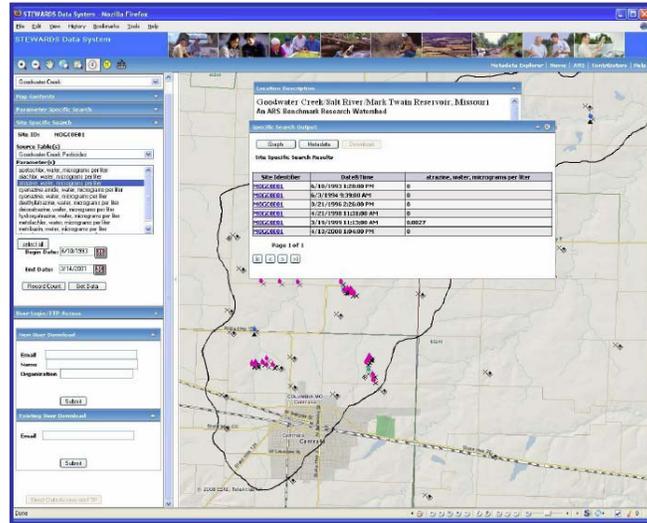


STEWARDS Agricultural Research Data System



Interdisciplinary research across natural and social sciences to address challenges in water resource management requires comprehensive and long-term data. As part of USDA's Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP), *STEWARDS (Sustaining the Earth's Watersheds, Agricultural Research Data System) was developed to compile, document and provide access to data from ARS research watersheds, which represent one of the largest research watershed data collections in the world.* Many of the watersheds offer decades of data to address issues of climate variability and global change. Major contributions include: a paired data table and data definition table programming methodology, increased visibility for watersheds by publishing of metadata, the ARS Methods Catalog which provides transparency and can serve as a resource for other researchers,

training opportunities and expanded networks for watershed data managers, and a template for watershed data management, in addition to the primary contribution - STEWARDS populated with data from multiple watersheds. This data system represents a move forward for hydrologic and environmental research by providing access to a multitude of data needed to support complex analyses. Challenges remain in data preparation and upload, including providing incentives and scientific credit to scientists who contribute to open source data systems. Anticipated impacts include increased productivity and collaborative opportunities for individual scientists, watershed teams, and the ARS water resources program and better accountability at the agency level for investment in long-term watershed research.

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Access STEWARDS on the web at:
<http://arsagsoftware.ars.usda.gov/stewards/>