

Glossary

Many terms are explained in the Guide to the Data Layers. Additional terms and explanations used are described here.

Anadromous: describes fish that live in the ocean and return to fresh water to spawn.

Assemblage: the set of related organisms that represent a portion of a biological community (e.g., benthic macroinvertebrates).

Benthic macroinvertebrate (BMI): are animals without backbones that live in the substrate of creeks and can be seen with the unaided eye.

Bioassessment: evaluates the condition of plants or animals that reside in water.

Channel: the section of the stream that contains the main flow.

Cobble: medium rocks (2-10 inches in diameter) that are found in a stream bed.

Conductivity: a measure of the ability of a solution to carry an electrical current.

Contaminant: a substance added by humans or natural activities that may, in sufficient concentrations, render the environment unacceptable for biota. The mere presence of these materials is not necessarily harmful.

Crib Wall: a retaining wall made of interlocking concrete or timber sections with earth or gravel fill in between.

Debris Jam: any non-permanent blockage of stream flow. Debris jams can be made of natural or manmade materials.

Dissolved oxygen (DO): oxygen dissolved in water and available for living organisms to use for respiration.

Diversity: the distribution and abundance of different kinds of plant and animal species and communities in a specified area.

Drop Structure: a drop structure is a constructed feature designed to dissipate the energy of a stream in a controlled manner to prevent undesirable erosion. Drop structures can take the form of a long slough with a drop or "waterfall" and constructed pool at the downstream end.

Dumping Area: describes areas that are used to dump large amounts of garbage and other waste such as tires, shopping carts, etc.

Emergent plants: plants rooted underwater, but with their tops extending above the water.

EPT: refers to a group of three sensitive taxa of benthic macroinvertebrates used as indicators

of water quality. EPT stands for: ephemeroptera, plecoptera, and tricoptera.

Ephemeroptera: taxa of benthic macroinvertebrate commonly known as mayflies.

Floating plants: plants that grow free floating, rather than being attached to the stream bed.

Gabions: rocks bound in metal fencing (cages) often used to protect banks from erosion.

Gravel: small rocks (0.1 – 2 inches in diameter) that are found in a stream bed.

GIS: Geographic Information System is a type of database designed to store, manipulate and analyze geographic data.

GPS: Global Positioning System is a term used to describe the network of orbiting satellites that provide time and positional information.

GPS Unit: the GPS unit is a device that receives signals from satellites and can use the signals to determine coordinates on Earth (latitude, longitude).

Habitat: a place where the physical and biological elements of ecosystems supply a suitable environment, and the food, cover, and space resources needed for plant and animal existence.

Impact: a change in the chemical, physical, or biological quality or condition of a water body caused by external sources.

Indicator: plant or animal species, communities, or special habitats with a narrow range of ecological tolerance.

Incised: refers to a deeply cut channel, with steep slopes.

Invasive plants: non-native plant species that spread rapidly and out-compete native plant species for water, nutrients and/or sunlight.

Kick net: a fine mesh net used to collect benthic macroinvertebrates.

Monitoring: the repeated measurement of some parameters to assess the current status and changes over time of the parameters measured.

Natural debris: organic debris from natural sources such as leaf litter, branches, bark, roots, vegetation, etc.

Nonpoint Source Pollution: pollution from many diffuse sources. NPS pollution is caused by rainfall over and through the ground. As the runoff moves, it

Glossary (Continued) and Bibliography

picks up and carries away natural and human-made pollutants, finally depositing them into water.

Nutrients: any substance assimilated by living things that promotes growth. The term is generally applied to nitrogen and phosphorus in wastewater, but is also applied to other essential and trace elements.

Outfall: the pipe through which industrial facilities and wastewater treatment plants discharge their effluent (wastewater) into a water body.

pH: a numerical measure of the hydrogen ion concentration used to indicate the alkalinity or acidity of a substance. Measured on a scale of 1.0 (acidic) to 14.0 (basic); 7.0 is neutral.

Plecoptera: taxa of benthic macroinvertebrate commonly known as stoneflies.

Pollutant: a substance that adversely alters the physical, chemical, or biological properties of the environment.

Protocol: a defined procedure.

Quality Assurance: actions taken to ensure adherence to standards and procedures.

Riffle: shallow area in a stream where water flows swiftly over gravel and rock.

Riparian: of or pertaining to the banks of a body of water.

Riparian zone: the vegetative area on each bank of a body of water. Riparian areas provide a link between the aquatic and terrestrial habitats and often have distinctly different vegetation than adjacent areas.

Riprap: rocks used on an embankment to protect against bank erosion.

Runoff: water that is not absorbed into the ground and flows overland to a drainage.

Salmonids: members of the fish family "Salmonidae," including salmon, trout and chars.

Severe Erosion: describes areas where there is obvious slope failure and erosion.

Shade Cover: the percentage of the sky covered by the canopy, generally vegetation.

Submergent plants: plants that live and grow fully submerged under the water.

Substrate: refers to a surface. This includes the material comprising the stream bed or the surfaces to which plants or animals may attach or live upon.

Taxon (plural taxa): a level of classification within a scientific system that categorizes living organisms based on their physical characteristics. A taxonomic category or group, such as a phylum, order, family,

genus, or species.

Taxonomic key: a quick reference guide used to identify organisms. They are available in varying degrees of complexity and detail.

Tricoptera: taxa of benthic macroinvertebrate commonly known as caddisflies.

Tolerance: the ability to withstand a particular condition, e.g., pollution-tolerant indicates the ability to live in polluted waters.

Undercut: a bank that rises vertically or overhangs the stream.

Watershed: an area of land that drains precipitated waters to a given reference point, typically a confluence with another major creek or large water body.

<http://www.epa.gov/OCEPATERMS/cterms.html>

Modified from US EPA Terms of Environment: Glossary, Abbreviations and Acronyms

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