Which Wetland is Which?

(*Indicates those wetlands found in Alberta)

Wetland Type	Location	Water Source	Common Plants
Bogs* (commonly called muskeg or peatland)	Where glaciers left a hollow in the earth. Mostly at northern latitudes, or western Alberta. Forms in a cold, wet climate.	Mostly from precipitation (which includes snowmelt).	Sphagnum moss, larch, black spruce, cotton grass, sedge, horsetail, peat, Labrador tea, bog rosemary.
Fens* (commonly called muskeg or peatland)	At northern latitudes, and in western Alberta; similar to bogs.	Ground water and precipitation. Water is less acidic than water found in a bog.	Similar to bogs but also has sedges, grasses, shrubs and different types of mosses than those found in bogs.
Freshwater Marsh* (commonly and locally called "sloughs" or "ponds")	Where depressions in the landscape fill with open water. Generally found throughout Alberta.	Groundwater or surface water. (rain, snow, streams, etc.)	Emergent plants such as cattails, reeds, rushes and sedges, which vary according to location.
Shallow Waters* (known in southern Alberta as Prairie Potholes; sometimes called "ponds" and "sloughs".)	In the rolling hills of the Prairies, left behind by the glaciers. Isolated from others by higher ground.	Surface water (rain, snow, streams, etc.).	Grasses and emergent plants.
Swamp* (Thicket swamps in Alberta)	Forested areas that are flooded seasonally.	Flooded during growing season by surface water.	Variety of trees and shrubs. In Alberta willows and other shrubs grow. In Florida, there are cypress and mangrove swamps.
Tidal Saltwater Marsh	Near ocean shores and other saltwater tides.	Flooded by tides.	Cordgrass, black grass, sea lavender and glasswort.
Tidal Freshwater Marsh	Near tidal saltwater marshes but a bit further inland, with little or no salt. Ones with higher salt content are called "brackish."	Flooded by tides.	More varied than saltwater marshes and include brightly colored flowering plants.

Note: Freshwater marshes and shallow waters are almost interchangeable. The difference would be noticed by a wetland expert and even then, differences are subtle.