

The Open Wetlands Map - an accessible, community-maintained dataset of wetland observations in the United States

Reed Van Beveren

Environmental Policy Innovation Center

7761 Diamondback Drive

College Park MD 20742

571-932-3388

Email: reed@policyinnovation.org

Wetlands provide rich habitats to support biodiversity, filter our water, and protect communities from floods and storm surge. Despite their importance, up-to-date [wetland data](#) remains fragmented and inaccessible in many areas. This has resulted in an inability to understand the pace and scale of changes in wetlands and decision-making based on incomplete information. To address this problem, EPIC and over 50 partners from over 30 different organizations have been meeting regularly to discuss improvements to the wetland data landscape. From our discussions, we have identified the need for a **comprehensive, openly accessible, and community-maintained dataset of on-the-ground observations of wetlands in the United States**. Called the **Open Wetlands Map**, this map will be designed in collaboration with OpenStreetMap with input from a diverse community of experts to capture the nuance of wetlands across different landscapes. Building a central and openly accessible repository of wetland observations will allow for a more up-to-date understanding of our wetlands and serve as training and validation data for modeled wetland locations. As a community-maintained dataset, this map will also serve as an educational resource and engage local communities directly in wetland science. When this project is completed, it will have cascading benefits for agencies, advocates, and communities seeking to protect and restore wetlands through better planning and permitting, and also for project developers seeking to avoid impacts to wetlands. Within this session, we will share findings from our data landscape research, preview our work on the Open Wetlands Map, and get feedback from the NAWM community. We're eager to collaborate with others in the NAWM community to build and pilot a more modern map of our wetlands, the Open Wetlands Map.