



Survey of the Nation's Lakes Fact Sheet

What is the Survey of the Nation's Lakes?

The goal of this survey is to address two key questions about the quality of the Nation's lakes¹, ponds, and reservoirs:

- What percent of the Nation's lakes are in good, fair, and poor condition for key indicators of ecological health and human activities?
- What is the relative importance of key stressors such as nutrients and pathogens?

The sampling design for this survey will be a probability-based network which will provide statistically-valid estimates of the condition of all lakes with known confidence. It is to be designed much like an opinion poll: that is sample sites will be selected at random to represent the condition of all lakes in regions that share similar ecological characteristics. This design will provide regional and national estimates of the condition of the Nation's lake resource.

The parameters measured will be used to evaluate the ecological condition of lakes and to evaluate the extent that lake resources support human activities. The measurements will be taken using consistent procedures at all sites to ensure the results can be compared across the country.

This survey is one of a series of surveys being implemented cooperatively by states, tribes, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Geological Survey and other partners. The purpose of these surveys is to periodically generate statistically-valid and environmentally relevant reports on the condition of the Nation's water resources. In addition to providing information on the condition of the Nation's waters these collaborative assessments are intended to provide funding and experience that enhance state's and tribe's ability to assess and manage water quality.

What is the schedule for the survey?

EPA, states, tribes and others are working on the scope and design of the survey in 2005 and 2006. This collaboration is exploring how to define the population of lakes that should be included in the survey and which indicators best reflect

Purpose

Report on the condition of the Nation's lakes

Help build state and tribal capacity for monitoring and assessment

Promote collaboration across jurisdictional boundaries in the assessment of water quality

For more information visit:

www.epa.gov/owow/lakes/

or contact:

Anne Weinberg, USEPA
202-566-1217
weinberg.anne@epa.gov

¹ For purposes of this survey "lakes" refers to natural and man-made freshwater lakes, ponds, and reservoirs in the continental U.S., excluding the Great Lakes.



ecological health and human activities. After these decisions are made, EPA and its partners will develop a quality assurance plan and field manuals that describe how to conduct the survey. Training and field sampling will be conducted in 2007. Sample processing and data analysis will be completed by early 2008 in order to publish a report near the end of the year.

How are states, tribes and other lakes experts involved in planning the survey?

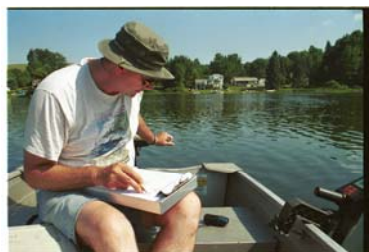
In 2005 and 2006 EPA is engaging in planning, scoping and design sessions with states, tribes and others with expertise in assessing the condition of lakes.



April 25-28, 2005 at the Annual State Lakes Meeting in Chicago, IL - This meeting provided an initial opportunity to discuss the broad goals of a survey of the Nation's lakes, identify issues, and gain recommendations from states and others on how to proceed.

Nov. 10, 2005 at the North American Lake Management Society's (NALMS) Annual Symposium in Madison, WI <http://www.nalms.org/symposia/madison/index.htm>

EPA will facilitate a half day session to discuss the broad scope of the survey and seek input from meeting participants on the scope, design and implementation process. A representative from the State of Vermont will provide an overview of the complementary partnership among states in New England to survey lake resources in that region. EPA will present options and seek input from states and others on specific recommendations for defining the population of lakes that should be included in the survey. This input will contribute to the design and selection of sample locations.



April 25-28, 2006 at the Annual State Lakes Meeting in Chicago, IL <http://www.nalms.org/symposia/events.htm>

The majority of this meeting will be dedicated to planning the survey of the Nation's lakes. This meeting will focus on the indicators and field protocols for the survey. EPA, states, tribes and others will present their approaches and discuss options on topics including chemical, physical, and/or biological parameters to be measured; technically and financially feasible sampling and analytical methods; use of technologies such as remote sensing; practical considerations for getting the assessment done (e.g., use of volunteers; availability of labs; timeframes; funding); and emerging pollutants or issues to consider. Participants will be invited to provide input and share their perspectives to help guide the scope and implementation of the survey.

