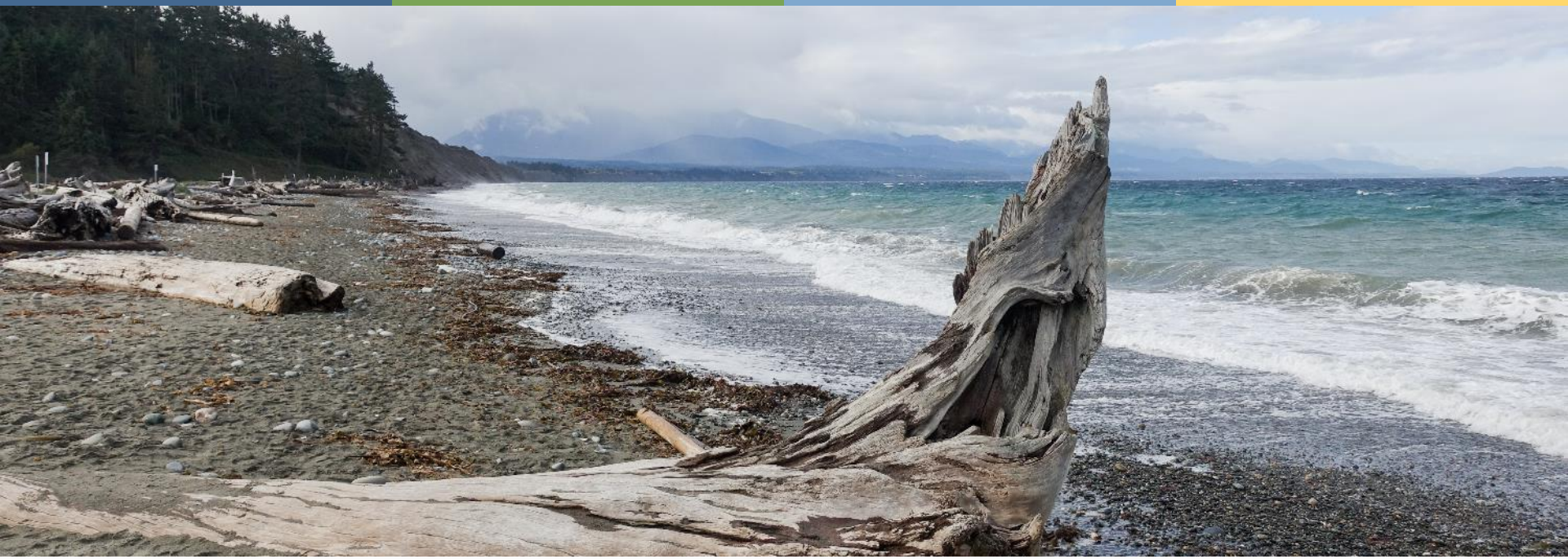


The Washington Tool for Online Ratings: Getting into the WATOR

DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY
State of Washington

Neil Molstad, Wetland Specialist, NWRO

SWS PNW Chapter Conference November 3, 2022

What is WATOR?

- WATOR = WAshington Tool for Online Rating
- Developed by Ecology – It lives online.

Why was WATOR developed?

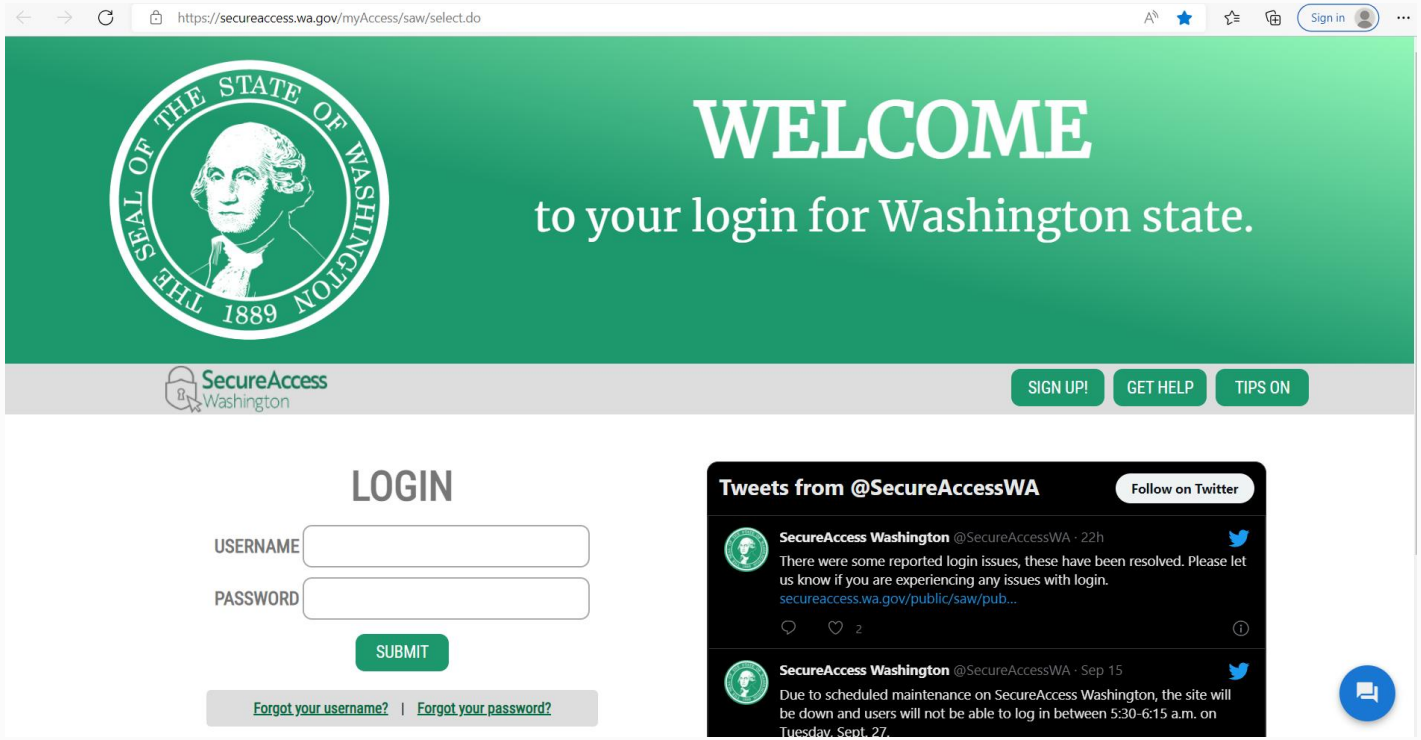
- The Washington State Wetland Rating System is used to evaluate wetland functions in most of Washington State.
- Access to various web-based resources is needed to properly use the Rating System.
- The Rating System also requires supporting figures.
- WATOR is a “one-stop shop” that contains everything needed to produce a complete wetland rating.
- Ecology is not requiring the use of WATOR, but other entities (local jurisdictions) might.

WATOR Development Timeline

- 2018: Ecology received an EPA grant to develop WATOR. We reached out to find interested testers.
- 2020 – 2022: The Test environment of WATOR has been available, and testing and refinement of the tool has occurred.
- Late 2022 – Early 2023: The production version of WATOR will be available to the public.
- Although the production version of WATOR is not available yet, you can request access to the WATOR Test environment.

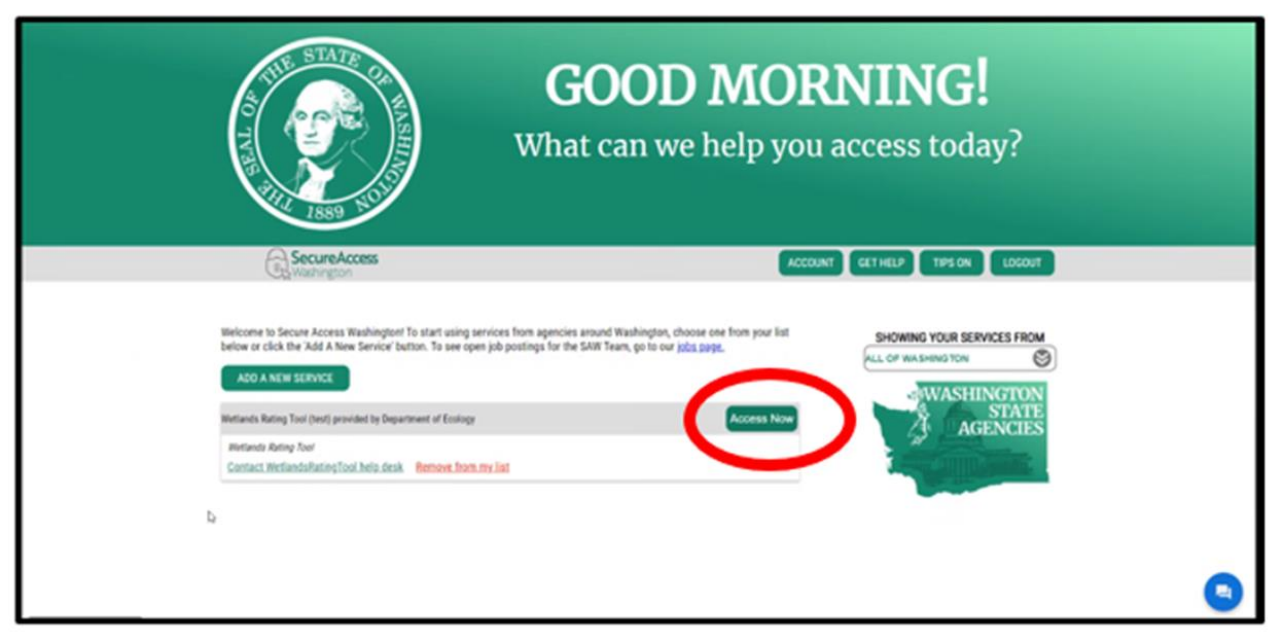
How do I access WATOR?

