

National Wetland Inventory Updates for New Mexico: 15 Years of Lessons Learned and Best Practices for Data and Program Development

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This presentation will examine the New Mexico Environment Department's efforts to develop National Wetland Inventory (NWI) across New Mexico, highlighting the evolution of data and program development over the past 15 years. We'll share valuable lessons learned and best practices for creating a successful statewide wetland mapping program. The discussion will cover the adoption of new mapping technologies, including the use of high-resolution imagery and LiDAR data for enhanced wetland detection and classification. We'll also detail the critical role of fieldwork in ground-truthing and refining mapping protocols to address the unique ecological challenges of New Mexico's arid and semi-arid landscapes.

The talk will also focus on the importance of stakeholder engagement, discussing how collaboration with federal agencies, state departments, non-profits, and other partners has been crucial for data validation and program sustainability. We'll showcase how these partnerships have led to the development of related projects, such as New Mexico Wetland rapid assessment methods, State wetland permitting, wetland action plans and watershed-based plans, that have leveraged NWI data to support conservation and management efforts. By providing a comprehensive overview of the New Mexico NWI program's journey, this presentation aims to offer a practical blueprint for other states and tribes looking to improve their wetland data and programmatic capacity.