dispersal, nutrient cycling, migration, and dispersal. |
| ecoregion | a territory defined by a combination of biological, social, and geographic criteria, rather than geopolitical considerations; generally, a system of related, interconnected ecosystems. |
| ecosystem | a natural community of organisms interacting with its physical environment, regarded as a unit. |

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| ecotourism | visits to an area that maintains and preserves natural resources as a basis for promoting its economic growth and development. |
| emergent wetland | wetlands dominated by erect, rooted, herbaceous plants. |
| endangered species | a federally or state-listed protected species in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range. |
| endophyte | a bacterium or fungus that lives within a plant for at least part of its life without causing apparent disease. |
| environmental education | curriculum-based education aimed at producing a citizenry that is knowledgeable about the biophysical environment and its associated problems, aware of how to help solve those problems, and motivated to work toward solving them. |
| environmental health | the composition, structure, and functioning of soil, water, air, and other abiotic features comparable with historic conditions, including the natural abiotic processes that shape the environment. |
| Environmental Assessment (EA) | a public document that discusses the purpose and need for an action, its alternatives, and provides sufficient evidence and analysis of its impacts to determine whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (q.v.) [cf. 40 CFR 1508.9]. |
| exemplary community type | an outstanding example of a particular community type. |
| extirpated | status of a species or population that has completely vanished from a given area but that continues to exist in some other location. |
| exotic species | a species that is not native to an area and has been introduced intentionally or unintentionally by humans; not all exotics become successfully established. |
| Federal land | public land owned by the Federal Government, including national forests, national parks, and national wildlife refuges. |
| federally listed species | a species listed either as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. |
| fee-title acquisition | the acquisition of most or all of the rights to a tract of land; a total transfer of property rights with the formal conveyance of a title. While a fee-title acquisition involves most rights to a property, certain rights may be reserved or not purchased, including water rights, mineral rights, or use reservation (e.g., the ability to continue using the land for a specified time period, such as the remainder of the owner's life). |
| Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) | supported by an environmental assessment, a document that briefly presents why a Federal action will have no significant effect on the human environment, and for which an environmental impact statement, therefore, will not be prepared [40 CFR 1508.13]. |
| fire regime | the characteristic frequency, intensity, and spatial distribution of natural fires within a given ecoregion or habitat. |

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| floodplain | flat or nearly flat land that may be submerged by floodwaters; a plain built up or in the process of being built up by stream deposition. |
| focus areas | see “special focus areas” . |
| forested land | land dominated by trees. For impacts analysis in CCP’s, we assume all forested land has the potential for occasional harvesting; we assume forested land owned by timber companies is harvested on a more intensive, regular schedule. |
| forested wetlands | wetlands dominated by trees. |
| fragmentation | the disruption of extensive habitats into isolated and small patches. Fragmentation has two negative components for biota: the loss of total habitat area and the creation of smaller, more isolated patches of habitat remaining. |
| geographic information system (GIS) | a computerized system to compile, store, analyze, and display geographically referenced information (e.g., GIS can overlay multiple sets of information on the distribution of a variety of biological and physical features). |
| grassland | a habitat type with landscapes dominated by grasses and with biodiversity characterized by species with wide distributions, communities being relatively resilient to short-term disturbances but not too prolonged, and intensive burning or grazing. In such systems, larger vertebrates, birds, and invertebrates display extensive movement to track seasonal or patchy resources. |
| groundwater | water in the ground that is in the zone of saturation, from which wells and springs and groundwater runoff are supplied. |
| habitat fragmentation | the breaking up of a specific habitat into isolated and small patches. [N.b. A habitat area that is too small may not provide enough space to maintain a breeding population of the species in question.] |
| habitat conservation | protecting an animal or plant habitat to ensure that the use of that habitat by the animal or plant is not altered or reduced. |
| habitat | the place where a particular type of plant or animal lives. [N.b. An organism’s habitat must provide all of the basic requirements for life, and should be free of harmful contaminants.] |
| historic conditions | the composition, structure, and functioning of ecosystems resulting from natural processes that we believe, based on sound professional judgment, were present prior to substantial human-related changes to the landscape. |
| hydrologic or flow regime | characteristic fluctuations in river flows. |
| hydrology | the science of waters of the earth: their occurrences, distributions, and circulations; their physical and chemical properties; and their reactions with the environment, including living beings. |
| impoundment | a body of water, such as a pond, confined by a dam, dike, floodgate, or other barrier, which is used to collect and store water for future use. |

