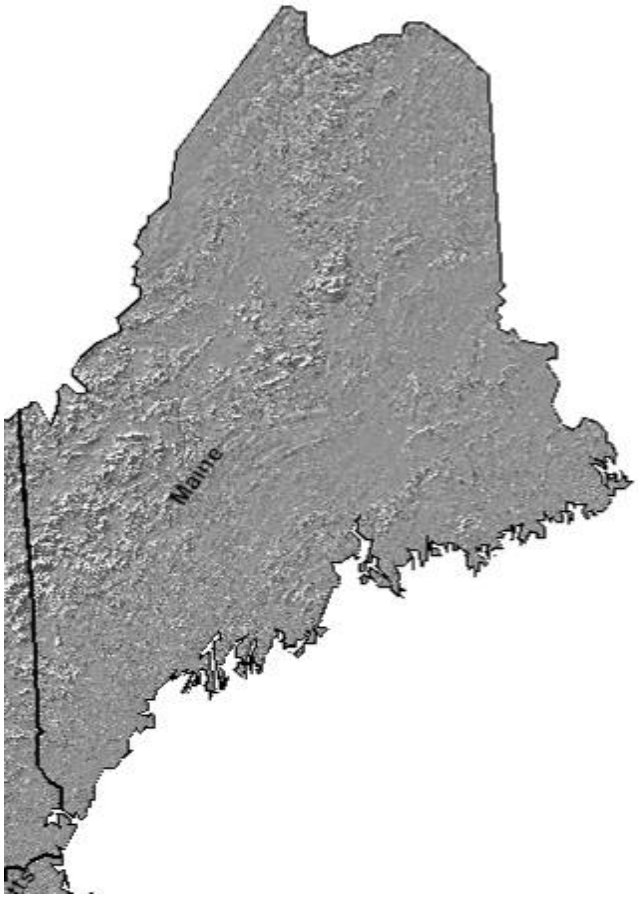
Maine NRCS
State Off-Site Methods for Wetland Determination



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Maine NRCS
State Off-Site Methods for Certified Wetland Determinations
for
Food Security Act

(PART I) INTRODUCTION

Maine's State Off-Site Methods (SOSM) outline the supplemental materials, methods, and criteria that NRCS will use in Maine to prepare certified wetland determinations (CWD) for the Wetland Conservation (Swampbuster) provisions of the Food Security Act of 1985, as amended (FSA). Under the FSA, NRCS has the sole responsibility to make wetland determinations and delineations for USDA program eligibility. The National Food Security Act Manual (NFSAM) Circular No.4, Part 514, Wetland Conservation Compliance (Guidance on Wetland Determinations and Delineation Methodology), dated December 23, 2009, provided notification that NRCS staff with the appropriate job-approval level who are listed on the State Conservationist's roster of employees approved to make wetland determinations ("agency experts") should utilize the methods found in Part IV of the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual (January 1987) and Regional Supplements to make wetland determinations.

There may be situations in which NRCS agency experts need to vary from the methods provided in the 1987 Corps manual and regional supplements due to the statutory requirements of the FSA. NFSAM Circular No. 6, Part 527, Appendix, provides wetland identification procedures to be used in making wetland determinations and delineations for the FSA. These procedures are based on the Corps method (Part IV of the Corps manual and Regional Supplements), but contain variances based on statutory and regulatory authorities provided for in the FSA.

SOSM are specific procedures developed to interpret off-site and remotely sensed data to identify wetlands, and to assign FSA wetland labels at the field level for USDA program participants. SOSM criteria will enable NRCS "agency experts" to evaluate wetland diagnostic factors independently. These SOSM are subordinate to and based on: rules and policies outlined in 7 CFR 12, NFSAM Circular No. 6; and methods and criteria outlined in the USACOE 1987 Wetland Delineation manual, and the Northeast-Northcentral Regional Supplement (current version) – with variances outlined in Circular No. 6. These documents should be consulted as needed, because only the supplemental materials and methods specific to Maine NRCS's FSA responsibilities are intended to be addressed in these SOSM.

