



# FLORIDA WETLAND MAPPING CONVENTIONS AND PROCEDURES

## I. GENERAL INFORMATION

The information contained in this document is provided to assist Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) field offices in Florida in completing certified wetland determinations and delineations on agricultural lands and non-agricultural lands for purposes of the Food Security Act of 1985, as amended (Act). The *National Food Security Act Manual* (NFSAM), which provides NRCS policy on implementing the Act, directs NRCS to develop Wetland Mapping Conventions at the state level in accordance with the 1994 Memorandum of Agreement Among the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of the Interior, and the Department of the Army Concerning the Delineation of Wetlands for Purposes of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Subtitle B of the Food Security Act (1994 MOA).

Certified wetland determinations and delineations for purposes of the Act shall be completed by NRCS using these Mapping Conventions, which were developed by NRCS with concurrence from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS). NRCS determinations/delineations made for purposes of compliance with the Act will be accepted by the COE/EPA for compliance with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) except where there is a potential CWA violation on a tract where NRCS has not finalized a determination, or where a geographic area is designated as "special case" by the COE or EPA (see NFSAM Part 513.22). In these cases, the COE or EPA will make the final determination/delineation, and NRCS will accept it for purposes of the Act.

All wetland determinations made by NRCS after July 3, 1996 are considered **certified** wetland determinations. This term denotes that the determination was made using procedures as directed in the NFSAM that took effect on this date. Wetland determinations once certified will be effective as long as the site remains in agricultural use unless natural events, new information, or a wetland conversion warrants a revision of the determination (see NFSAM 514.11e). Certified wetland determinations remain with the land and apply to subsequent owners and operators that are USDA program participants.

In some cases, a "sensitive area evaluation" is sufficient to meet conservation planning needs and comply with agency policy. **To determine whether a certified wetland determination is needed on a tract, refer to Florida Guidance for Performing Certified Wetland Determinations**, found in the Florida Field Office Technical Guide, Section I (E).

Where compliance with the Act is required for eligibility for USDA programs, a certified wetland determination must be provided to the USDA program participant by NRCS. Typically, NRCS conducts wetland determinations only for USDA program participants. However, a certified wetland determination may be provided to a non-participant under limited circumstances. See Florida Guidance for Performing Certified Wetland Determinations for more information.

Wetland determinations made for purposes of Food Security Act compliance will follow procedures described in the NFSAM and will be conducted or verified (if made by a non-federal entity such as an environmental consultant) onsite by NRCS. In addition, determinations on non-agricultural lands require application of procedures described in the *Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual*

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(1987, Technical Report Y-87-1). Only individuals who have received formal training in the use of this manual may make determinations on non-agricultural lands (see the NFSAM Part 513.0).

**When making wetland delineations on non-agricultural lands, coordination with the COE (or occasionally EPA) is required, unless the area meets the criteria of “narrow bands” or “small pockets” of non-agricultural lands (see the definition of narrow bands and small pockets on page 5).** Wetland determinations made by NRCS on narrow bands and small pockets using the *Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual* ('87 Manual) will be accepted by the COE/EPA without coordination; however, periodic review of these determinations may be conducted by NRCS and/or the COE/EPA.

Size of a wetland is not a factor used in determining jurisdiction under the Act. Wetlands large enough to detect in an onsite inspection will be determined. Wetlands will be outlined and labeled on the official USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) photomap and on an appropriate NRCS field office base map using wetland labels specified in the NFSAM. The preferred base map is rectified ortho-based photography that will enable digitization of certified wetland determinations and provide a basis for future updating. Recently, GIS software and databases have been provided to Florida NRCS field offices for this purpose. County Soil Survey and color infrared aerial photos have been used in the past as NRCS base maps and should be maintained until information can be transferred to GIS.

## II. DEFINITIONS

Definitions for specific terms used in this document are found below. Refer to the NFSAM Part 525 for a more comprehensive glossary of terms as they apply to the Wetland Conservation Provisions of the Act.

### A. Abandonment

Abandonment is the cessation of management on Farmed Wetland (FW) or Farmed Wetland Pasture and Hayland (FWP) for five consecutive years such that:

- wetland criteria are met, and
- the area has not been enrolled in a conservation set-aside program; and
- the area has not been enrolled in a state or federal wetland restoration program other than perpetual easements or the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP).

**NOTE:** A wetland **converted before 12/23/85 but not planted to an agricultural commodity** may also be considered abandoned if the area has regained wetland criteria (see mapping conventions for Non-Wetlands on page 8). Areas labeled CW, CW+year, and PC are not subject to abandonment. FWs and FWPs are not subject to abandonment if the person provides hydrologic and vegetative baseline conditions prior to allowing the site to revert to wetland conditions (see NFSAM Part 514.25).

This definition of abandonment is applicable only for Food Security Act compliance. Clean Water Act regulations may describe different criteria for abandonment, particularly with regard to Prior Converted Cropland (PC) areas. Persons planning to abandon areas should be notified to discuss their plans with the COE prior to proceeding.

### B. Agricultural Commodity

An agricultural commodity as defined in the NFSAM means any crop produced by annual tilling of the soil, including one-trip planters, or sugarcane.

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### C. Agricultural Lands

For the purposes of these Mapping Conventions, the definition of agricultural lands used in the 1994 MOA (see NFSAM Part 527.12) will be used. This definition is slightly different from the definition in the NFSAM in that it specifies that agricultural lands are lands that are intensively used and managed for food or fiber production **to the extent that the natural vegetation has been removed and cannot be used to determine whether the area meets applicable hydrophytic vegetation criteria.** This therefore excludes lands such as native pasture and rangeland that are part of the NFSAM definition. Examples of agricultural lands are cropland, hayland and pastures, groves, sod farms, and small tree farms (where the trees are harvested whole, as in nurseries or Christmas tree farms). Lands where the natural vegetation has not been removed, even though it may be regularly grazed, mowed, or hayed, are not considered agricultural lands for the purposes of these Mapping Conventions. The MOA definition is used here to distinguish between situations that require use of the '87 Manual and potential coordination with the COE (i.e., determinations on non-agricultural lands), and those that do not (i.e., determinations on agricultural lands).

### D. Certification

Certification of a wetland determination indicates that the determination was completed according to procedures agreed upon in the 1994 MOA and is sufficient for determining eligibility for USDA programs. All wetland determinations made after July 3, 1996 will be done on a whole tract basis and will be certified. Certification procedures include providing a Wetland Conservation Determination (Form NRCS-CPA-026E) to the recipient and marking NRCS and official FSA maps with the location of all wetland labels on the tract. See FOTG Section I (E)(1)(b)2 – Documentation for Certified Wetland Determinations and NFSAM Parts 514.51 and 523.23 for more information on certification requirements.

### E. Coordination

As per the 1994 MOA, NRCS will contact the COE and provide an opportunity for review, comment and concurrence with the findings of NRCS on all areas where the '87 Manual is used to make a wetland determination other than narrow bands and small pockets. The COE will review the proposed determination and respond to NRCS regarding its acceptability for CWA Section 404 purposes within 45 days of receipt of all necessary information. Necessary information to be provided to the COE for coordination purposes is listed in FOTG Section I (E)(1)(b)2 – Documentation for Certified Wetland Determinations.

In cases where coordination with the COE is required, NRCS will not issue a certified wetland determination to the landowner/producer until concurrence is received. If written concurrence is not received from the COE within 45 days of receipt of all necessary information, concurrence may be assumed; **however**, it is strongly recommended that NRCS staff develop productive working relationships with their local COE Regulatory Office counterparts to facilitate the coordination process.

In addition, NRCS policy requires notification to the COE of any manipulation of land (see the definition of manipulation on page 4) that may require CWA Section 404 authorization when observed in the course of administering NRCS responsibilities (see NFSAM Part 513.22e). **Any manipulation that receives a Section 404 permit will exempt the wetland from the provisions of the Act. NRCS will accept COE permit decisions to satisfy provisions of the Act.** See the NFSAM Part 510.46 for more information.

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### F. Delineation

A wetland delineation is outlining the boundaries of a wetland determination on the ground (the jurisdictional boundaries, also known as a “jurisdictional delineation”) or a map (approximate boundaries).

### G. Determination

A wetland determination is placing **wetland labels** and their approximate boundaries on an approved base map or photocopy thereof for a given tract. Wetland labels signify the characteristics and uses of distinct portions of the tract (e.g., PC, W, FW, NW, etc.). When delineated in accordance with the NFSAM (and '87 Manual procedures where applicable) and adequately documented, a determination may become certified. Wetland determinations once certified will be valid for purposes of the Act **as long as the area remains in agricultural use** unless natural events, new information, or a wetland violation warrants a revision of the determination. Certified wetland determinations made by NRCS will be valid for CWA purposes, **but only for a period of five years** from the date of certification.

### H. Making Production Possible

Making production possible means manipulation:

- which allows or would allow production of an agricultural commodity where such production was not previously possible, or
- making an area farmable more years than previously possible, or
- which reduces crop stress and allows increased crop yields, or
- after 11/28/90 that allows forage production or pasture/hayland use. On sites with woody vegetation, trees and stumps must be removed to constitute “making production possible.”

### I. Manipulation

Manipulation is the alteration of hydrology and/or the removal of woody vegetation (stems and stumps) on a wetland.

### J. Mapping Tools

It is imperative that the best and most complete data be used to make determinations and delineations. To this end, a list of mapping tools has been developed to help ensure that NRCS wetland determinations are as accurate as possible.

The principle tools to make wetland determinations are recent and historic aerial photography, NRCS County Soil Survey maps, and FWS National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) maps. When these tools are not in agreement with conditions documented onsite, the rationale must be documented in the wetland determination case file via COE Data Forms and/or other relevant information. Reasons for discrepancies in wetland signatures include canopy cover masking signatures in wooded areas or emergent hydrophytic vegetation being indistinguishable from upland herbaceous vegetation on aerial photography. The NFSAM Part 513.30d provides helpful tips for identifying wetlands on aerial photography.

**Use of wetland mapping tools must take into consideration periods of above and below normal precipitation**, e.g., a color infrared aerial photograph may have been taken soon after a major rain event, or an NWI map may reflect conditions as they were during a drought year. Particularly if mapping tools are not in agreement, it may be necessary to consult local long term climatological data and apply **hydrology tools** to confirm that wetland signatures are

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reflective of long term wetland hydrology for the site. See NFSAM Part 527.4 and *NRCS Engineering Field Handbook*, Chapter 19, "Hydrology Tools for Wetland Determination," for guidance.)

*Note on NWI maps:* NWI maps identify permanent water bodies such as lakes and rivers in addition to wetlands as they are defined by the Food Security Act (see NFSAM Part 513.11) and Clean Water Act. **NWI maps may not identify farmed wetlands because they lack natural vegetation.** The FWS publication *Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States* (1979, FWS/ OBS-79/31), which is a required reference in the FOTG Section I (A)(10) Reference List, describes the NWI map classification method.

In addition to the mapping tools listed above, others include:

- Farm Services Agency (FSA) color slides
- USGS Topographic Maps
- FSA cropping history records
- Floodplain maps or inventories
- Climatic data
- Prior knowledge from on-site visits
- Engineering surveys of site on file

### K. Narrow Bands and Small Pockets

In Florida, the NRCS, COE, EPA and FWS have determined that narrow bands of non-agricultural land are those that are no more than **200 feet wide** and immediately adjacent to agricultural land. Small pockets of non-agricultural land are those that are no more than **five acres** in size interspersed among agricultural lands. Note that these two terms refer to the sizes **of the non-agricultural lands**, not of any wetlands that may occur within these areas of non-agricultural lands.

### L. Non-Agricultural Lands

Land that is not covered by the definition of agricultural land, i.e., lands where natural vegetation is still present to the extent that it may be used to determine whether the area meets applicable hydrophytic vegetation criteria.

### M. Other Waters of the United States (OW)

As of September 2000, where an "Other Waters" determination is necessary, the COE will determine Other Waters for purposes of Section 404 of the CWA for land on which NRCS is otherwise engaged in making a wetland determination. Other Waters are not regulated under the Food Security Act. These areas can only be labeled on NRCS certified wetland determinations by the COE. **Therefore, unless manipulation has occurred (a potential CWA violation) or is proposed (a CWA permit is potentially needed) in an Other Water, label these areas as "Not Inventoried" (see NFSAM Part 514.27 for information on use of the NI label).** If manipulation has or will occur in an OW, contact the COE for an onsite inspection of the area. The COE must delineate the OW on a copy of the NRCS base map. The cover letter accompanying the certified wetland determination will state that Other Waters have been identified on the tract and that the person should contact the COE before working in these areas.

Other Waters include all of the following where they are coded blue on USGS topographic maps (1:24,000 scale):

- Perennial Streams (flow 90% of the year or more in a well-defined channel)

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- Intermittent Streams (flow only during the wet season for a few months per year and appear dry during the remainder of the time, may or may not have a well-defined channel)
- Lakes
- Ponds
- Rivers
- Ditches

Other Waters will also include most areas with a label other than Palustrine (e.g., Lacustrine, Riverine, Estuarine, etc.) on NWI maps.

**NOTE:** Not all Other Waters will be marked in blue on USGS maps. **Areas meeting the criteria for Artificial Wetlands (AW) are not to be considered OWs.** See procedures for determining Artificial Wetlands on page 15.

Be aware that a vegetated wetland fringe often occurs along natural ponds, lakes, streams, rivers and ditches in Florida. **These wetlands are subject to the Act** and to CWA Section 404 permitting authority, and are delineated in accordance with '87 Manual procedures. See procedures for determining Wetlands associated with Other Waters on page 7. However, unless manipulation has occurred or is proposed in the wetland fringe, these wetlands can be labeled Not Inventoried (NI) along with the adjacent Other Waters.

### N. Scope and Effect

Scope and effect is the term used to refer to the documentation of site hydrology resulting from hydrologic manipulation to wetlands prior to December 23, 1985 or planned hydrologic manipulation on these previously manipulated wetlands. A scope and effect evaluation is made to help determine whether an action is considered maintenance vs. improvement of an existing drainage or water control system. If manipulation after December 23, 1985 exceeds the scope and effect of the original hydrologic manipulation, the action will be considered **conversion**. Scope and effect documentation will require a field visit. A scope and effect evaluation is not a substitute for determining hydrology onsite in accordance with normal NFSAM/'87 Manual procedures.

Documentation of the scope and effect of hydrologic manipulation is required:

- as part of the initial determination for all FW and FWP labels.
- to respond to an AD-1026 form referred from FSA indicating a USDA program participant has or will conduct maintenance of an existing drainage system or installation of a new drainage system.
- to respond to complaints regarding hydrologic manipulation on a tract.
- during appeals.

**Scope and effect documentation must consist of written records for each site.** Tools used to support scope and effect documentations may consist of interviews of parties with knowledge of the site, application of computer models, probing existing drains, aerial photographs, satellite imagery, historical rainfall records, engineering analysis of hydrology, or any combination of these tools. See NFSAM Part 515 for further information on determining the scope and effect of existing or planned hydrologic manipulation.

### O. Urbanizing Areas

Agricultural lands where non-agricultural uses have been established or will be established to the extent that agricultural production will no longer occur or is no longer feasible (see NFSAM Part 513.22a). Requests for wetland determinations in these areas should be referred to the COE.

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### III. MAPPING CONVENTIONS FOR SPECIFIC WETLAND LABELS

**NOTE: These conventions must be used in conjunction with the appropriate sections in NFSAM Part 514. The onsite visit needed to conduct a wetland determination/delineation requires a signed Request for Wetland Determination (form NRCS-CPA-38).**

For all potential wetlands on non-agricultural land (natural vegetation), '87 Manual procedures will be used and data will be recorded on COE data forms. A copy of this form may be found in FOTG Section I (E)(1)(b)2 – Documentation for Certified Wetland Determinations. For potential wetlands where natural vegetation has been disturbed or removed, follow procedures stated in the NFSAM Part 527.4 (**currently the '87 Manual criteria and indicators**). Data will be recorded on COE Data Forms or on wetland site documentation forms NRCS-CPA-32 through -37, found in NFSAM Part 526.

