



GUIDANCE FOR AQUATIC RESOURCE DELINEATION REPORTS

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

BUILDING STRONG®

June 2019

The U.S Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), through its Regulatory Program, regulates certain activities in “waters of the United States” – which is a regulatory term defined in law and policy. Regulations governing waters of the U.S. are codified in 33 CFR Parts 320 through 332. To determine whether activities will occur in waters of the U.S. and, therefore, will be subject to regulation by the Corps, the amount and extent of waters of the U.S. at a site must first be delineated in accordance with established regulatory standards, guidance, and protocol, such as those contained in the 1987 Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual and appropriate regional supplements. The Corps is responsible for conducting or verifying the delineation and determining which of the aquatic resources fall under federal jurisdiction.

Permit applicants and/or property owners have the ability to employ the services of professional consultants to delineate aquatic resources that may be subject to regulation. Permit applicants are encouraged to submit delineation reports early in the project planning stages, along with a request for a preliminary or approved jurisdictional determination, and to engage in a pre-application consultation with their local Corps office.

The District has established this guidance for delineation reports to ensure consistency and accuracy in the delineation of aquatic resources. The guidance is based on previous experience conducting and verifying delineations, as well as the best practices of environmental consultants. The District will notify the applicant if a delineation submittal does not contain sufficient information to accurately identify the limits of waters of the U.S.

Providing the following information would aid in expediting the verification of a delineation:

- Purpose for the delineation (e.g. for use in a preliminary jurisdictional determination, approved jurisdiction determination, pre-application consultation, or Department of the Army permit).
- Contact information for the applicant(s), property owner(s), and agent(s), including physical mailing address(es), phone number(s) and email(s) for each.
- Directions to the survey area.
- Latitude and longitude in decimal degrees of the center point of the survey area.

- A statement that the delineation has been conducted in accordance with the 1987 Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual and the appropriate regional supplement(s).
- A statement that the ordinary high water mark (OHWM) delineation(s) was conducted using the appropriate OHWM characteristics, as defined in 33 CFR § 328.3(e) and 33 CFR § 329.11(a)(1). If applicable provide the technical document(s) and/or regional supplement(s) used for the delineation(s).
- Maps created for the delineation report should include the imagery date, date prepared or revised, legend, scale, north arrow, and reference elevation datum when applicable (e.g. North American Vertical Datum of 1988).
- Location map of the survey area. The map must clearly identify the area surveyed.
- A statement describing the survey methods used (e.g. GPS equipment capable of sub-meter delineation marked topographic contour of each aquatic resources and/or flagging of the aquatic resources). Identify and provide rationale for areas where no data was collected.
- Table listing all aquatic resources within the survey area, including a label for each aquatic resource, the Cowardin system classification, acreage, latitude, and longitude. For linear features, the table should provide both acreage and linear feet.
- Map of all delineated aquatic resources showing the following:
 - All delineated aquatic resources (e.g. rivers, streams, ditches, canals, and wetlands) should be clearly shown on the map. Only the Corps determines the jurisdictional status of each aquatic resource, the map should not include any labeling concerning jurisdiction.
 - Wetland aquatic resources: At least one set of paired data points for each wetland boundary should be shown on the map. The paired data points should be located close to the delineated boundary. Additional data points/transects may be required and dependent on various factors including the size and configuration of the aquatic resource(s), changes in vegetation communities, and site topography or slope. The additional data points/transects should be shown on the map. Transects should be in accordance to Part IV, Sections D and E of the 1987 Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual.
 - Non-wetland aquatic resources: The map should clearly show the OHWM delineation for each aquatic resource (e.g. rivers, streams, lakes, drains, canals and ditches).
 - A reference block that identifies the site name and organization or individual(s) who conducted the delineation.

- A statement describing the aquatic resources within the survey area, and an explanation for the mapped boundaries, especially for resources containing complex transition zones. Describe whether the delineation methodology used was routine, comprehensive, or atypical, or if “Difficult Wetland Situations” procedures were used, provide the rationale for their use.
- A statement describing the existing site conditions. The site condition description should include recent meteorological conditions, flood/drought conditions, current land use, grazing or irrigation practices, and atypical site conditions such as modifications to the site (e.g. constructed drains, tilling or drainage ditches).
- If the delineator believes one or more aquatic resources are not jurisdictional, the rationale should be included in a separate section of the delineation report and/or the suspected non-jurisdictional aquatic resource(s) should be identified on a separate map labeled (Suspected non-jurisdictional aquatic resources).
- Photographs of potential wetland(s) which only meet one or two wetland criteria. Provide a brief narrative explaining the wetland criteria that was not met. If a stream resource does not exhibit a clear OHWM, describe the rationale for not delineating these features (e.g. erosional features, upland swales) and include photographs of the feature.
- A statement describing the hydrology at the site, including all known surface or subsurface sources, and drainage gradients. The statement should identify the surface water connections flowing into or out of the survey area/parcel. The statement should include any manmade alterations which may influence the hydrology at the site (e.g. irrigation waters, drainage ditches). The statement should also identify the nearest aquatic resource found on the most recent USGS topographic map.
- A statement describing the soils present within the survey area and a discussion of hydric soils and non-hydric soils within the survey area.
- A statement describing the plant communities present within the survey area.
- National Wetland Inventory (NWI) map for the survey area.
- A USDA web soil survey map of the surveyed area. The map should include the associated soils table with map unit symbol, soil name/unit name, and acreage.
- Wetland determination data forms from the current regional supplement. All fields of the wetland determination data form(s) should be completed including the date(s) data was collected, scientific names of dominant plants species found in the survey area, the wetland indicator status of each plant using the most recent National Plant List, and any secondary indicators, if present.

FEMA flood plain mapping, USGS stream gauge data, USGS topographical maps, remote sensing maps (e.g. LiDAR, Color Infrared), and/or precipitation records (e.g. NRCS WETS table data).

Hydrological monitoring of highly disturbed or problematic sites, where applicable. All monitoring wells used to facilitate wetland hydrology determinations should be installed in accordance with the guidelines in the Technical Standard for Water-Table Monitoring of Potential Wetland Sites, ERDC-TN-WRAP-05-2, U.S. Army Research and Development Center, Vicksburg, MS (<http://el.erd.c.usace.army.mil/elpubs/pdf/tnwrap05-2.pdf>).

Electronic file of geographic information (e.g. ESRI shape-files, Google Earth KMZ/KML file) for the site, including the metadata file with the geographic coordinate system, projection, and datum for the aquatic resource boundaries and data point locations.

More information can be found on our website regarding aquatic resource delineations and reference materials (<http://www.nww.usace.army.mil/Business-With-Us/Regulatory-Division/Wetlands>)