- WATOR is accessed through the SAW (Secure Access Washington) portal:



From SAW to WATOR

- Accessing WATOR through SAW is a multi-step process:
  - If you don't already have a SAW account, you will need to sign up for one.
  - Once you have a SAW account, you will need to find and specifically request approval for access to the WATOR service.
  - Once approved, you can then access the WATOR tool:



The Organizational Structure of WATOR

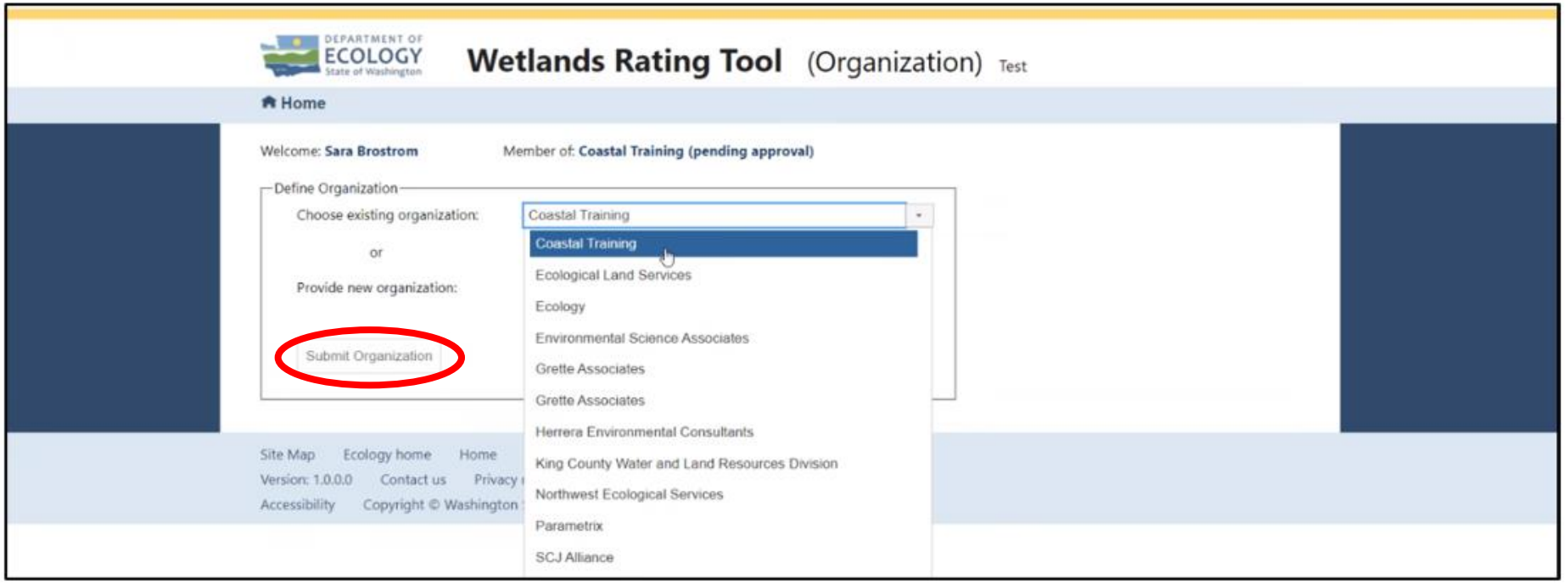
- WATOR uses an Organizational structure, which basically acts as a shared filing system.
- All the information within an Organization's "file" will be accessible to all members of that Organization, but are NOT accessible to other WATOR users outside of the Organization.
- Ecology Senior Wetland Scientist Amy Yahnke is WATOR's Administrator. She approves all Organization applications.

Organizations in WATOR

- Before you can use WATOR, you must either join an existing Organization or add a new Organization:

Joining an Organization in WATOR

- Click on an existing Organization in the drop-down menu or press the “Submit Organization” button:



Joining an Organization in WATOR

- Ecology must approve all WATOR users to meet state online security requirements. This process can take up to two business days.
- You will receive an email acknowledging your request to join an Organization:

Mon 4/26/2021 1:57 PM

NoReply@ecy.wa.gov

Wetlands Rating Tool Activity Report

To [redacted]

Cc [redacted]

Hello [redacted]

This email has been sent to notify you that your request to be associated with the Test Organization organization has been submitted for approval. You will be contacted once you are approved.

Joining an Organization in WATOR

- When your request to join an Organization is approved by Ecology, you will receive the following email:

Mon 4/26/2021 1:59 PM

NoReply@ecy.wa.gov

Wetlands Rating Tool Activity Report

To [redacted]

Cc [redacted]

Hello [redacted],

This email has been sent to notify you that you have been approved as a member of the Ecology organization. Please log back into Secure Access Washington (SAW) to continue using the Wetlands Rating Tool.

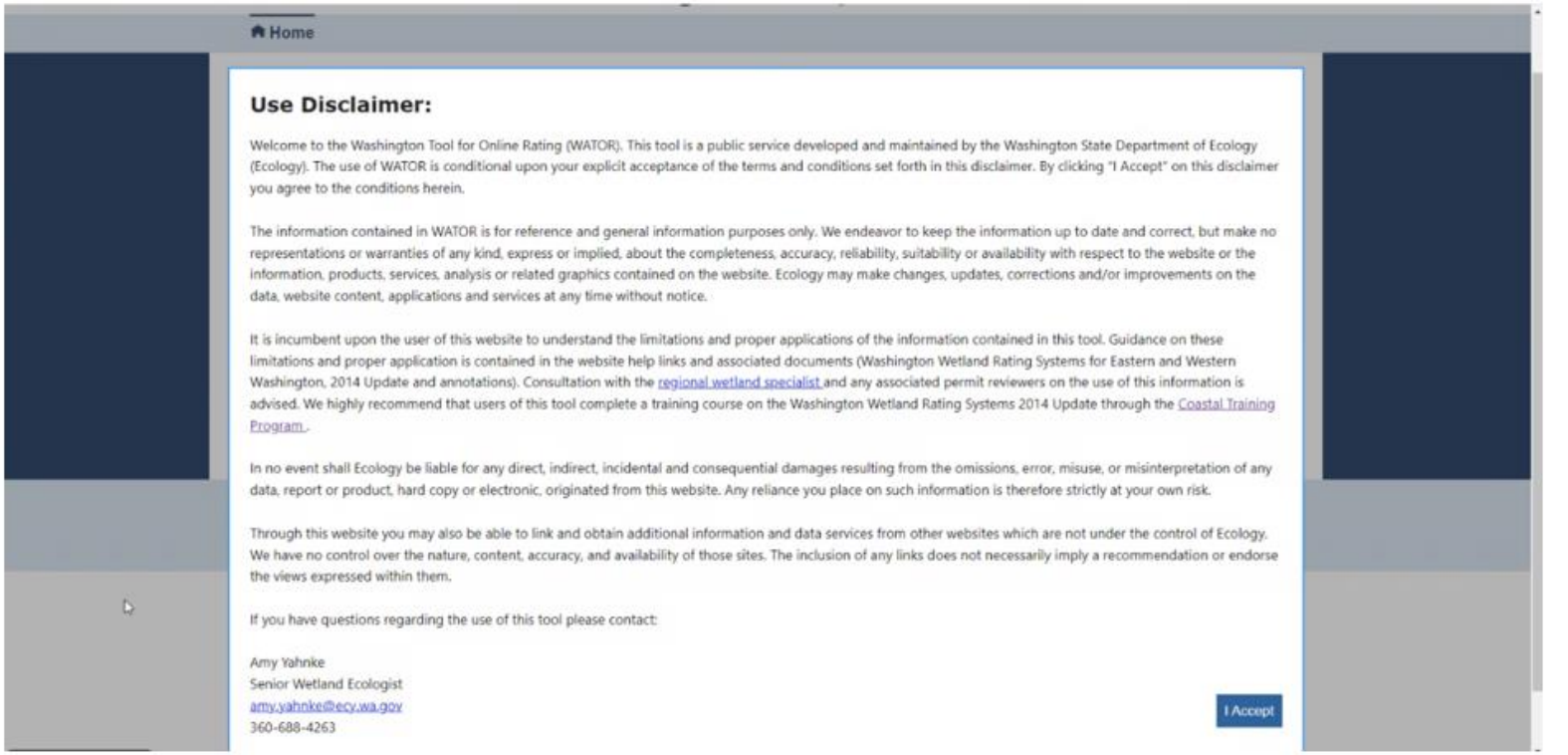
- You are now ready to start using WATOR!

WATOR Organization Tips and Tricks

- Use your Organization's full name; try to avoid acronyms and abbreviations if possible.
- **Please do not add a different variation of your Organization's name if it is already on the list.**
- If you are working for an external Organization (e.g., WSDOT) that wants data created and saved under their Organizational name, you can create a separate username for that work.
- It is probably a good idea to assign one person in your Organization to be the WATOR manager.
- Contact Amy with questions or problems.

