US Army Corps
of Engineers
Seattle District

Special Public Notice

Regulatory Branch
Post Office Box 3755
Seattle, Washington 98124-3755
Telephone (206) 764-6913
ATTN: Kristina Tong

Public Notice Date: May 28, 2008

Implementation of the Western Mountain, Valley and Coast Region Interim Regional Supplement to the 1987 Wetland Delineation Manual

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District announces the publication and one-year trial implementation of the Interim Regional Supplement (Supplement) to the Corps' 1987 Wetland Delineation Manual (1987 Manual) for the Western Mountains, Valleys, and Coast Region dated April 2008. The Supplement was developed by wetland delineation experts from state and Federal agencies and academia with experience within this region of the United States. It has been peer reviewed by an independent panel of scientists and practitioners. This interim document will be tested for a one year period prior to finalization; this one year period will begin effective 30 days from the date of this public notice.

The Supplement will be field tested by interagency teams of state and Federal scientists to assess its clarity and ease of use, and to determine whether its use will result in any spatial changes in wetland delineation for Clean Water Act purposes. Comments on this Supplement should be submitted to:

Katherine Trott (CECW-CO)
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
441 G Street, NW
Washington DC 20314-1000
or by email to 1987Manual@usace.army.mil

The 1987 Manual, this supplement, including data forms, and field evaluation questionnaire, as well as the independent peer review report and response document, the environmental assessment/FONSI prepared under NEPA, and copies of public comments are available on the Regulatory Headquarters Homepage website at:

http://www.usace.army.mil/inet/functions/cw/cecwo/reg/reg_supp.htm

The following guidance is superceded by this Supplement, and is hereby rescinded by this public notice:

> "Implementation of the 1987 Corps Wetland Delineation Manual," memorandum from John P. Elmore dated 27 August 1991.
>
> "Questions & Answers on the 1987 Manual," memorandum from John F. Studt dated 7 October 1991.
>
> "Clarification and Interpretation of the 1987 Manual," memorandum from Major General Arthur E. Williams dated 6 March 1992.
>
> "Revisions to National Plant Lists," memorandum from Michael L. Davis dated 17 January 1996.
>
> "NRCS Field Indicators of Hydric Soils," memorandum from John F. Studt dated 21 March 1997.

Region and subregion boundaries are depicted in these documents as sharp lines. However, climatic conditions and the physical and biological characteristics of landscapes do not change abruptly at the boundaries. In reality, regions and subregions often grade into one another in broad transition zones that may be tens or hundreds of miles wide. The lists of wetland indicators presented in these regional supplements may differ between adjoining regions or subregions. In transitional areas, investigators must use experience and good judgment to select the supplement and indicators that are appropriate to the site based on its physical and biological characteristics. Wetland boundaries are not likely to differ between two supplements in transitional areas, but one supplement may provide more detailed treatment of certain problem situations encountered on the site. If in doubt about which supplement to use in a transitional area, apply both supplements and compare the results. For additional guidance, contact the appropriate Corps of Engineers District Regulatory Office. Contact information for District regulatory offices is available at the Corps Headquarters website http://www.usace.army.mil/inet/functions/cw/cecwo/reg/district.htm.

Effective 30 days from the date of this public notice, the supplement data forms and indicators must be used for any data collection for wetland delineations. Field data collected for wetland delineations using the 1987 Manual prior to the effective date of this notice, but not yet submitted to the appropriate Corps District for review and formal approval will be grandfathered. Documentation must be submitted to the appropriate Corps District which clearly shows that the field data was collected prior to 30 days from the date of this notice in order to qualify for this grandfather provision. Once this documentation and the field data have been reviewed and approved by the appropriate Corps District, a written jurisdictional determination will be issued.

While we are confident the Supplement will improve the accuracy of wetland delineations in the Western Mountains, Valleys and Coast Region, anyone performing a wetland delineation during this interim period using the Supplement who believes it has resulted in a significantly different boundary line than the 1987 Manual may also complete the delineation using the 1987 Manual and submit both delineations. You must include enough points to adequately describe the representative plant communities, soils, and hydrology of the site(s) and clearly document the difference in boundaries between the two methods. Data recorded on both the existing 1992 data forms and the new Supplement data forms, maps indicating the location of the field site and data collection points (upland and wetland), and a completed field evaluation questionnaire for each delineation must be submitted as part of the jurisdictional determination request to the appropriate Corps District Office. The District will make the final determination based on their analysis of all the submitted information. This information will also be used in evaluation and potential modification of the Supplement.