

WETLANDS QUANTITY, QUALITY, AND BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

INDICATORS: Ability to monitor “no net loss” of wetlands; net change in wetland acres

WHY IS THIS INDICATOR IMPORTANT?

Minnesota Statutes, Sec. 103A.201 notes: “The legislature finds that the wetlands of Minnesota provide public value by conserving surface waters, maintaining and improving water quality, preserving wildlife habitat, providing recreational opportunities, reducing runoff, providing for floodwater retention, reducing stream sedimentation, contributing to improved subsurface moisture, helping moderate climatic change, and enhancing the natural beauty of the landscape, and are important to comprehensive water management, and that it is in the public interest to: 1) achieve no net loss in the quantity, quality, and biological diversity of Minnesota’s existing wetlands; 2) increase the quantity, quality, and biological diversity of Minnesota’s wetlands by restoring or enhancing diminished or drained wetlands.”

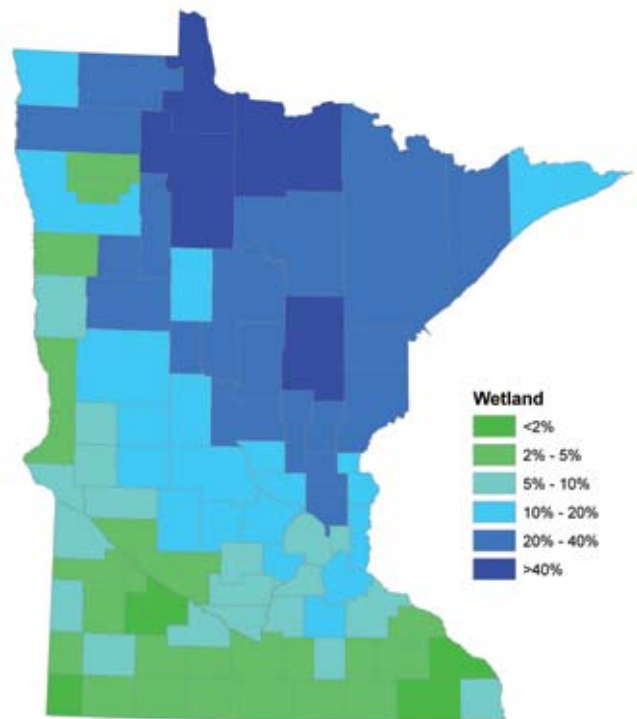
WHAT IS DNR DOING?

DNR influences impacts to wetlands through the Public Waters and Waters Appropriation Permit Programs and by providing technical information and onsite reviews for other regulatory programs. DNR acquires and restores wetlands on state lands. DNR staff help develop regulations and policies affecting wetlands.

DNR, in cooperation with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, operates the only statistically-designed monitoring program to provide a comprehensive, state-wide assessment of wetland quantity and quality trends. This program uses a cyclical design to monitor nearly 5000 random plots. The program was initiated in 2006 and the first full 3 year sampling cycle was completed in fall 2009. These data provide the most comprehensive and up-to-date assessment of wetland status in Minnesota. Initial results for trends in wetland gain or loss will be available beginning in 2010.

TARGET: Continue to monitor trends in wetland gains and losses to assess progress toward meeting Minnesota’s no net loss goal.

DNR cannot achieve no net loss of wetlands on its own because most wetlands are not on land administered by the state. To promote the conservation of wetlands and achieve the goal of no net loss, DNR has a three point strategy. First, DNR will provide scientifically sound, publicly available monitoring information on wetland gains and losses which can be used to help shape wetland policy and management decisions. Second, DNR will manage wetlands on DNR administered land according to an internal policy which is stricter than state or federal laws. Third, DNR will work with other agencies, non-governmental organizations, and landowners to promote stewardship practices that help achieve the no net loss goal.



Current wetlands in Minnesota: Data from the 2006-2008 cycle of the wetland monitoring program show the current distribution of wetlands across Minnesota. Most counties in northern Minnesota have wetlands covering more than 20% of the land. Most counties in southern Minnesota have less than 5% of their land cover in wetlands. The overall average cover of wetlands and water for Minnesota is 19.6%.

LEARN MORE ABOUT:

- Minnesota wetlands at: www.mndnr.gov/wetlands
- Wetland monitoring strategy: www.mndnr.gov/eco/wetlands/wstm_prog.html