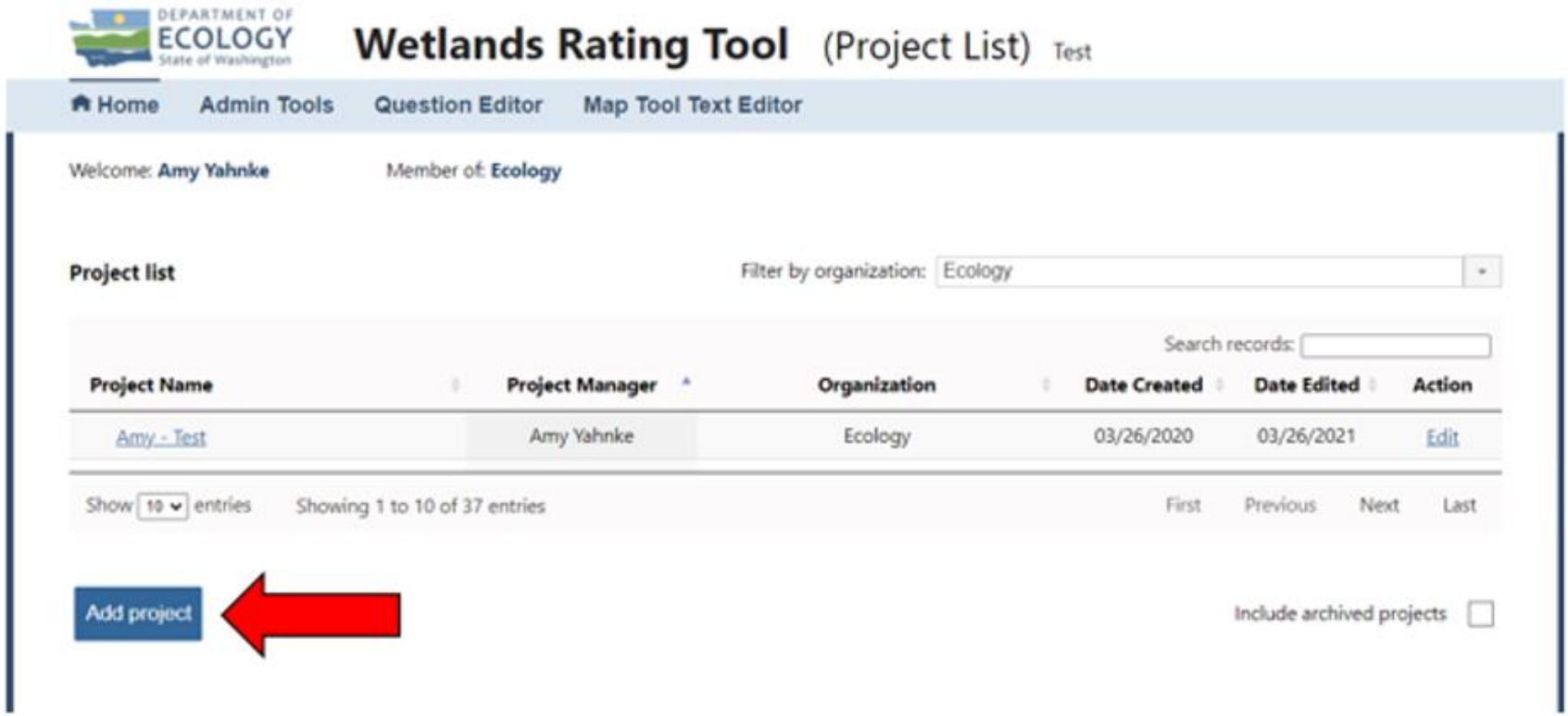
Getting Started in WATOR

- You must accept the Use Disclaimer before each WATOR session:



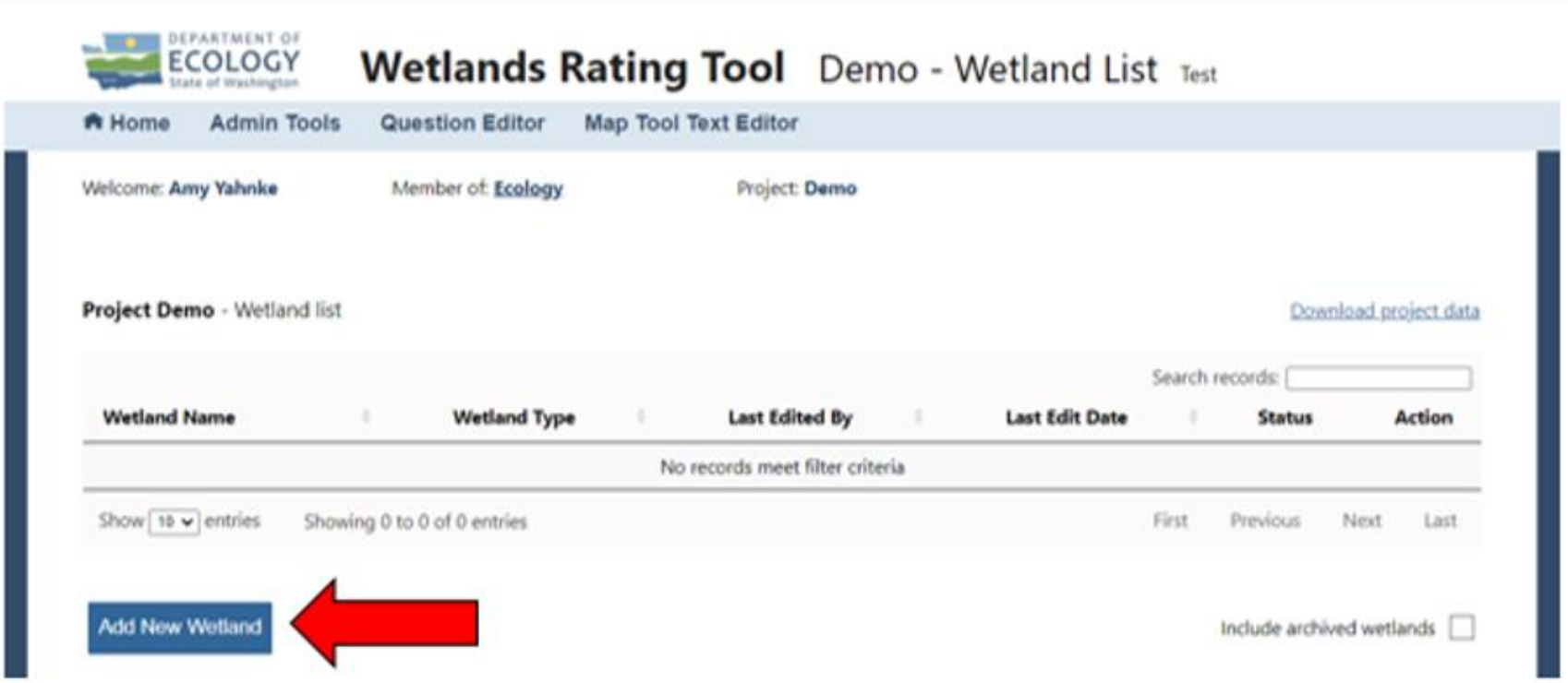
Getting Started in WATOR

- Adding a new project (Project List Screen):



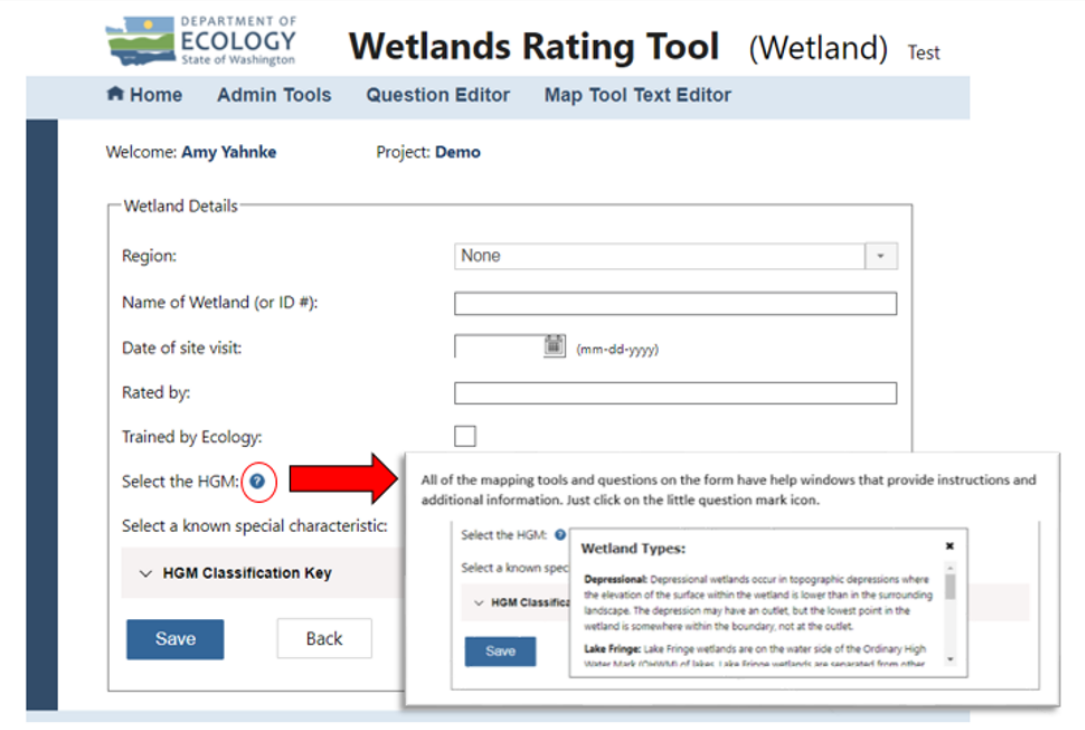
Getting Started in WATOR

- Adding a new wetland (Wetland List screen):



Getting Started in WATOR

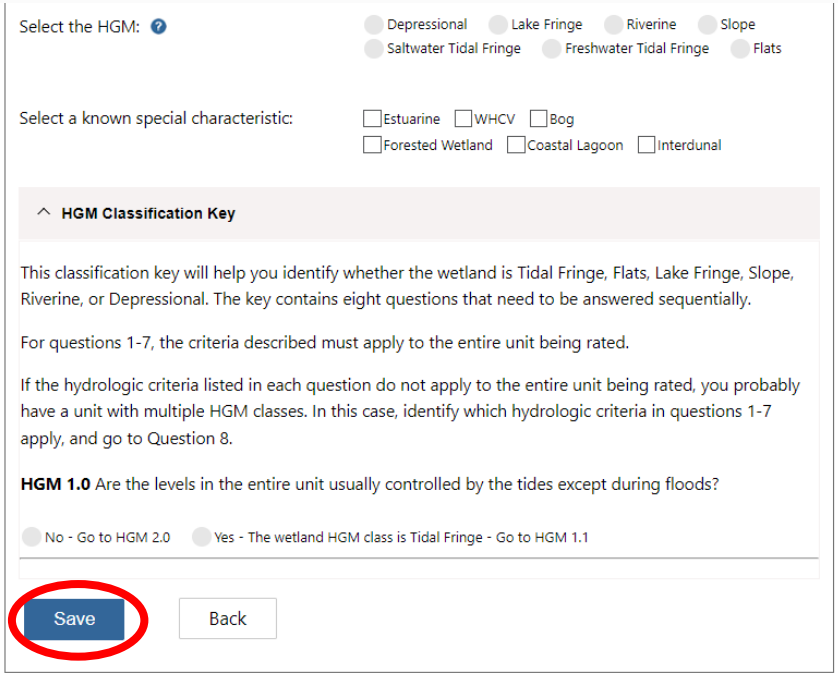
- Once you have added a new wetland, you must identify the Region and Hydrogeomorphic (HGM) class of the wetland, so WATOR can take you to the correct tools/forms:



Getting Started in WATOR

- To choose the HGM class of a wetland, you can enter it manually or answer the flowchart questions:

When you have selected the wetland's HGM class, click "Save".

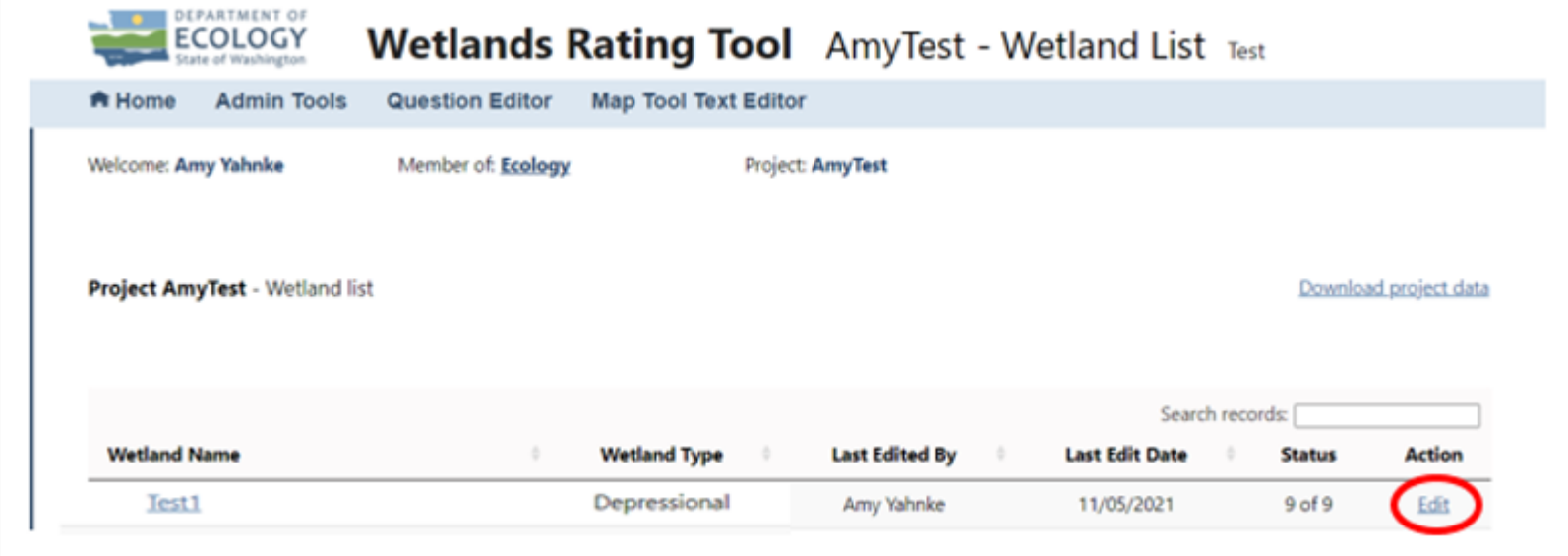


Getting Started in WATOR

- Once you have selected the wetland's HGM class, you are directed to the relevant mapping tools and wetland rating form for the wetland:

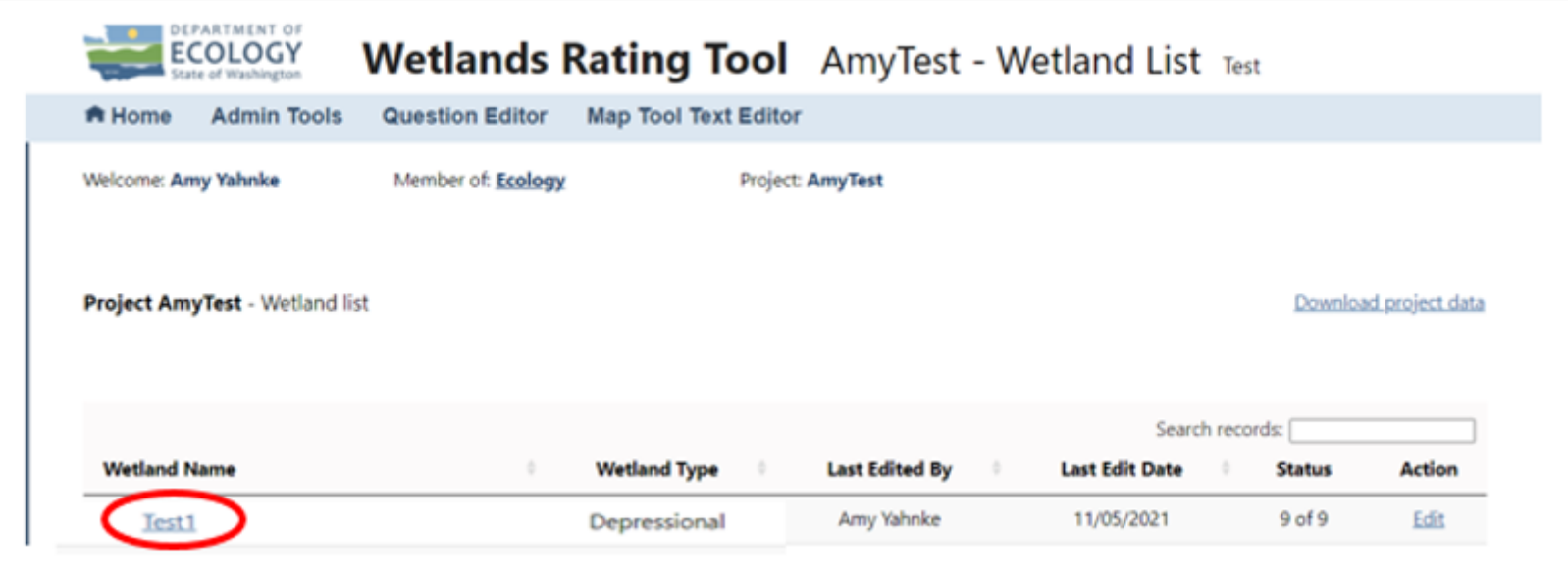
Making Edits in WATOR

- To edit the general wetland information or the HGM class of a wetland, go to the Wetland List page and select “Edit” in the Action column:



