



## Draft Wetland Delineation Report Content

*Guidance for CNMI from the BECQ's Division of Coastal Resources Management*

This guidance offers support for the application of the Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality's regulations and the Army Corps of Engineer's (ACE) requirements for wetland delineation reports using the 1987 ACE Delineation Manual and the 2012 Regional Supplement for the Hawaii and Pacific Islands region. A complete delineation report shall, at minimum, include the following components:

- **Clear identification of the site location and assessment area.** This is typically the property line for most projects, although linear projects such as roadways or utility lines are usually evaluated within a designated right-of-way or corridor width. Regardless of project type, the report must clearly identify the boundary of the area investigated on maps that are part of the report. Provision of a contextual map is encouraged but not required.
- **Description of field conditions at the time of review.** When a field review is conducted, the report must include the date(s) of review, recent climatic conditions, and any other factors potentially influencing the interpretation of wetland-related field characteristics.
- **Identification of who conducted the review and for whom the review was conducted.** Inclusion of the name and phone number and/or email address of the primary author is encouraged.
- **Purpose of the review.** This is important in determining the general approach and methods used for identifying and delineation wetlands and other aquatic resources on the site. Delineations are almost always conducted for the purpose of some type of regulatory compliance.
- **Methodology.** The report should identify the specific methods, techniques, and data sources used to complete the delineation. The current version of the Manual and regional supplement describe a variety of different approaches and data sources that can be used depending on the site conditions and other circumstances. The report should discuss which methods and data sources were used and why. Where wetlands have or are suspected to have a federal nexus, delineation determinations should be submitted to the Army Corps of Engineers' Guam Regional office and the DCRM office. Where wetlands are not believed to have a federal nexus, reports can be submitted directly to the DCRM permitting office. The DCRM may forward these reports to the ACE at its discretion.

For determinations of the boundaries of wetlands (jurisdictional or non-jurisdictional), DCRM requires a report that at minimum: (1) outlines site hydrology and current conditions; and (2) maps proposed boundaries including justification regarding the basis used for this determination. DCRM staff will verify boundaries based on assessment of hydrology, vegetation, and soils. Demarcation of proposed boundary lines and soil test pits using flagging, and attachment of photos for reference is encouraged.

For official confirmation of a delineation of waters of the U.S., including wetlands, by the Honolulu District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Regulatory Office ALL delineations must be prepared in accordance with the current method required by the Corps (per the 1987 Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual and the 2012 Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual: Hawaii and Pacific Islands Region) and use of the most current National Wetland Plant List (NWPL).

- 2012 Regional Supplement: [http://www.usace.army.mil/Portals/2/docs/civilworks/regulatory/reg\\_supp/HPI\\_regsupp\\_v2.pdf](http://www.usace.army.mil/Portals/2/docs/civilworks/regulatory/reg_supp/HPI_regsupp_v2.pdf)
- National Wetland Plant List: [http://rsgisias.crrel.usace.army.mil/nwpl\\_static/index.html](http://rsgisias.crrel.usace.army.mil/nwpl_static/index.html)

The CNMI Rapid Assessment Methodology (RAM) may be used to assess the value / quality of delineated wetlands for local permitting and resource management purposes.

• **Mapping Resources.** The report should include readily available mapping products that provide clear and useful information related to wetlands and aquatic resources. The boundaries of the review area, north arrow, scale and legend must be identified on each map, which must also be at a scale allowing for identification of relevant information. At a minimum, the following figures must be included in the report (may be combined, as appropriate):

- Site location, with adequate detail providing a reviewer directions to the site.
- Topography data from sources such as USGS quads, a topographic survey or LiDAR data.
- NRCS Web Soil Survey (WSS) map.
- National Wetland Inventory (NWI), National Hydrographic Dataset (NHD), and/or any other available local inventory mapping, including storm sewer mapping.
- Recent aerial photography and historical imagery, if that data facilitates a complete delineation report.
- A final Delineation Figure, **overlaid on current aerial imagery**, depicting the wetland size, and labeling the identified wetland or aquatic resources and sampling points referenced to corresponding data forms. All wetlands and aquatic resources should be shown on the final delineation figure regardless of their presumed jurisdictional status in relation to any regulatory program.

• **Data Forms.** For delineations involving onsite field assessment, supporting data forms from the applicable regional supplement (see reference above) are required. The data forms provide the supporting field documentation for report conclusions. These forms must be fully completed and correspond to sample point locations identified on one or more mapping resources in the report. Photographs of the sampling locations and overall site conditions can often provide further documentation of observed conditions. Locations of photographs must be referenced, and soil pits must be flagged for agency verification purposes. Assessor(s) must provide a sufficient number of data points to adequately sample and represent the complexity of a site and the wetland edge(s).

• **Results and Discussion.** Basic conclusions should be discussed and described in the report. This includes a physical description of the site in terms of vegetation, soils and hydrology. The report should thoroughly describe wetlands, other aquatic resources and non-wetland areas in terms of their vegetation (plant community type), landscape position, hydrology and soils. The report should also discuss the consistency of the delineation with the mapping resources. For example, if the field delineation fails to identify wetlands in mapped hydric soil areas, the report should discuss this inconsistency and possible reasons for it. Areas fulfilling all three wetland parameters should be shown on the final delineation figure, regardless of the delineator's opinion related to potential agency jurisdictional responsibilities.