



## Marshes



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## Marshes

Marshes are wetlands frequently or continually inundated with water, characterized by emergent soft-stemmed vegetation adapted to saturated soil conditions. Marshes receive most of their water from surface water, and many marshes are also fed by groundwater. Nutrients are plentiful, leading to an abundance of plant and animal life.

An emergent marsh is a shallow-water wetland along the shore of a lake or stream, characterized by emergent narrow- and broad-leaved herbs and grass-like plants as well as floating-leaved herbs.

The presence of marshes in a watershed helps to reduce damage caused by floods by slowing and storing flood water. As water moves slowly through a marsh, sediment and other pollutants settle to the substrate, or floor of the marsh. Marsh vegetation and microorganisms also use excess nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus that can otherwise pollute surface water.



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