

TOOL TYPE & AVAILABILITY

A process for assessing the social benefits of ecological restoration

SPONSORING ORGANIZATION & DEVELOPERS

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Research and Development, National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory, Atlantic Ecology Division, Monitoring and Assessment Branch

WEBSITE & CONTACT INFORMATION

The RBI approach is available at <https://www.epa.gov/water-research/rapid-benefit-indicators-rbi-approach>; information requests can be sent to mazzotta.marisa@epa.gov

TARGET USERS

Resource managers, watershed groups or others interested in a rapid approach to assessing the benefits of restoration using non-monetary approaches.

RELEASE YEAR & UPDATES

2017

COST

No cost

Rapid Benefits Indicators (RBI) Approach

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE

- The RBI approach is an easy-to-use process for assessing restoration sites using non-monetary benefits indicators. It uses readily available data to estimate and quantify benefits to people around an ecological restoration site.
- The RBI approach may be used in many contexts, including prioritizing sites or projects, deciding which projects to fund...

SOFTWARE AND DATA INPUT REQUIRED

- The RBI approach is available online and provides an Excel Checklist Tool (macro enabled file) to record and review information and an alternative fillable PDF form which works on any operating system.
- The user must supply locally appropriate data.
- Additional tools and extensions will be added to the project website as they become available. These will include a set of Python scripts for use with GIS to automate some of the steps, and a Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis aggregation tool to aggregate site scores.

INFORMATION GENERATED

- Checklists are used during the assessment to record metrics and result in a summary report but do not calculate the metrics.
- The Excel Checklist tool provides a way to compare up to 10 sites using the RBI approach whereas the fillable PDF form only allows for comparison of two sites at a time.

EXPERTISE & TIME INVESTMENT REQUIRED

- The expertise and time required will depend on several factors:
 - The level of detail and precision required,
 - the user's existing knowledge of / familiarity with the sites and locations to be assessed, and
 - whether the 5 services included (flood risk reduction, scenic views, environmental education, recreation, bird watching), and the context of freshwater wetland restoration, are appropriate to the analysis.
- A quick and basic analysis can be done using free online maps along with local knowledge; a more detailed analysis would use GIS maps and modeling.

EXAMPLES OF COMPANY USERS

- None yet.