(PART II) DEFINITIONS

1. From 7CFR12 - a wetland, defined for FSA purposes, is;

   "*Wetland*, except when such term is a part of the term ''converted wetland'', means land that—
   (1) Has predominance of hydric soils;

(2) Is inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support a prevalence of hydrophytic vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions; and
(3) Under normal circumstances does support a prevalence of such vegetation, except that this term does not include lands in Alaska identified as having a high potential for agricultural development and a predominance of permafrost soils.

Wetland determination means a decision regarding whether or not an area is a wetland, including identification of wetland type and size.

2. From (NFSAM) 180-CPA Circular No.6, Part 527

(2-14) State Offsite Methods (SOSM). Methods developed by NRCS for the sole purpose of supplementing the off-site methodology in the [USA Corps of Engineers wetland delineation] manual for use in identifying wetlands for FSA purposes. The adoption process for State offsite methods will include solicitation of State Technical Committee recommendations. These methods may replace or supplement methods provided for in [State Mapping Conventions] SMCs. The use of "Hydrology Tools for Wetland Determination" contained in Title 210, National Engineering Handbook (NEH), Chapter 19, Part 650 shall be considered to be a SOSM. The SOSM must contain the objective criterion that defines wetland hydrology for each of the hydrology tools in Chapter 19.

(2-2) Agency Expert.-An individual granted job approval authority by a State Conservationist to make technical decisions related to the WC provisions. Job approval authority criteria are found in Title 180, National Food Security Act Manual (NFSAM) Part 514.1(B). All agency experts must be listed on a roster of qualified employees, maintained by the State Conservationist and filed in section III of the Field Office Technical Guide.

(2-4) Comparison Site.-A site in the local area that has the same hydric soil map unit as the subject site. The comparison site is used to make a decision on the presence of hydrophytic vegetation when the subject site is altered and the plant community that occurred prior to the alteration cannot be determined from onsite inspection or remote sensing and other remote data sources. The comparison site should support hydrologic conditions that are similar to what existed on the subject site prior to the alteration.

(2-5) Diagnostic Factor (Factor).-A physical characteristic common to all wetlands that is used in the identification of a wetland. The three diagnostic factors are hydric soils, hydrophytic vegetation, and wetland hydrology. In the Corps manual, these are referred to as "diagnostic environmental characteristics" or "parameters," whereas they are referred to as "factors" in the supplements.

(2-8) Hydric soil - "means soil that, in its undrained condition, is saturated, flooded, or ponded long enough during a growing season to develop an anaerobic condition that supports the growth and regeneration of hydrophytic vegetation" (16 U.S.C. section 3801(a)(12)).

(2-9) Hydrophytic vegetation -"means a plant growing in (A) water; or (B)a substrate that is at least periodically deficient in oxygen during a growing season as a result of excessive water content" (16 U.S.C. section 3801(a)(13)).

(2-19) Wetland Hydrology - Inundation or saturation of the site by surface or groundwater during a growing season at a frequency and duration sufficient to support a prevalence of hydrophytic vegetation.

(2-10) Normal Circumstances (NC).-The soil and hydrologic conditions that are normally present, without regard to whether the vegetation has been removed (7 CFR section 12.31(b)(2)(i)). For FSA wetland identification purposes, this concept is the consideration of normal and abnormal climate-based site changes and natural and artificial disturbance-based site changes that can create wetland identification challenges. "Normally present" is further explained as the vegetative, soil, and hydrologic conditions that occur under both of these conditions:

a. Without regard to whether the site has been subject to drainage actions (see drainage definition) after December 23, 1985, and without regard to whether the vegetation has been removed or significantly altered.

b. During the wet portion of the growing season under normal climatic conditions (normal environmental conditions).

(2-11) Normal Environmental Conditions (NEC).-The climate-based concept of NC, defined as the physical conditions, characteristics (hydrology, soil, and vegetation), or both that would exist in a typical situation (2-12) on a site during the wet portion of the growing season in a normal climatic year.

