

**62-340.100 Intent.**

(1) This rule's intent is to provide a unified statewide methodology for the delineation of the extent of wetlands and surface waters to satisfy the mandate of Section 373.421, F.S. This delineation methodology is intended to approximate the combined landward extent of wetlands as determined by a water management district and the Department immediately before the effective date of this rule. Before implementing the specific provisions of this methodology, the regulating agency shall attempt to identify wetlands according to the definition for wetlands in Section 373.019(25), F.S., and subsection 62-340.200(19), F.A.C., below. The landward extent of wetlands shall be determined by the dominance of plant species, soils and other hydrologic evidence indicative of regular and periodic inundation or saturation. In all cases, attempts shall be made to locate the landward extent of wetlands visually by on site inspection, or aerial photointerpretation in combination with ground truthing, without quantitative sampling. If this cannot be accomplished, the quantitative methods in paragraph 62-301.400(1)(c), F.A.C., shall be used unless the applicant or petitioner and regulating agency agree, in writing, on an alternative method for quantitatively analyzing the vegetation onsite. The methodology shall not be used to delineate areas which are not wetlands as defined in subsection 62-340.200(19), F.A.C., nor to delineate as wetlands or surface waters areas exempted from delineation by statute or agency rule.

(2) The Department shall be responsible for ensuring statewide coordination and consistency in the delineation of surface waters and wetlands pursuant to this rule, by providing training and guidance to the Department, Districts, and local governments in implementing the methodology.

*Rulemaking Authority 373.421 FS. Law Implemented 373.421, 373.4211 FS. History—New 7-1-94, Formerly 17-340.100.*

## **62-340.200 Definitions.**

When used in this chapter, the following terms shall mean:

- (1) "Aquatic plant" means a plant, including the roots, which typically floats on water or requires water for its entire structural support, or which will desiccate outside of water.
- (2) "Canopy" means the plant stratum composed of all woody plants and palms with a trunk four inches or greater in diameter at breast height, except vines.
- (3) "Diameter at Breast Height (DBH)" means the diameter of a plant's trunk or main stem at a height of 4.5 feet above the ground.
- (4) "Facultative plants" means those plant species listed in subsection 62-340.450(3), F.A.C., of this chapter. For the purposes of this rule, facultative plants are not indicators of either wetland or upland conditions.
- (5) "Facultative Wet plants" means those plant species listed in subsection 62-340.450(2), F.A.C., of this chapter.
- (6) "Ground Cover" means the plant stratum composed of all plants not found in the canopy or subcanopy, except vines and aquatic plants.
- (7) "Ground truthing" means verification on the ground of conditions on a site.
- (8) "Hydric Soils" means soils that are saturated, flooded, or ponded long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in the upper part of the soil profile.
- (9) "Hydric Soil Indicators" means those indicators of hydric soil conditions as identified in Soil and Water Relationships of Florida's Ecological Communities (Florida Soil Conservation ed. Staff 1992).
- (10) "Inundation" means a condition in which water from any source regularly and periodically covers a land surface.
- (11) "Obligate plants" means those plant species listed in subsection 62-340.450(1), F.A.C., of this chapter.
- (12) "Regulating agency" means the Department of Environmental Protection, the water management districts, state or regional agencies, local governments, and any other governmental entities.
- (13) "Riverwash" means areas of unstabilized sandy, silty, clayey, or gravelly sediments. These areas are flooded, washed, and reworked by rivers or streams so frequently that they may support little or no vegetation.
- (14) "Saturation" means a water table six inches or less from the soil surface for soils with a permeability equal to or greater than six inches per hour in all layers within the upper 12 inches, or a water table 12 inches or less from the soil surface for soils with a permeability less than six inches per hour in any layer within the upper 12 inches.
- (15) "Seasonal High Water" means the elevation to which the ground and surface water can be expected to rise due to a normal wet season.
- (16) "Subcanopy" means the plant stratum composed of all woody plants and palms, exclusive of the canopy, with a trunk or main stem with a DBH between one and four inches, except vines.
- (17) "Upland plants" means those plant species, not listed as Obligate, Facultative Wet, or Facultative by this rule, excluding vines, aquatic plants, and any plant species not introduced into the State of Florida as of the effective date of this rule.
- (18) "U.S.D.A.-S.C.S." means the United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service.
- (19) "Wetlands," as defined in Section 373.019(25), F.S., means those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface water or ground water 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. Florida wetlands generally do not include longleaf or slash pine flatwoods with an understory dominated by saw palmetto.

