

AN INTRODUCTION TO WETLAND BIOASSESSMENT AND THE BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF WETLANDS WORKGROUP

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Abstract:

The biological assessment of wetlands using an Index of Biological Integrity is a relatively young field that has its genesis rooted in wadeable stream work. Many elements involved in wetland bioassessment are similar to that of other waterbody types, however there is a quickly expanding field of knowledge that is being developed to address the unique and challenging circumstances peculiar to wetland ecosystems.

The Biological Assessment of Wetlands Workgroup (BAWWG) was formed in 1997 with the objective of improving methods and programs to assess the biological integrity of wetlands. The workgroup consists of approximately 35 wetland scientists from federal agencies, states, and universities and is coordinated by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watersheds. BAWWG initiated several pilot projects to increase the level of knowledge in this field. Subsequently, in cooperation with EPA's Office of Science and Technology, BAWWG has published a series of modules entitled "Methods for Evaluating Wetland Condition" to describe the "state of the science" in wetland bioassessment and nutrient enrichment. With 12 currently available, more modules will be added to this series in the future as need dictates. For instance, one is proposed to describe how wetland water quality standards can be developed using data collected from wetland bioassessments. In addition to the modules, BAWWG has published other works including databases, literature searches and held a National Meeting in the May, 2001.

Biographical Information:

Doug Hoskins is working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Wetland Division at their headquarters in Washington, D.C. as their wetland bioassessment and wetland water quality specialist. He is on detail assignment to the EPA from the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's Inland Water Resources Division where he first became involved with the bioassessment of wetlands through the New England Biological Assessment of Wetlands Work Group (NEBAWWG). He holds a M.S. degree in Natural Resource Management and Administration from Antioch University (New England) and a B.A. in Environmental Studies from Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania.