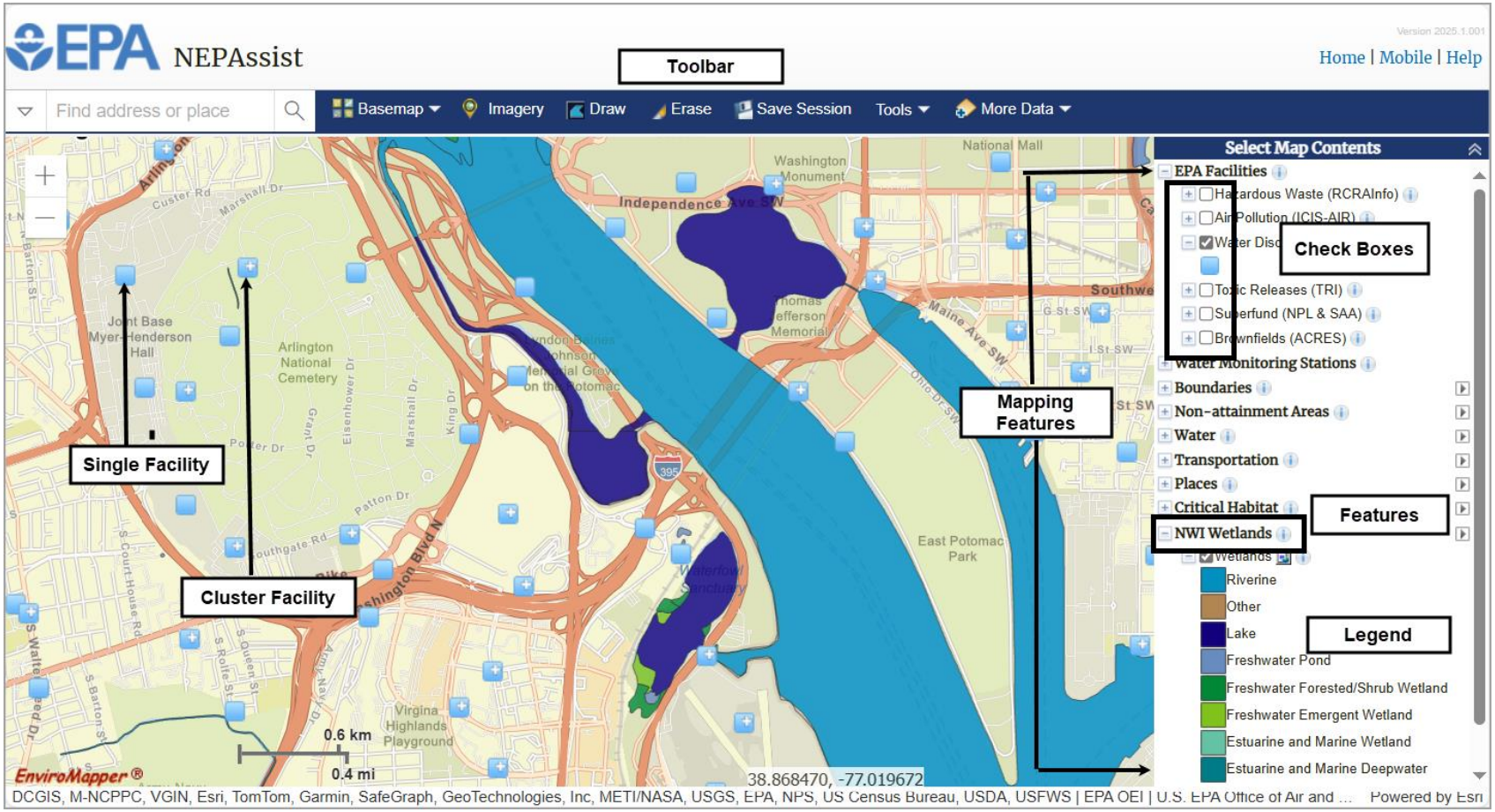
Updated February 6, 2025

NEPAssist Help Document

NEPAssist is a tool that facilitates the environmental review process and project planning in relation to environmental considerations. The web-based application draws environmental data dynamically from EPA's Geographic Information System databases and web services and provides immediate screening of environmental assessment indicators for a user-defined area of interest. These features contribute to a streamlined review process that potentially raises important environmental issues at the earliest stages of project development.

For documentation on available data features, see Description of Map Features.

For help using the tool, see the NEPAssist help categories found below. If you still need assistance, please send an email to nepassisthelp@epa.gov.



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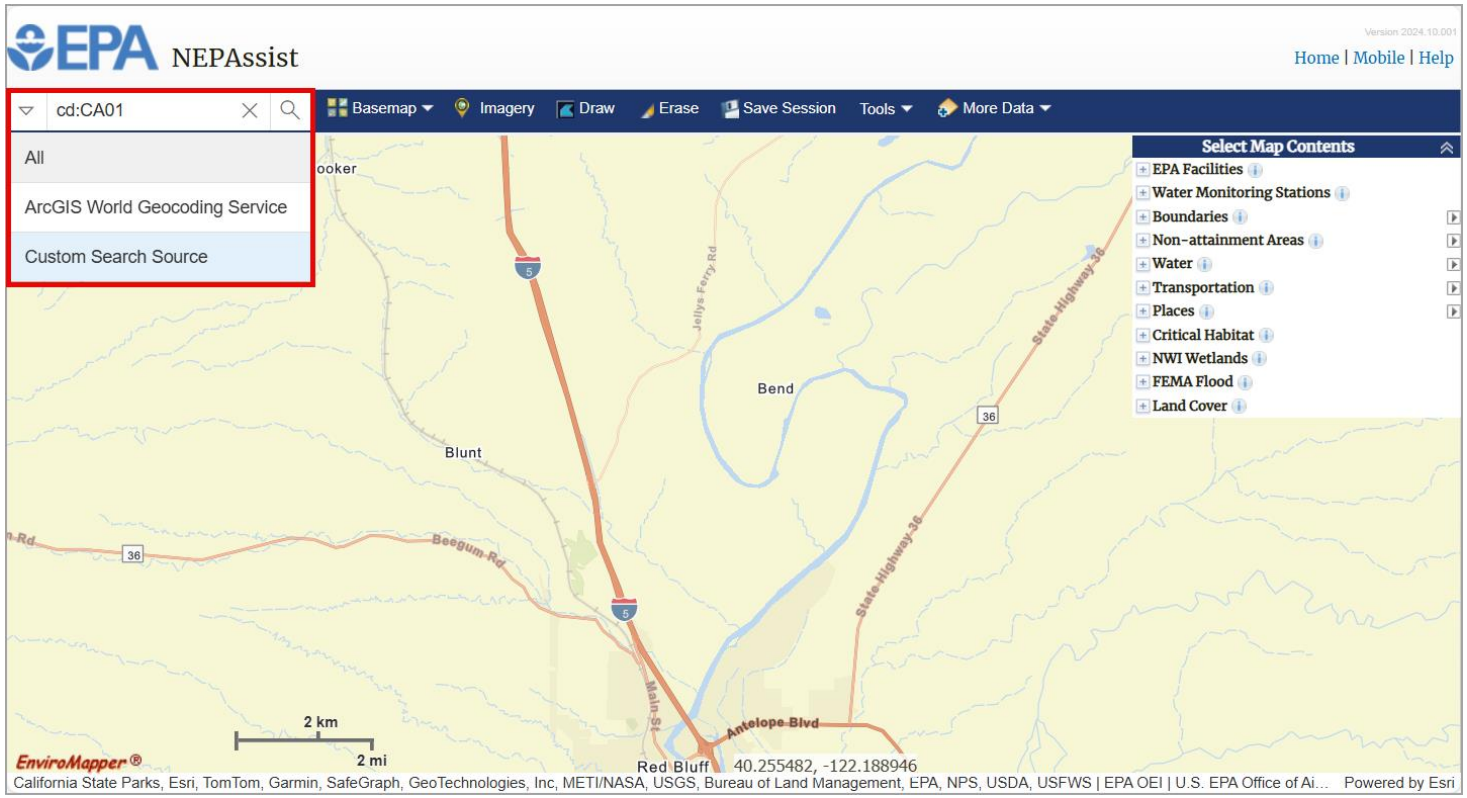
Selecting a Study Area

Once you enter the NEPAssist map, you can use the **search tool** located at the top left of the map to find a study area. Users may choose from many search options such as:

- Address
- Airport
- ZIP Code
- City
- County
- State
- Coordinates
- Congressional District
- Watershed



Search by:

Address

To search using an address, select ArcGIS World Geocoding Service from the left-hand dropdown menu, then enter the address in the search box and click the Search icon. A map centered on the address entered will be displayed. Where possible, try using the following formats for addresses: "Address, city, state" or "Address, city, ZIP".

Airport

To search by airport, select ArcGIS World Geocoding Service from the left-hand dropdown menu, then enter the 3-letter airport code in the search box and click the Search icon. A map centered on the airport selected will be displayed.

ZIP Code

To view spatial data by ZIP Code, select ArcGIS World Geocoding Service from the left-hand dropdown menu, then enter a valid 5-digit United States Postal Service ZIP Code in the search box and click the Search icon. A map of the area for the ZIP Code entered will be displayed.

City/State

To view spatial data by City or State, select ArcGIS World Geocoding Service from the left-hand dropdown menu, then enter the corresponding city name or a United States Postal Service 2-letter state abbreviation in the search box and click the Search icon. A map of the City or State entered will be displayed.

County

To view spatial data by county, select ArcGIS World Geocoding Service from the left-hand dropdown menu, then enter the county and state associated with the county and click the Search icon. A map of the county entered will be displayed.

Coordinates

To search by coordinates, select ArcGIS World Geocoding Service from the left-hand dropdown menu, then type the coordinates of your desired destination into the search box. Enter the coordinates with the latitude first followed by the longitude, using a comma to separate the two. Example: 38.628676,-77.085226. Click the search icon and a map will be displayed.

Congressional District

To search by congressional district, select the Custom Search Source from the left-hand dropdown menu, then type “cd: ” in the search box, followed by the name of the congressional official or the state abbreviation and the 2-digit U.S. congressional district. (Notice there is a space after the “:”.) If you do not know either, just enter the state's abbreviation and suggestions will appear. Then click the congressional district in the suggestion list and a map will be displayed.

Watershed

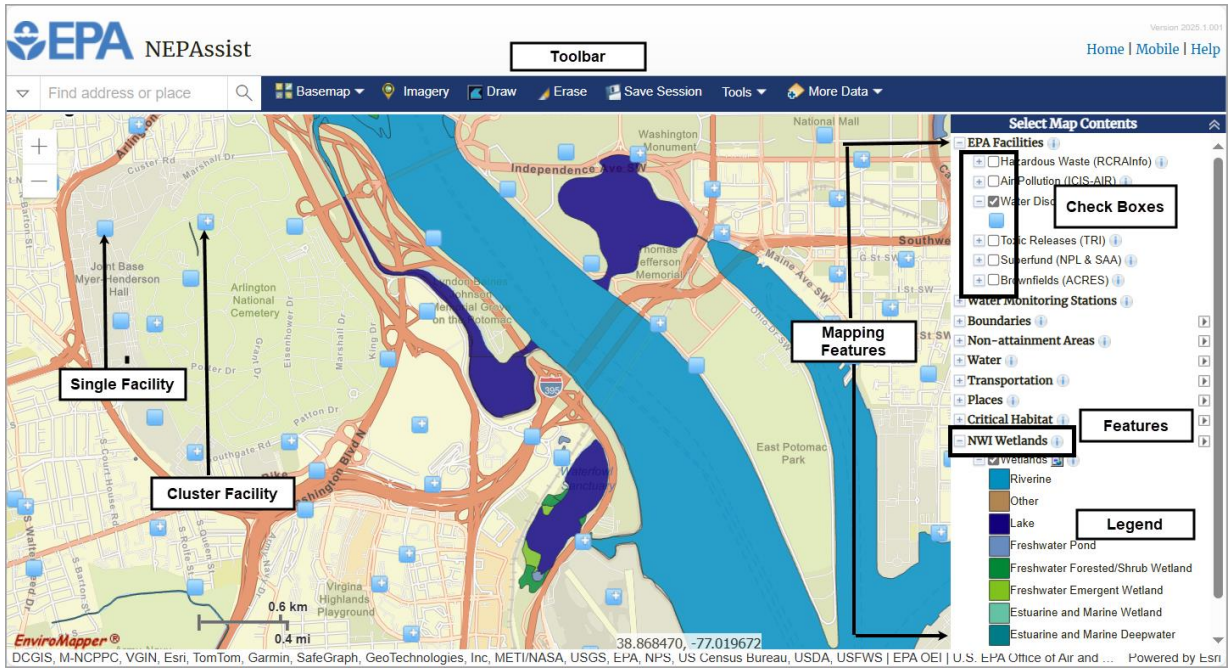
To search by watershed, select the Custom Search Source from the left-hand dropdown menu, then type “watershed: ” in the search box, followed by the 8-digit USGS hydrologic unit code (HUC) or the watershed name. (Notice there is a space after the “:”.) If you do not know either, just enter the state's abbreviation and suggestions will appear. Click the watershed in the suggestion list and a map will be displayed.

Map Features

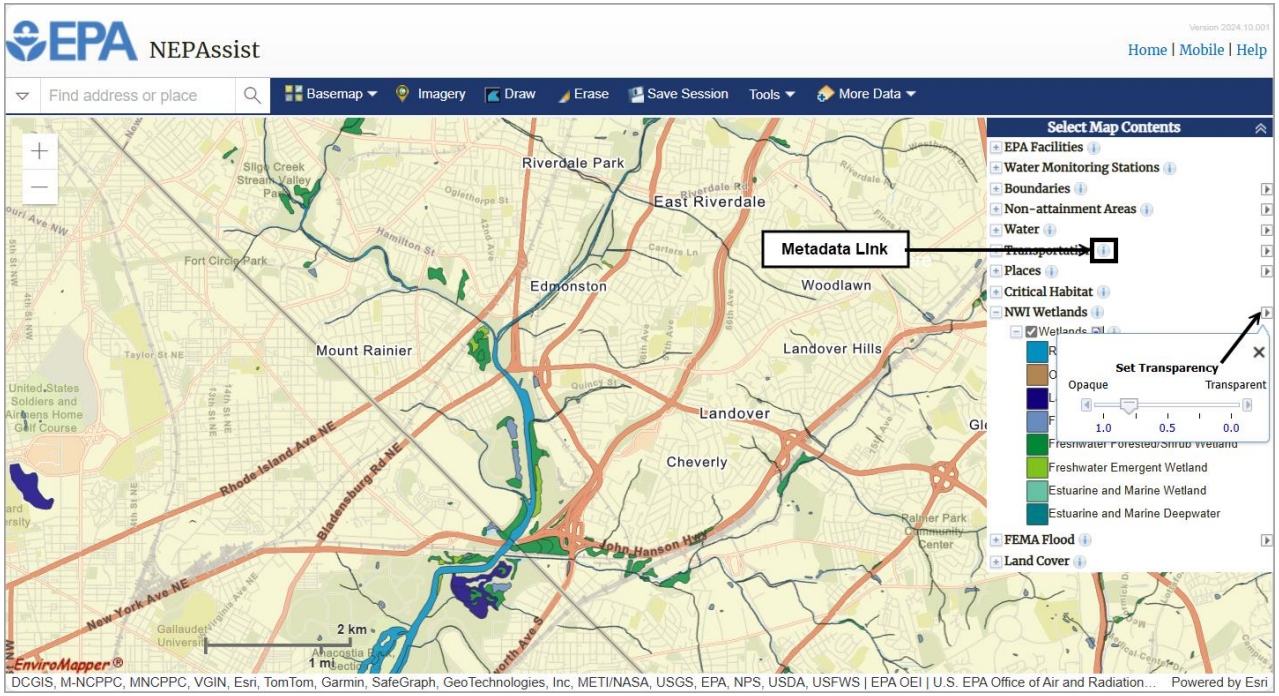
To view map features, first expand the mapping feature under the "Select Map Contents" box, then select the feature you wish to be applied to the map. Several features may be selected at once. You may need to expand the menu further to see the legend for that feature.

Some things to note:

- As you zoom in or out, some features become unavailable because they depend on the scale of the current map window. For example, when you zoom in on a single intersection, Watersheds (HUC8) becomes unavailable. Likewise, when you zoom out to see the whole United States, Watersheds (HUC12) becomes unavailable. When this happens, the option under "Select Map Contents" will be disabled and the feature will not be displayed on the map, even if it was selected before you zoomed in or out.
- Also, as you zoom out, facilities that are close together become clustered. When you mouse over them, you will see a list of sites in the bunch and as you zoom in, the sites will begin to separate.



- Each mapping layer is supported by metadata that can be viewed by clicking on the associated ⓘ button to the right of every layer.
- Many of the mapping layers' transparency can be adjusted to allow the user to view both the layer information and the underlying map.



Basemaps and Imagery

Basemaps

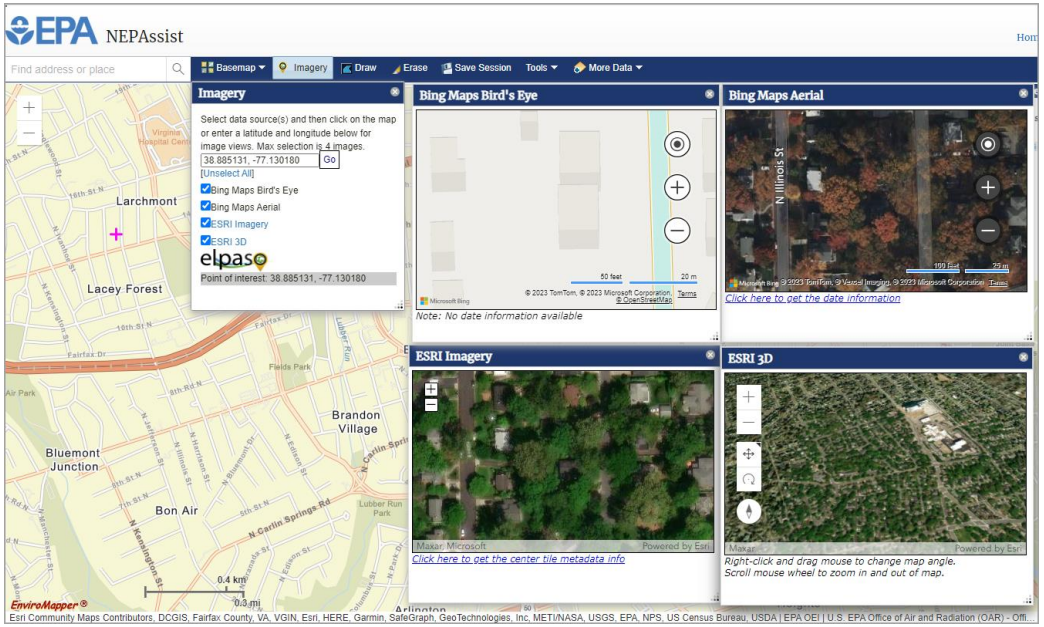
Users can choose a basemap to display on the map by clicking on the Basemap icon located on the top toolbar. The Streets view is the default option.

Additional Imagery

To view other imagery available for a specific point, click on the Imagery icon located at the top of the toolbar on the map.

To select a point for additional imagery:

1. Select the types of imagery you would like to view.
2. Either select a point by clicking on the map or enter a latitude and longitude in the search box available and click Go.



Identifying Map Features

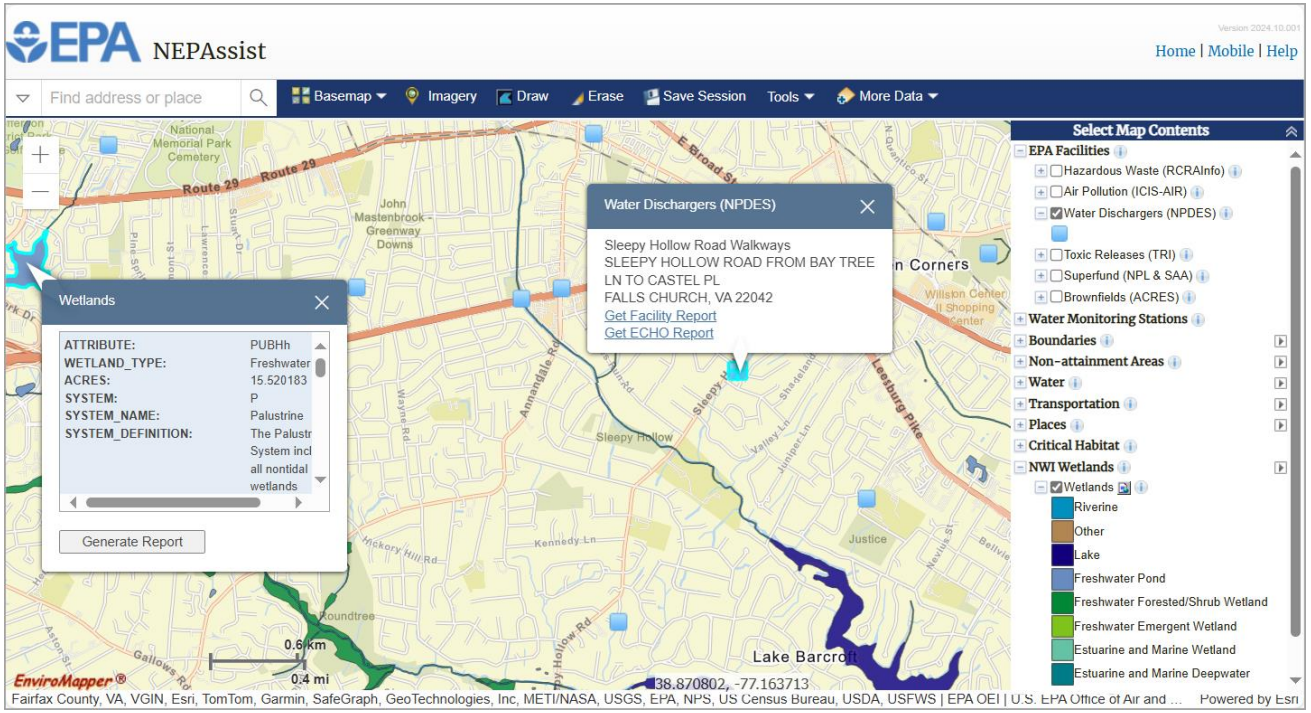
Data Descriptions

NEPAssist draws and displays environmental data from many locations and sources to enable users to easily access this information in one place. To view additional information on the data layer features available in the map, click on the ⓘ button, which displays basic descriptions for the data and links to their sources. For a listing of all the available data features, see Description of Map Features.

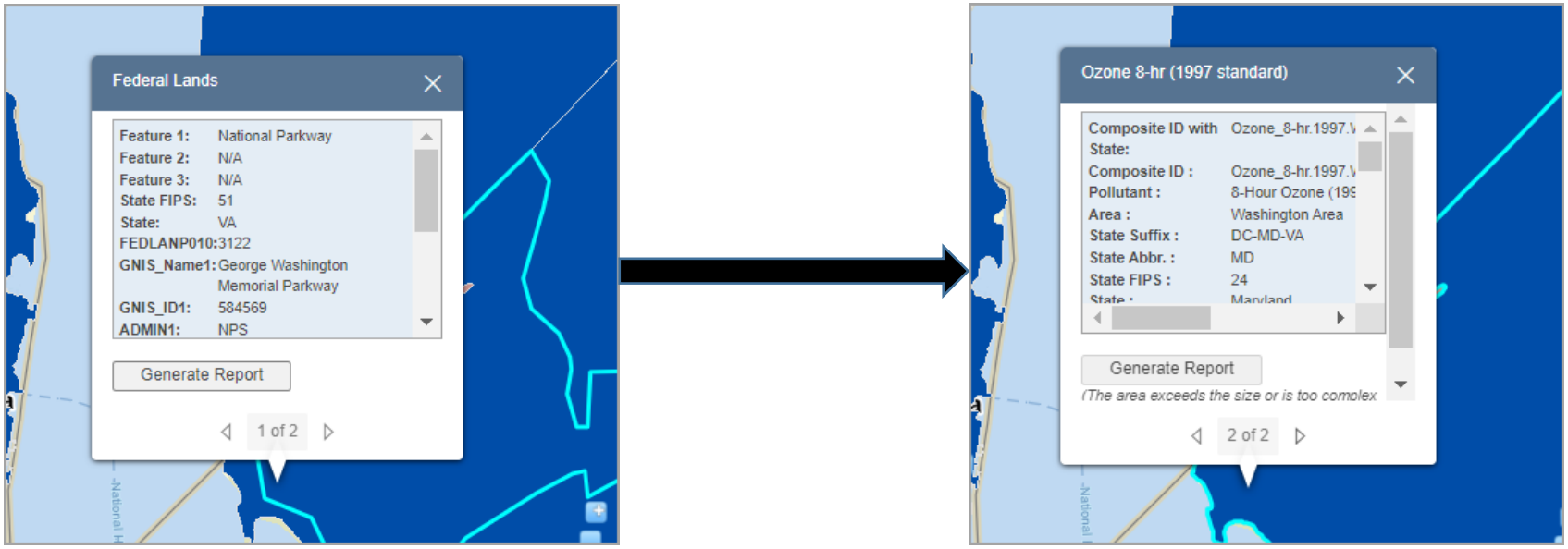
Identifying Features

Depending on the dataset, you can identify map features in two different ways:

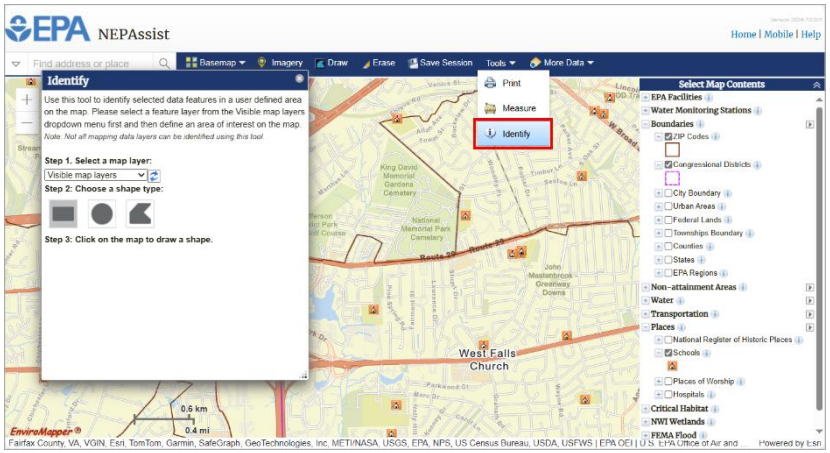
1. To identify features for mapping layers, simply click on the feature you are interested in to view additional information on that feature. Some of the features contain hyperlinks to additional reports and documentation.



When multiple mapping features are identified, users can scroll through and view the applicable features by clicking on the arrows located at the bottom of the attributes box.

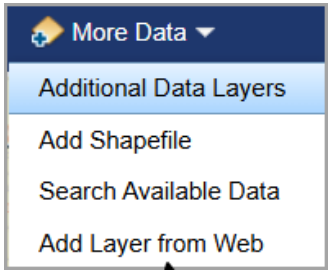


2. To identify selected data features in a user-defined area on the map, use the Identify tool. Make sure the appropriate layers are selected for the feature you wish to identify on the map. Then select the layer from the dropdown menu and define your area of interest on the map.



Adding Data

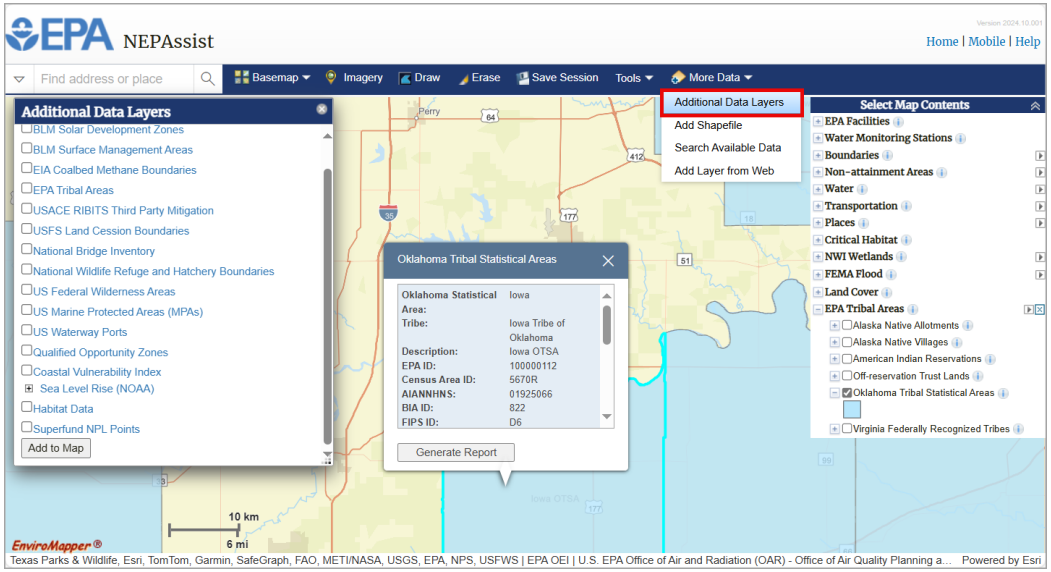
Users can add additional publicly available data to NEPAssist on the fly by selecting from the options under the “More Data” dropdown button.



Additional Data Layers

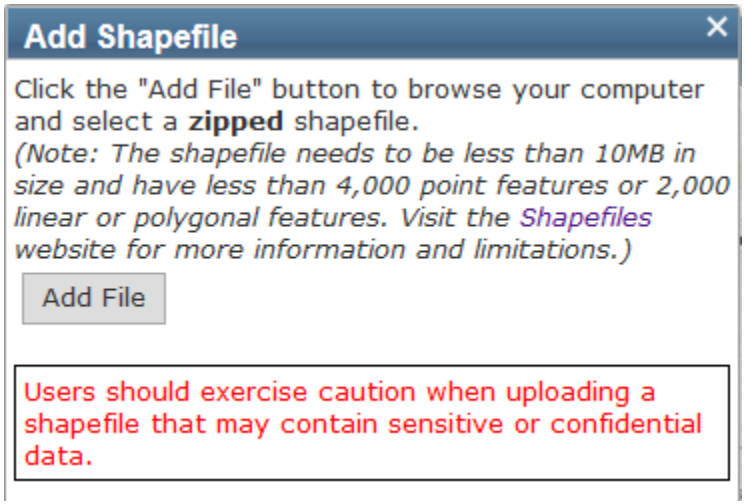
Users can add additional layers from the list by following these steps:

1. Select the “Additional Data Layers” option under “More Data”.
2. Select the data layer that you would like added to the map contents.
3. Click the “Add to Map” button.
4. Once the data appears in the Select Map Contents section, turn on and off the appropriate layer features.
5. Click on the features to see more detailed information.



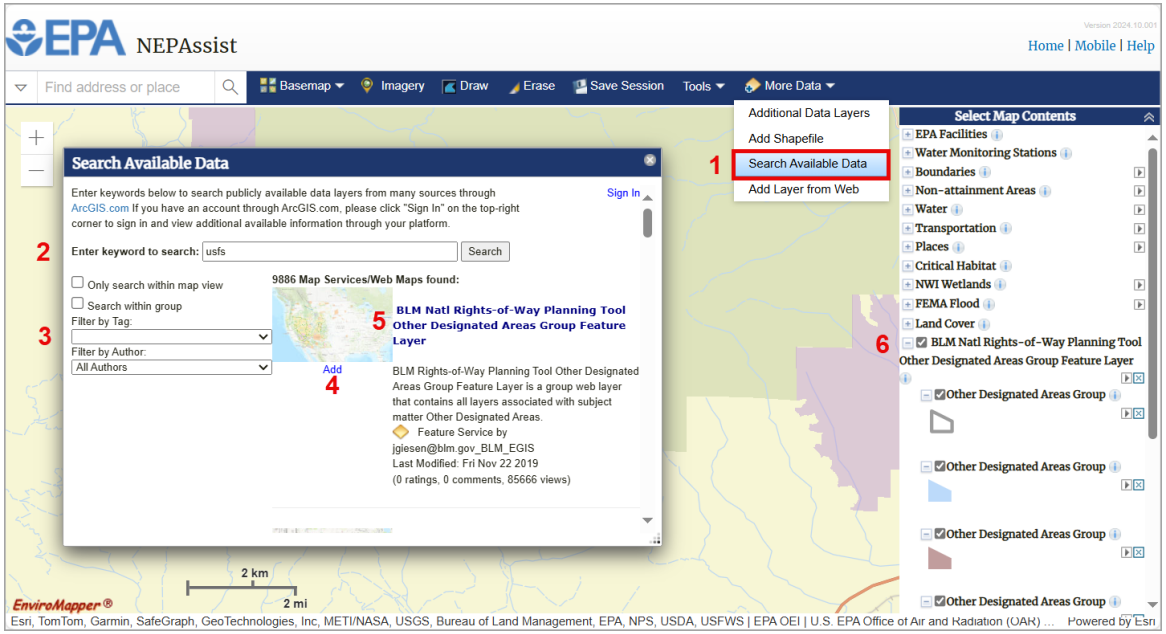
Add Shapefile

The “Add Shapefile” option can be used to add a saved shapefile from a user’s computer. When the file is selected from the computer, the layer will be added in the Select Map Contents panel. Please note that users should exercise caution when uploading a shapefile that may contain sensitive or confidential data.



Search Available Data

Users can search ArcGIS.com and add publicly available data by:

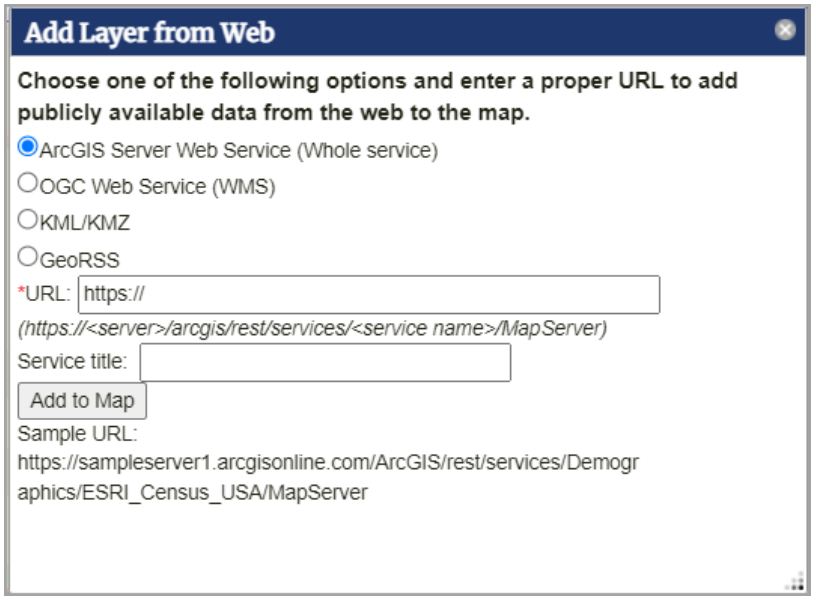


1. Select the “Search Available Data” option under “More Data”.
2. Enter keywords to search publicly available data on ArcGIS.com.*
3. Filter the results by “tag” and/or “author”.
4. Click the “Add” button below the feature you would like to add to the map.
5. Click on the title of the feature if you would like to see the metadata associated with that feature.
6. Once the feature is added, it will appear, along with the legend, at the bottom of the Select Map Contents panel where users can turn on and off the available features.

** Users with accounts through ArcGIS.com can sign in to their account to access additional data available through their platform by clicking the “Sign In” button located at the top right of the Search Available Data window.*

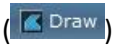
Add Layer from Web

The “Add Layer from Web” option can be used to add data from a map service on the web. When users click the “Add to Map” button, the layer will be added in the Select Map Contents panel.



Defining a Report Area

You can draw an area and then generate a detailed environmental report for that area. Using the Draw tool, you can draw a point, line, area, or rectangle. You can also specify a buffer area radius (e.g., go 1 mile out in all directions) for which the report will be generated. (*Note: You need to change the buffer before you generate the report or the default radius will be used.*)

Start by clicking the Draw (

) button in the toolbar at the top of the map. You can draw a point, line, area, or rectangle. You may also enter your own coordinates if you know them. (See graphic below.)

To start with a point, click the ( ) button.

1. Click a point on the map that you want to define. Give it a name and a description (optional).
2. You can specify a radius around the point you want to include in the reports by entering a value for the buffer. The default is 0.5 miles.

To draw a line, click the ( ) button.

1. Click on the map two or more times to draw a line. For each click on the map, a corner or vertex is added and the line can change direction. Double-click to end the drawing. Give it a name and a description (optional).
2. You can specify a radius around the line you want to include in the reports by entering a value for the buffer. The default is 0.5 miles.

To draw an area, click the ( ) button.

1. For each click, a vertex is added. When you are ready, double-click to complete the polygon. You must have at least three vertices. Give the shape a name and a description (optional).
2. You can specify a radius around the area you want to include in the reports by entering a value for the buffer. The default is 0.0 miles.

