

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q. What are wetlands?**

**A.** "Wetlands" are defined as areas that are inundated or saturated by surface water or groundwater at a frequency and a duration sufficient to support, and under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soils. Soils present in wetlands generally are classified as hydric or alluvial, or possess characteristics that are associated with reducing soil conditions. The prevalent vegetation in wetlands generally consists of facultative or obligate hydrophytic macrophytes that are typically adapted to areas having soil conditions described above. These species, due to morphological, physiological, or reproductive adaptations, have the ability to grow, reproduce, or persist in aquatic environments or anaerobic soil conditions. Florida wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bayheads, bogs, cypress domes and strands, sloughs, wet prairies, riverine swamps and marshes, hydric seepage slopes, tidal marshes, mangrove swamps and other similar areas.

### **Q. How are wetlands identified?**

**A.** Wetlands are identified by examining the vegetation, soils, and hydrologic indicators on site. Wetland boundaries are established or "delineated" by using a standardized method more formally known as Chapter 62-340 F.A.C. To find the full text of the legal rule, click [here](#).

### **Q. How do I obtain a wetland alteration permit application?**

**A.** Please visit our [Wetlands](#) site. The requirements and application process vary depending on whether the proposed development is commercial or residential.

### **Q. How do I know if my property contains wetlands?**

**A.** You may call or visit our office in DeLand if you would like a general idea of what types of soils and vegetation may be on your property. The aerial mapping system we use is for general information only and has not been field-verified. For a more accurate assessment, a site visit would be necessary and can be performed by Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) staff or a private environmental consultant. You can contact [Florida Department of Environmental Protection](#) at 407-894-7555, or obtain the [consultant list](#) online.

### **Q. My lot contains wetlands. Can I build?**

**A.** You may be able to build on your lot if it contains wetlands. However, you will need to try to avoid any impact to the wetlands as well as the buffer. If it is impossible to avoid the wetlands and/or buffer, then you must try to minimize the impacts. Any unavoidable impacts must be permitted and generally require mitigation to offset the impacts. Permits may be required by other agencies as well. Please visit our [wetlands](#) site online or contact Environmental Permitting at 386-736-5927 for more information.

**Q. Can I impact the wetlands on my property if I buy wetlands somewhere else?**

**A.** Not necessarily. In order to obtain a wetland alteration permit from Volusia County, you must first demonstrate the impacts are unavoidable and have been minimized to the greatest extent possible. Only then can staff assess what mitigation may be appropriate. Options could include purchasing or preserving wetlands. However the County does not typically accept preservation alone because it generally results in a net loss of wetland acreage.

**Q. What is a buffer?**

**A.** Buffers are upland areas adjacent to wetlands which are necessary to protect the wetlands and wetland species from the detrimental impacts of development or alteration. The buffer shall include canopy, understory, and groundcover and consists of preserved existing vegetation or planted native species.

**Q. Do I need a permit to trim mangroves?**

**A.** Mangrove trimming may require a permit. Please contact the [Florida Department of Environmental Protection \(FDEP\)](#) at 407-894-7555 to determine your permitting requirements.

**Q. Is the ocean a wetland?**

**A.** No, the ocean does not support the vegetation or soils necessary to meet the state definition for wetlands.

**Q. Are lakes, ponds, creeks, and ditches wetlands?**

**A.** In most cases yes, if they are inundated and support the appropriate type of vegetation and/or contain the soil characteristics to meet the state definition.

**Q. Since I have pine trees on my property, does that mean I do not have wetlands?**

**A.** Pine trees can be found in wetlands, although some species tend to be found in wetter areas than others. To determine if an area contains wetlands, a qualified professional would have to inspect the property and assess what other types of vegetation, soils and hydrologic indicators are on site.