

Filling the Gaps

Priority Data Needs and
Key Management Challenges
for National Reporting
on Ecosystem Condition



A Report of the Heinz Center's
State of the Nation's Ecosystems Project
May 2006

THE H. JOHN HEINZ III CENTER FOR
SCIENCE, ECONOMICS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

THE
HEINZ
CENTER

“Data Gaps”

Strategy: Report intentionally was not limited to data already in hand

Outcome: Nearly half of 103 high priority indicators could not be reported

~30% had inadequate data

~15% had inadequate definition

Reaction: Very positive but must set priorities



High Priority Data Gaps

(not in priority order)

1. Area of key habitat elements
2. Landscape pattern analysis
3. Contaminants re human exposure
4. Nitrogen losses
5. Carbon storage
6. At-risk species
7. Non-native species
8. Biological community condition
9. Stream / riparian area condition
10. Groundwater levels



Caveats and Concerns

- **Not given as zero-sum recommendations – do not cut others to fill these gaps.**
 - **New funding should be identified**
- **Isolated improvements were only part of the picture**
 - **Management of overall system is critical**



Monitoring Infrastructure

- 1. The system faces serious challenges to its integrity and effectiveness**
- 2. There are real benefits that can come from integration (strategic and tactical)**
- 3. If it was easy, it would have been done**
- 4. There are ways to move forward**



Urban and Suburban Areas



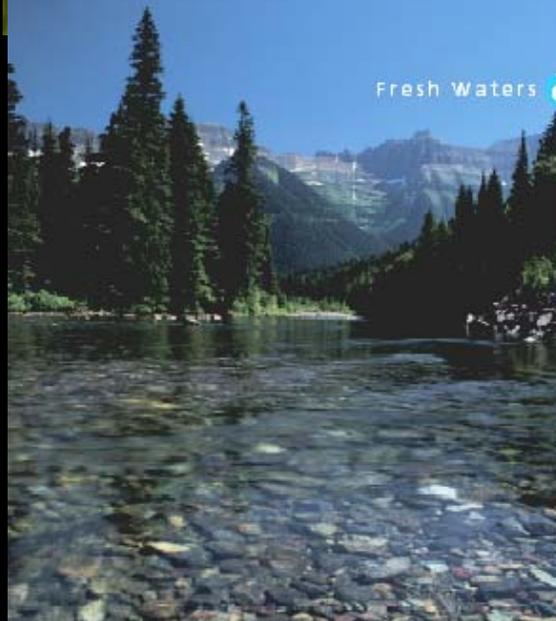
Farmlands



Grasslands and Shrublands



Fresh Waters



Forests



Coasts and Oceans