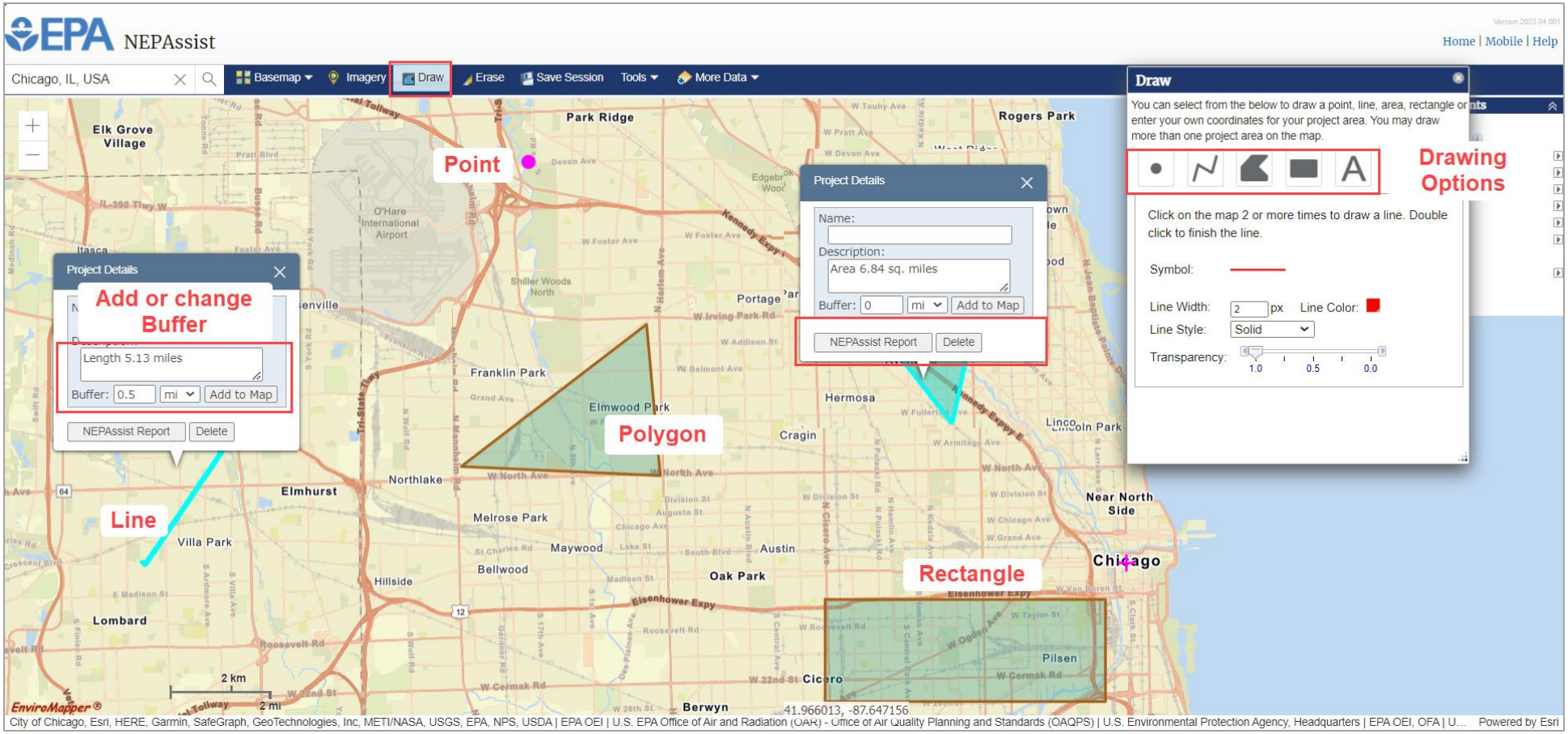
To draw a rectangle, click the ( ) button.

1. Hold down the left-mouse button and drag on the map; release the button to end the drawing. Give the shape a name and a description (optional).
2. You can specify a radius around the area you want to include in the reports by entering a value for the buffer. The default is 0.0 miles.

To enter your own coordinates, click the (A) button.

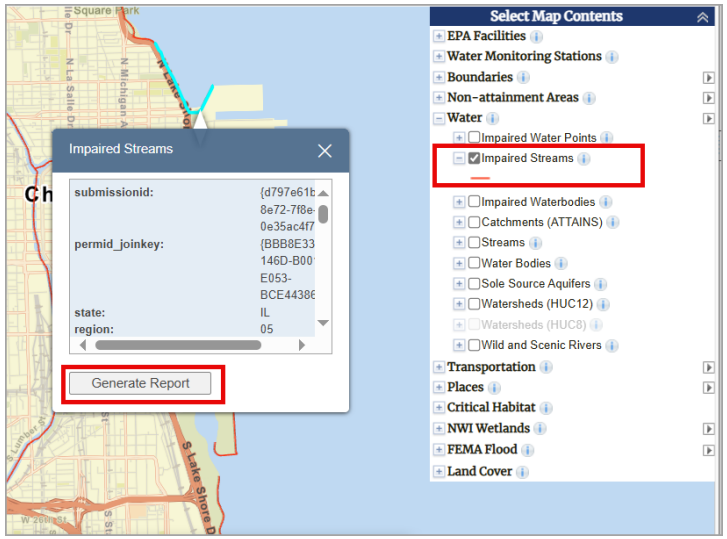
1. Enter your own coordinates in the text box. The data values must be comma-delimited Latitude and Longitude (in that order) as decimal degrees, then click “Add to Map”. Give the coordinates a name and a description (optional).
2. You can specify a radius around the area you want to include in the reports by entering a value for the buffer. The default is 0.5 miles.

When you click on a defined report area, you will see two more options in addition to the buffer setting: NEPAssist Report and Delete. Delete will remove the digitized feature from the map. NEPAssist Report will generate the reports.



Using existing boundaries of a map feature:

Users can generate a report based on an existing boundary of a map feature.



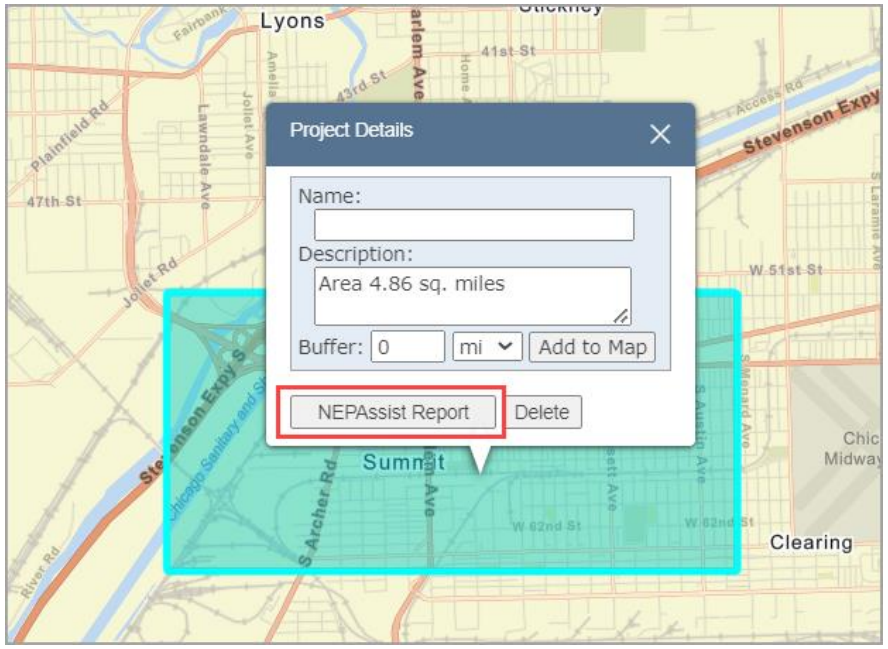
Turn on the mapping layer in which you would like to generate a report.

1. Click on the associated feature, then click “Generate Report”.
2. Give the shape a name and a description (optional).
3. You can specify a radius around the area you want to include in the reports by entering a value for the buffer.

Note: You cannot generate a report from the EPA Facilities points or the Water Monitoring Stations points.

NEPAssist Report

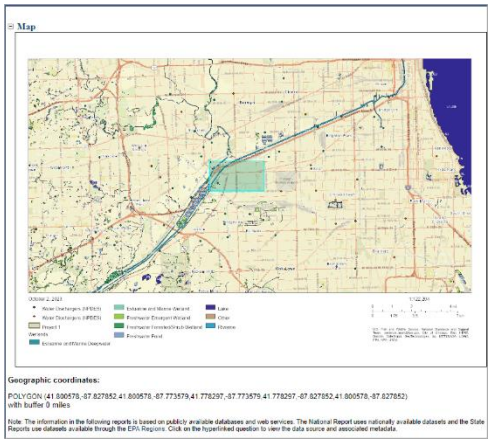
To generate a report using NEPAssist, you must first draw your project area or select an existing feature boundary on the map. For more information on drawing your project area, see Defining a Report Area. Once you have drawn your project area or selected an existing feature, established a buffer and given it a name, click on the drawn area to show the Project Details window. From there you can click the "NEPAssist Report" button located in the Project Details window.



