



Alaska Region

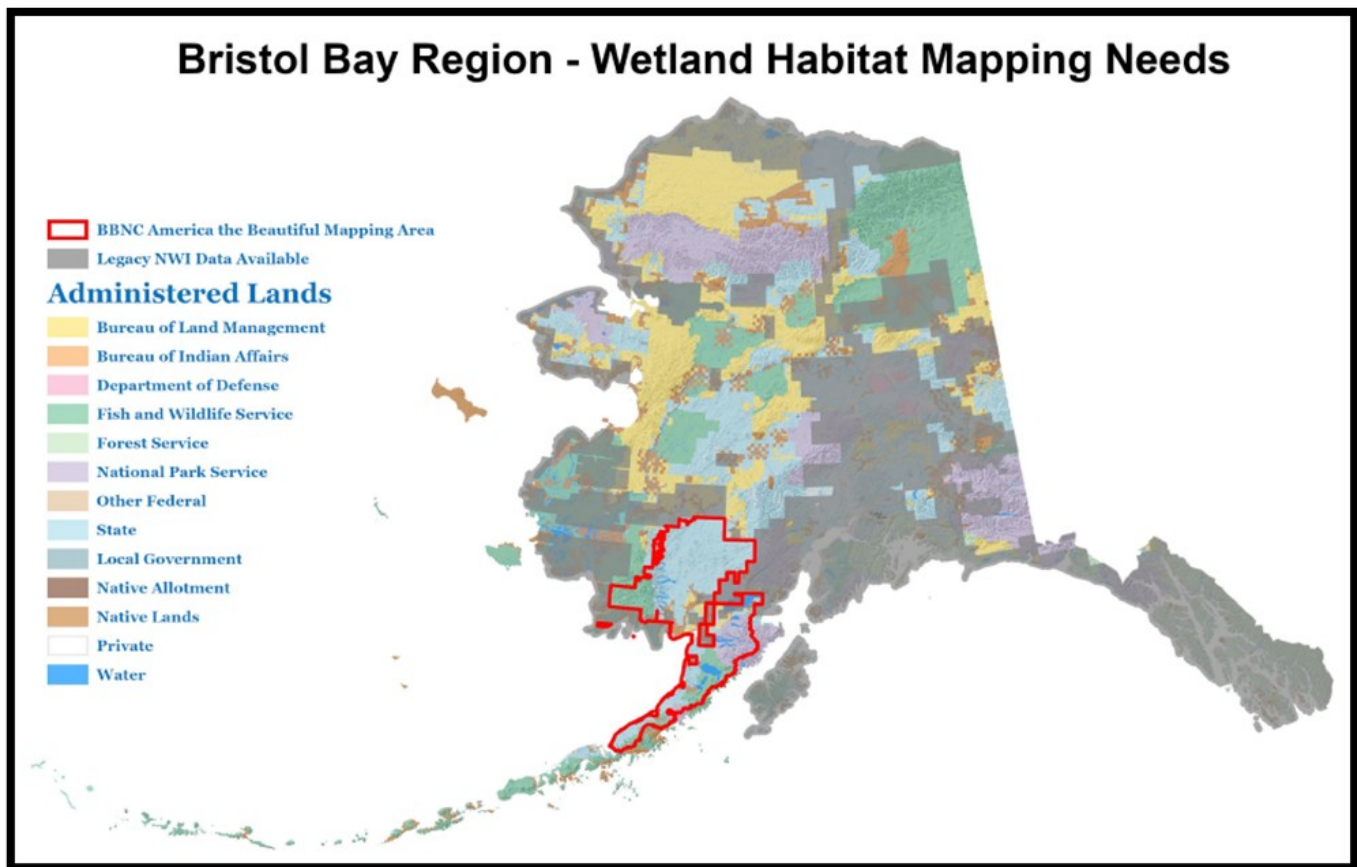
National Wetlands Inventory

March 2023 Update

Strategically planning to develop comprehensive and standardized wetlands data across Alaska

NWI for the Bristol Bay Watershed

In 2022, the Bristol Bay Native Corporation (BBNC) partnered with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and others to submit a grant application to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation America the Beautiful campaign to map wetlands across the Bristol Bay region while simultaneously providing education and employment opportunities to local residents and shareholders. While only a portion of the project was funded, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. FWS and U.S. Geological Survey have contributed funding to ensure mapping covers the entire Bristol Bay Fisheries Reserve. And the BBNC project will still be able to provide education and employment opportunities. More information about these opportunities will be available in the coming months.



