

Arizona State Wetland Program Summary



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Section A. Quick View

Description of State's Wetlands

It is estimated that less than one percent of Arizona's landscape has wetlands (National Water Summary on Wetlands Resources, 1996). Arizona's wetlands include riparian wetlands, marshes, oxbow lakes, bosques, cienegas, playas, caldera lakes, and tinajas.

State Definition of Wetlands

The state's regulatory definitions echo the federal definitions of waters and wetlands. "Surface water' means a water of the United States and includes...a water that is currently used, was used in the past, or may be susceptible to use in interstate or foreign commerce; an interstate water, including an interstate wetland; all other waters, such as an intrastate lake, reservoir, natural pond, river, stream (including an intermittent or ephemeral stream), creek, wash, draw, mudflat, sandflat, wetland, slough, backwater, prairie pothole, wet meadow, or playa lake that the use, degradation, or destruction of which would affect or could affect interstate or foreign commerce...; an impoundment of a surface water [as defined here]; a tributary of a surface water [as defined here]; and a wetland adjacent to a surface water [as defined here]."

Historic Wetland Loss/Gain

Original Wetland Acreage	Remaining Wetland Acreage	Acreage Lost	% Lost
931,000	600,000	331,000	36%

Source: US Fish and Wildlife Service (Dahl, 1989)

Primary State Wetlands Webpage

Arizona Department of Environmental Quality - Water Quality Division
Surface Water Programs Landing Page

http://www.azdeq.gov/environ/water/surfacewater/surfacewater_programs.html

State Wetland Program Plan

Arizona does not have an EPA-approved state wetland program plan.

No Net Loss/Net Gain Goal

No information available.

State Resources for Wetland Work

State Name	Core element #1: Regulation	Core Element #2: Monitoring and Assessment	Core Element #3: Wetland Water Quality Standards	Core Element #4: Voluntary Wetland Restoration
Agency	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable
Source(s)	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable
Amount	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable
Staffing	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable

Note: ADEQ does not have a budget for wetlands work. The state’s ten-year vision includes the devotion of resources to wetlands in the future.

Innovative Features

None

Models and Templates

None

Section B. Regulation

How are Wetlands Regulated in Arizona?

Arizona does not have a wetlands regulatory program separate from the federal §404 permitting program under the CWA, but state law does outline water quality standards for both “waters of the state” and “navigable waters. Section 401 certification is the state’s main tool for regulating activities affecting wetlands. The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (AZDEQ) certifies federal permitting decisions for dredging and filling of wetlands under §401 of the CWA. By issuing a 401 Certification, ADEQ ensures that the project will not violate surface water quality standards, adversely impact impaired waters (waters that do not meet water quality standards) and that the project complies with applicable water quality improvement plans (total maximum daily loads). The CWA 401 Certification Program is administered by AZDEQ’s Surface Water Section. For more information about the state’s 401 Certification Program, go to: <http://www.azdeq.gov/environ/water/permits/cwa401.html>

Wetland Delineation

Delineation Guidance	Yes	No	Detail
Use State’s Own Method		X	

Use Corps' 87 Manual and Regional Supplement	X		Arizona relies on the Corps to conduct wetland delineations
Other (Please describe)		X	

Evaluation Methodology

The state does not have a formal wetland evaluation methodology.

Exempted Activities

Same as federal. Projects on Native American Reservations are not reviewed by the DEQ.

Special Provisions for Agriculture and Forestry

Same as federal.

Penalties and Enforcement

The Arizona Revised Statutes outline enforcement provisions for violations to state water quality standards. The AZDEQ may pursue violations to the state's water quality standards, aquifer protections, or AZPDES permits using compliance orders, injunctions, civil penalties, and criminal penalties and/or prosecution.

Permit Tracking

Arizona has a statewide permit tracking database, not limited to wetland data. The state's ADEQ AZURITE database is used to obtain status information on license applications that are currently being processed.

State General Permit (statewide vs. regional coverage)

Permit Coverage	Yes	No	Detail (Type of Permit)
Regional General Permit		X	
Statewide General Permit		X	

Assumption of 404 Powers

Assumption Status	Yes	No	Detail
Assumed		X	
Working Toward Assumption		X	
Explored Assumption	X		The state held an exploratory meeting with stakeholders in 2013 to discuss possible state assumption of the §404 program. The dialogue indicates additional discussions are needed.

Joint permitting

None.

Special Area Management Plans and Advanced Identification Plans

None.

Buffer Protections

None.

Mitigation Policy

The State of Arizona has not adopted guidelines, policies, or legislation (beyond CWA §404 requirements) pertaining to compensatory mitigation for permitted impacts to wetlands or streams, including banking and in-lieu-fee operations.

Mitigation Database

None.

Section C. Monitoring and Assessment

Agency Responsible for Wetland Monitoring and Assessment

The state does not have a wetland monitoring and assessment program separate from its ambient monitoring program, which includes the state's wetlands and streams. Arizona's several surface water monitoring and assessment programs are operated under the AZDEQ. These include the Lakes Monitoring Program, the Watershed Monitoring Program, the AZDEQ/U.S. Geological Survey Cooperative Monitoring Program, and the Bioassessment Program.

Mapping/Inventory

<http://www.fws.gov/wetlands/Data/Mapper.html>

State Wetland Mapping Public Portal

None.

Wetland Classification and Assessment

Neither an assessment methodology nor a monitoring program has been developed specifically for wetlands in Arizona. ADEQ has just begun to develop a monitoring program specifically for wetlands as part of the 104(b) monitoring grant. Methodologies for other waters have been developed for regulatory purposes—for water quality standards and development of 303(d) lists and 305(b) reports, as well as for support of the state's NPDES program.