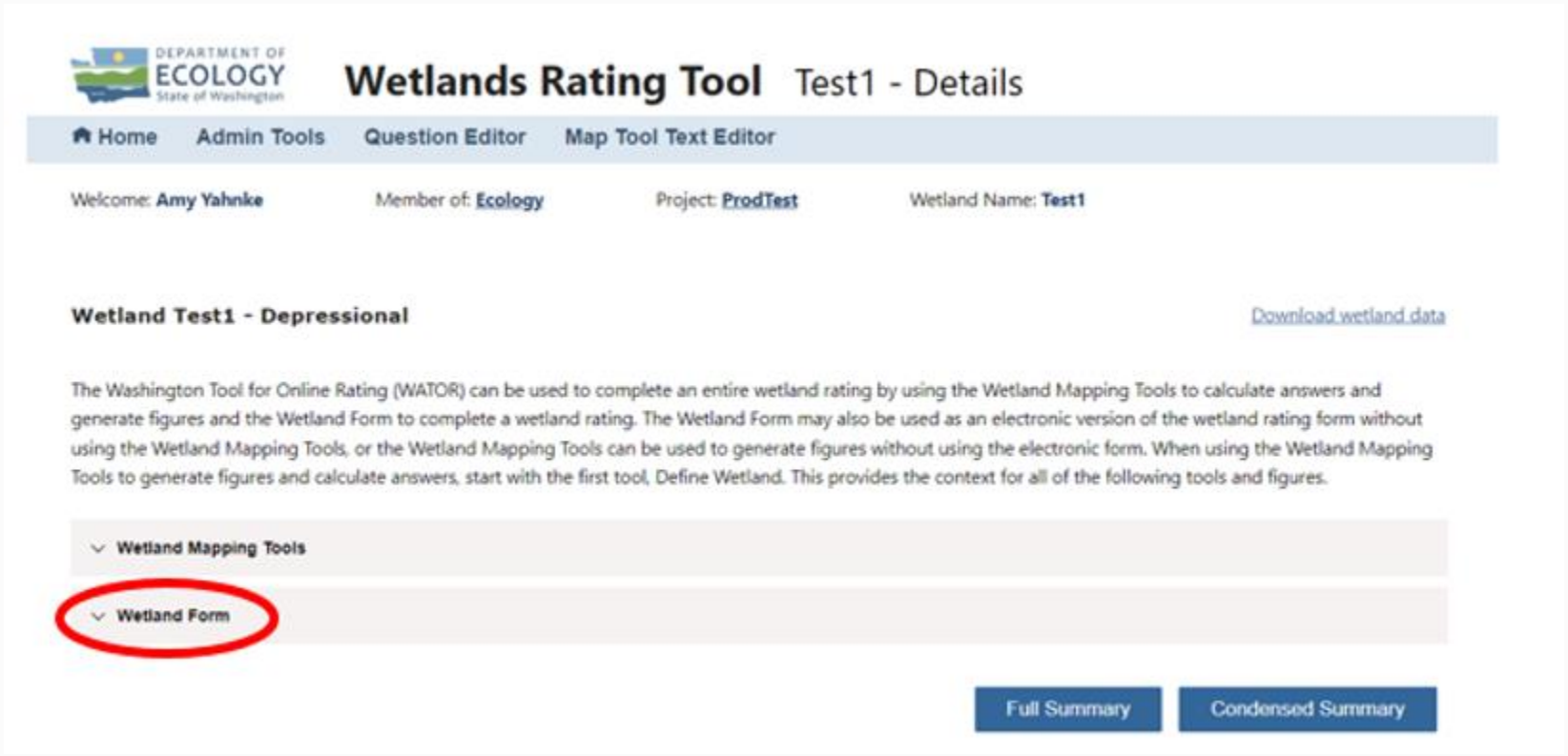
Making Edits in WATOR

- To edit the wetland mapping tools or the wetland rating form, go to the Wetland List page and select the wetland to edit from the list in the Wetland Name column:



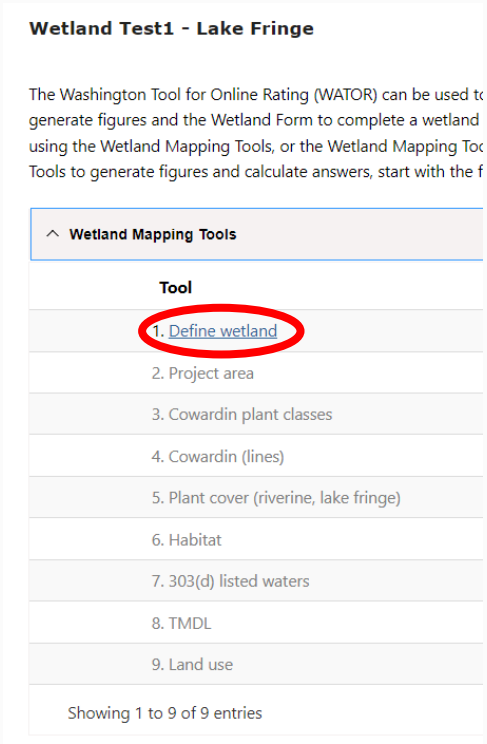
Rating a Wetland in WATOR

- WATOR gives you the option to use the rating form without using the map tools:



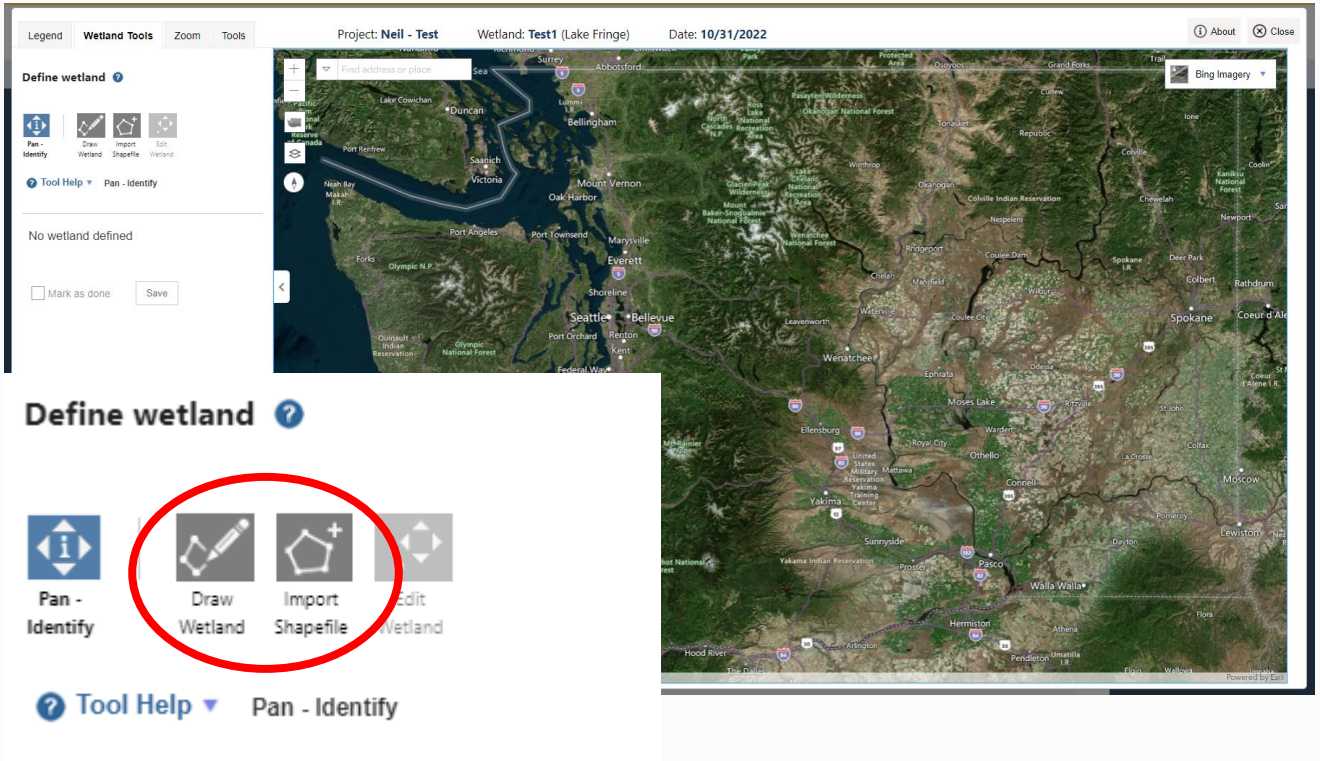
Rating a Wetland in WATOR

- To use the rating tools in WATOR, you need to define the wetland unit to rate. Use the "Define wetland" Tool to input the boundary of the unit:



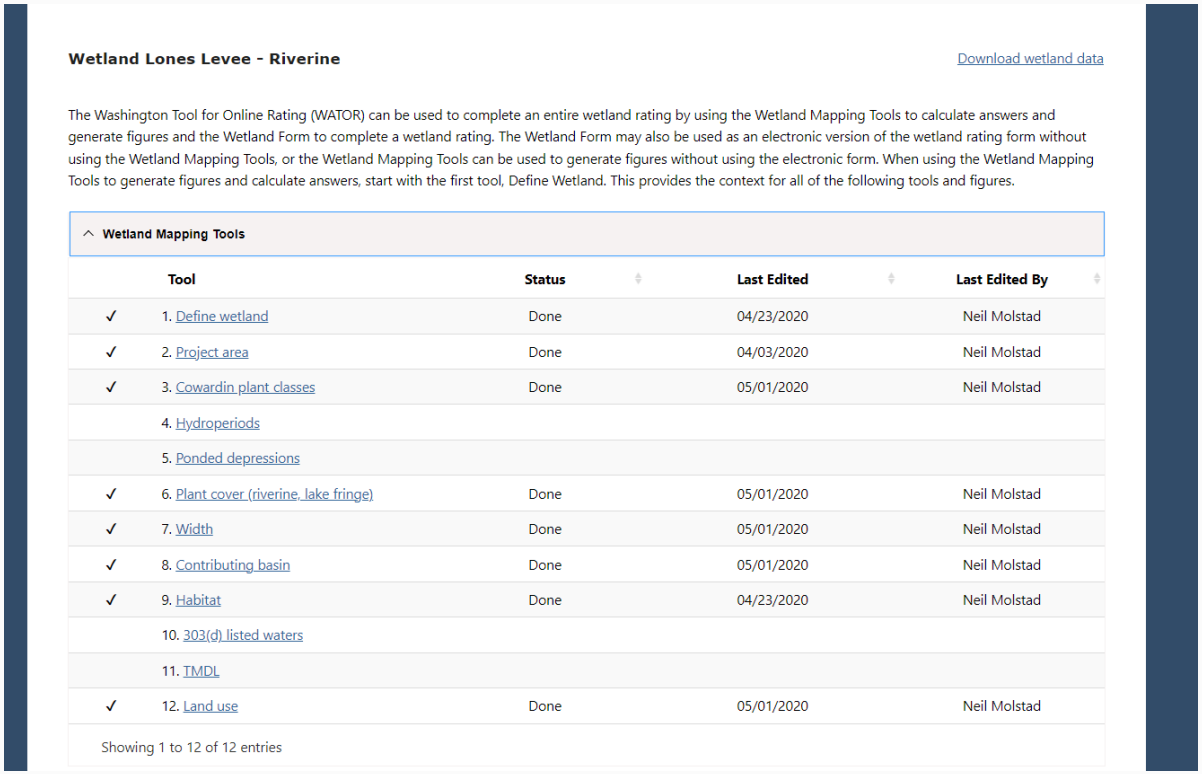
Rating a Wetland in WATOR

- You can define your wetland unit by drawing it in or by importing a shapefile:



Rating a Wetland in WATOR

- Once you have defined your wetland unit to rate, the other map tools become available:



Wetland Lones Levee - Riverine

Download wetland data

The Washington Tool for Online Rating (WATOR) can be used to complete an entire wetland rating by using the Wetland Mapping Tools to calculate answers and generate figures and the Wetland Form to complete a wetland rating. The Wetland Form may also be used as an electronic version of the wetland rating form without using the Wetland Mapping Tools, or the Wetland Mapping Tools can be used to generate figures without using the electronic form. When using the Wetland Mapping Tools to generate figures and calculate answers, start with the first tool, Define Wetland. This provides the context for all of the following tools and figures.