Mapping Conventions for the following wetland labels are found in this section:

- A. **WETLAND (W)**
- B. **NON-WETLAND (NW)**
- C. **FARMED WETLAND (FW)**
- D. **FARMED WETLAND PASTURE OR HAYLAND (FWP)**
- E. **PRIOR CONVERTED CROPLAND (PC)**
- F. **CONVERTED WETLAND (CW or CW+yr)**
- G. **MANIPULATED WETLAND (WX)**
- H. **ARTIFICIAL WETLAND (AW)**
- I. **NOT INVENTORIED (NI)**
- J. **OTHER WETLAND MAP LABELS**

#### A. WETLANDS (W)

##### Definition:

*Wetlands that are labeled (W) are areas that meet wetland criteria under natural conditions and have typically not been manipulated by altering hydrology and/or removing woody vegetation. Wetland includes areas that have been abandoned (see NFSAM 514.25). Wetland criteria are described in NFSAM Parts 513.11 and 527.4.*

Wetlands may be planted to produce an agricultural commodity under natural conditions after December 23, 1985, as long as **all** of the following requirements are met:

- production is made possible as a result of a natural condition, such as drought
- water regimes are not manipulated
- woody vegetation (including stumps) is not removed
- normal tillage does not fill, level, or otherwise cause conversion of the wetland.

NOTE: Removal of herbaceous vegetation is not considered manipulation.

Impoundments and ponds placed in existing wetlands (W, FW, or FWP) **do not remain wetlands after construction where the depth and duration of inundation prevents the survival of emergent wetland vegetation**. These areas typically qualify for other wetland labels such as CWNA or WX. See the descriptions of Other Wetland Labels on page 17 and NFSAM Part 514, Subpart C for more information on these labels.

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To delineate wetlands associated with open water (e.g., Other Waters) the wetland/open water boundary is determined by the extent of emergent vegetation. Where water depth or other factors prevent the establishment of emergent vegetation, the area is no longer wetland.

### Procedures:

- Step 1: Review County Soil Survey and Hydric Soils List to locate any areas of hydric soils, hydric inclusions or other potentially hydric soils (denoted by “crow’s foot” symbols) on the tract or portion of interest. Note date of Soil Survey map data.*
- Step 2: Review NWI maps, aerial photography and any other appropriate Mapping Tools that may indicate the presence of wetlands. Particularly if Mapping Tools are not in agreement, it may be necessary to consult local climatological data and apply hydrology tools to confirm that wetland signatures are reflective of long term wetland hydrology for the site. See NFSAM Part 527.4 and NRCS Engineering Field Handbook, Chapter 19, “Hydrology Tools for Wetland Determination,” for guidance.*
- Step 3: Review 1985, 1990, and present aerial photos or FSA slides to check for land use changes that may indicate wetland manipulation or conversion.*
- Step 4: Make site visit and apply '87 Manual procedures to potential wetland areas identified using Mapping Tools and any additional ones identified onsite, as necessary for compliance with the Act (i.e., it may not be necessary to determine all wetlands on the tract) . Data confirming the presence or absence of wetland criteria typically must be collected at **a minimum of two points** in order to accurately locate the wetland boundary. Refer to procedures in the '87 Manual for detailed information.*
- Step 5: Label site W if applicable. Outline area on the official FSA base map and NRCS field office base map. Include documentation supporting the chosen label in the client’s file. Keep an electronic copy of the GIS wetland determination map in the client’s Customer Service Toolkit folder or Wetland Toolkit folder.*

## B. NON-WETLAND (NW)

### Definition:

*1. Non-wetland is land that under natural conditions never did and currently does not meet wetland criteria, also known as **upland**.*

*2. Non-wetland also includes **converted wetlands which did not meet wetland criteria as of December 23 1985, and***

- do not meet prior converted cropland criteria (see page 12)
- have not been abandoned. Note: NW is not protected from abandonment by documentation of baseline conditions prior to abandonment as is the case for FW and FWP.

In Florida, wetlands that were drained for citrus groves prior to December 23, 1985 and where wetland hydrology has not returned are a common example of the second definition.

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FSA records may be used to determine if an agricultural commodity was produced. In the absence of FSA records and for non-program participants, documentation of cropping history should be based on aerial photography, crop expense or receipt records, or other suitable documentation.