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| indigenous | native to an area. |
| interpretive facilities | structures that provide information about an event, place, or thing by a variety of means, including printed, audiovisual, or multimedia materials (e.g., kiosks that offer printed materials and audiovisuals, signs, and trail heads). |
| interpretive materials | any tool used to provide or clarify information, explain events or things, or increase awareness and understanding of the events or things (e.g., printed materials like brochures, maps or curriculum materials; audio/visual materials like video and audio tapes, films, or slides; and, interactive multimedia materials, CD ROM or other computer technology). |
| invasive species | a non-indigenous species whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. |
| invertebrate | any animal lacking a backbone or bony segment that encloses the central nerve cord. |
| issue | <p>any unsettled matter that requires a management decision (e.g., a Service initiative, an opportunity, a management problem, a threat to the resources of the unit, a conflict in uses, a public concern, or the presence of an undesirable resource condition).</p> <p>[N.b. A CCP should document, describe, and analyze issues even if they cannot be resolved during the planning process (FWS Manual 602 FW 1.4).]</p> |
| Land Protection Plan (LPP) | a document that identifies and prioritizes lands for potential Service acquisition from a willing seller, and describes other methods of providing protection. Landowners within project boundaries will find this document, which is released with environmental assessments, most useful. |
| land trusts | organizations dedicated to conserving land by purchase, donation, or conservation easement from landowners. |
| landscape | an aggregate of landforms, together with its biological communities. |
| management alternative | a set of objectives and the strategies needed to accomplish each objective [FWS Manual 602 FW 1.4]. |
| management concern | see “issue” and “migratory nongame birds of management concern.” |
| management opportunity | see “issue.” |
| management plan | <p>a plan that guides future land management practices on a tract.</p> <p>[N.b. In the context of an environmental impact statement, management plans may be designed to produce additional wildlife habitat along with primary products like timber or agricultural crops (see “cooperative agreement”).]</p> |
| management strategy | <p>a general approach to meeting unit objectives.</p> <p>[N.b. A strategy may be broad, or it may be detailed enough to guide implementation through specific actions, tasks, and projects (FWS Manual 602 FW 1.4).]</p> |

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| mesic soil | sandy-to-clay loams containing moisture-retentive organic matter, well-drained (no standing water). |
| mission statement | a succinct statement of the purpose for which the unit was established; its reason for being. |
| mitigation | actions to compensate for the negative effects of a particular project (e.g., wetland mitigation usually restores or enhances a previously damaged wetland or creates a new wetland). |
| National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) | 42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq. requires all Federal agencies to examine the environmental impacts of their actions, incorporate environmental information, and use public participation in planning and implementing environmental actions. Federal agencies must integrate NEPA with other planning requirements, and prepare appropriate NEPA documents to facilitate better environmental decisionmaking (cf. 40 CFR 1500). |
| National Wildlife Refuge System (Refuge System) | all lands and waters and interests therein administered by the Service as wildlife refuges, wildlife ranges, wildlife management areas, waterfowl production areas, and other areas for the protection and conservation of fish and wildlife, including those that are threatened with extinction. |
| native | a species that, other than as a result of an introduction, historically occurred or currently occurs in a particular ecosystem. |
| native plant | a plant that has grown in the region since the last glaciation, and occurred before European settlement. |
| natural disturbance event | any natural event that significantly alters the structure, composition, or dynamics of a natural community (e.g., floods, fires, and storms). |
| non-consumptive, wildlife-oriented recreation | wildlife observation and photography and environmental education and interpretation (see “wildlife-dependent recreation”). |
| nonnative species | see “exotic species.” |
| nonpoint source pollution | a diffuse form of water quality degradation in which wastes are not released at one specific, identifiable point but from diffuse sources or a number of points that are spread out and difficult to identify and control. |
| non-forested wetlands | wetlands dominated by shrubs or emergent vegetation. |
| Notice of Intent (NOI) | an announcement we publish in the <i>Federal Register</i> that we will prepare and review an environmental impact statement or an environmental assessment [40 CFR 1508.22]. |
| Notice of Availability (NOA) | an announcement we publish in the <i>Federal Register</i> that we have prepared an environmental impact statement or an environmental assessment and that it is available for public review and comment. |
| objective | see “unit objective.” |

