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SAN FRANCISCO DISTRICT

PUBLIC NOTICE

Project: Final Arid West Regional Supplement to the 1987 Wetland
Delineation Manual

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With this Public Notice the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's (Corps) San Francisco District announces the availability of the Final Arid West Regional Supplement to the 1987 Wetland Delineation Manual. The final version of the supplement is available at: http://www.usace.army.mil/cw/cecwo/reg/reg_supp.htm.

This supplement was developed by regional expert delineators with input from state and federal agencies, academia, and other local experts. It was peer reviewed by a panel of independent scientists and field tested by interagency teams comprised of members of state and federal agencies. The purpose of the peer review and field testing was to both determine the clarity and ease of use of the document and to determine if the manual would result in spatial changes in wetland mapping for Clean Water Act Section 404 purposes. Based on this peer review, the following changes were incorporated into Version 2.0 of the Arid West regional supplement:

1. Minor wording and organizational changes have been made throughout the document in an attempt to improve clarity and consistency with other regional supplements.
2. The recommended excavation depth for soil sampling is 20 inches, although a shallower soil pit may suffice for some hydric soil indicators. Examination of the soil below the 20-inch depth is required only in soils with deep, dark surface layers that may meet indicator A12 (Thick Dark Surface) (see page 33).
3. Information on combining the characteristics of different hydric soil indicators has been added to Chapter 3 (see pages 36-37).
4. Wording of hydric soil indicators in Chapter 3 has been updated to conform to Version 6.0 of the Natural Resource Conservation Service's Field Indicators of Hydric Soils in the United States.
5. To determine the initiation of the growing season in a given location and year, we have clarified that the preferred approach is based on onsite observations of (1) vegetation green-up, growth, and maintenance, and/or (2) soil temperature at a 12-inch depth. These onsite techniques are preferred over estimates of growing-season dates published in WETS tables, which are based on median air temperatures recorded at National Weather Service meteorological stations (see pages 59-61).
6. Wetland hydrology indicator A3 (Saturation) has been reworded to include situations in which saturated soils are perched on a shallow restrictive layer, such that there is no water table below (see page 66).

7. “Soft masses” are now included in wetland hydrology indicator C6 (Recent Iron Reduction in Tilled Soils) (see page 79), as illustrated in Figure 41.

8. As recommended by the National Advisory Team, wetland hydrology indicator C7 (Thin Muck Surface) has been changed to a “primary” indicator. This change acknowledges that muck layers can only develop and be maintained on sites that are inundated or saturated to the surface for long periods each year (see page 80 and Appendix C (Data Form)).

9. In Chapter 5, it has been clarified that more than one wetland factor (vegetation, soil, and/or hydrology) may be disturbed or problematic on a given site (see page 85).

10. Due to changes in plant nomenclature and distributions since the development of the 1988 wetland plant lists, some unlisted plant species in the Arid West are not necessarily upland (UPL) species. We have clarified that procedures given in Chapter 5 (General Approaches to Problematic Hydrophytic Vegetation) may be used to determine whether hydrophytic vegetation is present in areas dominated by FACU, NI, NO, or unlisted species that are functioning as hydrophytes (see page 94).

11. Some additional terms have been added to the Glossary (e.g., absolute cover, aquitard, episaturation, halophyte, nodules and concretions, phreatophyte, and reduced matrix).

The Corps will continue to accept comments/suggestions and new data on this supplement. Comments may be submitted 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 87Manual@usace.army.mil.