



US Army Corps  
of Engineers

**Detroit District**

# Public Notice

In Reply Refer To: Corps File No. LRE-2008-00801-900

Date: July 18, 2008

Expires: September 19, 2008

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## **Corps of Engineers Mid-West Regional Supplement to the 1987 Wetland Delineation Manual**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Detroit District, announces the availability of the Draft Northcentral and Northeast Regional Supplement to the 1987 Wetland Delineation Manual (Environmental Laboratory 1987). This draft was developed by regional expert delineators with input from state and Federal agencies, academia and other local experts. It is being peer reviewed by a panel of independent scientists, the report from which will be available upon request. This draft is also being field tested by interagency teams of state and Federal agencies to determine the clarity and ease of use of the document and whether its use will result in any spatial changes in wetland jurisdiction for Clean Water Act Section 404 purposes

We are specifically seeking public input, including scientific information/data, on the proposed hydrology, soils and vegetation indicators and data collection procedures in this draft document. Reviewers may wish to field test this manual as part of the public comment procedure. The protocol for this testing is to perform wetland delineations using both the 1987 Wetland Delineation Manual and this draft regional supplement on the same data points. Reviewers should include data sheets from the manual and draft supplement, maps indicating data collection points (upland and wetland) and a completed questionnaire for each delineation point. The testing protocol and questionnaire are attached and the draft may be located at:

[http://www.usace.army.mil/cw/cecwo/reg/reg\\_supp.htm](http://www.usace.army.mil/cw/cecwo/reg/reg_supp.htm)

Comments must be submitted by **(60 DAYS)**, to Ms. Jennifer McCarthy (CECW-CO), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 441 G. Street, NW, Washington DC 20314-1000 or by e-mail to 1987Manual@usace.army.mil. Another public notice will be issued by this district announcing the publication of the final supplement and the implementation date of this supplement.

### Reference

Environmental Laboratory. (1987). "Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual," Technical Report Y-87-1, U.S. Army Engineer Waterways Experiment Station, Vicksburg, MS.  
(<http://el.erdc.usace.army.mil/wetlands/pdfs/wlman87.pdf>)

File No LRE-2008-00801-900

Attachments

Field Testing Protocol  
Wetland Delineation Field Evaluation Questionnaire

Questions on this in Detroit District may be directed to John Ritchey at 574-232-1952.

FOR THE DISTRICT ENGINEER

John Konik  
Chief, Regulatory Office  
Engineering and Technical Services

NOTICE TO POSTMASTERS:

We request that the above notice be conspicuously and continuously posted for the time period of this notice.

# Field Testing Protocol

## Northcentral and Northeast Regional Supplement

### **Organization of field testing teams:**

District Offices of the Corps of Engineers in the Northcentral and Northeast Region (see the list of District coordinators at the end of this document) will coordinate and oversee the field testing of the draft Regional Supplement. Field testing will be done in cooperation with regional NRCS, EPA, FWS, and other interested federal and state agencies and universities.

Field teams will consist of available interagency experts, with the constraint that each team must include an experienced botanist and a soil scientist to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the basic data.

If needed, the District coordinator will provide team members with an introduction to the Regional Supplement and will explain any new or unfamiliar indicators as necessary to avoid confusion over interpretation of the indicators.

### **Site Selection:**

Testing teams should focus on areas where permitting activity is high. There is no need to sample remote areas unless convenient opportunities arise.

Sample a number of typical wetland sites in each District or subregion, plus a selection of available “problem” situations. Problem situations should include, if possible, areas with unusual plant communities or soil types that may lack indicators, requiring use of Chapter 5 (Difficult Wetland Situations in the Northcentral and Northeast Region) to make the wetland determination.

### **Approach:**

The basic testing approach is to document at least 2 sampling points at each field site, one point in the wetland and one point in the adjacent upland, and determine the location of the wetland boundary between them. The team should collaborate to make the determination and documentation as accurate as possible. Follow these general steps:

1. Document each sampling point based on existing practice (i.e., 1987 Manual with existing guidance memos and existing local interpretation). For each point, completely fill out the old (1992) wetland determination data form. Locate the wetland boundary based on current practice.