(2-12) Sampling Unit-The smallest portion of the area subject to the wetland determination, delineation, or both for which consideration is made regarding a wetland determination decision. In Part IV of the Corps manual, this unit is referred to as a unique "plant community." In the supplements, the concept is referred to interchangeably as "plant community," "vegetative unit," and "landscape unit." Sampling units are selected based on having (or would have) similar plant communities resulting from similar soil properties, hydrologic regimes, and landscape positions. Each sampling unit differs (landscape position, hydrology, soils, and vegetation) from other sampling units within the subject area. In the second step of the FSA wetland determination process (determination of FSA wetland type or assignment of the wetland conservation label), sampling units may be further divided or combined.

(2-21) Wetland Type.-In the regulation, the term "wetland type" is used to refer to the FSA wetland conservation labels assigned to a subject area based on the definition of wetland types in 7 CPR section 12.2(a) and exemptions provided in 7 CPR section 12.5(b).

(PART III) BACKGROUND

The FSA Procedures (Code of Federal Regulations, “Circular 6”, and the National FSA Manual) explain that NRCS will utilize exclusively the protocols contained in Part IV: Methods of the Corps Manual (1987 Manual), as replaced or supplemented by Corps regional supplements. The use of the supplements is limited to what is directly provided for in Chapter 1, Table 1, of each supplement. What is provided by the Corps in Part IV: Methods (as

replaced/supplemented) is, in specific cases, altered by a "FSA Variance" provided in the "Circular 6". "Circular 6" provides an option to States to develop State Off-site Methods (SOSM) to supplement the Corps Manual off-site procedures (for Level 1 or Level 3 Determinations). Per the Corps Manual, Part IV: Methods – the user (agency expert) can make a decision for each sampling unit from the exclusive use of remote data sources (Level 1 determination) or a combination of off-site and on-site indicators if needed for one or more of the 3-factors (Level 3 determination). SOSMs supplement the Corps Methods by independently addressing each of the wetland diagnostic factors (identifying specific signatures or indicators for each factor).

(PART III) GENERAL INFORMATION

Off-site wetland determination reference materials include: NRCS soil survey and ecological site information, hydric soil lists, LiDAR elevation data, National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) maps, State wetland mapping, USGS topographic maps, digital elevation models, FEMA flood maps, Farm Service Agency (FSA) color slides, color infrared (CIR) aerial imagery, color or black and white aerial imagery, precipitation data to determine if normal environmental conditions were present for imagery, biological growing season maps, and personal knowledge of an area.

(PART IV) OFF-SITE METHODS PROCEDURES

Wetland identification procedure with the following guidance from Circular 6.

(5-10) The Corps provides for two major approaches: the routine approach and the comprehensive approach. The various options under the routine approach provide for adequate means to identify an FSA wetland.

(5-11) FSA Variance.-The comprehensive approach will not be used for FSA determinations. Corps Manual Section D: Routine Determinations will be used.

(5-12) Within the routine approach, Part N, Section C (Selection of Method) of the Corps manual describes three "levels":

Level 1 - Onsite Inspection Unnecessary.-In this level, remote resources (offsite methods and indicators) are utilized to make a decision on each of the three diagnostic factors for a sampling unit.

Level2 - Onsite Inspection Necessary.-In this level, onsite data (onsite methods and indicators) are used to make a decision on each of the three diagnostic factors for a sampling unit.

Level 3 -Combination of Levels 1 and 2. - Utilization of Level 3 may include the use of offsite methods for one sampling unit and onsite methods for another sampling unit. A Level-3 effort may also include the use of offsite methods for one factor of a sampling effort, while using onsite methods for another factor of that same sampling unit.

The nine step Wetland Determination Procedure from Section B. Data Synthesis 87 Corps Manual shall be used:

STEP 1 - Identify the project area on a map. Obtain a USGS quadrangle map (1:24,000) or other appropriate map, and locate the area.

