

# APPENDIX B

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## *CATEGORIES BASED ON SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS*

Questions SC 1 to SC 5 provide the information needed to identify and rate the wetlands with these special characteristics. These types of wetlands have an importance or value that may supersede their functions. **You should determine whether the wetland being rated meets any of the conditions described below as well as answering the questions about functions. If a wetland is categorized as a Category I or II wetland BUT is functioning as a Category III or Category IV, that wetland may be considered for enhancement or restoration.**

### **SC 1.0 Estuarine wetlands**

SC 1.1 Estuarine wetlands are vegetated (salt marsh), saltwater tidal fringe, wetlands where the concentration of salt in the water is normally greater than 5 ppt. Estuarine wetlands of any size within a Federal, State, or Local protection area are rated as Category I if they are not disturbed.

SC 1.2 Any estuarine wetland that does not meet the criteria above for a Category I becomes a Category II wetland. These are usually less than 1 acre in size.

### **SC 2.0 Flat wetlands (generic term bog)**

The FLAT, ORGANIC HGM subclass may be considered Category I wetlands. These are peat-forming ecosystems influenced solely by water which falls directly on it as rain or snow. Bogs have low pH (3.0 – 4.2) (acidic), nutrient poor and have thick fibrous brown peat composed mainly or entirely of partially disintegrated Sphagnum, with a water table at or near the surface. Soils are histosols or have a histic epipedon. There is little standing water except in ponds. Bog vegetation may be dominated by herbs, shrubs, or sparse trees but Sphagnum moss is usually present. Bog succession can vary through several stages (refer to Talbot, S.S. & Gabriel, H.W. Glossary of Landscape & Vegetation Ecology for Alaska. 1984; Moore, P.D. & Bellamy, D.J. Peatlands). These types are generally regarded as “regionally and locally” unique. Black spruce woodland bogs are not usually included as a SC 2.0.

### **SC 3.0 Slope or discharge wetlands (fens)**

Fens are considered Category I wetlands. In contrast to bogs, fens are a peat-forming ecosystem that receive most of their water from ground water. Fens have high pH, alkaline and nutrient rich. Fens generally support more varied vegetation composed of grasses, sedges (compared to bogs) but are generally absent of sphagnum mosses

### **SC 4.0 Unique and Natural Heritage wetlands**

All wetlands that fall within the following designations are considered Category I wetlands:

- *Federal, State, or Local protection area including all Acts (TES, Wild & Scenic Rivers Act, special aquatic sites under CWA, American Indian Religious Freedom Act, SHPO designation, etc.);*

- *CERCLA/RCRA Hazardous waste sites;*
- *Federal, State or Local listed TES or candidate species;*
- *Non-compatible use with any restrictive covenant or deed restriction or wetlands that are considered “mitigated” wetlands;*
- *That area adjacent (within a ¼ mile) or hydrologically connected to /with surface waters that contain aquatic species of Federal/State/Local concern or water bodies identified on the Alaska “Catalog of Waters Important for Spawning, Rearing or Migration of Anadromous Fishes”;*
- *That would impact existing or proposed public water supply and/or reservoirs.*

### **SC 5.0 Interdunal wetlands**

Interdunes are those dunes that occur between the “main dune” systems. They are relatively flat, that can be free or sand or covered by sand. Interdunal wetlands are considered Category II wetlands. Interdunal wetlands provide critical habitat for shorebirds, marine mammals, and other wildlife species because of their unique “wetland and upland” boundaries. Because of this they also provide cultural and subsistence significance. This ecosystem is very dynamic with functions and services that are impossible to restore or mitigate.

Appendix B is also available on the Ecological Sciences Share Point Site:

[Appendix%20B\\_Categories%20Based%20on%20Special%20Characteristics](#)