
Wetland Classification

CWMW Considerations

30 July 2009

Significance of Classification

- Classification as *taxonomy*
 - Groups objects to establish similarity of appearance and/or function among object types
 - Identifies relationships among wetland/aquatic area types and functions
 - Classification as *organizing principle*
 - Places objects into well-established “bins” for record-keeping purposes
 - Standardizes approaches and procedures across agency boundaries
-

Implications for Wetland/Aquatic Area Monitoring

- Classification system must be compatible with *Definition* and with *Delineation* methodology
 - Classification system must be based on the same standardized wetland definition that is used by regulatory programs
 - Classification system must be based on a standardized methodology for identifying and delineating wetlands, which must be applied uniformly throughout state programs
-

Implications for Wetland/Aquatic Area Monitoring

- “Standardized” Classification System means:
 - State’s wetland data management framework will be based on the adopted classification system
 - All California agencies, applicants, consultants, etc., will use the same data framework for identifying and reporting wetlands/aquatic areas pursuant to state programs
 - Must “crosswalk” successfully with federal programs
-

Identifying a California Classification System

- Currently
 - Several classification systems (state/federal) are in use in California
 - No single classification system appears to be compatible with regulatory programs across state agency boundaries
 - Subsequently
 - Does State of California establish a state “classification” to standardize wetland/aquatic area monitoring procedures and data management?
-

Developing a Standardized (Technical) Wetland Classification

■ Why bother?

- Not all wetlands are the same – different types of wetlands have different functions, services, beneficial uses, etc.
 - A classification system is needed to distinguish one type of wetland from another.
 - The system should be standardized to foster collaborations and coordination among wetland interests.
-

Possible Technical Criteria for Selecting or Developing a Standardized State Wetland/Aquatic Area Classification System

- ❑ Includes all types of wetlands/aquatic areas in California.
 - ❑ Reflects functional differences among wetlands/aquatic areas.
 - ❑ Reflects differences in landscape position and water source that influence wetland/aquatic area form and function.
 - ❑ Supports development of sample frames for Level 2 and Level 3 ambient surveys.
 - ❑ Accommodates wetland/aquatic areas named in State policies and regulatory programs.
 - ❑ Fosters collaborations with NWI, NHD, CDFG, and other local, state and federal interests.
 - ❑ Can accommodate new wetland/aquatic area types.
-

CWMW Actions?

- Recognize the need for policy consolidation supporting a state classification approach and database management
 - Recognize the need for resolving potential state/federal conflicts
 - Recognize the need for technical assessment of options for state classification and support additional technical development work
-