STEP 2 - Prepare a base map. Mark the project area boundaries on the map.

STEP 3 - Determine size of the project area. Measure the area boundaries (including sampling units) and calculate the size of the area.

STEP 4 - Summarize available information on vegetation. Examine available sources that contain information about the area vegetation.

STEP 5 - Determine whether the vegetation in the project area is adequately characterized. Examine the summarized data (STEP 4) and determine whether the area plant communities are adequately characterized.

STEP 6 - Summarize available information on area soils. Examine available information and describe the area soils.

STEP 7 - Determine whether soils of the project area have been adequately characterized. Examine the summarized soils data and determine whether the soils have been adequately characterized.

STEP 8 - Summarize available hydrology data. Examine available information and describe the area hydrology.

STEP 9 - Determine whether hydrology is adequately characterized. Examine the summarized data and determine whether the hydrology of the project area is adequately characterized.

Note: in step 2 above “sampling units” will be delineated following the establishment of the project area boundaries. Sampling units will be established based upon the diagnostic factor with the strongest evidence (most clearly evident) available. Generally this should correspond with the MLRA soil survey hydric soil map unit delineation, however if stronger or contradictory evidence of wetland hydrology or hydrophytic vegetation exists using the identification criteria below then another diagnostic factor should be considered and may be used to determine sampling unit boundaries.

Each sampling unit will be evaluated for the presence of all three diagnostic factors and will receive a wetland or non-wetland determination based upon the criteria in part V of this document.

When an onsite investigation is unfeasible the guidance from the 87 Corps Manual Subsection 1 – Level 1 determination – Onsite Inspection Unnecessary will be used.

STEP 1 - Determine whether available data are sufficient for entire project area. Examine the summarized data (Section B, STEPS 5, 7, and 9) and determine whether the vegetation, soils, and hydrology of the entire project area are adequately characterized.

STEP 2 - Determine whether hydrophytic vegetation is present. Examine the vegetation data and list on WETLAND DETERMINATION DATA FORM – Northcentral and Northeast Region the dominant plant species found in each vegetation layer of each community type.

STEP 3 - Determine whether wetland hydrology is present. When one of the following conditions applies (STEP 2), it is only necessary to confirm that there has been no recent hydrologic alteration of the area.

STEP 4 - Determine whether the soils parameter must be considered.

STEP 5 - Determine whether hydric soils are present. Examine the soils data (Section B, STEP 7) and record the soil series or soil phase on WETLAND DETERMINATION DATA FORM – Northcentral and Northeast Region for each community type.

STEP 6 - Wetland determination. Examine the WETLAND DETERMINATION DATA FORM – Northcentral and Northeast Region for each community type.

STEP 7 - Determine wetland boundary. Mark on the base map all community types determined to be wetlands with a W and those determined to be non-wetlands with an N. Combine all wetland community types into a single mapping unit. The boundary of these community types is the interface between wetlands and non-wetlands. Once the boundaries are drawn then the appropriate FSA wetland label shall be assigned using the guidance listed later in this document.

Note: in step 7 above “sampling units” will be used as a basis for community types. Sampling units may be based upon positive identification of any of the diagnostic factors.

The steps are intended to be applied independently to assess the presence of each of the three diagnostic factors. The order of the steps stated above and within the Corps manual, is prescribed for wetland determinations. However, the order of completion may be otherwise, often starting with hydric soils identification (from soil surveys) – per the flexibility/professional judgment provision (paragraph 23) in the USACOE 87 Manual.

