

STEP 4: Review the critical loads available for the forest.

The Critical Loads section of the Air Quality Portal for Land Management Planning hosts the following [critical loads data sets](#): 1) nationwide CLs of acidity for surface waters, 2) nationwide CLs of acidity for forested ecosystems, and 3) nationwide empirical CLs of nutrient nitrogen for several ecosystem receptors and responses. Only published critical loads are used in this process. If more site-specific CLs are available for your forest, determine whether they provide better information for the assessment than the associated national CL effort. The Portal hosts a description of the different [approaches](#) for calculating CLs, including advantages and disadvantages associated with the different methods.

Important Concept: The degree of uncertainty associated with the different critical loads calculations will vary with environmental variability (i.e., the high degree of variability in soils) and the method of critical load calculation (i.e., the use of site-specific data versus extrapolated/modeled data). Step 6 incorporates uncertainty and reliability into future recommendations.

After you have assembled all available published CLs for your forest, proceed to [Step 5](#) where you will identify the best deposition data to use in your analysis, and calculate exceedances.