

New Database Systems for Wetland Resource Analysis

Fisheries and Habitat Conservation is proud to announce the availability of a newly designed, integrated wetlands mapping tool, the Wetlands Master Geodatabase (MGD). Developed in cooperation with the U.S. Geological Survey, the MGD allows the Service, the principal Federal agency providing information on the extent and status of the Nations wetlands, to provide fast, efficient and scientifically sound digital information. Using these newer geographic information system technologies facilitates means that digital wetland map data are more easily used to resolve resource management issues.

In 2002, the Service developed a forward-looking strategy to guide the agency's digital wetland mapping and assessment efforts. This strategic re-direction recognized a need to analyze and assess wetlands and other aquatic habitat data at the watershed, ecosystem and national levels. The Strategy indicates these assessments should **1) provide scientifically based applications for wetlands and water resource data already available from various resource agencies and 2) expand the capability of the Inventory to integrate digital map data with other resource information to produce timely and relevant management and decision support tools.**

There were two important yet distinct purposes for the creation of the Wetlands Master Geodatabase. The first was to improve the editing, storage and distribution capability of the wetlands digital data. The second was to enhance the Service's capability to use supporting GIS data sets and integrate digital map data with other resource information to produce timely and relevant management and decision support tools.

The MGD provides a seamless digital wetland data layer and standardized parameters for improved data quality and integrity. Some of the older wetland attribute codes have been updated and there are metadata links for both the project level and supplemental wetland information. Currently the MGD contains over 28,000 maps in a seamless ArcSDE geodatabase. This represents wetland map data for approximately 45 percent of the conterminous U.S. and 13 percent of Alaska.

Data from the new MGD can be accessed through the Service's Wetlands Mapper at <http://wetlandfws.er.usgs.gov> or by accessing The National Map at <http://nationalmap.usgs.gov>. Collectively, these developments enable the Service to keep pace with growing demands for wetland resource information and enhance customer service using readily accessible technology.

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