(PART V) DIAGNOSTIC FACTORS. Offsite determination methods for the three diagnostic factors are as follows:

SUBPART A: HYDROPHYTIC VEGETATION

Positive identification of the hydrophytic vegetation factor should be made by confirming one or more of the following methods:

A. Confirmation of hydrophytic vegetation by direct observations at a comparison site (defined below from Circular 6 to the NFSAM):

(5-30) For vegetation, when using the Corps manual adjacent vegetation data source (Corps manual paragraph 73, STEP 3 (d)), "NRCS will collect vegetative data from a comparison site "in the local area on the same hydric soil map unit," in accordance with 7

CFR section 12.31(b)(2)(ii). The comparison site should support hydrologic conditions that are similar to what existed on the altered site prior to the drainage. Long-term hydrologic monitoring, as referenced in the Corps methods, is not required. Note: The adjacent vegetation data source is only one of several options provided for making a decision on the hydrophytic vegetation factor in section F.

(5-31) For vegetation, when using the SCS records data source (Corps manual paragraph 73, STEP 3 (e)), the agency expert will consider NRCS records, such as ecological site descriptions and data from NRCS reference sites, as potential data sources in addition to soil survey data.

(5-71) When using the "Reference Sites" approach as detailed in chapter 5 of the ACOE Regional Supplement, a comparison site "in the local area on the same hydric soil map unit" will be used, in accordance with 7 CFR section 12.3l(b)(2)(ii). The comparison site should support hydrologic conditions that are similar to what existed on the altered site prior to the alteration. Long-term hydrologic monitoring, as referenced in the Corps methods, is not required. Note: The "Reference Sites" approach is only one of several procedures for making a decision on the hydrophytic vegetation factor provided in chapter 5.

Note that a comparison site for FSA wetland determinations generally equates with what the Corps manual calls a “reference site”, and to serve as an indicator of the “adjacent vegetation” for use in Atypical Situations (Section F) of the Corps manual. Comparison sites must be within the same MLRA as the subject site to be considered to be within the “local area”. Comparison sites should be based on the soil series concept transferred from the subject area, as used in the subject area’s specific soil map unit, or as amended from on-site observations by a soil scientist. They should correspond to Ecological Site Description (ESD) data for the respective soil series within that Major Land Resource Area (MLRA). The vegetation at the “reference site” must meet one of the following four hydrophytic vegetation indicators found within and following instructions of how to apply them in the regional supplement.

1. Rapid Test for Hydrophytic Vegetation
2. Dominance Test
3. Prevalence Index
4. Morphological Adaptations

B. Imagery showing plants growing in water during Normal Circumstances – Circular No. 6 (NC).
C. Imagery showing ponding or flooding in a cropland area (under NC the sampling unit would support plant growing in water or a reduced substrate).– *Note for B or C above positive indication must occur in three out of five years or 60% of available aerial imagery.*
D. Soil Survey Ecological Site Description data suggestive that under NC, the site would support a prevalence of hydrophytic vegetation.

SUBPART B: WETLAND HYDROLOGY

Wetland Hydrology may be ascertained remotely using the seven "Hydrology Tools for Wetland Determination and Analysis" (CH 19 of the National Engineering Handbook). To follow are objective criteria to be applied per the above:

1. Stream and Lake Gauges (and tidal data): Where applicable, 5/10 or higher normal or dry antecedent periods in growing seasons with 15 days or more indicating that saturation and/or inundation within 12" of the soil surface exists at the site.
2. Runoff volumes: SPAW or other tools can be used to estimate water budgets, applied where appropriate to wetland creation, enhancement, or restoration.
3. Remote sensing:
    a. Imagery indicating inundation/ponding during normal or dry antecedent conditions. More than 50% of 5 or more years.
    b. Imagery indicating plant stress from wetness during normal or dry antecedent conditions. More than 50% of 5 or more years.
4. DRAINMOD: may be applied to supplement observation well data per Chapter 19, and used for wetland creation, enhancement, or restoration per Chapter 19.
5. Scope and Effect: may be applied for specific Hydrogeomorphic Groups, currently limited to mineral and organic flats for effects of drainage tile and ditches.
6. Drainage Guides: N/A.
7. Observation Wells:
    a. 1 year of growing season data for normal or dry year with corroborating DRAINMOD model data.
    b. 3/5 years of growing season data for normal or dry years' antecedent data indicating 15 or more days of saturation w/in 12" and/or inundation per specifications in Chapter 19.

