

**Chicago District Regulatory Branch Delineation Report Reminders**  
**May 17, 2022**

It's spring and time to get out in the field! The Corps strongly recommends you complete the following activities for all wetland delineations submitted to this office for review:

- Use of automated data sheets now available for delineations (*see Link 1*).
- Growing season has generally begun in our region. Information on the growing season start times can be found in Chapter 4 of the Supplement to Delineation Manual: Midwest Region (*see Link 2*). However, Project Managers have the discretion to accept delineations completed outside the growing season on a case-by-case basis.
- Farmed wetland determinations need to be completed for all sites that have land in agricultural production (or that have been actively farmed within the last 5 years). The process for assessing the presence of wetlands on agricultural land is detailed in Chapter 5 of the Supplement to Delineation Manual: Midwest Region (*see Link 2*):
  - Please note that in these situations the farmed wetland determination method must be used to determine the wetland boundaries. Conventional wetland delineation methods are not permissible in these situations.
- Delineate the ordinary high water mark (OHWM) for non-wetland waters with the same rigor as a wetland boundary. In addition:
  - Describe observations of OHWM characteristics at multiple points in written format;
  - Place flags for survey and field verification and document the OHWM indicators identified at all observation points; and
  - The OHWM is not set at any hydraulic recurrence interval from an H&H model or floodplain map but rather should be observed in the field. ERDC's OHWM page can be used as a reference (*see Link 3*).
- Completing a rigorous plant inventory is essential for determining the quality of wetlands as well as making assessments for the presence/absence of threatened and endangered species. In addition:
  - Complete a meander survey to assess vegetation throughout the wetland;
  - Capture multiple data points for more comprehensive FQI;
  - Delineations performed at the beginning or end of the growing season may not be an adequate representation of vegetative diversity. Therefore, the Corps may require additional vegetative surveys.
- Follow Corps delineation standards (*see Link 4*). In particular, emphasis is placed on completion of the following activities:
  - Include road names and portions of adjacent land on all report figures and exhibits;
  - Include acreage and/or square feet for all delineated areas and wetland community types (i.e., emergent, forested, etc.) for each delineated area;
  - Complete an adequate sampling of data points to document the wetland boundaries. Larger wetlands may require multiple sets of upland/wetland data points; and
  - Take sample points in suspect areas to demonstrate and document upland/wetland status. A suspect area is an area mapped as a wetland or an area that exhibits wetland vegetation, hydric soils, and/or wetland hydrology or a combination thereof. Do not conclude that an area is upland without documenting its upland status with (a) sample point(s).

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Link 1: <https://www.usace.army.mil/Media/Announcements/Article/2989646/5-april-2022-army-corps-of-engineers-announces-the-release-of-automated-wetland/>

Link 2: <https://usace.contentdm.oclc.org/utils/getfile/collection/p266001coll1/id/7630>

Link 3: <https://www.erdc.usace.army.mil/Media/Fact-Sheets/Fact-Sheet-Article-View/Article/486085/ordinary-high-water-mark-ohwm-research-development-and-training/>

Link 4: <https://www.lrc.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory/Delineation-Standards/>