

HYDRIC SOILS

DEFINITION

Soils that formed under conditions of saturation, flooding or ponding long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in the upper part (1).

CONCEPT

The concept of hydric soils includes soils developed under sufficiently wet conditions to support the growth and regeneration of hydrophytic vegetation. Soils sufficiently wet because of artificial measures are included in the concept of hydric soils. Also, soils in which the hydrology has been artificially modified are hydric if the soil, in an unaltered state, was hydric (2).

CRITERIA

The database criteria are selected soil properties that were designed to develop a list of potentially hydric soils from the soils database. The primary purpose of the criteria is to generate a list of map unit components that are **likely** to meet the definition of a hydric soil. Some soil series, designated as hydric have phases that are not hydric depending on water table, flooding, and ponding characteristics (2). Use or knowledge of the specific criteria are generally not required for field personnel in routine activities.

FIELD INDICATORS

Field indicators are specific combinations of soil colors, textures, layer depths and thickness, and types of soil materials that are observable in the field on a site-by-

site basis. They are designed for use in specific regions throughout the country and are proof positive evidence of hydric soils in those areas (2, 3, 4).

REFERENCES

- (1) National Soil Survey Handbook, Part 622.06.
<http://soils.usda.gov/technical/handbook/>
- (2) Links to hydric soil information.
<http://soils.usda.gov/use/hydric/>
- (3) Field Indicators of Hydric Soils in the U.S., version 6.0 ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/NSSC/Hydric_Soils/FieldIndicators_v6_0.pdf
- (4) Field Indicators of Hydric Soils In The Mid-Atlantic U.S.
<http://www.epa.gov/reg3esd1/wetlands/hydric.htm#books>