

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Adaptive Management: A process in which policy decisions are implemented within a framework of scientifically driven experiments to test predictions and assumptions inherent in a management plan. Analysis of results help managers determine whether current management should continue or whether it should be modified to achieve desired results.

Biological Diversity: The variety of life and its processes, including the variety of living organisms, the genetic differences among them, and communities and ecosystems in which they occur.

Biological Integrity: The 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.

Cultural Resources: The remains of sites, structures, or objects used by people in the past; including archeological sites, historic sites, historic buildings, historic districts, cultural landscapes, and traditional cultural properties.

Ecosystem: A dynamic and interrelating complex of plant and animal communities and their associated non-living environment.

Environmental Health: 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.

Estuarine: Deep water tidal habitats and adjacent tidal wetlands that are usually partly enclosed by land but have some access to the open ocean and are diluted by freshwater from riverine in-flows.

Exotic and Invasive Species: Any species, including its seeds, eggs, spores, or other biological material capable of propagating that species, that is not native to that ecosystem; and whose introduction does or is likely to cause environmental or economic harm or harm to human health.

Forb: A broad-leaved, herbaceous flowering plant that is not a grass; for example, an annual sunflower.

GIS: Geographic Information System. A computer based system for the collection, processing, and managing of spatially referenced data. GIS allows for the overlay of many data layers and provides a valuable tool for resource management.

Habitat: Suite of existing environmental conditions required by an organism for survival and reproduction. The place where an organism typically lives.

Invertebrate: Any animal without a spinal column. The group includes 97% of all animal species.

Hydroperiod: Number of days per year that an area of ground is covered with water.

Neotropical Migratory Bird: A bird that breeds in Canada and the United States during summer and spends the winter in Mexico, Central America, South America or the Caribbean islands.

Midden: A slightly elevated mound composed of shell fragments and other debris left as waste by native Indians.

Paleoindian: People who hunted now-extinct animals prior to 6,000 years ago.

Palustrine: Nontidal wetlands dominated by trees, shrubs, or persistent emergents.

Prescribed Burning: Burning conducted under controlled conditions to enhance natural habitats and/or to reduce vegetative fuels to reduce the risk from uncontrolled natural fires.

Relative Sea Level Rise: The combination of global and local rises in sea level. Local rises can occur from the shifting downward of the earth's surface (see subsidence).

RONs: Refuge Operating Needs System. A national database which contains the unfunded operational needs of each refuge.

Scoping Process: An early and open public participation process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed in an Environmental Impact Statement, and for identifying significant issues related to a proposed action.

Smoke Management: Methodologies used to reduce adverse impacts of smoke from wildland fires on people and communities.

Submerged Aquatic Vegetation: Plants which grow beneath and at the water's surface.

Subsidence: The motion of the Earth's surface as it shifts downward relative to a datum such as sea-level.

Succession: The natural replacement of one biotic community by another.

Wetland: Wetlands are 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; and, which support, under natural conditions, plants and animals that require saturated or seasonally saturated soils.