### Procedures:

- Step 1: Review County Soil Survey and Hydric Soils List to locate any areas of hydric soils, hydric inclusions or other potentially hydric soils (denoted by “crow’s foot” symbols) on the tract or portion of interest. Note date of Soil Survey map data.*
- Step 2: For any areas that may meet the criteria in Definition 2, review NWI maps, aerial photography and any other appropriate Mapping Tools that may indicate the presence of wetlands. Particularly if Mapping Tools are not in agreement, it may be necessary to consult local climatological data and apply hydrology tools to confirm that wetland signatures are reflective of long term wetland hydrology for the site. See NFSAM Part 527.4 and NRCS Engineering Field Handbook, Chapter 19, “Hydrology Tools for Wetland Determination,” for guidance.*
- Step 3: For any areas that may meet the criteria in Definition 2, refer to past aerial photography and/or FSA records to determine cropping history (i.e., agricultural commodity vs. any other use) and abandonment status. If area meets abandonment criteria, it will be labeled W. See NFSAM Part 514.25 for more information.*
- Step 4: Make site visit to confirm potential NW areas (both uplands and former wetlands) identified by the Mapping Tools. Data confirming the presence or absence of wetland criteria typically must be collected at **a minimum of two points** in order to accurately locate the wetland boundary (if area fits second definition of NW). Refer to procedures in the '87 Manual for detailed information. If all relevant Mapping Tools and the onsite inspection confirm that an area is upland, it is not necessary to complete a COE data form to support the NW designation.*
- Step 5: Label site NW if applicable. Outline area on the official FSA base map and NRCS field office base map. Include documentation supporting the chosen label in the client’s file. Keep an electronic copy of the GIS wetland determination map in the client’s Customer Service Toolkit folder or Wetland Toolkit folder.*

### C. FARMED WETLAND (FW)

#### Definition:

*Farmed wetlands are wetlands that were drained, dredged, filled, leveled or otherwise manipulated **before December 23, 1985**, for the purpose of or to have effect of making the production of an agricultural commodity possible, and meets all of the following criteria:*

- is seasonally flooded or ponded for at least 15 consecutive days during the growing season under average conditions (50% chance of occurrence).
- production was not possible before the manipulation
- an agricultural commodity has been produced at least once prior to December 23, 1985

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- the area has not been abandoned. As long as the site remains in agricultural use, the FW will not be considered abandoned IF the person provides NRCS with hydrologic and vegetative baseline conditions prior to abandonment. This allows management of the site to resume as long as the original scope and effect of manipulation is not exceeded.

FSA records may be used to determine if an agricultural commodity was produced. In the absence of FSA records and for non-program participants, documentation of cropping history should be based on aerial photography, crop expense or receipt records, or other suitable documentation.

NOTE: Impoundments and ponds placed in existing wetlands (W, FW, or FWP) **do not remain wetlands after construction where the depth and duration of inundation prevents the survival of emergent wetland vegetation.** These areas typically qualify for other wetland labels such as CWNA or WX. See the descriptions of Other Wetland Labels on page 17 and NFSAM Part 514, Subpart C for more information on these labels.

**CAUTION: If the area has been altered after 12/23/85, it may meet the converted wetland criteria.**

### Procedures:

- Step 1: Review County Soil Survey and Hydric Soils List to locate any areas of hydric soil, hydric soil inclusions or other potentially hydric soils (denoted by "crow's foot" symbols) on the tract or portion of interest. Note date of Soil Survey map data.*
- Step 2: Review NWI map, and historic and current aerial photography/FSA slides to determine 1) the presence of a wetland signature and 2) if and when the site was hydrologically manipulated or had the woody vegetation removed. Choose photos/slides dated as close to 12/23/85 as possible. If hydrology was modified before 12/23/85, document the scope and effect of drainage systems or other hydrologic manipulations.*
- Step 3: Refer to past aerial photography and/or FSA records to determine cropping history and abandonment status. Determine if the site has been abandoned without the abandonment being part of an approved plan (documentation of baseline conditions). If area meets abandonment criteria, it will be labeled W. See NFSAM Part 514.25 for more information.*
- Step 4: Make site visit and use NFSAM procedures and appropriate hydrology tools to confirm whether the site is flooded or ponded for 15 consecutive days during the growing season under average conditions (50% chance occurrence). See NFSAM Part 514.22d for guidance on documenting seasonally flooded or ponded conditions. If site has been manipulated since 12/23/85 beyond the scope and effect of any prior manipulation, it may meet the converted wetland criteria.*
- Step 5: Label site FW if applicable. Outline area on the official FSA base map and NRCS field office base map. Include documentation supporting the chosen label in the client's file. Keep an electronic copy of the GIS wetland determination map in the client's Customer Service Toolkit folder or Wetland Toolkit folder.*

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### D. FARMED WETLAND PASTURE OR HAYLAND (FWP)

#### Definition:

*A farmed wetland pasture or hayland is a wetland that was manipulated and used for pasture or hayland (includes native pasture or hayland) as of December 23, 1985 and meets the following criteria:*

- is inundated for at least 7 consecutive days during the growing season, OR saturated for at least 14 consecutive days during the growing season, and
- has not been abandoned. As long as the site remains in agricultural use, the FWP will not be considered abandoned IF the person provides NRCS with hydrologic and vegetative baseline conditions prior to abandonment. This allows management of the site to resume as long as the original scope and effect of manipulation is not exceeded.

FSA records may be used to determine cropping history. In the absence of FSA records and for non-program participants, documentation of cropping history should be based on aerial photography, crop expense or receipt records, or other suitable documentation.

NOTE: Impoundments and ponds placed in existing wetlands (W, FW, or FWP) **do not remain wetlands after construction where the depth and duration of inundation prevents the survival of emergent wetland vegetation.** These areas typically qualify for other wetland labels such as CWNA or WX. See the descriptions of Other Wetland Labels on page 17 and NFSAM Part 514, Subpart C for more information on these labels.