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| old fields | areas formerly cultivated or grazed, where woody vegetation has begun to invade. [N.b. If left undisturbed, old fields will eventually succeed into forest. Many occur at sites marginally suitable for crops or pasture. They vary markedly in the Northeast, depending on soil and land use and management history.] |
| outdoor education | educational activities that take place in an outdoor setting. |
| partnership | a contract or agreement among two or more individuals, groups of individuals, organizations, or agencies, in which each agrees to furnish a part of the capital or some service in kind (e.g., labor) for a mutually beneficial enterprise. |
| payment in lieu of taxes | cf. Revenue Sharing Act of 1935, Chapter One, Legal Context. |
| point source | a source of pollution that involves discharge of waste from an identifiable point, such as a smokestack or sewage-treatment plant outfall pipe. |
| population monitoring | assessing the characteristics of populations to ascertain their status and establish trends on their abundance, condition, distribution, or other characteristics. |
| prescribed fire | the application of fire to wildland fuels, either by natural or intentional ignition, to achieve identified land use objectives [FWS Manual 621 FW 1.7]. |
| priority public use | a compatible wildlife-dependent recreational use of a refuge involving hunting, fishing, wildlife observation or photography, or environmental education or interpretation. |
| private land | land owned by a private individual or group or nongovernmental organization. |
| private landowner | see “private land.” |
| private organization | any nongovernmental organization. |
| protection | mechanisms like fee title acquisition, conservation easements, or binding agreements with landowners that ensure land use and land management practices will remain compatible with maintaining species populations at a site. |
| public | individuals, organizations, and nongovernment groups; officials of Federal, state, and local government agencies; Native American Tribes, and foreign nations includes anyone outside the core planning team, those who may or may not have indicated an interest in the issues, and those who do or do not realize that our decisions may affect them. |
| public involvement | offering an opportunity to interested individuals and organizations whom our actions or policies may affect to become informed; soliciting their individual opinions. We thoroughly study public input, and give it thoughtful consideration in shaping decisions about managing refuges. |
| public land | land owned by the local, state, or Federal Government. |
| rare species | species identified for special management emphasis because of their uncommon occurrence within a watershed. |

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| rare community types | plant community types classified as rare by any state program; includes exemplary community types. |
| refuge goals | According to “Writing Refuge Management Goals and Objectives: A Handbook,” refuge goals are “...descriptive, open-ended, and often broad statements of desired future conditions that convey a purpose but do not define measurable units.” |
| refuge purposes | According to the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, “The terms ‘purposes of the refuge’ and ‘purposes of each refuge’ mean the purposes specified in or derived from the law, proclamation, executive order, agreement, public land order, donation document, or administrative memorandum establishing, authorizing, or expanding a refuge, refuge unit, or refuge subunit.” |
| refuge lands | lands in which the Service holds full interest in fee title or partial interest like an easement. |
| restoration | management of a disturbed or degraded habitat that results in the recovery of its original state (e.g., restoration may involve planting native grasses and forbs, removing shrubs, prescribed burning, or reestablishing habitat for native plants and animals on degraded grassland). |
| riparian | referring to the interface between freshwater habitats and the terrestrial landscape. |
| riparian habitat | habitat along the banks of a stream or river (see note above). |
| riverine | within the active channel of a river or stream. |
| riverine wetlands | generally, all the wetlands and deepwater habitats occurring within a freshwater river channel not dominated by trees, shrubs, or persistent emergents. |
| runoff | water from rain, melted snow, or agricultural or landscape irrigation that flows over a land surface into a water body (see “urban runoff”). |
| Service presence | Service programs and facilities that it directs or shares with other organizations; public awareness of the Service as a sole or cooperative provider of programs and facilities |
| shrublands | habitats dominated by various species of shrubs, often with many grasses and forbs. |
| species of concern or species of conservation concern | species not federally listed as threatened or endangered, but about which we or our partners are concerned. |
| species diversity | usually synonymous with “species richness,” but may also include the proportional distribution of species. |
| species richness | a simple measure of species diversity calculated as the total number of species in a habitat or community. |
| state agencies | natural resource agencies of state governments. |
| state land | state-owned public land. |