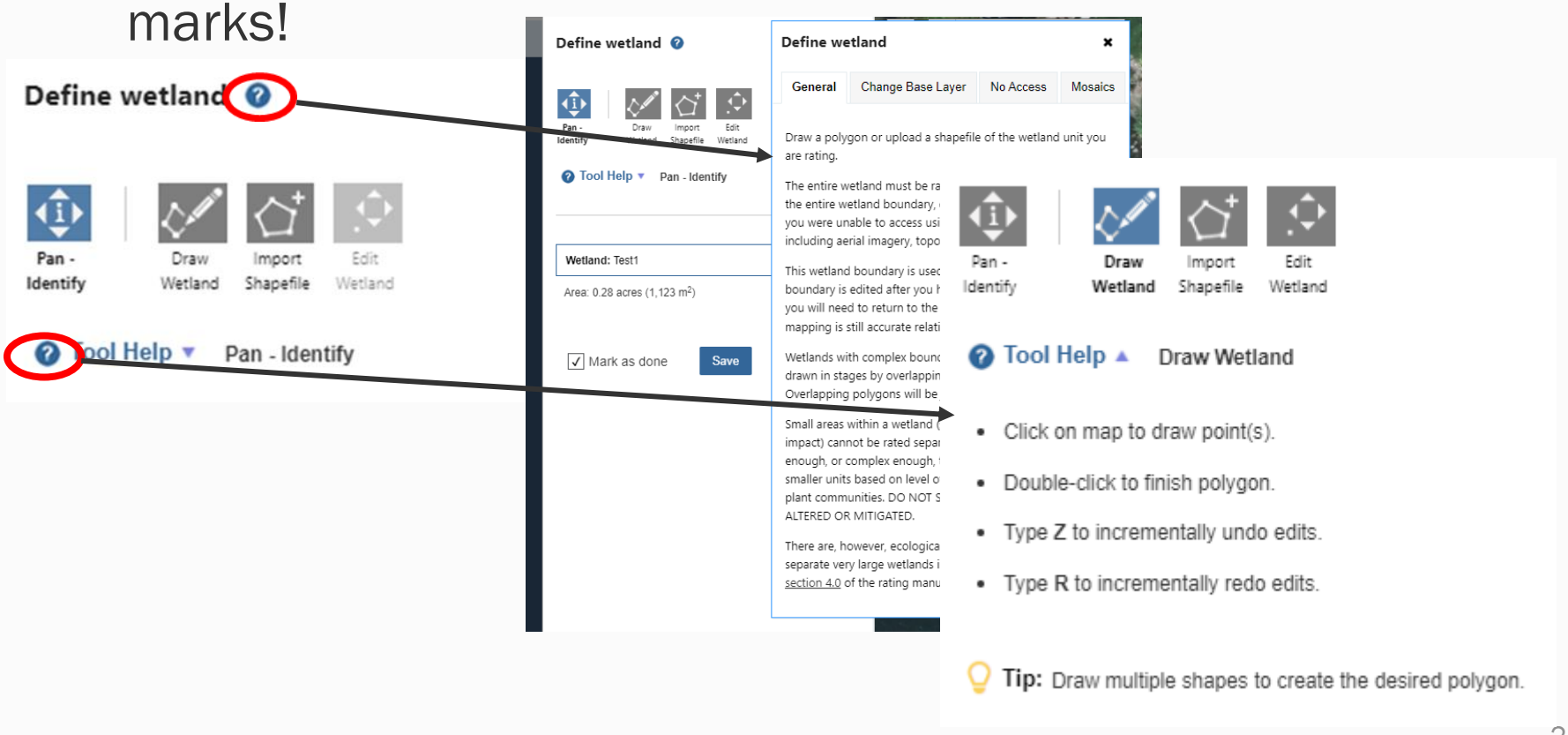
Wetland Mapping Tools

	Tool	Status	Last Edited	Last Edited By
✓	1. Define wetland	Done	04/23/2020	Neil Molstad
✓	2. Project area	Done	04/03/2020	Neil Molstad
✓	3. Cowardin plant classes	Done	05/01/2020	Neil Molstad
	4. Hydroperiods			
	5. Ponded depressions			
✓	6. Plant cover (riverine, lake fringe)	Done	05/01/2020	Neil Molstad
✓	7. Width	Done	05/01/2020	Neil Molstad
✓	8. Contributing basin	Done	05/01/2020	Neil Molstad
✓	9. Habitat	Done	04/23/2020	Neil Molstad
	10. 303(d) listed waters			
	11. TMDL			
✓	12. Land use	Done	05/01/2020	Neil Molstad

Showing 1 to 12 of 12 entries

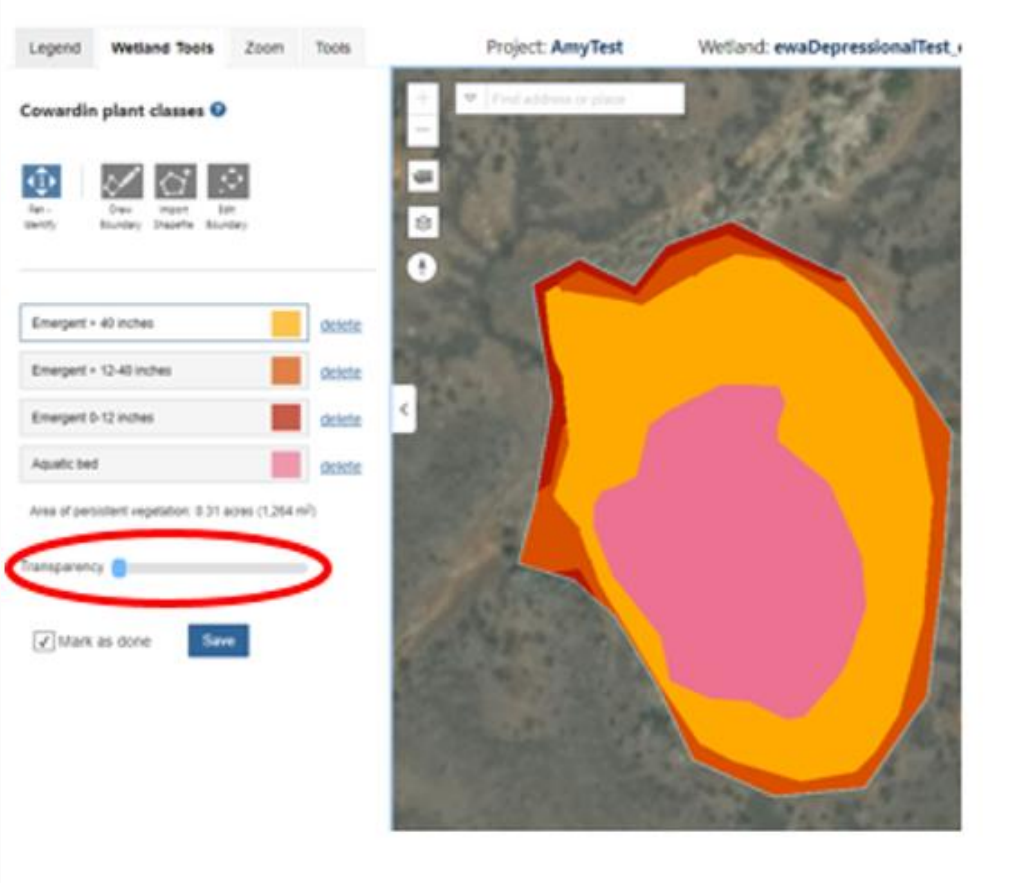
Getting Help in WATOR

- Most of the places within WATOR provide links to help and assist you in the use of the tool. Look for the question marks!



