

IOWA INSTRUCTION 180-381 – PROCEDURES FOR OFF-SITE WETLAND DETERMINATIONS
ON CROPLAND

1. PURPOSE:

This Iowa Instruction provides the instructions for conducting off-site wetland determinations on cropland.

2. EXPLANATION :

The attachment summarizes the procedures to be used when making off-site certified wetland determinations as per the Iowa Off-site Mapping Conventions. These procedures must be followed to ensure consistent wetland determinations are made that will be defensible in appeals.

Approved By:

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MAKING WETLAND DETERMINATION ON CROPLAND

The following is a reminder on the policy for making USDA wetland determinations on cropland.

- All preliminary cropland wetland determinations must be made using the 1995 Iowa Wetland Mapping Conventions Off-Site Procedures. This is the only procedure that is valid for making certified determinations for lands where annual crop production is occurring. Any previous bulletins to the contrary are expired and not valid.
- Certified determinations must be based upon these approved Iowa Mapping Conventions or upon an on-site determination. No determination made from any of the wetland inventories in the 1980's or the 1990's are considered valid determinations for certification.
- There are no frozen PC determinations from old inventories. This freeze was cancelled by the 1996 Farm Bill. Producers should not rely on these old determinations (which did not have the option for a Farmed Wetland label) but instead, need a certified determination based on current NRCS procedures.
- Iowa Wetland Mapping Conventions can be found in EFOTG, Section IB, References List, Item 18. This contains the mapping conventions and a list of both the approved recommended slide years and alternative years to be used if one of the recommended years is missing or has a quality issue.
- The five recommended years of slides (or substituted alternative year) listed in the mapping conventions are the minimum to be used. Five years of slides is the minimum but extra years of slides may be utilized, especially if the results from the five recommended years produce an unclear answer.
- If extra years of slides are used, they should be normal years or use a combination of equal years of wet and dry years. Any extra years used should be as close to 1985 as possible.
- For preliminary wetland determinations, all cropland sites on hydric soils that have positive signature of hydrology in 50% or more of the years examined, meet the off-site mapping conventions and are to be labeled as wetlands for USDA purposes.
- Sites that appear on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetland Inventory (do not use the IDNR NWI remapping) are considered wetlands unless they do not meet the conventions requirements. Sites with hydric soils that are on the NWI map having 2 hits out of 5 recommended slide years (or 40% of the years if more than 5 are used) meet the off-site mapping criteria and are to be labeled as wetlands.
- Sites that are in pasture, trees or other non-cropland sites, require a field visit to make a preliminary wetland determination. The Army Corps of Engineers procedures are to be followed for making determinations on these land uses.
- Remember, sites that have 50% or more positive signatures of hydrology meet the test for wetland hydrology and vegetation. On-site field reviews are to confirm that the signature is not the result of non-hydrologic signature. Field reviews do NOT override the slide signatures unless an anomaly is found.