Generating a Report

Once you click on the "NEPAssist Report" button, a report will be generated based on environmental data available specific to your project area. Information in the report will be displayed as a series of questions with "yes" or "no" answers based on the location of your project area. The report questions are drawn from publicly available datasets available through EPA databases and web services. The National Report is drawn from nationally available datasets and the State Reports are drawn from datasets available through the EPA Regions. Click on a hyperlinked question to view the data source and associated metadata. If your project area crosses multiple states, NEPAssist will provide a consolidated report containing available information on the multi-state project area.

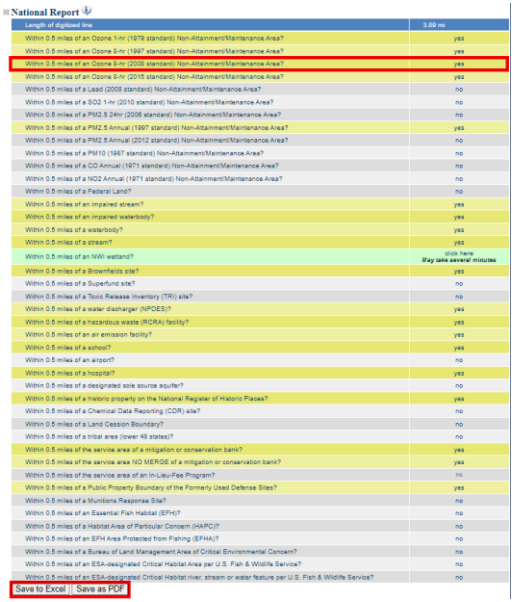
Map and legend of project area:



National Report:

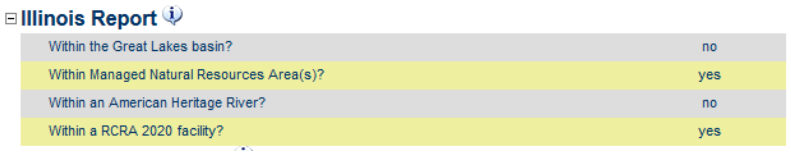
Click on any of the report questions to view the associated metadata or click on any “yes” or “no” response to get additional information regarding that particular question.

Users can also save the NEPAssist report in Excel and print a PDF of the report. For more information on printing, see the section on Printing.



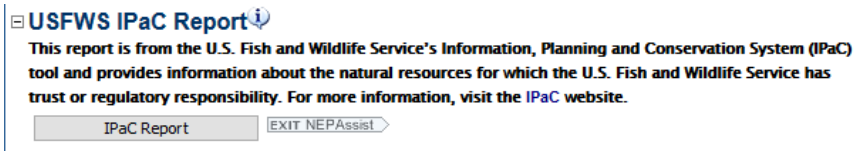
State Report:

Click on any of the report questions to view the associated metadata or click on any “yes” or “no” response to get additional information regarding particular questions.



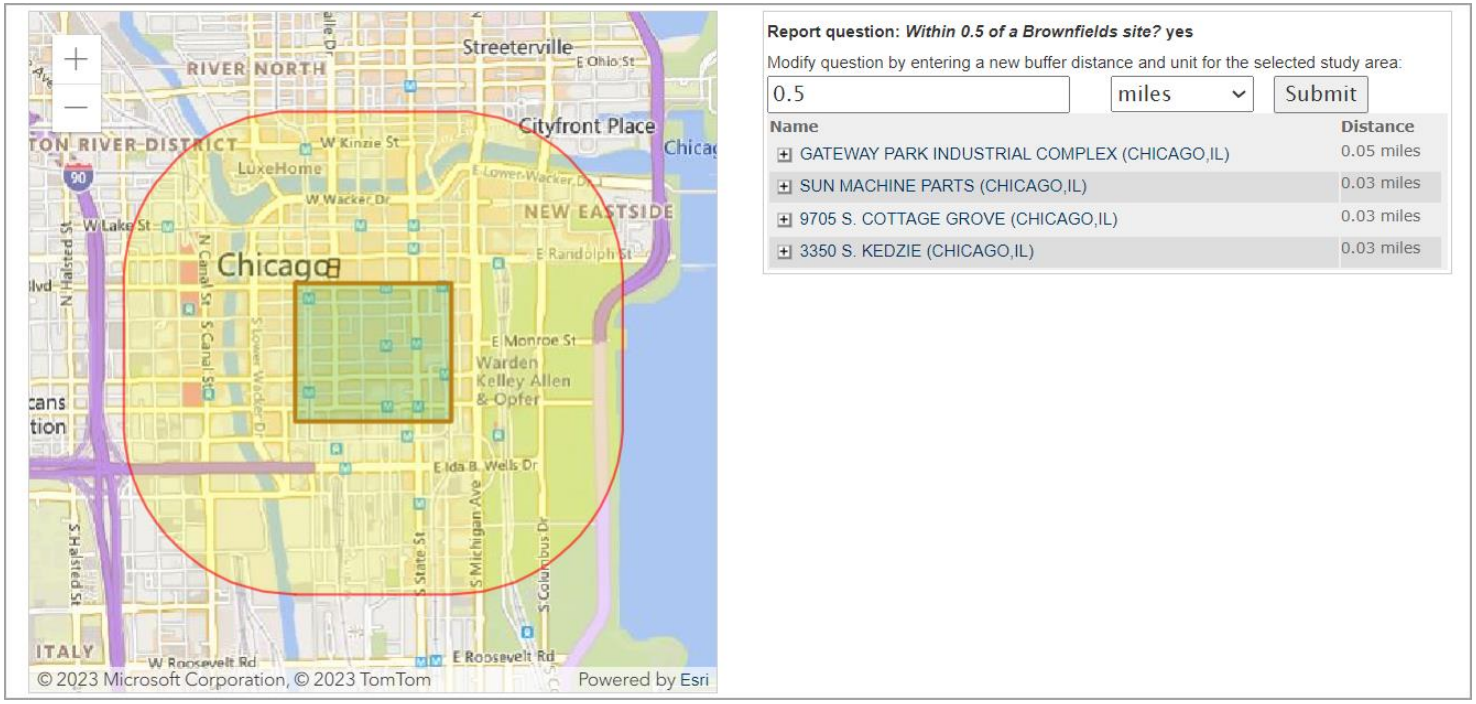
USFWS IPaC Report:

This report is from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Information, Planning and Conservation System (IPaC) tool and provides information about threatened and endangered species.



Additional Report Data

To gain additional information regarding particular questions, please click on the “yes” or “no” answer associated with that question. In a separate window, the project area map and selected question will appear with additional information, including the ability to change the buffer around the point, line, or area you included in the initial report.



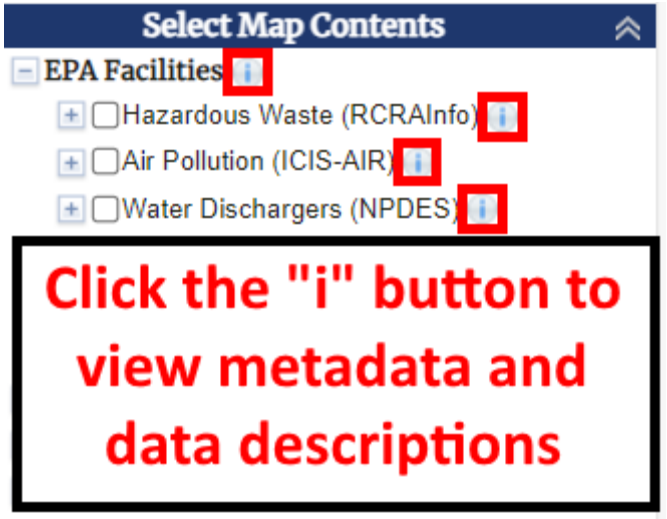
For example: *If based on your project area the initial answer to "your project area is within a Brownfields site" was yes, you can click on “yes” and view additional information such as the name and distance of the Brownfields site within your project area as well as change the buffer around your project area (to .5 miles in this example) to see additional Brownfields sites if applicable.*