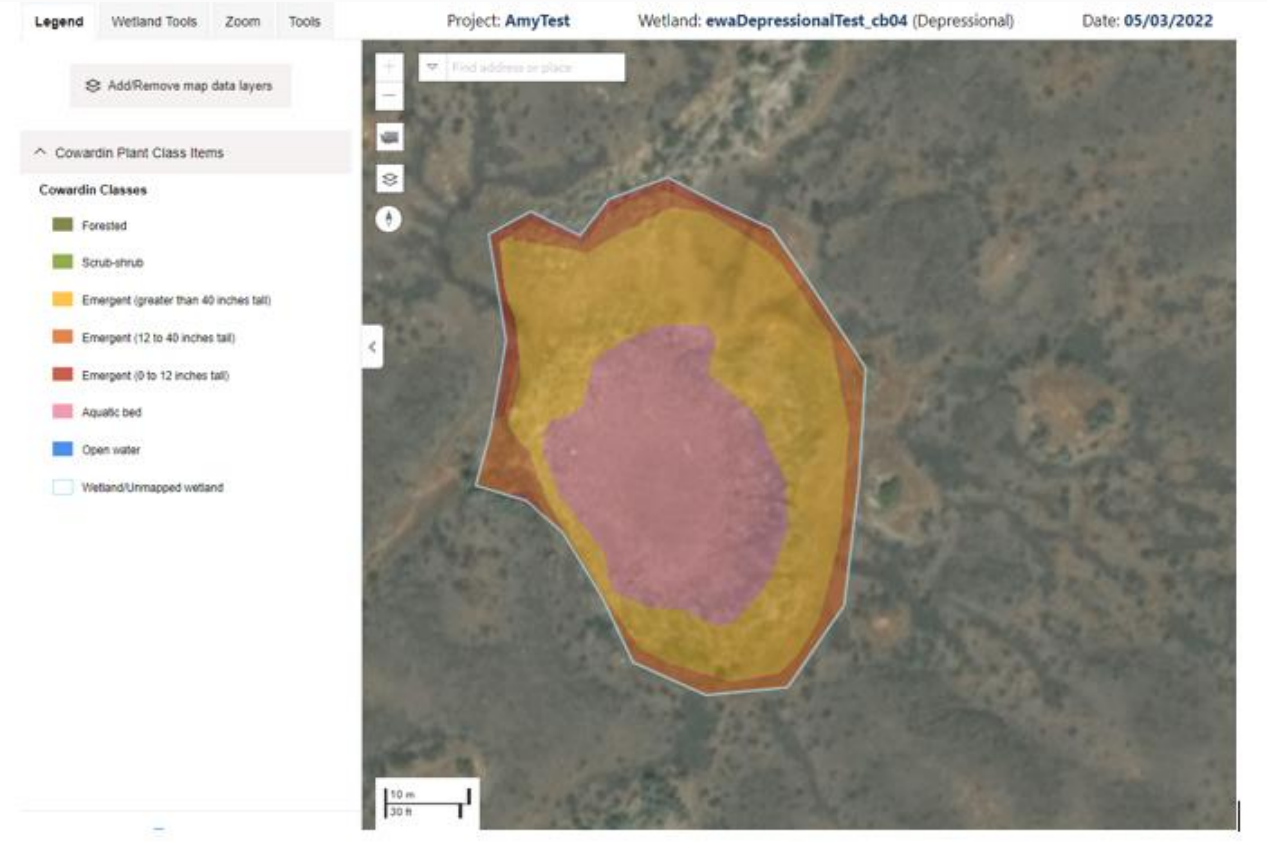
Creating Wetland Rating Figures in WATOR

- Adjust the transparency slider to make the underlying image more visible:



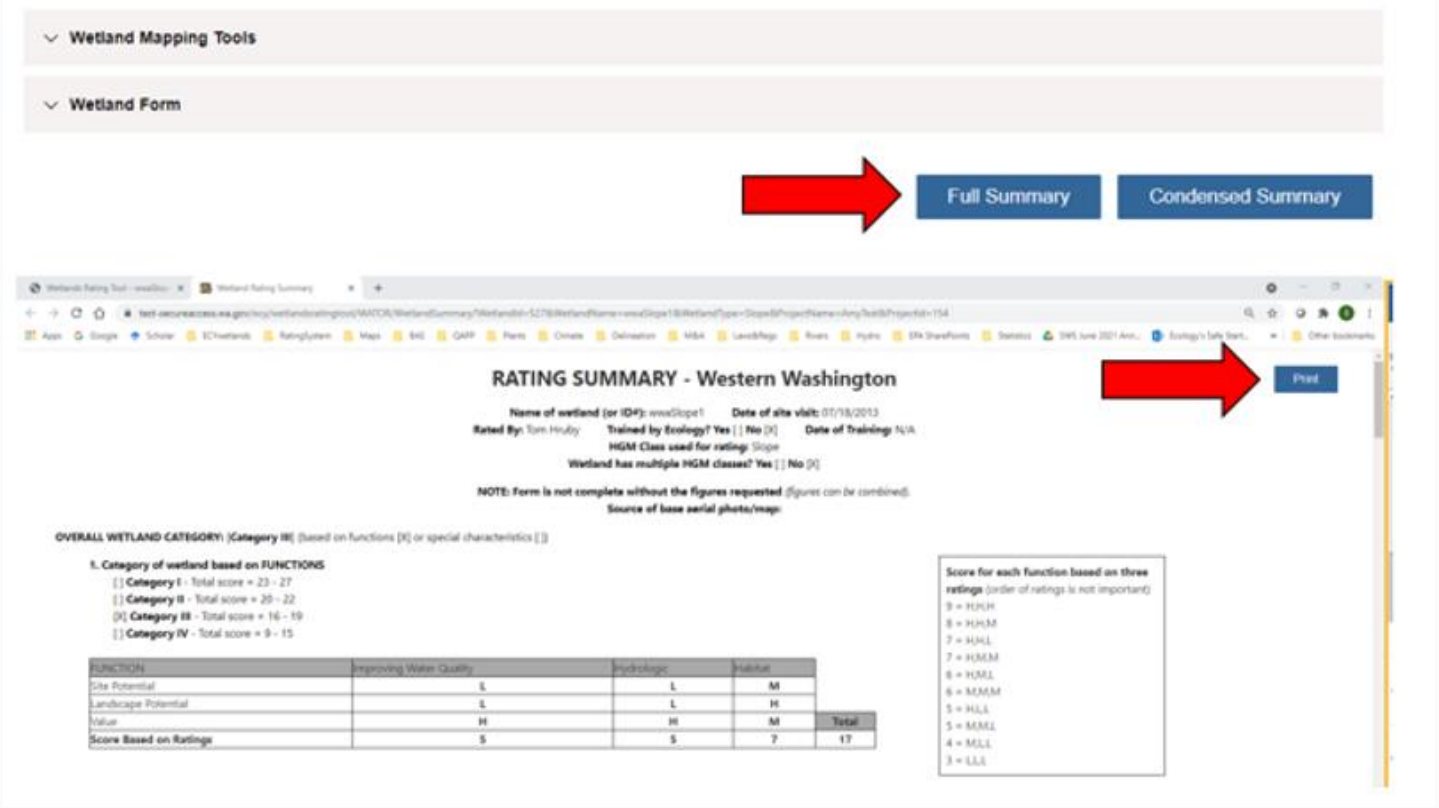
Creating Wetland Rating Figures in WATOR

- Make adjustments so that all needed information is included in your proposed image, then take a snip:



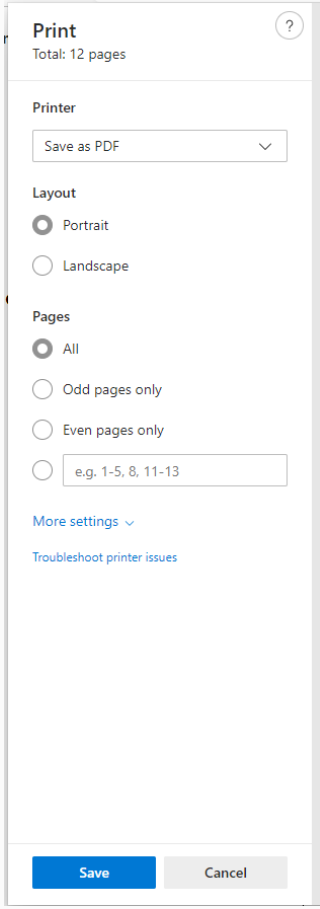
Printing/Saving Wetland Rating Forms in WATOR

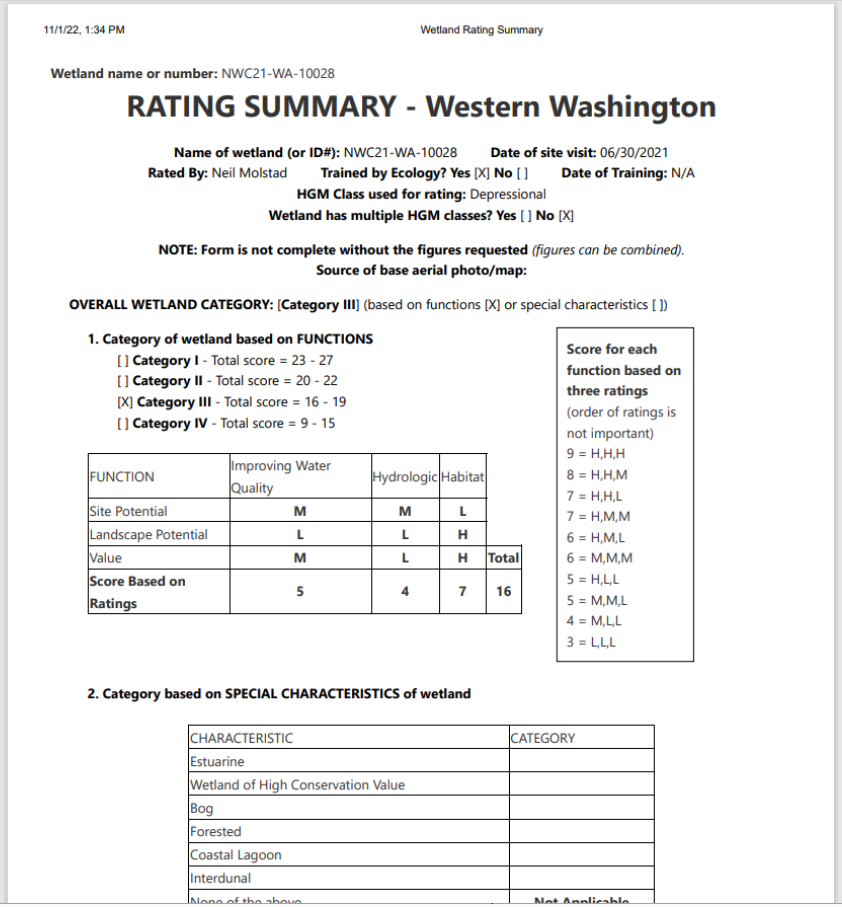
- To print or save the rating form results elsewhere, click on "Full Summary" or "Condensed Summary" and then "Print":