2. Document each point using the new (Regional Supplement) data form. Locate the wetland boundary based on indicators and guidance given in the Regional Supplement.
3. If the two wetland boundaries are different, measure the distance between them.
4. Fill out the attached questionnaire (one copy per field site) to help explain any differences seen in the two methods.
5. For each field site sampled, submit the following items to the appropriate District coordinator:
  - a. Completed 1992 and Regional Supplement data forms for each sampling point
  - b. Sketch map of the site with sampling points, wetland boundaries, and any other important features indicated
  - c. One copy of the Field Evaluation Questionnaire
  - d. Optional brief report as necessary to explain test results

**List of Corps District Coordinators in the Northcentral and Northeast Region:**

Christine Delorier, U.S. Army Engineer District, New York, NY, 518-266-6354  
Scott Hans, U.S. Army Engineer District, Pittsburgh, PA, 412-395-7154  
Theresa Hudson, U.S. Army Engineer District, Buffalo, NY, 716-879-4368  
Neal Johnson, U.S. Army Engineer District, Rock Island, IL, 309-794-5379  
Michael Leggiero, U.S. Army Philadelphia District, Gouldsboro, PA, 570-842-1046  
Michael Machalek, U.S. Army Engineer District, Chicago, IL, 312-846-5534  
Tom Mings, U.S. Army Engineer District, St. Paul, MN, 651-290-5365  
Paul Minkin, U.S. Army Engineer New England District, Concord, MA, 978-318-8283  
Lee Pittman, U.S. Army Engineer District, Huntington, WV, 304-399-5210  
Frank Plewa, U.S. Army Engineer Baltimore District, Carlisle, PA, 717-249-2522  
John Ritchey, U.S. Army Engineer District, Detroit, MI, 574-232-1952  
Sam Werner, U.S. Army Engineer District, Louisville, KY, 812-853-5631

## WETLAND DELINEATION FIELD EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire should be completed for each boundary delineation performed. The assumption is that two communities were evaluated, one wetland (= "lower community") and one upland (= "upper community") so that a boundary between them could be identified. Fill in the blanks or check spaces as appropriate. Attach copies of the completed field data forms.

**Site Name or Location** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Evaluator(s)** \_\_\_\_\_ **Affiliation(s)** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### General Site Characteristics

Is the site \_\_\_ typical or \_\_\_ problematic? *If problematic, explain:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### Wetland (lower community)

Ecological System: \_\_\_ Saline Tidal \_\_\_ Fresh Tidal \_\_\_ Fresh Nontidal \_\_\_ Saline Nontidal  
Wetland Type: \_\_\_ Forested \_\_\_ Shrub \_\_\_ Emergent \_\_\_ Moss/Lichen \_\_\_ Farmed (hay or crop)  
\_\_\_ Other (specify \_\_\_\_\_)  
HGM Class: \_\_\_ Depression \_\_\_ Riverine \_\_\_ Fringe \_\_\_ Slope \_\_\_ Flat  
Vegetative Cover: \_\_\_ Dense \_\_\_ Evenly Mixed w/Nonvegetated \_\_\_ Sparse

#### Nonwetland (upper community)

Habitat Type: \_\_\_ Forest \_\_\_ Shrub \_\_\_ Meadow/Prairie \_\_\_ Moss/Lichen \_\_\_ Farmed  
\_\_\_ Other (specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

1. Was there a marked difference in the two plant communities? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No
2. Was there a gradual change in vegetation between the two communities creating a significant "transition zone" between? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No. If so, how wide was this transition zone? \_\_\_\_\_ feet
3. Was there an abrupt topographic change between the two communities? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

### Boundary Determination

*Compare results from the two methods: (1) current practice using the 1987 Manual and guidance memos, and (2) 1987 Manual with the draft Regional Supplement.*