**CAUTION: If the area has been altered since 12/23/85, it may meet the converted wetland criteria.**

#### Procedures:

- Step 1: Review County Soil Survey and Hydric Soils List to locate any areas of hydric soil, hydric soil inclusions or other potentially hydric soils (denoted by "crow's foot" symbols) on the tract or portion of interest. Note date of Soil Survey map data.*
- Step 2: Review NWI map, and historic and current aerial photography/FSA slides to determine 1) the presence of a wetland signature and 2) if and when the site was hydrologically manipulated or had the woody vegetation removed. Choose photos/slides dated as close to 12/23/85 as possible. If hydrology was modified before 12/23/85, document the scope and effect of drainage systems or other hydrologic manipulations.*
- Step 3: Refer to past aerial photography and/or FSA records to determine cropping history and abandonment status. Determine if the site has been abandoned without the abandonment being part of an approved plan (documentation of baseline conditions). If area meets abandonment criteria, it will be labeled W. See NFSAM Part 514.25 for more information.*
- Step 4: Make site visit and use NFSAM procedures and appropriate hydrology tools to confirm that the site is inundated for 7 consecutive days or saturated for 14 consecutive days during the growing season under average conditions (50% chance occurrence). See NRCS Engineering Field Handbook, Chapter 19, "Hydrology Tools for Wetland Determination," for guidance. If site has been*

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*manipulated since 12/23/85 beyond the scope and effect of any prior manipulation, it may meet the converted wetland criteria.*

*Step 5: Label site FWP if applicable. Outline area on the official FSA base map and NRCS field office base map. Include documentation supporting the chosen label in the client's file. Keep an electronic copy of the GIS wetland determination map in the client's Customer Service Toolkit folder or Wetland Toolkit folder.*

### E. PRIOR CONVERTED CROPLAND (PC)

#### Definition:

*Prior converted croplands are converted wetlands that were drained, dredged, filled, leveled, or otherwise manipulated before December 23, 1985, and an agricultural commodity was produced at least once prior to December 23, 1985.*

To be considered prior converted cropland, the area occurring on saturated, ponded, or flooded hydric soil must meet all of the following criteria:

- was drained or otherwise manipulated before 12/23/85, making the production of an agricultural commodity possible
- did not support woody vegetation as of 12/23/85
- an agricultural commodity was produced at least once prior to 12/23/85
- as of 12/23/85, did **not** flood or pond for 15 consecutive days during the growing season under average conditions (50% chance of occurrence)
- as of 12/23/85, did not meet wetland, farmed wetland, or farmed wetland pasture criteria

**NOTE:** Prior converted croplands are exempt from the Wetland Conservation Provisions of the Act. PC's retain this label **as long as they are in agricultural use** and may **not** be considered abandoned; however, for CWA purposes, if the area is not managed for five consecutive years such that wetland conditions return, the COE may consider the area abandoned.

#### Procedures:

*Step 1: Review County Soil Survey and Hydric Soils List to locate any areas of hydric soil, hydric soil inclusions or other potentially hydric soils (denoted by "crow's foot" symbols) on the tract or portion of interest. Note date of Soil Survey map data.*

*Step 2: Review NWI map, and historic and current aerial photography/FSA slides to determine 1) the presence of a wetland signature and 2) if and when the site was hydrologically manipulated or had the woody vegetation removed. Choose photos/slides dated as close to 12/23/85 as possible. **Drainage systems or other hydrologic manipulations may be maintained or improved after 12/23/85, provided that the hydrology of any adjacent wetlands (W, FW, FWP, etc.) is not adversely impacted. Adjacent areas containing hydric soils should be determined.***

*Step 3: Refer to past aerial photography and/or FSA records to determine whether an agricultural commodity was produced on the area at least once prior to 1985.*

## Florida Mapping Conventions

*Step 4: Make site visit and use NFSAM procedures and appropriate hydrology tools to confirm that the site does not flood or pond for 15 consecutive days during the growing season under average conditions (50% chance occurrence). See NRCS Engineering Field Handbook, Chapter 19, "Hydrology Tools for Wetland Determination," for guidance.*

*Step 5: Label the site PC if applicable. Outline area on the official FSA base map and NRCS field office base map. Include documentation supporting the chosen label in the client's file. Keep an electronic copy of the GIS wetland determination map in the client's Customer Service Toolkit folder or Wetland Toolkit folder.*

### F. CONVERTED WETLAND (CW or CW+Year)

#### Definition:

*A converted wetland is an area that was formerly wetland (e.g., W, FW, FWP) and meets all of the following criteria:*

- after December 23, 1985, has been drained, dredged, filled, leveled, or otherwise manipulated, including any activity that results in impairing or reducing the flow, circulation, or reach of water, **and/or**
- woody vegetation, including stems and stumps, was removed, **and**
- the purpose or effect of the activity was to make production of an agricultural commodity possible or to increase production, such as:
  - (1) making an area farmable in more years than it previously was, or
  - (2) increasing yield because of reduced crop stress due to wetness.

*Note that although the term "conversion" is often used to mean simply that an area no longer meets wetland criteria, for purposes of the Act, **the label "Converted Wetland" also requires that the purpose or effect of the activity was to make production of an agricultural commodity possible or to increase production.** Converted wetlands that do not meet this requirement qualify for either the label WX or an exemption label. See NFSAM Part 514 for further explanation.*

NOTE: If woody stumps are not removed, or if they are cleared from an area of land so small that the use of conventional tillage equipment is not possible, the manipulation is not considered conversion for purposes of the Act. NFSAM Parts 514.24d and 514.24e contain helpful examples of activities that are and are not considered conversion.