Positive identification of the hydrology factor should be made by confirming one or more of the items above as they apply to the factor diagnostics in the Corps 87 Manual/Regional Supplements and the FSA Variances.

Additionally positive confirmation of one of the hydrology indicators listed in the Regional Supplement that may be remotely determined may be used. Indicator B7 – inundation visible on aerial imagery is a primary indicator and indicators C9 – saturation visible on aerial imagery, D1 – stunted or stressed plants, and D2 – geomorphic aquitard are secondary indicators. The presence of one primary or two secondary hydrology indicators will serve as positive evidence of wetland hydrology.

SUBPART C: HYDRIC SOILS

A predominance of hydric soils will be ascertained by the use of published soil survey information. From Circular No. 6:

(5-51) Discussion.-By regulation, NRCS is afforded the opportunity to utilize two processes to determine if this criterion is met: utilization of soil maps, lists, or both, or an onsite evaluation.

(5-52) If the agency expert determines that the soil map, list, or both are sufficient, then it is considered a Level-1or Level-3 determination, decision, or both.

(5-53) FSA Variances.-Agency experts will utilize chapter 3 to make the determination of a predominance of hydric soils with the following variances:

(5-54) If soil mapping and hydric soil lists are used, the criteria in 7 CFR section 12.31(a) (2) will be followed:

NRCS must determine whether a sampling unit has a predominance of hydric soils that are inundated or saturated, as follows:

- If a soil map unit has hydric soil as all or part of its name, that soil map unit or portion of the map unit related to the hydric soil will be determined to have a predominance of hydric soils.
- If a soil map unit is named for a miscellaneous area that meets the criteria for hydric soils (i.e., riverwash, playas, beaches, or water) the soil map unit will be determined to have a predominance of hydric soils.
- If a soil map unit contains inclusions of hydric soils, the portion of the soil map unit identified as hydric soil will be determined to have a predominance of hydric soils.

The soil map must be reviewed by a NRCS soil scientist to confirm the probable accuracy of the map unit delineation prior to the determination of hydric soil predominance within the sampling unit. Soil map unit disaggregation to determine what, if any portion of a soil map unit contains hydric soils will be performed by a NRCS soil scientist with wetland job approval authority. The soil map unit disaggregation will be done with reference of appropriate geospatial information including but not limited to USGS Topographic, LiDAR, and NWI maps.

(PART VI) WETLAND DETERMINATION AND LABELS

NFSAM defines several possible variations of wetland labels based upon current and prior land use, particularly in relation to the site condition on December 23, 1985. Methods for wetland label assignment will be performed by an agency expert with JAA in accordance with the policy defined in NFSAM part 514.

(PART VII) ADDENDUM

The following statement should be included in all written wetland determination documentation provided to USDA participants.

THIS CERTIFIED WETLAND DETERMINATION/DELINATION HAS BEEN CONDUCTED FOR THE PURPOSE OF IMPLEMENTING THE WETLAND CONSERVATION PROVISIONS OF THE FOOD SECURITY ACT OF 1985. THIS DETERMINATION/DELINEATION MAY NOT BE VALID FOR IDENTIFYING THE EXTENT OF THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS' (COE) CLEAN WATER ACT JURISDICTION FOR THIS SITE. IF YOU INTEND TO CONDUCT ANY ACTIVITY THAT CONSTITUTES A DISCHARGE OF DREDGED OR FILL MATERIAL INTO WETLANDS OR OTHER WATERS, YOU SHOULD REQUEST A JURISDICTIONAL DETERMINATION FROM THE LOCAL OFFICE OF THE COE PRIOR TO STARTING THE WORK.

(PART VIII) GLOSSARY

Agricultural Commodity: Any crop planted and produced by annual tilling of the soil, including tilling by one-trip planters, or sugarcane. (180-V-NFSAM, Fourth Ed., Amend. 4, Jan. 2008, Part 514.2)

Agricultural Land, Non-Forested: Land that is intensively used and managed for the production of food and fiber to the extent that the natural vegetation has been removed and cannot be used to determine whether the area meets applicable hydrophytic vegetation criteria in making a wetland determination.