### **62-340.300 Delineation of Wetlands.**

The landward extent (i.e., the boundary) of wetlands as defined in subsection 62-340.200(19), F.A.C., shall be determined by applying reasonable scientific judgment to evaluate the dominance of plant species, soils, and other hydrologic evidence of regular and periodic inundation and saturation as set forth below. In applying reasonable scientific judgment, all reliable information shall be evaluated in determining whether the area is a wetland as defined in subsection 62-340.200(19), F.A.C.

(1) Before using the wetland delineation methodology described below, the regulating agency shall attempt to identify and delineate the landward extent of wetlands by direct application of the definition of wetlands in subsection 62-340.200(19), F.A.C., with particular attention to the vegetative communities which the definition lists as wetlands and non-wetlands. If the boundary cannot be located easily by use of the definition in subsection 62-340.200(19), F.A.C., the provisions of this rule shall be used to locate the landward extent of a wetland. In applying the provisions of this rule, the regulating agency shall attempt to locate the landward extent of wetlands visually by on site inspection, or aerial photointerpretation in combination with ground truthing.

(2) The landward extent of a wetland as defined in subsection 62-340.200(19), F.A.C., shall include any of the following areas:

(a) Those areas where the areal extent of obligate plants in the appropriate vegetative stratum is greater than the areal extent of all upland plants in that stratum, as identified using the method in Rule 62-340.400, F.A.C., and either:

1. The substrate is composed of hydric soils or riverwash, as identified using standard U.S.D.A.-S.C.S. practices for Florida, including the approved hydric soil indicators, except where the hydric soil is disturbed by a nonhydrological mechanical mixing of the upper soil profile and the regulating agency establishes through data or evidence that hydric soil indicators would be present but for the disturbance,

2. The substrate is nonsoil, rock outcrop-soil complex, or the substrate is located within an artificially created wetland area, or

3. One or more of the hydrologic indicators listed in Rule 62-340.500, F.A.C., are present and reasonable scientific judgment indicates that inundation or saturation is present sufficient to meet the wetland definition of subsection 62-340.200(19), F.A.C.

(b) Those areas where the areal extent of obligate or facultative wet plants, or combinations thereof, in the appropriate stratum is equal to or greater than 80% of all the plants in that stratum, excluding facultative plants, and either:

1. The substrate is composed of hydric soils or riverwash, as identified using standard U.S.D.A.-S.C.S. practices for Florida, including the approved hydric soil indicators, except where the hydric soil is disturbed by a nonhydrologic mechanical mixing of the upper soil profile and the regulating agency establishes through data or evidence that hydric soil indicators would be present but for the disturbance,

2. The substrate is nonsoil, rock outcrop-soil complex, or the substrate is located within an artificially created wetland area, or

3. One or more of the hydrologic indicators listed in Rule 62-340.500, F.A.C., are present and reasonable scientific judgment indicates that inundation or saturation is present sufficient to meet the wetland definition of subsection 62-340.200(19), F.A.C.

(c) Those areas, other than pine flatwoods and improved pastures, with undrained hydric soils which meet, in situ, at least one of the criteria listed below. A hydric soil is considered undrained unless reasonable scientific judgment indicates permanent artificial alterations to the on site hydrology have resulted in conditions which would not support the formation of hydric soils.

1. Soils classified according to United States Department of Agriculture's *Keys to Soil Taxonomy* (4th ed. 1990) as Umbraqualfs, Sulfaquents, Hydraquents, Humaquepts, Histosols (except Folists), Argiaquolls, or Umbracqualls.