Statewide Wetland Monitoring Plan

Arizona does not have a wetland monitoring plan. However, discussion of monitoring and assessment plans for wetlands are mentioned in Arizona’s Comprehensive Water Quality Monitoring Strategy http://www.azdeq.gov/envIRON/water/assessment/download/Comprehensive_WQ_Monitor_Strategy.pdf

Overall Wetland Gain and Loss Tracking System

None

Wetland Monitoring and Assessment Characteristics

Level	None	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<i>Arizona</i>	X			

Type	None	IBI	Condition	Functional
<i>Arizona</i>	X			

Frequency	None	Project Specific	Ongoing
<i>Arizona</i>		X	

Participation in National Wetland Condition Assessment

NWCA Study Type	Yes	No
National Study	X	
State Intensification Study		X

Section D. Water Quality Standards

Wetland and Water Quality Standards

Type	None	Use Existing WQ Standards	In Process	Adopted	Future Direction
Wetland-specific Designated Uses		X			
Narrative criteria in the standards to protect designated wetland uses		X			

Numeric criteria in the standards based on wetland type and location to protect the designated uses		X			
Anti-degradation policy includes wetlands		X			

Description: Arizona’s water quality standards (WQS) do not identify criteria specific to wetlands. The state WQS, provided for in the Arizona Revised Statutes and outlined in the Arizona Administrative Code, are both narrative and numeric in nature and include chemical and biological criteria for water quality. The regulations do not identify designated uses or antidegradation standards for wetlands, defaulting to designated uses and antidegradation provisions for surface waters. It should also be noted that, in the absence of wetland-specific WQS, AZPDES permit and §401 certification decisions rely on surface water criteria and standards.

Section E. Voluntary Wetland Restoration

Types of Wetland Restoration Work Funded by the State:

Type of Work	YES	NO	Description
Fund Wetland Restoration (may include easement agreements)		X	
Private Land Restoration		X	
Public Land Restoration		X	
Technical Assistance		X	
Tax Incentives		X	
Other		X	

Detail: Arizona does not have a formal state voluntary wetland restoration program. AZDEQ has no programs, activities, or funding directed toward wetland restoration initiatives. However, the AZDEQ’s Water Quality Improvement Grant Program administers funds from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for implementation of nonpoint source management projects.³⁵ The distribution of grant funds from EPA is provided pursuant to CWA §319(h). These federal funds are granted to individuals, as well as public and private entities for implementing on-the-ground water quality improvement projects that reduce nonpoint source pollutant loadings to surface or ground water in Arizona. Wetland restoration activities may be eligible for this type of funding.

Voluntary Wetland Restoration Program Components

Wetland Restoration Efforts	Nothing in the Works	Planning	In Progress	Mature/ Complete
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Program has a set of restoration goals	N/A			
Coordinate with relevant agencies that outline restoration/protection goals and strategies and timeframes	N/A			
Developed multi-agency body to coordinate restoration/protection efforts	N/A			
Set restoration goals based on agency objectives and available information	N/A			

Goals for Restoration Projects

Goal	Yes	No	Description
No Net Loss	N/A		
Reverse Loss/Net Gain	N/A		
Nonpoint Source Pollution (NPS)/WQ	N/A		
Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDLs)	N/A		
Habitat	N/A		
Coastal Protection	N/A		
Floodwater Protection	N/A		
Groundwater	N/A		
Other (please describe)	N/A		

Landowner Guides and Handbooks to Assist with Voluntary Wetland Restoration Efforts

None.

Section F. Innovative and/or Highly Effective Education and Outreach

Arizona’s *Master Watershed Steward Program (MWS)* works to educate and train citizens across the State of Arizona to serve as volunteers in the monitoring, restoration, conservation and protection of their water and watersheds. The MWS program is a partnership of the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension and the AZDEQ.

Section G. Climate Change and Wetlands

The state wetland program does not work on climate change.

Section H. Integration

Entity/Program Area	Yes/No	Description of the Connection	Contact for Follow-up
NPDES/Stormwater	NO		
303(d)	NO		
305(b) reporting on wetlands	NO		
Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDLs)	NO		
Climate Change/ Resiliency	NO		
Land Use /Watershed planning	NO		
Flood/Hazard Mitigation	NO		
Coastal Work	NO		
Wildlife Action Plan	NO		
Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)	NO		
Other (Specify)	NO		

State Wetland Program Development Continuum

Continuum Stage		Core Element 1: Regulation	Core Element 2: Monitoring & Assessment	Core Element 3: Wetland Water Quality Standards	Core Element 4: Voluntary Restoration
Mature Stage	High	401 Certification Only			
Initial Implementation Stage	↑				
Development Stage					
Early Stage			Low	X	X

Section I. Contact Information

Section J. Useful Websites

State Government Programs

1. Arizona Department of Environmental Quality
 - a. Water Quality Division
<http://www.azdeq.gov/environ/water/>

- i. Watershed Management
<http://www.azdeq.gov/environ/water/watershed/>
 - ii. Permits
<http://www.azdeq.gov/environ/water/permits/index.html>
- 2. Arizona Game & Fish Department
 - a) In-lieu Fee Program
http://www.azgfd.gov/w_c/Implementation_of_WetlandRestoration.shtml
 - b) Natural Heritage Program
http://www.azgfd.gov/w_c/edits/species_concern.shtml

Federal Government Programs

- 1. USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Wetlands Reserve Program
<http://www.az.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/wrp/>

Tribal Government Programs

- 1. Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community
Environmental Protection & Natural Resources (EPNR) Division
Wetland Program Plan
http://water.epa.gov/type/wetlands/upload/salt_river_pima-maricopa_indian_community_wpp.pdf

Other Wetland Organization Links

- 1. Arizona Riparian Council
<http://azriparian.org/>