Areas that meet the above definition may include intensively used and managed cropland, hayland, pasture land, orchards, vineyards, and areas which support wetland crops (e.g., cranberries, taro, watercress, rice). For example, lands intensively used and managed for pasture or hayland where the natural vegetation has been removed and replaced with planted grasses or legumes such as ryegrass, bluegrass, or alfalfa are considered agricultural lands, non-forested. Agricultural lands, non-forested do not include range lands, forest lands, wood lots, or tree farms.

Certified Wetland Determination: A wetland determination made by the Natural Resources Conservation Service that is of sufficient quality to make a determination of ineligibility for program benefits under the Food Security Act of 1985

Field: A part of a farm which is separated from the balance of the farm by permanent boundaries such as fences, roads, permanent waterways, woodlands, croplines (in cases where farming practices make it probable that such croplines are not subject to change), or other similar features. (180-V-NFSAM, Third Ed., Amend. 2, Nov. 1996, Part 525.0)

Non-Agricultural lands: Lands which are **not** used for the production of food, fiber, or horticultural crops; used for haying or grazing; or, left idle in accordance with USDA program requirements. For the purposes of these off-site methods, forest land and abandoned agricultural lands (except Prior Converted cropland) are non-agricultural lands.

Qualified Professional: A NRCS employee who, through training and experience, has demonstrated the knowledge and skill to conduct wetland determinations/delineations and whose name is listed on the roster of qualified employees in the state.

Wetland Delineation: Outlining the boundaries of a wetland determination on aerial photography, digital imagery, and other graphic representation of the area; or on the land. (180-V-NFSAM, Fourth Ed., Amend. 4, Jan. 2008, Part 514.2)

Wetland Determination: A technical decision regarding whether or not an area is a wetland, including identification of appropriate wetland labels and acres of each label. Wetland determinations are recorded on NRCS-CPA-026e. (180-V-NFSAM, Fourth Ed., Amend. 4, Jan. 2008, Part 514.2)

Wetland Signature: the indication left in a field, recorded by imagery, of ponding, flooding or saturation for sufficient duration, during the biological growing season, to meet wetland hydrology criteria. Wetland signatures in New England include signs of a water-stressed crop, no crop growing, or standing water. A wet signature on a fallow or recently tilled field is identified by a darker reflection than the surrounding soil color reflection. Textural or color contrast against an otherwise uniform area may indicate wetness. Tire marks, mowing, and plowing patterns which show avoidance of a wet feature on the map are other signs that may be indicative of wetness. Stereoscopic aerial photography can show relief and vegetation strata.

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

Fact Sheet *September 2007*

Wetland Determination Identifiers

Overview

As part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) continuous effort to use digital mapping technology to increase efficiency, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) have recently revised the symbols used to identify wetland determination locations on FSA maps. The NRCS makes wetland determinations based on landowners' requests. FSA marks these sites with symbols on the maps for producers' ease of use.

Revised Symbols

In the past, FSA maps contained labels and delineations of NRCS wetland determinations. When FSA started using digital geographic data for maps, blue dots were used to represent wetland determinations. Since May 2007, FSA and NRCS have updated map symbology to give producers a more detailed representation of the wetland determinations present on their land.

Now, USDA's wetland point symbols, called wetland determination identifiers, indicate on digital maps the approximate location of NRCS wetland determinations.