1. The wetland boundary was: \_\_\_ the same or \_\_\_ different.
2. If different, which method produced the boundary higher on the landscape?  
\_\_\_ Manual with current guidance or \_\_\_ Manual with Regional Supplement
3. What was the linear distance between the two boundaries? \_\_\_\_\_ feet
4. What type of indicator(s) were responsible for the difference in the boundaries?  
\_\_\_ Hydrophytic vegetation \_\_\_ Hydric soil \_\_\_ Wetland hydrology (*check all that apply*)

## Assessment of the Indicators

### Hydrophytic Vegetation

1. Did the lower community pass the current basic test for hydrophytic vegetation (i.e., >50% of the dominants had an indicator status of FAC or wetter, *excluding FAC-*)?  Yes  No
2. Did the lower community pass the “dominance test” in the Regional Supplement (i.e., >50% of the dominants were FAC or wetter, *counting FAC- as FAC*)?  Yes  No
3. What other indicators of hydrophytic vegetation were observed in the lower community?
  - a) List those from the Manual with current guidance: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - b) List those from the Regional Supplement: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Was the vegetation in the lower community a problematic wetland community type?  
 Yes  No. *If so, briefly describe and explain how the problem was handled* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Did the upper community pass the current basic test for hydrophytic vegetation (i.e., >50% of the dominants had an indicator status of FAC or wetter, *excluding FAC-*)?  Yes  No
6. Did the upper community pass the “dominance test” in the Regional Supplement (i.e., >50% of the dominants were FAC or wetter, *counting FAC- as FAC*)?  Yes  No
7. What other indicators of hydrophytic vegetation were observed in the upper community?
  - a) List those from the Manual with current guidance: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - b) List those from the Regional Supplement: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Did both methods reach the same conclusion regarding the presence of hydrophytic vegetation for the upper community?  Yes  No. *If not, briefly explain* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Were the hydrophytic vegetation indicators in the Regional Supplement clearly described and easy to apply?  Yes  No. *If not, briefly explain* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Hydric Soil

1. Did both methods find indicators of hydric soil in the lower community? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No
  - a) List those from the Manual with current guidance: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - b) List those from the Regional Supplement: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Did the lower community contain a problematic hydric soil (i.e., one that lacked indicators)? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No. *If so, briefly describe the problem and explain how it was handled:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Did both methods reach the same conclusion regarding the presence of hydric soil in the upper community? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No. *If not, briefly explain* \_\_\_\_\_
  - a) List indicators from the Manual with current guidance: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - b) List indicators from the Regional Supplement: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Were the hydric soil indicators in the Regional Supplement clearly described and easy to apply? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No. *If not, briefly explain* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Wetland Hydrology

1. Did both methods determine that wetland hydrology was present in the lower community? (Requires 1 primary indicator or 2 secondary indicators.) \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No
  - a) List indicators from the Manual with current guidance:  
Primary: \_\_\_\_\_ Secondary: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - b) List indicators from the Regional Supplement:  
Primary: \_\_\_\_\_ Secondary: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Did the lower community contain a problematic wetland hydrology situation (i.e., one that lacked indicators)?

Yes  No. *If so, briefly describe the problem and explain how it was handled:* \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Did both methods reach the same conclusion regarding wetland hydrology for the upper community?  Yes  No. *If not, briefly explain* \_\_\_\_\_

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a) List indicators from the Manual with current guidance:

Primary: \_\_\_\_\_ Secondary: \_\_\_\_\_

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b) List indicators from the Regional Supplement:

Primary: \_\_\_\_\_ Secondary: \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Were the wetland hydrology indicators in the Regional Supplement clearly described and easy to apply?  Yes  No. *If not, briefly explain* \_\_\_\_\_

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**Comments on the Regional Supplement**

1. Were the indicators and procedures in the Supplement clear and easy to apply?

Yes  No. *If not, how could they be improved?* \_\_\_\_\_

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2. In your opinion, did the Regional Supplement make this wetland determination more defensible?  Yes  No. *Briefly explain* \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Based on your testing, do you want to recommend other indicators that should be considered for further evaluation? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No. *List by indicator type:* \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Was the Regional Supplement's field data form complete, understandable, and easy to fill out? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No. *If not, how could it be improved?* \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Any additional comments or suggestions? \_\_\_\_\_

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