2. Saline sands (salt flats-tidal flats).

3. Soil within a hydric mapping unit designated by the U.S.D.A.-S.C.S. as frequently flooded or depressional, when the hydric nature of the soil has been field verified using the U.S.D.A.-S.C.S. approved hydric soil indicators for Florida. If a permit applicant, or a person petitioning for a formal determination pursuant to Section 373.421(2), F.S., disputes the boundary of a frequently flooded or depressional mapping unit, the applicant or petitioner may request that the regulating agency, in cooperation with the U.S.D.A.-S.C.S., confirm the boundary. For the purposes of Section 120.60(2), F.S., a request for a boundary confirmation pursuant to this subparagraph shall have the same effect as a timely request for additional information by the regulating agency. The regulating agency's receipt of the final response provided by the U.S.D.A.-S.C.S. to the request for boundary confirmation shall have the same effect as a receipt of timely requested additional information.

4. For the purposes of this paragraph only, "pine flatwoods" means a plant community type in Florida occurring on flat terrain with soils which may experience a seasonal high water table near the surface. The canopy species consist of a monotypic or mixed forest of long leaf pine or slash pine. The subcanopy is typically sparse or absent. The ground cover is dominated by saw palmetto with areas of wire grass, gallberry, and other shrubs, grasses, and forbs, which are not obligate or facultative wet species. Pine flatwoods do not include those wetland communities as listed in the wetland definition contained in subsection 62-340.200(19),

F.A.C., which may occur in the broader landscape setting of pine flatwoods and which may contain slash pine. Also for the purposes of this paragraph only, “improved pasture” means areas where the dominant native plant community has been replaced with planted or natural recruitment of herbaceous species which are not obligate or facultative wet species and which have been actively maintained for livestock through mechanical means or grazing.

(d) Those areas where one or more of the hydrologic indicators listed in Rule 62-340.500, F.A.C., are present, and which have hydric soils, as identified using the U.S.D.A.-S.C.S. approved hydric soil indicators for Florida, and reasonable scientific judgment indicates that inundation or saturation is present sufficient to meet the wetland definition of subsection 62-340.200(19), F.A.C. These areas shall not extent beyond the seasonal high water elevation.

(3)(a) If the vegetation or soils of an upland or wetland area have been altered by natural or man-induced factors such that the boundary between wetlands and uplands cannot be delineated reliably by use of the methodology in subsection 62-340.300(2), F.A.C., as determined by the regulating agency, and the area has hydric soils or riverwash, as identified using standard U.S.D.A.-S.C.S. practices for Florida, including the approved hydric soil indicators, except where the hydric soil is disturbed by a non hydrologic mechanical mixing of the upper soil profile and the regulating agency establishes through data or evidence that hydric soil indicators would be present but for the disturbance, then the most reliable available information shall be used with reasonable scientific judgment to determine where the methodology in subsection 62-340.300(2), F.A.C., would have delineated the boundary between wetlands and uplands. Reliable available information may include, but is not limited to, aerial photographs, remaining vegetation, authoritative site-specific documents, or topographical consistencies.

(b) This subsection shall not apply to any area where regional or site-specific permitted activity, or activities which did not require a permit, under Sections 253.123 and 253.124, F.S. (1957), as subsequently amended, the provisions of Chapter 403, F.S. (1983), relating to dredging and filling activities, Chapter 84-79, Laws of Florida, and Part IV of Chapter 373, F.S., have altered the hydrology of the area to the extent that reasonable scientific judgment, or application of the provisions of Section 62-340.550, F.A.C., indicate that under normal circumstances the area no longer inundates or saturates at a frequency and duration sufficient to meet the wetland definition in subsection 62-340.200(19), F.A.C.

(c) This subsection shall not be construed to limit the type of evidence which may be used to delineate the landward extent of a wetland under this chapter when an activity violating the regulatory requirements of Sections 253.123 and 253.124, F.S. (1957), as subsequently amended, the provisions of Chapter 403, F.S. (1983), relating to dredging and filling activities, Chapter 84-79, Laws of Florida, and Part IV of Chapter 373, F.S., has disturbed the vegetation or soils of an area.

(4) The regulating agency shall maintain sufficient soil scientists on staff to provide evaluation or consultation regarding soil determinations in applying the methodologies set forth in subsection 62-340.300(2) or (3), F.A.C. Services provided by the U.S.D.A.-S.C.S., or other competent soil scientists, under contract or agreement with the regulating agency, may be used in lieu of, or to augment, agency staff.

*Rulemaking Authority 373.421 FS. Law Implemented 373.421, 373.4211 FS. History—New 7-1-94, Formerly 17-340.300.*