



Media Release

Where Are Our Wetlands and How Are They Doing?

*Find Out Through Two Innovative New Web Tools
from the California Wetland Monitoring Workgroup*

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Sacramento – “What is the extent of our wetlands?” “How healthy are they?” “How are they protected?”

These are three of many questions addressed by two new web-based tools, released today by the Wetland Monitoring Workgroup of the California Water Quality Monitoring Council. Together, these tools are designed to make information about wetlands location, extent and condition more readily available.

The first, EcoAtlas, is targeted toward wetland scientists, managers and regulators. It provides an online resource for compiling maps and data about wetlands produced by numerous local, state and federal agencies and non-governmental organizations. The second, the California Wetlands Portal, is designed to help members of the general public answer fundamental questions about wetlands in their communities and the state as a whole using the data stored in EcoAtlas. By making information more accessible, the Wetland Workgroup and the Monitoring Council hope to better inform agency decision making.

Wetlands play a pivotal role in maintaining healthy ecosystems in California. “The health and cleanliness of California’s surface waters remain an important barometer of their availability for beneficial purposes like drinking water, recreational uses, and for the continued sustainability of aquatic life,” said State Water Resources Control Board Executive Director Tom Howard.

Formed in 2007 by cooperative agreement between the California Environmental Protection Agency and the Natural Resources Agency, the California Water Quality Monitoring Council brings together water quality and ecosystem health information from a variety of organizations with special expertise in wetland monitoring and assessment, coordinated through the California Wetland Monitoring Workgroup. This collaborative workgroup facilitates dialogue and coordination among twenty-three state, federal, and local agencies and non-governmental organizations that monitor and assess our state’s wetlands.



The California Wetlands Portal is part of the *My Water Quality* website at www.MyWaterQuality.ca.gov. Initially launched in 2009 by the Monitoring Council, this website houses the widest collection of water quality and aquatic ecosystem health data ever available about our state’s lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands and ocean waters. The goal is to provide timely information in an easy-to-understand manner for the public,

environmental organizations, and water resource professionals. The Wetlands Portal and EcoAtlas build upon a suite of other tools already available through the *My Water Quality* website.

The EcoAtlas tool was developed by the San Francisco Estuary Institute in partnership with U.S. EPA and the State Water Resources Control Board. EcoAtlas gives site visitors access to salient information about the condition and extent of streams, wetlands, lakes, and their surrounding riparian areas while offering a toolbox of advanced features needed for wetlands management. EcoAtlas is on the web at www.ecoatlas.org.

“These new online tools will empower Californians to access information about the value and health of their wetlands,” said U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Regional Administrator Jared Blumenfeld. “The release of the Wetlands Portal and EcoAtlas represents a multi-agency collaborative effort to inform the public and support better aquatic resource management.”

Fact sheet on the new California Wetlands Portal:

www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/eco_health/wetlands/docs/wetlands_factsheet.pdf

More information on the California Water Quality Monitoring Council:

www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/monitoring_council/

More information on the California Wetland Monitoring Workgroup:

http://www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/monitoring_council/wetland_workgroup

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