

NB.180.8.8, CPA – Vegetation Indicator Status Designation Modifiers for Certified Wetland Determinations

National Bulletin:	180-8-8	September 4, 2008
Subject:	CPA – Vegetation Indicator Status Designation Modifiers for Certified Wetland Determinations	

Purpose. To clarify for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff use of the Vegetation Indicator Status Designation Modifiers.

Expiration Date. September 30, ~~2008~~ 2009 (misprint verified)

Background. The *National List of Plant Species that Occur in Wetlands* (List) contains approximately 7,000 plants that occur in wetlands. Each species is ascribed with an Indicator Status Designation signifying its frequency of occurrence in a wetland (Obligate [OBL], Facultative Wetland [FACW], Facultative [FAC], Facultative Upland [FACU], and Upland [UPL]). Additionally, some species are ascribed with a “+/-” modifier to further refine a species preference for wetlands (“+” meaning wetter as in FAC+; “-” meaning drier as in FAC-).

Explanation. [National Bulletin 180-7-11, Wetland Conservation Compliance](#), was issued on May 10, 2007, to provide guidance to NRCS staff regarding the use of Regional Supplements to the 1987 Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) Wetland Delineation Manual. In most of the Regional Supplements, the use of the “+/-” modifiers has been eliminated. The guidance provided in the Supplements is to consider all FAC plants (FAC+, FAC, FAC-) as hydrophytes. Prior to the Regional Supplements, a plant ascribed as FAC- would be considered a non-hydrophyte for wetland determination purposes.

The National Wetland Plant Panel plans to re-evaluate all plants ascribed with the FAC- designation. This evaluation will determine whether these species should be designated FAC or FACU. This evaluation will be completed within two years. Any change in the indicator status designation will not affect previously completed certified wetland determinations.

The NRCS staff is to continue using the FAC- designation when using Corps Regional Supplements for Swampbuster purposes until the National Plant Panel completes the re-evaluation process. For NRCS purposes in making hydrophytic vegetation determinations, plants listed as FAC- in the 1988, “National List of Plant Species that Occur in Wetlands” will continue to be considered non-hydrophytes.

Contact. For further information, contact the Wetland Compliance Specialist, at (202) 690-2825.

/s/

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