When the Act was signed in 1985, it provided that persons shall be ineligible for USDA benefits **if an agricultural commodity is planted on wetland that was converted after December 23, 1985.** Revisions to the Act in 1990 mandated additional restrictions for land **converted** after November 28, 1990. For this reason, NRCS is required to determine whether a wetland was converted before or after November 28, 1990. **Conversions made after 11/28/90 will be labeled CW+yr. Conversions made prior to 11/28/90 but after 12/23/85 will be labeled CW.**

Wetland conversion activities will be assessed to determine if any exemptions to the Act apply to the conversion. Exemption labels are described in NFSAM Part 514, Subpart C.

## Florida Mapping Conventions

### Procedures:

- Step 1: Review County Soil Survey and Hydric Soils List to locate any areas of hydric soil, hydric soil inclusions or other potentially hydric soils (denoted by "crow's foot" symbols) on the tract or portion of interest. Note date of Soil Survey map data.*
- Step 2: Review NWI maps, aerial photography and any other appropriate Mapping Tools that may indicate the presence of wetlands. Particularly if Mapping Tools are not in agreement, it may be necessary to consult local climatological data and apply hydrology tools to confirm that wetland signatures are reflective of long term wetland hydrology for the site. See NFSAM Part 527.4 and NRCS Engineering Field Handbook, Chapter 19, "Hydrology Tools for Wetland Determination," for guidance.*
- Step 3: Review 1985, 1990, and/or other appropriate year aerial photos or FSA slides to confirm date of potential wetland conversion. FSA receipts or other records may also be used to help determine the date. For wetlands converted between 12/23/85 and 11/28/90, it is generally not critical to know the exact crop year of conversion. For wetlands converted after 11/28/90, the crop year must be determined using the best available data.*
- Step 4: Make site visit and apply '87 Manual procedures to potential converted wetland areas identified using Mapping Tools and any additional ones identified onsite. All converted wetlands **on the tract** must be determined if the tract is owned by a USDA program participant. Data confirming the presence or absence of wetland criteria typically must be collected at **a minimum of two points** in order to accurately locate the wetland boundary. Be aware that wetland criteria are often altered or removed as a result of conversion. Refer to procedures in the '87 Manual for detailed information.*
- Step 5: Label site CW or CW+Year if applicable. Outline area on the official FSA base map and NRCS field office base map. Include documentation supporting the chosen label in the client's file. Keep an electronic copy of the GIS wetland determination map in the client's Customer Service Toolkit folder or Wetland Toolkit folder.*

### G. MANIPULATED WETLANDS (WX)

#### Definition:

*Wetlands that have been manipulated after December 23, 1985, and the manipulation was not for the purpose of and did not make production of an agricultural commodity possible. Manipulated wetlands may or may not meet wetland criteria depending on type and degree of manipulation. These areas by definition are not capable of producing an agricultural commodity. **If a commodity is ever produced on the manipulated wetland or if production is later made possible, the area will become a converted wetland (CW+Year). See NFSAM Part 514.28 for examples of WX.***

**NRCS personnel will notify the local COE office of the nature and location of these manipulated wetlands, and will seek a decision as to whether the activity violated the CWA. The person will be advised of the COE decision.**

## Florida Mapping Conventions

### Procedures:

- Step 1: Review County Soil Survey and Hydric Soils List to locate any areas of hydric soils, hydric inclusions or other potentially hydric soils (denoted by “crow’s foot” symbols) on the tract or portion of interest. Note date of Soil Survey map data.*
- Step 2: Review NWI maps, aerial photography and any other appropriate Mapping Tools that may indicate the presence of wetlands. Particularly if Mapping Tools are not in agreement, it may be necessary to consult local climatological data and apply hydrology tools to confirm that wetland signatures are reflective of long term wetland hydrology for the site. See NFSAM Part 527.4 and NRCS Engineering Field Handbook, Chapter 19, “Hydrology Tools for Wetland Determination,” for guidance.*
- Step 3: Review 1985, 1990, and present aerial photos or FSA slides to check for land use changes that may indicate wetland manipulation or conversion.*
- Step 4: Make site visit and apply '87 Manual procedures to potential wetland areas identified using Mapping Tools and any additional ones identified onsite. Data confirming the presence or absence of wetland criteria typically must be collected at **a minimum of two points** in order to accurately locate the wetland boundary. Be aware that wetland criteria may be altered or removed as a result of manipulation. Refer to procedures in the '87 Manual for detailed information.*
- Step 5: Label site WX if applicable. Outline area on the official FSA base map and NRCS field office base map. Include documentation supporting the chosen label in the client’s file. Keep an electronic copy of the GIS wetland determination map in the client’s Customer Service Toolkit folder or Wetland Toolkit folder.*

## H. ARTIFICIAL WETLAND (AW)

### Definition:

*Artificial wetland is land that was formerly non-wetland under natural conditions, but now exhibits wetland characteristics because of human activities. These areas are exempt from the wetland conservation provisions of the Act and thus can be drained, removed or manipulated without causing ineligibility for USDA benefits.*

Examples of AW include:

- A wet area created incidentally by an irrigation delivery system or other adjacent human activity on an area that was formerly non-wetland.
- Ponds constructed in uplands. These will be labeled as AW even though all or part of these areas may be too deep to allow wetland vegetation to grow (i.e., technically does not meet the hydrophytic vegetation criteria for a wetland).

