

Summary of WI DNR's RFQA Development

The WI DNR undertook the effort to create a Level 2 (rapid) assessment, as defined by the Environmental Protection Agency. Rapid floristic quality assessments (RFQA) may be used by those familiar with wetlands and common wetland plants but who are not trained as expert botanists. DNR's objective for this tool is to expand capacity to conduct routine wetland assessments throughout the state. The DNR intends for this protocol to be incorporated into some future permitting decisions as part of functional value assessments.

The DNR underwent two levels of testing to develop the RFQA:

1. Manipulating existing wetland floristic data to assess the effects of simplifying WDNR's intensive timed-meander survey methodology.
2. Field testing the tool across a range of wetland types and conditions.

The RFQA differs from the Department's Timed Meander Survey in four key aspects:

1. It asks users to only collect information about dominant plants.
2. It allows genus-level plant identification for several groups.
3. It uses broad, structure-based wetland classes, Cowardin classes, instead of NHC wetland community types.
4. It uses a simplified, four-tier, numeric thresholds for floristic quality based on weighted mean coefficient of conservatism values.

For additional information about how the RFQA tool was developed and tested, see "[Development of a Rapid Floristic Quality Assessment Methodology for Wisconsin Wetlands](#)".