Understanding the Data

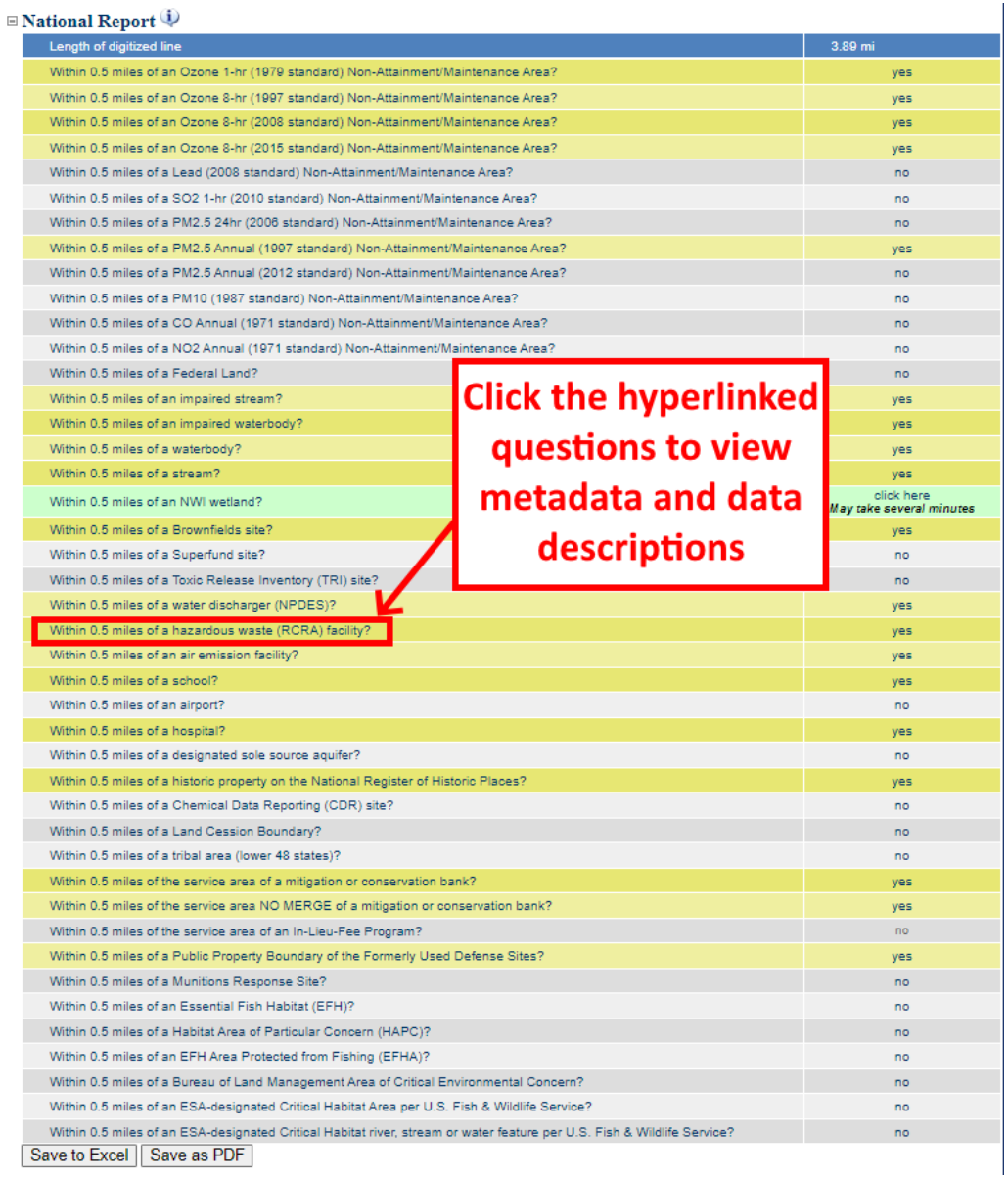
The NEPAssist application draws and displays environmental data from many locations and sources to provide users with easy access to this information in one place.

Metadata

Each mapping layer and report question in the NEPAssist application is supported by metadata that can be viewed in the data description window.



Metadata describes the contents and context of the data files, including the source, the date the data was generated, accuracy, and projections. When providing references for information accessed in NEPAssist, cite the data file and corresponding metadata. Do not cite the NEPAssist application as a reference, because data layers within NEPAssist are continually updated and refreshed when more current data is available.



For example: If you have a hazardous waste site in your project area, cite the EPA Envirofacts database, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act Information (RCRAInfo) System, and the last data retrieval date from the EPA source database.

System	Retrieved	Posted	Update Frequency
Assessment, Cleanup and Redevelopment Exchange System (ACRES)	10/02/2023	10/02/2023	Updated Weekly
Biennial Reporting (BR)	08/23/2023	08/23/2023	Updated Monthly
Facility Registry System (FRS)	10/02/2023	10/02/2023	Updated Weekly
Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program (GHGRP)	10/01/2022	10/01/2022	2021 data is now available
Integrated Compliance Information System (ICIS)	08/18/2023	08/23/2023	Updated Weekly
Integrate			
Informati			
Locationa			
National			data
Next Gen			
Permit Compliance System (PCS)	11/11/2012	11/12/2012	Final Data Update Complete. *
RadNet, formerly Environmental Radiation Ambient Monitoring System	09/29/2023	09/29/2023	
Resource Conservation and Recovery Act Information (RCRAInfo)	08/23/2023	08/23/2023	Updated Monthly
Safe Drinking Water Information System (SDWIS)	07/13/2023	07/14/2023	Updated Quarterly
Superfund Enterprise Management System (SEMS)	10/02/2023	10/02/2023	Updated Monthly
TRI Explorer	05/18/2023	05/24/2023	2021 data is now available
Toxics Release Inventory (TRI)	09/20/2023	09/26/2023	TRI 2022 data is now available

Hazardous Waste (RCRAInfo)

Description: Hazardous waste information contained in the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act Information (RCRAInfo) includes an inventory on all generators, transporters, treaters, storers, and disposers of hazardous waste that are required to provide information about their activities.

Source: EPA's Envirofacts

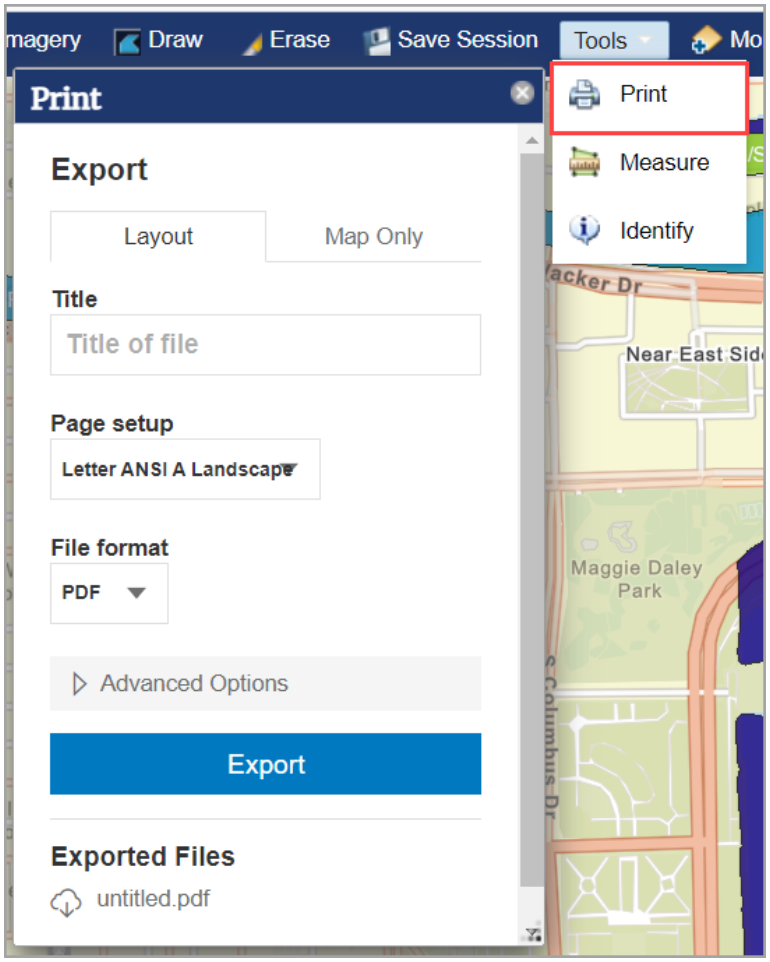
Date: Refer to the Envirofacts Data Update for RCRAInfo

Printing

Users can print the map and the report available in NEPAssist.