## Florida Mapping Conventions

### Cautions:

- Enhancement of the hydrology on an existing wetland does not make the wetland an AW. Such an area would remain wetland unless the hydrology is enhanced to the point where wetland vegetation cannot survive.
- Wetlands created by beaver activity are not artificial wetlands.

The label AW/W or AW/FW should be used for wetland determinations when no manipulation is proposed, and where it is difficult to distinguish between irrigation induced or enhanced wetlands and natural wetlands or farmed wetlands. A determination of the extent of W, FW, and AW must be made at the time manipulation is proposed.

NOTE: If a manmade pond or pit was created entirely within uplands it will usually not be considered jurisdictional by the COE. **An important exception may occur** when the pond or pit has "naturalized" with the establishment of wetland vegetation. If the pond or pit has naturalized, the COE may exert Section 404 jurisdiction down to the ordinary high water mark and any vegetated wetlands which may be present. For NRCS purposes, the entire area should be marked as AW, but the person will be notified in writing to contact the COE prior to altering these areas.

### Procedures:

*Step 1: Review County Soil Survey and Hydric Soils List to locate any areas of hydric soils, hydric inclusions or other potentially hydric soils (denoted by "crow's foot" symbols) on the tract or portion of interest. Note date of Soil Survey map data. Any part of the area that is on hydric soil **cannot** be AW unless it can be **documented** that hydric soil indicators had been removed through drainage or other means prior to December 23, 1985.*

*Step 2: Review NWI maps, aerial photography and any other appropriate Mapping Tools that may indicate the presence of wetlands, to determine if area was in fact created by human activities. Document conclusions.*

*Step 3: Make site visit to confirm potential AW areas identified by the Mapping Tools. If all relevant Mapping Tools and the onsite inspection confirm that an area is an AW, it is not necessary to complete a COE data form to support the AW designation.*

*Step 5: Label site AW if applicable. Outline area on the official FSA base map and NRCS field office base map. Include documentation supporting the chosen label in the client's file. Keep an electronic copy of the GIS wetland determination map in the client's Customer Service Toolkit folder or Wetland Toolkit folder.*

### I. NOT INVENTORIED (NI)

#### Definition

*This label is used when not conducting a wetland determination on certain portions of a tract. Areas that are not determined are labeled NI. Emphasize to client that NRCS should be notified before conducting activities that may impact wetlands in these areas.*

## Florida Mapping Conventions

### J. OTHER WETLAND MAP LABELS

Other wetland labels, signifying exemptions to the Act, are briefly described below. Wetland conversion activities will be assessed to determine if any exemptions to the Act apply to the conversion. Even where an exemption is appropriate, certain restrictions may apply for maintaining the exemption, and an onsite visit is required to make a wetland determination and help evaluate whether an exemption is warranted. Use of all labels will follow procedures outline in the NFSAM and/or the '87 Manual, as appropriate. Refer to NFSAM Part 514, Subpart C for more information.

**a) Corps Permit Decision (CPD)** – Indicates that activity in a wetland has been authorized by a COE Section 404 permit. Obtain copy of permit for file and label the area CPD. Authorized activities in wetland and on mitigation site, if applicable, are as per COE permit requirements.

**b) Converted Wetland Non-Agricultural Use (CWNA)** – Wetland conversion is not for the purpose of producing an agricultural commodity, but is for another purpose related to the agricultural operation. Examples are wetlands converted for groves, fish production, roads, irrigation pivot tracks, buildings, agricultural waste management structures, and livestock or irrigation ponds. Specific requirements apply, including proof of a COE permit or permit exemption for those wetlands that are jurisdictional under the Clean Water Act. See NFSAM Part 514.32 for details.

**c) Converted Wetland Technical Error (CWTE)** – Wetland converted after 12/23/85 where a violation occurred as a result of an incorrect NRCS wetland determination or misinformed Farm Service Agency decision. Exemption must be approved by the State Conservationist. Authorized activities vary. See NFSAM Part 514.34 for details.

**d) Minimal Effect Exemption (MW)** – Applies where wetland conversion activity is determined to have an insignificant adverse effect on the functions and values of the wetland and/or the wetlands in the area. Criteria for the exemption are found in the *Florida Evaluation for Determining Wetland Minimal Effect Exemptions*, located in the Florida FOTG Section I (E) 1(b)4. At the national level, a list of activities considered to have insignificant adverse effects on wetlands is in development as of the date of this document. These activities, if conducted in accordance with specific national criteria, will be known as categorically exempted. Conversions meeting these criteria will be eligible for the Categorical Minimal Effect Exemption (CMW) label.

**e) Mitigated Wetland (MIW)** – A converted wetland whose functions will be mitigated for by restoring, enhancing, or creating another wetland according to an NRCS or COE-approved wetland mitigation plan. No restrictions on activities on the converted site unless directed by the COE. Mitigation site is labeled W. Restrictions applicable to the W label apply, along with mitigation plan requirements. See NFSAM Part 517 for details.

**f) Third Party Conversion (TP)** – An area converted after 12/23/85 by an entity having no current or previous financial interest on the land that was converted. Typically this entity is a governmental agency performing local or regional drainage, such as a county highway department or state Water Management District, or a neighboring landowner whose activities alter the hydrology of adjacent property. Evidence may be required to prove that the conversion was not part of a scheme or device in avoidance of federal wetland laws.