Wetland Summary

Florida has about 11 million acres of wetlands, more than any of the other 47 conterminous States. The abundance of wetlands in Florida is due primarily to the low, flat terrain and plentiful rainfall. Florida’s wetlands include coastal marsh and mangrove forests, forested freshwater swamps and savannas, cypress domes, flood-plain forests, isolated wetlands, and hydric flatwoods. Florida wetlands include the Everglades, which historically covered an estimated 8.6 million acres - including one of the largest freshwater marshes on the North American continent. Florida has lost nearly one-half of its wetlands, primarily to residential and agricultural activities, much of which occurred prior to 1970, when state and federal regulations began to be adopted. The State protects wetlands through a comprehensive environmental resource permitting program administered by the State and five water management districts, land acquisition programs funded primarily through taxes collected on land transactions, and State mandated local land use plans.

Distinctive Example of NWI Usage in Florida

Over the past several decades the State of Florida has been mapping its land use/land cover to meet the needs of State agencies, local governments and private enterprise related to development pressures. By converting the wetlands and deepwater data to the Cowardin classification system, an obsolete NWI wetlands data set that is currently in place in Florida will be updated. The conversion process will integrate not only the Florida Land Use/Land Cover Classification System (FLUCCS) information, but will incorporate Soil Survey Geographic Database (SSURGO) soils, collateral NWI data, and current imagery to construct the new data set. With the current NWI dating back to the 1970s and 1980s, this effort will bring a much desired product to land use managers and others that are in need of current wetland information. Florida also has a robust independent wetland delineation mapping program and received a Wetland Plan Development Grant in 2013.

For the most up-to-date wetland mapping information, please contact the state contact listed below:

John Humphreys, Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection
www.dep.state.fl.us/water/wetlands/delineation/index.htm