

Introduction to Wetland and Riparian Summary

Within the report area you have requested, wetland and riparian mapping is summarized by acres of each classification present. Summaries are only provided for modern MTNHP wetland and riparian mapping and not for outdated (NWI Legacy) or incomplete (NWI Scalable) mapping efforts; [described here](#). MTNHP has made all three of these datasets and associated metadata available for separate download on the Montana [Wetland and Riparian Framework MSDI download page](#).

Wetland and Riparian mapping is one of 15 [Montana Spatial Data Infrastructure](#) framework layers considered vital for making statewide maps of Montana and understanding its geography. The wetland and riparian framework layer consists of spatial data representing the extent, type, and approximate location of wetlands, riparian areas, and deepwater habitats in Montana.

Wetland and riparian mapping is completed through photointerpretation of 1-m resolution color infrared aerial imagery acquired from 2005 or later. A coding convention using letters and numbers is assigned to each mapped wetland. These letters and numbers describe the broad landscape context of the wetland, its vegetation type, its water regime, and the kind of alterations that may have occurred. Ancillary data layers such as topographic maps, digital elevation models, soils data, and other aerial imagery sources are also used to improve mapping accuracy. Wetland mapping follows the federal Wetland Mapping Standard and classifies wetlands according to the Cowardin classification system of the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) (Cowardin et al. 1979, FGDC Wetlands Subcommittee 2013). Federal, State, and local regulatory agencies with jurisdiction over wetlands may define and describe wetlands differently than the NWI. Similar coding, based on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service conventions, is applied to riparian areas (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2009). These are mapped areas where vegetation composition and growth is influenced by nearby water bodies, but where soils, plant communities, and hydrology do not display true wetland characteristics. **These data are intended for use in publications at a scale of 1:12,000 or smaller. Mapped wetland and riparian areas do not represent precise boundaries and digital wetland data cannot substitute for an on-site determination of jurisdictional wetlands.**

A detailed overview, with examples, of both wetland and riparian classification systems and associated codes can be found at: http://mtnhp.org/help/MapView/WetRip_Classification.asp

Literature Cited

- Cowardin, L.M., V. Carter, F.C. Golet, and E.T. LaRoe. 1979. Classification of wetlands and deepwater habitats of the United States. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, FWS/OBS-79/31. Washington, D.C. 103pp.
- Federal Geographic Data Committee. 2013. Classification of wetlands and deepwater habitats of the United States. FGDC-STD-004-2013. Second Edition. Wetlands Subcommittee, Federal Geographic Data Committee and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services. 2009. A system for mapping riparian areas in the western United States. Division of Habitat and Resource Conservation, Branch of Resource and Mapping Support, Arlington, Virginia.