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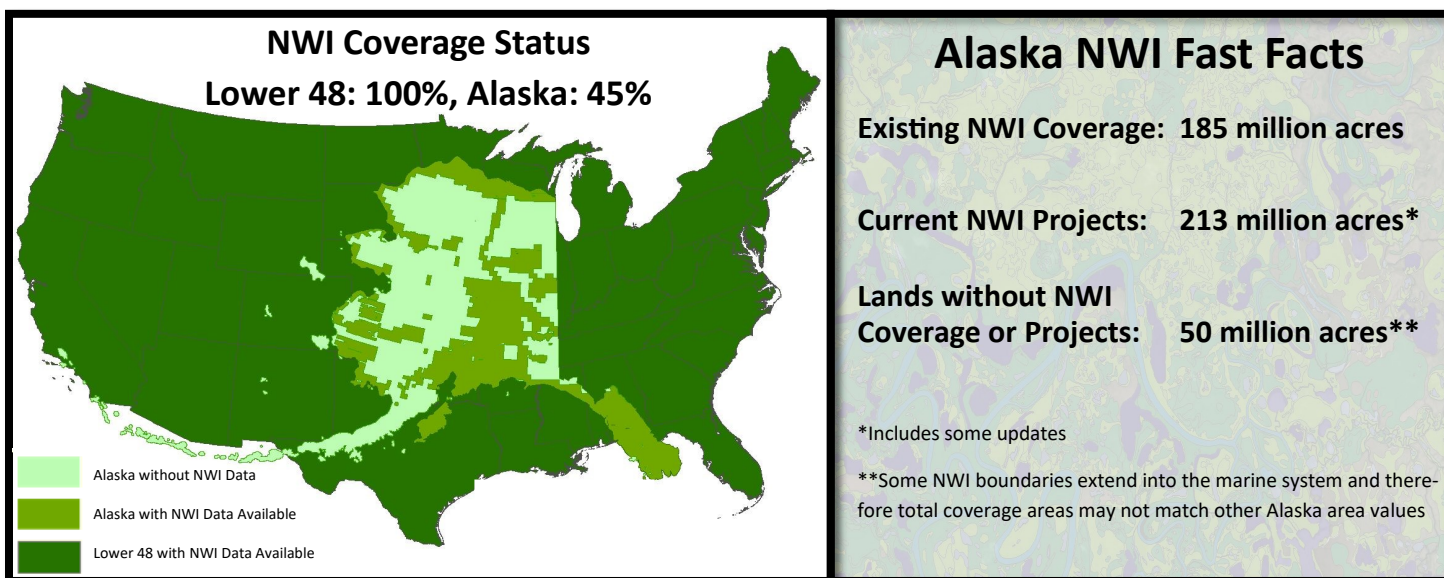
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Fish and wildlife management, aviation and maritime safety, energy development, resource assessments, flood plain management and recreational activities all depend on access to accurate wetlands and hydrographic data. The geospatial data to support modern wetland and hydrography maps do not exist for much of Alaska, where natural resource management, community use and development interests intersect. Geospatial data provide federal agencies, the State of Alaska and local communities with scientific tools and information to ensure balanced use and stewardship of public and private lands.

The **National Wetlands Inventory (NWI)**, is the nation’s most comprehensive wetland and deepwater habitat dataset across the country. The geospatial dataset is considered a National Geospatial Data Asset and a recognized as part of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure. At this time, the entire contiguous 48 states have comprehensive coverage; however, only 45% of Alaska is included in the national database and there are no existing plans to complete mapping on over 50 million acres.



Value of the National Wetlands Inventory

- U.S. Army Corps of engineers estimates over \$8.25 million in annual cost savings by using the NWI in their workflow
- Project areas with out NWI have increased time and cost burdens for data collection
- Federal agencies and consulting firms agree that contemporary NWI streamlines environmental permitting and review processes
- The NWI program provides a web delivery system for data dissemination where over 1,000,000 maps have been created
- NWI is used for:
 - * Natural resource management
 - * Energy exploration and production
 - * Transportation planning
 - * Telecommunication Sites
 - * Recreational access and facility construction
 - * Comprehensive community plans

The NWI program integrates supporting information from mapping initiatives into its wetlands inventories. This includes digital imagery, elevation and hydrography developed in coordination with the Alaska Mapping Executive Committee (AMEC) and Alaska Geospatial Council (AGC).

The AGC Alaska Wetlands Technical Working Group (AWTWG) has developed a statewide strategy (<http://agc.dnr.alaska.gov/wetlands.html>) with a goal of completing the National Wetland Inventory across the state by 2029. The group is composed of federal, state and local government representatives as well as consultants, product vendors and research professionals. With the strategy in place, the group is now focused on outreach and seeking financial investments.

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