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SPECIAL PUBLIC NOTICE  
2009**

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
U.S. ARMY ENGINEER DISTRICT, MOBILE  
CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
P.O. BOX 2288  
MOBILE, ALABAMA 36628-0001**

**Issue Date: July 27, 2009  
Expiration Date: September 25,**

**SPECIAL PUBLIC NOTICE  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District, announces the availability of the Draft Eastern Mountains and Piedmont Regional Supplement to the 1987 Wetland Delineation Manual (Environmental Laboratory 1987). This draft regional supplement was developed by wetland delineation experts from state and Federal agencies and academia with experience within the region. It is being peer reviewed by an independent panel of scientists and practitioners (report is available upon request). This draft is also being field tested by interagency teams of state and Federal scientists to assess its clarity and ease of use, and to determine whether use of this supplement will result in any spatial changes in wetland jurisdiction for Clean Water Act Section 404 purposes. The draft is available at [http://www.usace.army.mil/CECW/Pages/reg\\_supp.aspx](http://www.usace.army.mil/CECW/Pages/reg_supp.aspx)

We are specifically seeking public input, including additional scientific information or data, on the proposed indicators of wetland hydrology, hydric soils, and hydrophytic vegetation and data collection procedures in this draft document. Commentors may wish to field test this supplement as part of their evaluation and comments. If so, the protocol for field testing must include the use of (1) the 1987 Wetland Delineation Manual with current guidance and (2) the 1987 Manual with this draft regional supplement on the same sampling points. A minimum of two points must be documented, one in the lower (wetland) community and one in the adjacent higher (upland) community. Commentors should include data recorded on both the current 1992 data forms and the proposed data forms from the Regional Supplement, maps indicating the location of the field site and data collection points (upland and wetland), and a completed questionnaire (see attached) for each delineation.

Comments may be submitted by the above due date to Ms. Katherine Trott (CEIWR-GI), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Room 236, Casey Building, 7701 Telegraph Road, Alexandria, VA 22315, or by e-mail to [1987Manual@usace.army.mil](mailto:1987Manual@usace.army.mil). Another public notice will be issued by this district announcing the publication of the final document 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>)

**Attachments**

# Field Testing Protocol

## Eastern Mountains and Piedmont Regional Supplement

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

District Offices of the Corps of Engineers in the Eastern Mountains and Piedmont 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 Eastern Mountains and Piedmont 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 Eastern Mountains and Piedmont Region:**

Charles Allred, U.S. Army Engineer District, Vicksburg, MS, 601-631-5546  
Rodney Christensen, U.S. Army Engineer Kansas City District, Warsaw, MO, 816-389-3979  
James (Randy) Clark, U.S. Army Engineer District, Memphis, TN, 901-544-0735  
Andrew Commer, U.S. Army Engineer District, Tulsa, OK, 918-669-7616  
Christine Delorier, U.S. Army Engineer District, New York, NY, 518-266-6354  
Casey Ehorn, U.S. Army Engineer District, Mobile, AL, 205-290-9096  
Thomas Fischer, U.S. Army Engineer District, Savannah, GA, 229-430-8566  
Scott Hans, U.S. Army Engineer District, Pittsburgh, PA, 412-395-7154  
Michael Hayduk, U.S. Army Engineer District, Philadelphia, PA, 215-656-5822  
Amanda Jones, U.S. Army Engineer Wilmington District, Asheville, NC, 828-271-7980 x231  
Joseph Kassler, U.S. Army Engineer District, Buffalo, NY, 716-879-4432  
Kathleen Kuná, U.S. Army Engineer District, Nashville, TN, 615-369-7506  
Keith McMullen, U.S. Army Engineer District, St. Louis, MO, 314-331-8582  
Les Parker, U.S. Army Engineer District, Charleston, SC, 803-253-3904  
Lee Pittman, U.S. Army Engineer District, Huntington, WV, 304-399-5210  
Frank Plewa, U.S. Army Engineer District, Baltimore, MD, 717-249-2522  
Tim Scott, U.S. Army Engineer District, Little Rock, AR, 501-324-5295  
Ron Stouffer, U.S. Army Engineer Norfolk District, Dumfries, VA, 703-221-6967  
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:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

a) List indicators from the Manual with current guidance:

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

b) List indicators from the Regional Supplement:

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**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?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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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