Red, yellow and green symbols (no longer blue dots) represent different categories of wetland determinations and a legend provides an explanation of the various levels of use that are allowed on these wetlands:

- Red octagons represent 'Restricted Use' determinations; upside-down yellow triangles represent 'Limited Restrictions' determinations; and green circles represent 'Exempt from Conservation Compliance Provisions' determinations.
- Restricted Use = W (Wetland); CW, CW+YR (Converted Wetland + Year); AW/W (Artificial Wetland/Wetland); GFW, GFW+YR (Good Faith Wetland + Year); RSW, RSW+YR (Restored Wetland + Year); RPW (Replacement Wetland)
- Limited Restrictions = FW (Farmed Wetland); FWP (Farmed Wetland Pasture); CWNA (Converted Wetland, Non-ag Use); AW/FW (Artificial Wetland/Farmed Wetland); CWTE (Converted Wetland Technical Error); TP (Third Party Conversion); WX (Manipulated Wetland) MW; CMW (Minimal Effect Wetlands); MIW, MWM (Mitigation Wetlands); NI (Not Inventoried); OW (Other Waters); Easement

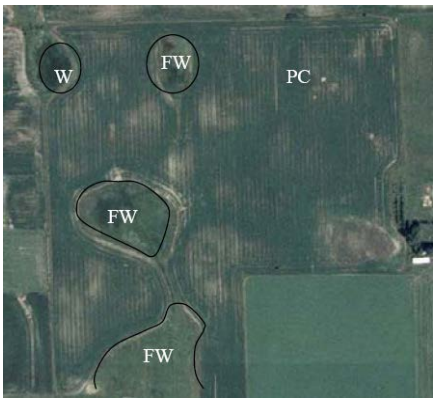
Exempt from Conservation Compliance Provisions = PC (Prior Converted); NW (Non Wetland); PC/NW (Prior Converted/Non Wetland); CC (Commenced Conversion); NW/NAD (Non Wetland, National Appeal Decision); AW (Artificial Wetland)

Wetland Policy Unchanged

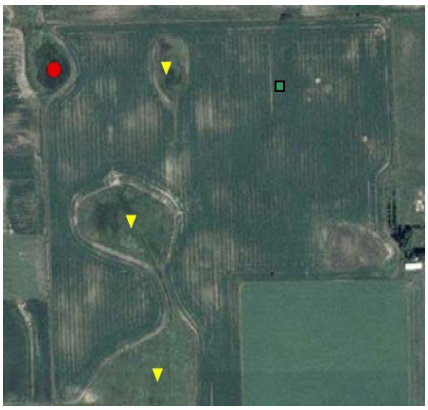
As noted on the producer maps, the change to the current wetland determination identifiers does not change the wetland determinations made by NRCS, nor does it change FSA or NRCS wetland policy or regulations. The wetland determination identifiers do not represent the size, shape, exact location or exact category of wetland determination. The maps are used primarily for producer information when producers make crop acreage reports, change field boundaries or request a map of their land from FSA. The maps are not used for wetland conservation compliance. USDA participants remain responsible for self-certifying compliance with USDA wetland conservation provisions

Continues

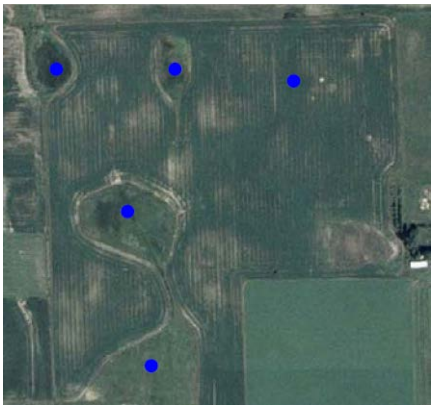
Examples of FSA Producer Maps with Varying Wetland Symbols



Initial FSA Map



Current FSA Map



FSA Map with Blue Dots

Sample Legend

For More Information

The maps with the new identifiers are not the official USDA wetland determination maps. Producers who have questions about the size, shape, exact location or exact category of the determination should refer to the determination information previously provided to them by NRCS on a form (CPA-026), or contact their local NRCS office. Both FSA and NRCS have the USDA wetland determination maps available for landowners and operators. Copies of these original maps have previously been provided to all producers. Producers may request a replacement copy through their local FSA or NRCS office if they no longer have the original.
