

# Tidal & Non-Tidal Wetland Habitat Assessment Guide

|                 |       |
|-----------------|-------|
| Landowner Name: |       |
| Evaluator:      | Date: |

**Instructions:** This assessment shall be used to identify the habitat limiting factors for wildlife species dependent on wetlands. This habitat assessment guide should be used for sites NOT associated with agricultural tracts (i.e., do not use when doing whole farm planning for agricultural lands). Each wetland must be assessed and scored individually. Weighted averages are not allowed.

If the evaluation determines that the current habitat quality is less than 0.5 (on a scale of 0 to 1), recommendations will be made to improve the existing habitat so the planned (future) condition will have a quality rating of 0.5 or more. **If wildlife is the client's primary objective, the land unit must achieve a quality rating of 0.7 or better.** If the evaluation determines that the current condition is equal to or greater than 0.5 (or 0.7 if wildlife in the primary objective), recommendations will be made to maintain the existing habitat in its present condition.

For all the habitat components below, select the habitat description that most closely mirrors the wetland(s) being appraised and enter that value in the table. Both the existing and planned conditions must be evaluated.

## 1. Hydrology

- Wetland has not been hydrologically altered = 10
- Natural surface and/or subsurface hydrology somewhat altered but is sufficient to maintain wetland = 5
- Natural surface and/or subsurface hydrology are severely altered so that wetland is not functioning well = 1

|                           | Wetland No. |
|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Existing Condition</b> |             |             |             |             |             |
| <b>Planned Condition</b>  |             |             |             |             |             |

## 2. Plant Composition

- Natural wetland plant community with multiple species present or a natural wetland community that typically has few species = 10
- Natural wetland plant community present but shows signs of some manipulation (e.g. few wetland species present, invasives creeping in, etc.) = 5
- Natural wetland plant community absent and/or exotic invasive plant species constitute  $\geq 30\%$  of vegetation = 1

|                           | Wetland No. |
|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Existing Condition</b> |             |             |             |             |             |
| <b>Planned Condition</b>  |             |             |             |             |             |

## 3. Human Impacts of Soil Properties

- No evidence of fill, erosion or sediment deposition = 10
- Evidence of either fill, erosion or sediment deposition = 5
- Evidence of two of the above factors = 3
- Evidence of all three factors = 1

|                           | Wetland No. |
|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Existing Condition</b> |             |             |             |             |             |
| <b>Planned Condition</b>  |             |             |             |             |             |

## 4. Buffer Zone

- Suitable buffer around entire wetland = 10
- Suitable buffer around  $>75\%$  of wetland = 7
- Suitable buffer around  $>50$  to  $75\%$  of wetland = 5
- Suitable buffer around  $25-50\%$  of wetland = 3
- Suitable buffer around  $<25\%$  of wetland = 1

|                           | Wetland No. |
|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Existing Condition</b> |             |             |             |             |             |
| <b>Planned Condition</b>  |             |             |             |             |             |

**5. Proximity of Wetland to other Suitable Wildlife Habitat** – Suitable wildlife habitat must not be disturbed between April 15 and August 1, must not contain invasives  $\geq 30\%$  and must be of a size equal to at least 4% of the wetland size (e.g., if wetland is 10 acres, suitable wildlife habitat patch must be at least 0.4 acre in size).

Directly adjacent = 10  
 < 300 feet = 8  
 < 1/8 mile = 6  
 < 1/4 mile = 3  
 > 1/4 mile = 1

|                           | Wetland No. |
|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Existing Condition</b> |             |             |             |             |             |
| <b>Planned Condition</b>  |             |             |             |             |             |

**Scoring**

For each wetland evaluated, enter the before and after values for each habitat component. There is a total of 50 points possible. Divide the total for each wetland (both the existing and planned conditions) by 50. This will give you a value between 0 and 1, which represents the habitat value of the particular field for wetland dependent wildlife species in the existing condition and in the planned condition.

|                    | Hydrology | Plant Comp. | Human Impacts | Buffer Zone | Interspersion | Total | Habitat Value (total/50) |
|--------------------|-----------|-------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|-------|--------------------------|
| <b>Wetland No.</b> |           |             |               |             |               |       |                          |
| Existing Condition |           |             |               |             |               |       |                          |
| Planned Condition  |           |             |               |             |               |       |                          |
| <b>Wetland No.</b> |           |             |               |             |               |       |                          |
| Existing Condition |           |             |               |             |               |       |                          |
| Planned Condition  |           |             |               |             |               |       |                          |
| <b>Wetland No.</b> |           |             |               |             |               |       |                          |
| Existing Condition |           |             |               |             |               |       |                          |
| Planned Condition  |           |             |               |             |               |       |                          |
| <b>Wetland No.</b> |           |             |               |             |               |       |                          |
| Existing Condition |           |             |               |             |               |       |                          |
| Planned Condition  |           |             |               |             |               |       |                          |