



# Guidance for Evaluating Air Quality in Natural Resource Conditions Assessments

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To assess air quality conditions and trends at a park for planning purposes:

1. Look up and include the most recent park-specific air quality data, conditions, and trends using the following sources:
  - a. “Park Conditions & Trends” web page at <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/air/park-conditions-trends.htm>.
  - b. For mercury and particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub>) condition and trend information, contact [airresources@nps.gov](mailto:airresources@nps.gov).
  - c. Refer to the air quality analysis methods documentation at <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/air/analysis-methods.htm> for a description of methods used to determine park condition status (*warrants significant concern*, *warrants moderate concern*, or *good condition*) and trends.
2. Address current or potential effects to air quality sensitive resources (e.g., vegetation, lakes and streams, soils, wildlife, and visibility). This is particularly relevant if the air quality condition status for any of the indicators warrants moderate concern or warrants significant concern. Information on air quality sensitive resources is available from the following sources:
  - a. General information on effects of air pollution in parks is available at <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/air/effects.htm>.
  - b. Park profiles summarize park specific information about significant air pollutants and their effects on natural and scenic resources for selected parks (i.e. Class I area). Available at: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/air/airqualityparks.htm>.
  - c. Refer to the NPS Inventory & Monitoring (I&M) network air quality related values (AQRVs) report discussing effects on park resources from for ozone, particulates, and atmospheric deposition of acids, nutrients, and toxics. Available at <https://www.nps.gov/articles/aqrv-assessment.htm>.
  - d. If the park is a designated as Class I area by the Clean Air Act (park list available at <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/air/class1.htm>), consider discussing the Regional Haze Rule goal of achieving natural visibility conditions in designated Class I areas by 2064. States with Class I areas are required to establish goals for each Class I area in the state and these goals are included in state implementation plans (SIPs). For copies of this information, contact state and local air quality agencies at <http://www.4cleanair.org/agencies>.

- e. Nitrogen critical loads (the amount of nitrogen or sulfur deposition below which resources are not likely to be harmed) and estimated exceedances for most NPS units are available at <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Collection/Profile/4079>. If critical loads are available for ecosystems in the park, they can be used for reference conditions.
  - f. Park lists of acid and ozone sensitive plant species are available at <https://irma.nps.gov/NPSpecies/Report>.
  - g. Mercury/toxic fish advisories are available at <https://fishadvisoryonline.epa.gov/General.aspx>.
3. Determine if the park is in a nonattainment area for National Ambient Air Quality Standards, specifically ozone and particulate matter, using the following resources:
    - a. "Park Conditions & Trends" web page at <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/air/park-conditions-trends.htm>.
    - b. EPA Green Book provides detailed information about area designations, classifications and nonattainment status at <https://www.epa.gov/green-book>.
    - c. Interactive map of air quality monitors that displays nonattainment areas for ozone and particulate matter standards at <https://www.epa.gov/outdoor-air-quality-data/interactive-map-air-quality-monitors>.
  4. Refer to example air quality condition assessments, available upon request: [airresources@nps.gov](mailto:airresources@nps.gov).