

Regulatory Updates: Regional Supplements

May 2009

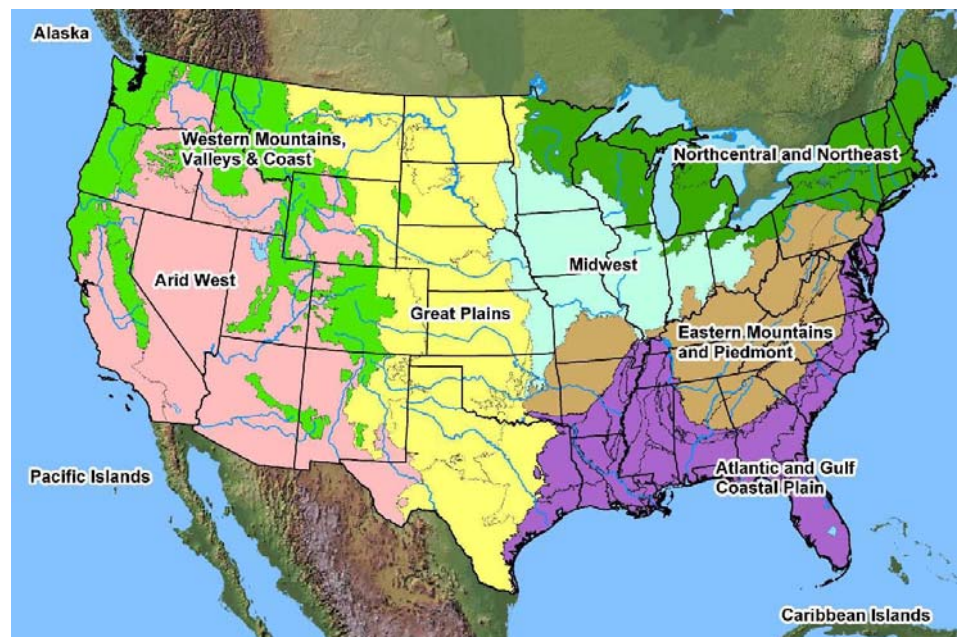
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Regional Supplements

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is in the process of updating the *1987 Corp Wetland Delineation Manual ('87 Manual)* through the use of regional supplements, which will allow each region of the U.S. to focus on those vegetative, hydrologic and hydric soil indicators that are most representative of the wetlands of their region. For instance, this enables wetlands in the dry western portions of the U.S. (i.e.,

Arid West) to utilize a different set of indicators (i.e., vegetation, hydrology and soils) best suited to their drier climates, landforms, geology and soils, and plant distributions and adaptations without having to utilize indicators that are more representative of humid and wetter climates found in the Midwest.



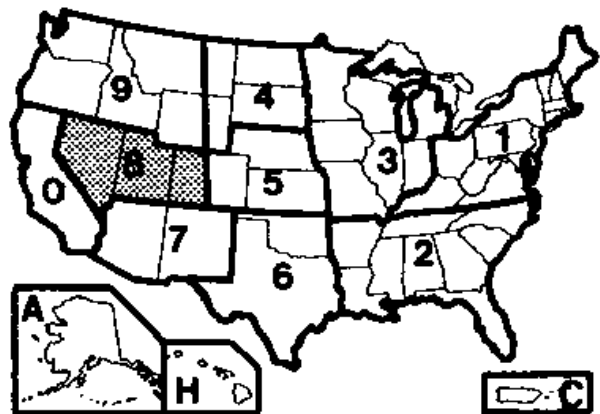
The USACE published the interim *Midwest Regional Supplement* in October 2008 and implemented it in November 2008. This supplement updates and replaces portions of the '87 *Manual*. Field work conducted before this date can still utilize the old '87 *Manual* wetland data forms. However, any field work conducted within the geographic areas covered by the *Midwest Regional Supplement* after November 22, 2008 will require the use of the new wetland data forms and their respective reference to the additional indicators for vegetation, hydrology and hydric soils.

Other regions within the JFNew footprint that have implemented interim supplements include the Atlantic and Gulf Coastal Plain region (January 2009) and the Great Plains region (May 2008). Any work in these regions will need to use the appropriate supplements. The supplements for the Northcentral and Northeast regions are still in the draft stage and are currently being field tested. The Eastern Mountains and Piedmont regions are still in the working group stage. The latter two regions still require the use of only the '87 *Manual*. Over the past couple of months there have been several USACE Supplement training sessions provided by various agencies and organizations, including JFNew, throughout the Midwest. These sessions have been critical to educating staff on the many new indicators. However, these indicators should be used in the field with trained staff or soil scientists to ensure an understanding of how to identify the correct indicators for a given location.

Significant Changes to the '87 Manual

One of the most significant changes to be the '87 *Manual* is the elimination of "+" and "-" wetness modifiers on the plant indicator status listings. This means that plants classified as FAC- and previously counted as non-wetland plants will now be considered wetland species. This has the potential to change many wetland determinations. FAC and FAC+ species continue to be counted as wetland plants. The indicator status for plants in our regions can be found in the following lists:

- Region 1—Reed (1988) *National List of Plant Species That Occur in Wetlands*



- Region 3—U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (1988) *National List of Plant Species That Occur in Wetlands*

The supplements also provide new wetland data forms that list all the hydrologic and soil indicators for the given region. The revised process also includes a much more formal field assessment of vegetation and a series of calculations to determine if an area meets the wetland vegetation criterion.

NEXT

- **Regulatory Updates: Jurisdictional Determinations (JD)**
 - What is now being required for an Approved JD Report
 - Why and when do I have to include a Rapanos Guidance JD Form
 - Will all this extra work expedite the JD process

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