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| state-listed species | see “federally listed species.” |
| step-down management plan | a plan for dealing with specific refuge management subjects, strategies, and schedules, e.g., cropland, wilderness, and fire [FWS Manual 602 FW 1.4.]. |
| strategy | a specific action, tool, technique, or combination of actions, tools, and techniques for meeting unit objectives. |
| succession | the natural, sequential change of species composition of a community in a given area. |
| surface water | all waters whose surface is naturally exposed to the atmosphere, or wells or other collectors directly influenced by surface water. |
| sustainable development | the attempts to meet economic objectives in ways that do not degrade the underlying environmental support system. Note that there is considerable debate over the meaning of this term; we define it as “human activities conducted in a manner that respects the intrinsic value of the natural world, the role of the natural world in human well-being, and the need for humans to live on the income from nature’s capital rather than the capital itself.” |
| terrestrial | living on land. |
| threatened species | a federally listed, protected species that is likely to become an endangered species in the foreseeable future over all or a significant portion of its range. |
| tributary | a stream or river that flows into a larger stream, river, or lake, feeding it water. |
| trust resource | a resource that the Government holds in trust for the people through law or administrative act. [N.b. A Federal trust resource is one for which responsibility is given wholly or in part to the Federal Government by law or administrative act. Generally, Federal trust resources are nationally or internationally important no matter where they occur, like endangered species or migratory birds and fish that regularly move across state lines. They also include cultural resources protected by Federal historic preservation laws, and nationally important or threatened habitats, notably wetlands, navigable waters, and public lands like s national wildlife refuges.] |
| unfragmented habitat | large, unbroken blocks of a particular type of habitat. |
| upland | dry ground (i.e., other than wetlands). |
| upland meadow or pasture | upland pastures are areas maintained in grass for livestock grazing; upland meadows are hay production areas. [N.b. Meadows may occur naturally in tidal marshes and inland flooded river valleys or, more frequently, at upland sites where vegetation has been cleared and grasses planted. Eventually, meadows will revert to old fields and forest if they are not mowed, grazed, or burned. Grasses in both managed meadows and pastures usually are similar, but pasture herbs often differ because of selective grazing.] |
| urban runoff | water from rain, melted snow, or landscape irrigation flowing from city streets and domestic or commercial properties that may carry pollutants into a sewer system or water body. |

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| vernal pool | depressions holding water for a temporary period in the spring, and in which various amphibians lay eggs. |
| vision statement | a concise statement of what the refuge could achieve in the next 10 to 15 years. |
| watershed | the geographic area within which water drains into a particular river, stream, or body of water. A watershed includes both the land and the body of water into which the land drains. |
| wetlands | lands transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface or the land is covered by shallow water. These areas are inundated or saturated by surface water or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted to life in saturated soil conditions. |
| wilderness study areas | lands and waters identified by inventory as meeting the definition of wilderness and being evaluated for a recommendation that they be included in the designated wilderness area. |
| wilderness | see “designated wilderness area.” |
| wildfire | a free-burning fire requiring a suppression response; all fire other than prescribed fire that occurs on wildlands [FWS Manual 621 FW 1.7]. |
| wildlife-dependent recreation | recreational activities in which wildlife is the focus of the experience. According to the National Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act of 1997, “The terms ‘wildlife-dependent recreation’ and ‘wildlife-dependent recreational use’ mean a use of a refuge involving hunting, fishing, wildlife observation or photography, or environmental education or interpretation.” |
| wildlife-dependent recreational use | a use of a national wildlife refuge involving hunting, fishing, wildlife observation or photography, or environmental education or interpretation (National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966). |
| wildlife management | manipulating wildlife populations, either directly by regulating the numbers, ages, and sex ratios harvested, or indirectly by providing favorable habitat conditions and alleviating limiting factors. |

Acronyms

| Acronym | Full Name |
|----------------|---|
| ADA | Americans with Disabilities Act |
| ATV | All-terrain Vehicle |
| BCR | Bird Conservation Region |
| BIDEH | Biological Diversity, Integrity, and Environmental Health |
| CCP | Comprehensive Conservation Plan |
| CD | Compatibility Determination |
| CFR | Code of Federal Regulations |
| CWD | Chronic Wasting Disease |
| DNL | Day-night Average Sound Level |
| EA | Environmental Assessment |
| EHD | Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease |
| USEPA | United States Environmental Protection Agency |
| FONSI | Finding of No Significant Impact |
| GIS | Geographic Information System |
| HMP | Habitat Management Plan |
| IPCC | Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change |
| LWCF | Land and Water Conservation Fund |
| MBCF | Migratory Bird Conservation Fund |
| NEPA | National Environmental Policy Act |
| NOAA | National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration |
| NWPS | National Wilderness Preservation System |
| NWR | National Wildlife Refuge |
| NWRS | National Wildlife Refuge System |
| PADCNR | Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources |
| PADEP | Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection |
| PENNDOT | Pennsylvania Department of Transportation |
| PFBC | Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission |
| PGC | Pennsylvania Game Commission |

| Acronym | Full Name |
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| PIF | Partners in Flight |
| PWD | Philadelphia Water Department |
| rSETs | Rod-Surface Elevation Tables |
| RONs | Refuge Operating Needs System |
| SAMMS | Service Asset Maintenance Management System |
| SEPTA | Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority |
| SETs | Surface Elevation Tables |
| SLAMM | Sea Level Affecting Marshes Model |
| USDA | United States Department of Agriculture |
| USEPA | United States Environmental Protection Agency |
| USFWS | United States Fish and Wildlife Service |
| USGS | United States Geological Survey |
| WIA | Wilderness Inventory Area |
| WSA | Wilderness Study Area |