Printing/Saving Wetland Rating Forms in WATOR

- Here is a snip of what you get after hitting the “Print” button:





11/1/22, 1:34 PM Wetland Rating Summary

Wetland name or number: NWC21-WA-10028

RATING SUMMARY - Western Washington

Name of wetland (or ID#): NWC21-WA-10028 **Date of site visit:** 06/30/2021
Rated By: Neil Molstad **Trained by Ecology? Yes** [X] **No** [ ] **Date of Training:** N/A
HGM Class used for rating: Depressional
Wetland has multiple HGM classes? Yes [ ] **No** [X]

NOTE: Form is not complete without the figures requested *(figures can be combined).*
Source of base aerial photo/map:

OVERALL WETLAND CATEGORY: [**Category III**] (based on functions [X] or special characteristics [ ])

1. Category of wetland based on FUNCTIONS

[ ] **Category I** - Total score = 23 - 27
[ ] **Category II** - Total score = 20 - 22
[X] **Category III** - Total score = 16 - 19
[ ] **Category IV** - Total score = 9 - 15

FUNCTION	Improving Water Quality	Hydrologic	Habitat	
Site Potential	**M**	**M**	**L**	
Landscape Potential	**L**	**L**	**H**	
Value	**M**	**L**	**H**	**Total**
Score Based on Ratings	**5**	**4**	**7**	**16**

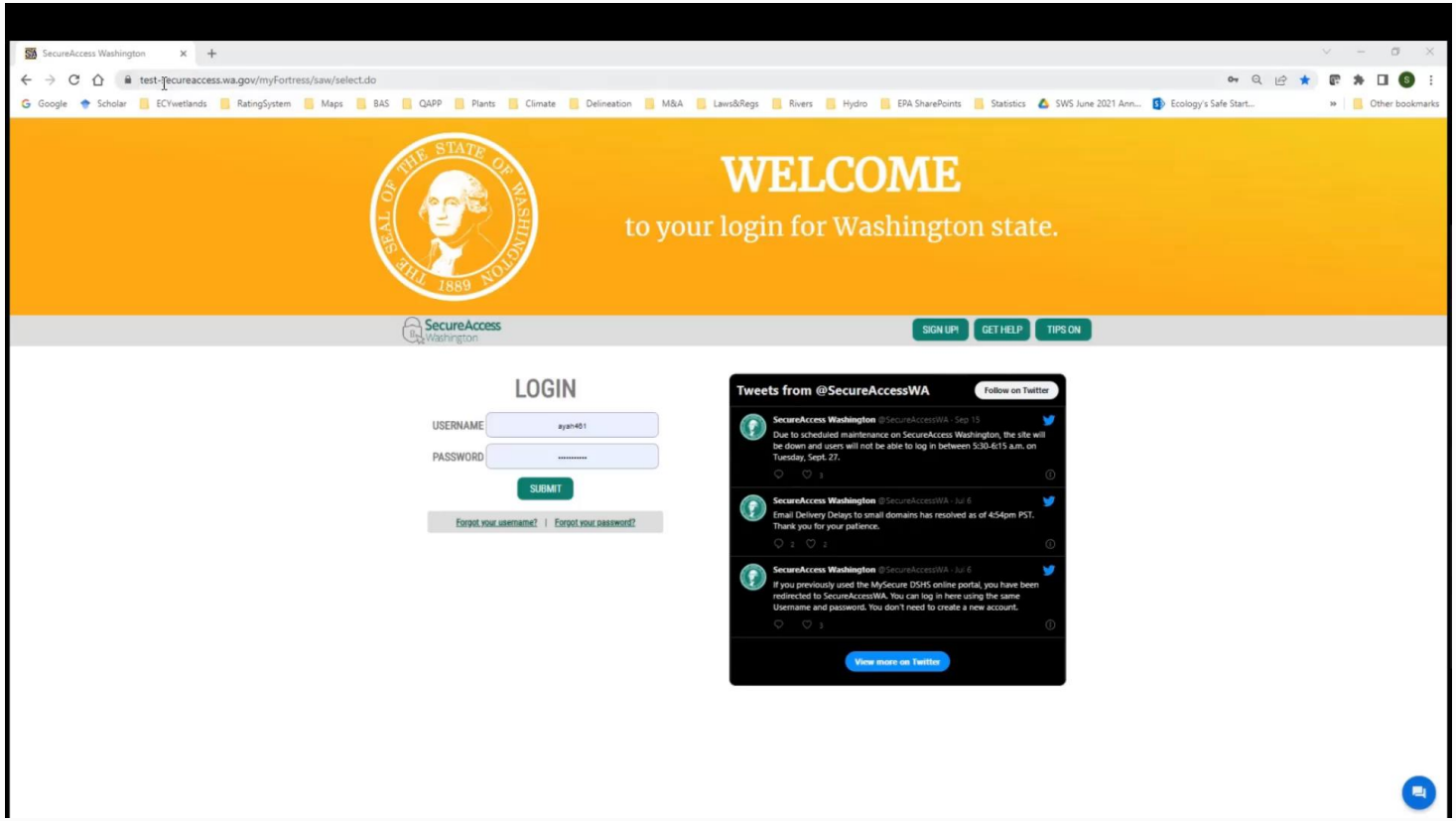
Score for each function based on three ratings
(order of ratings is not important)
9 = H,H,H
8 = H,H,M
7 = H,H,L
7 = H,M,M
6 = H,M,L
6 = M,M,M
5 = H,L,L
5 = M,M,L
4 = M,L,L
3 = L,L,L

2. Category based on SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS of wetland

CHARACTERISTIC	CATEGORY
Estuarine	
Wetland of High Conservation Value	
Bog	
Forested	
Coastal Lagoon	
Interdunal	
None of the above	**Not Applicable**

WATOR Demonstration

- I will demonstrate the tool myself, or we will watch a video of Amy Yahnke demonstrating the tool and I will narrate.

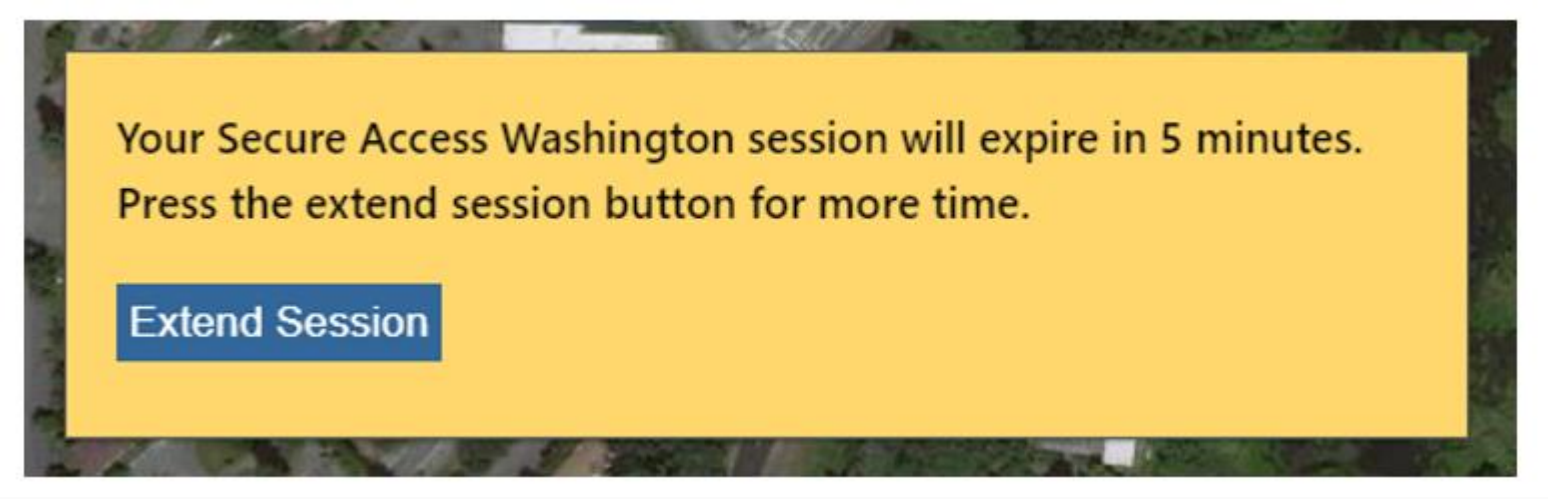


WATOR Tips and Tricks

- Always save your work before closing out of any map tools!

WATOR Tips and Tricks

- Don't leave WATOR "unattended". Why? SAW requires a time limit to the application, and it will close unexpectedly if you don't let SAW know you are still there. Save early, save often, save always!



Coming Soon to WATOR

- Draft annotations to the Rating System have already been incorporated into WATOR.
- Template page to drop your figure snips in to.
- Tutorial videos.
- WATOR Users Guide
- An even more condensed version of the condensed wetland rating form.
- Sign up to receive updates on WATOR through Ecology's wetland listserv: Washington Department of Ecology (govdelivery.com)

Feedback on WATOR

- Please email Amy Yahnke (amy.yahnke@ecy.wa.gov) if you would like to test out WATOR before the production version is released.
- Amy is also looking for feedback on the following:
  - Navigating and using the tools and form
  - Clarity of instructions
  - General user experience
  - The intuitiveness of the tool
  - What needs improving
  - Issues/bugs
  - Text edits
  - What to emphasize for potential future trainings

Thank you