Wetland Water Quality Standards
Program Building Activities Menu

Objective 1: Ensure that wetlands are treated as waters within state and tribal water quality programs

Actions	Menu of Activities
a. Adopt an appropriate definition of wetlands	• Include wetlands in state/tribal legal definition of waters • Ensure legal definition of waters is at least as inclusive as the CWA definition • Remove any regulatory language excluding defined wetlands from water quality standards
b. Ensure the appropriate wetlands definition is included in WQS	• Include appropriate definition of wetlands in state/ tribal policy or regulations authorizing water quality standards program (e.g., wetland size, type, ownership)

Objective 2: Develop wetland-specific water quality standards

Actions	Menu of Activities
a. Gather and analyze monitoring data and other information that will become basis of water quality standards	• Define wetland types/classes • Establish reference conditions for defined wetland types in terms of functional/condition performance and other physical measurements
b. Establish and adopt appropriate wetland-specific designated uses to be achieved and protected	• Establish designated uses for different wetland types (e.g., recreation, wildlife habitat,) • Map where designated uses apply
c. Establish and adopt narrative criteria that qualitatively describe the condition or suite of functions that must be achieved to support a designated use	• Establish narrative physical criteria (e.g., fill material not present; no hydrologic alterations) • Establish narrative biologic criteria (e.g., species composition, population dynamics, structure)

Actions	Menu of Activities
	• Develop technical documents to support the narrative criteria with numerical data. These documents describe the types of narrative and numerical data that will be used in determining attainment of the standard
d. Establish and adopt numeric criteria representing wetland specific values for chemical, physical, and biological parameters that may not be exceeded, must be exceeded, or some combination to protect or restore designated uses	• Establish numeric criteria for biological attributes based on wetland type and location (e.g., plant or macroinvertebrate indices, algae) • Establish numeric criteria for chemical constituents based on wetland type and location (e.g., nutrients) • Establish numeric criteria for physical parameters based on wetland type and location (e.g., buffer characterizations, micro habitats)
e. Better define state/tribal antidegradation policies for wetlands, requiring full protection of existing uses (functions and/or condition), maintenance of functions/condition in high quality wetlands, and a prohibition against lowering functions/conditions in outstanding national resource waters	• Include wetlands in antidegradation policies • Include restoration potential of wetlands in antidegradation policies • Administer and enforce antidegradation policies for wetlands • Develop measures to ensure antidegradation is being applied successfully in a manner specific to wetlands

Objective 3: Incorporate wetland-specific water quality standards into agency decision-making

Actions	Menu of Activities
a. Use water quality standards as basis for regulatory decisions	• Base 401 certifications on wetland WQS • Base state/tribal permit decisions, including mitigation requirements, on WQS

Actions	Menu of Activities
	• Track wetland impacts avoided or mitigated based on WQS, via permitting actions
b. Use water quality standards as basis for evaluating restoration/protection projects and mitigation/compensation projects	• Use water quality standards in restoration guidelines • Track restoration/protection projects that are monitored for compliance with water quality standards • Track restoration/protection sites that meet water quality standards • Identify remedial measures for sites that do not meet wetland WQS
c. Incorporate water quality standards into monitoring and assessment program	• Update monitoring strategy and methods based on water quality standards • Track acres monitored for compliance with water quality standards • Regularly report on wetlands status and trends relative to water quality standards