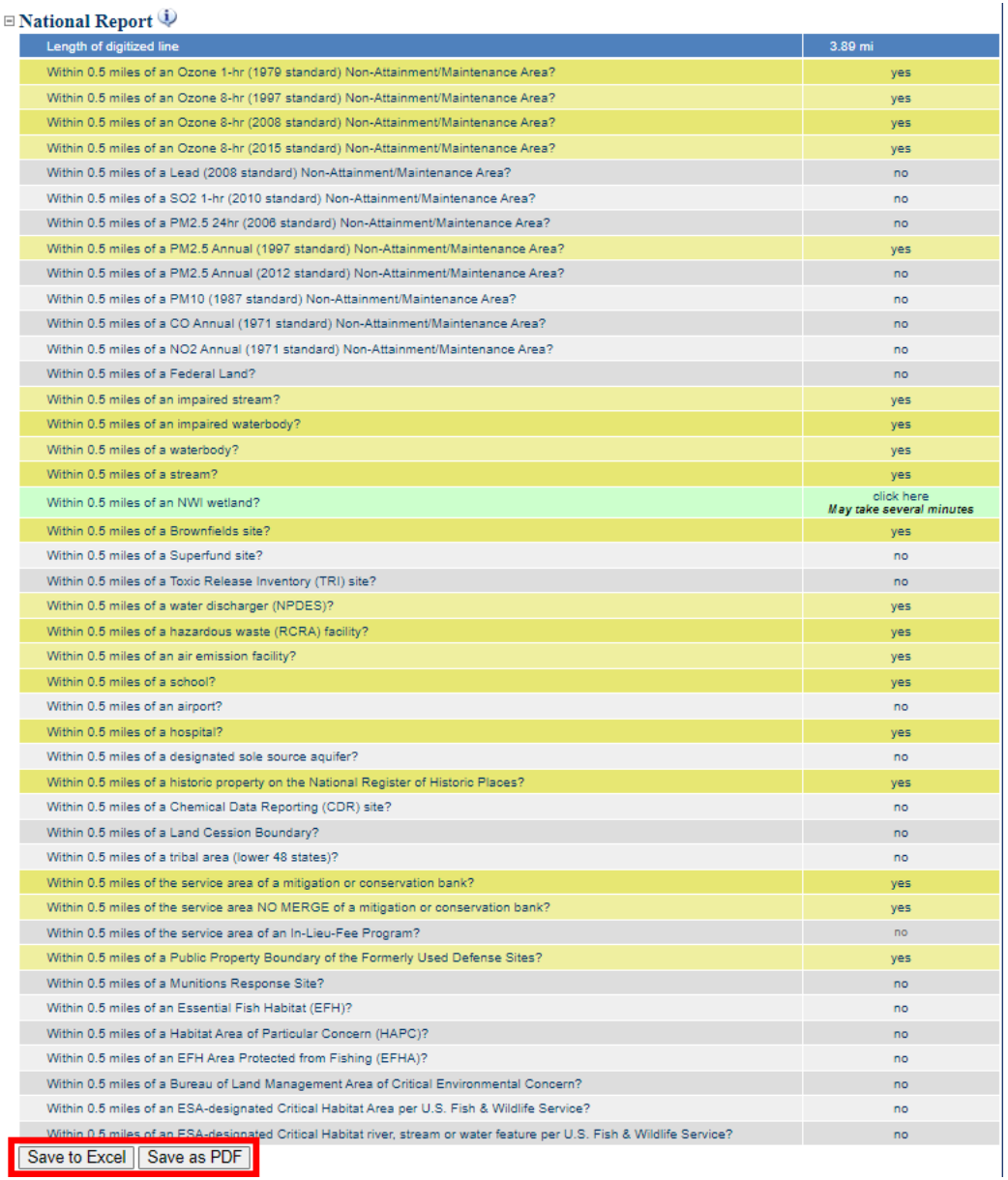
Print Map

Click on the “Print” option located under Tools on the toolbar to print your NEPAssist map. The Print window allows you to select file format. To print a map and its associated legend, select the Layout option. To print only the map, select the Map Only option.



Print Report

Users can print and/or save their report as an Excel file or PDF by clicking “Save to Excel” or “Save to PDF” on the NEPAssist report.



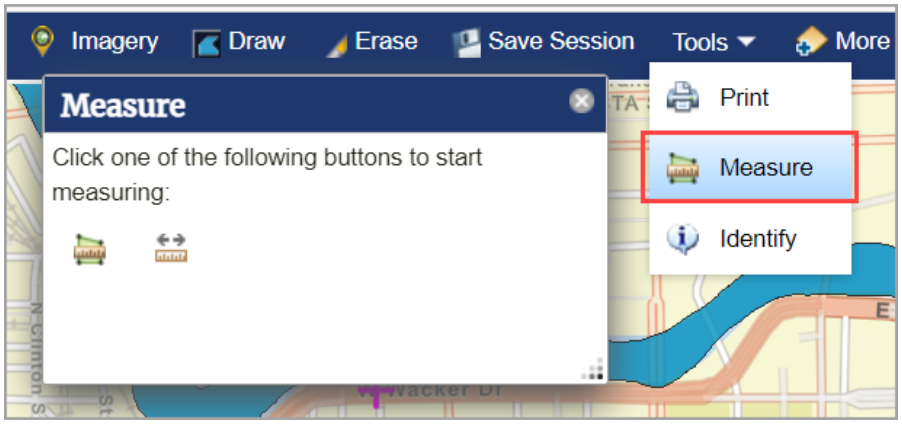
National Report

Length of digitized line	3.89 mi
Within 0.5 miles of an Ozone 1-hr (1979 standard) Non-Attainment/Maintenance Area?	yes
Within 0.5 miles of an Ozone 8-hr (1997 standard) Non-Attainment/Maintenance Area?	yes
Within 0.5 miles of an Ozone 8-hr (2008 standard) Non-Attainment/Maintenance Area?	yes
Within 0.5 miles of an Ozone 8-hr (2015 standard) Non-Attainment/Maintenance Area?	yes
Within 0.5 miles of a Lead (2008 standard) Non-Attainment/Maintenance Area?	no
Within 0.5 miles of a SO2 1-hr (2010 standard) Non-Attainment/Maintenance Area?	no
Within 0.5 miles of a PM2.5 24hr (2006 standard) Non-Attainment/Maintenance Area?	no
Within 0.5 miles of a PM2.5 Annual (1997 standard) Non-Attainment/Maintenance Area?	yes
Within 0.5 miles of a PM2.5 Annual (2012 standard) Non-Attainment/Maintenance Area?	no
Within 0.5 miles of a PM10 (1987 standard) Non-Attainment/Maintenance Area?	no
Within 0.5 miles of a CO Annual (1971 standard) Non-Attainment/Maintenance Area?	no
Within 0.5 miles of a NO2 Annual (1971 standard) Non-Attainment/Maintenance Area?	no
Within 0.5 miles of a Federal Land?	no
Within 0.5 miles of an impaired stream?	yes
Within 0.5 miles of an impaired waterbody?	yes
Within 0.5 miles of a waterbody?	yes
Within 0.5 miles of a stream?	yes
Within 0.5 miles of an NWI wetland?	click here *May take several minutes*
Within 0.5 miles of a Brownfields site?	yes
Within 0.5 miles of a Superfund site?	no
Within 0.5 miles of a Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) site?	no
Within 0.5 miles of a water discharger (NPDES)?	yes
Within 0.5 miles of a hazardous waste (RCRA) facility?	yes
Within 0.5 miles of an air emission facility?	yes
Within 0.5 miles of a school?	yes
Within 0.5 miles of an airport?	no
Within 0.5 miles of a hospital?	yes
Within 0.5 miles of a designated sole source aquifer?	no
Within 0.5 miles of a historic property on the National Register of Historic Places?	yes
Within 0.5 miles of a Chemical Data Reporting (CDR) site?	no
Within 0.5 miles of a Land Cession Boundary?	no
Within 0.5 miles of a tribal area (lower 48 states)?	no
Within 0.5 miles of the service area of a mitigation or conservation bank?	yes
Within 0.5 miles of the service area NO MERGE of a mitigation or conservation bank?	yes
Within 0.5 miles of the service area of an In-Lieu-Fee Program?	no
Within 0.5 miles of a Public Property Boundary of the Formerly Used Defense Sites?	yes
Within 0.5 miles of a Munitions Response Site?	no
Within 0.5 miles of an Essential Fish Habitat (EFH)?	no
Within 0.5 miles of a Habitat Area of Particular Concern (HAPC)?	no
Within 0.5 miles of an EFH Area Protected from Fishing (EFHA)?	no
Within 0.5 miles of a Bureau of Land Management Area of Critical Environmental Concern?	no
Within 0.5 miles of an ESA-designated Critical Habitat Area per U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service?	no
Within 0.5 miles of an ESA-designated Critical Habitat river, stream or water feature per U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service?	no

Save to Excel | Save as PDF

Measure

The Measure tool allows users to measure geographic distance on the map.



To measure an area, click the ( ) button.

1. Area Units of Sq Miles will appear on the Measure window. A dropdown menu with all unit options is located next to the default units. Select the desired unit.
2. Click on the map to begin drawing the polygon. Continue clicking to add to the polygon and double-click to complete the drawing.
3. The area measurement will appear in the Measure window.
4. To remove the drawing, click the Erase icon in the toolbar. Click on the map to begin a new drawing, or close the Measure tool.

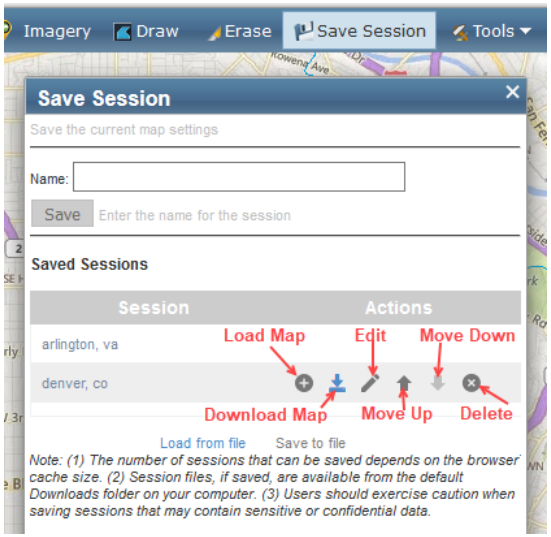
To measure a line, click the ( ) button.

1. Distance Units of Miles will appear on the Measure window. A dropdown menu with all unit options is located next to the default units. Select the desired unit.
2. Click anywhere on the map display to begin a line. Click to add points along the line or to add angles to the line. Double-click to complete the line.
3. The distance measurement will appear in the Measure window.
4. To remove the drawing, click the Erase icon in the toolbar. Click on the map to begin a new drawing, or close the Measure tool.

Save Session

The Save Session tool allows users to save the current map settings. Enter a unique name to save the current map settings. The available saved sessions will appear for upload, download, and further edit. Consider saving your available sessions to your computer using the "Save to file" setting to avoid losing your current saved sessions.

Users can save sessions by:

1. Click the "Save Session" button on the toolbar.
2. Enter the name for the session.
3. Click the "Save" button. This will add the session to the list of saved sessions.
4. From the Saved Sessions list, click the session name to see the options:
    i. Load map – click this to load the saved session.
    ii. Download map – click this to save the session to your computer.
    iii. Edit – click this to edit the session name.
    iv. Move up/Move down – click these to adjust the order of saved sessions in the list.
    v. Delete – click this to remove the saved session.
    vi. Load from file – click this to load sessions that have been saved to your computer.
    vii. Save to file – click this to save the saved session(s) to your computer.

Notes: (1) The number of sessions that can be saved depends on the browser cache size. (2) Session files, if saved to file, are available from the default Downloads folder on your computer. (3) Users should exercise caution when saving sessions that may contain sensitive or confidential data.