

## WETLAND DELINEATION + MITIGATION BANKING



### WETLAND DELINEATION

#### WHAT IS A WETLAND?

Wetlands are areas that are saturated or inundated near the soil surface--for at least 14 continuous days during the growing season--to support a dominance of wetland vegetation that is adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands vary widely across the landscape due to local differences in soils, topography, climate, hydrology, water chemistry, vegetation, and other factors, including agriculture and other human disturbance. Some wetlands are only saturated near the ground surface for a short period of time during the spring, making them hard to distinguish from upland areas. A Certified Wetland Delineator can properly delineate all types of wetlands, including several types that may appear to be upland yet still are wetland.

#### WHAT IS A WETLAND DELINEATION?

Wetland delineation is the methodology used to establish the presence of wetland, type, and size based on the boundary within a particular site. A Certified Wetland Delineator looks for numerous indicators to determine if all three parameters are observed within an area for it to be deemed a wetland. These indicators include a dominance of hydrophytic vegetation (i.e., plants that thrive in wet conditions), presence of hydric soils, and wetland hydrology, which are all defined in the U.S. Army Corps for Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual (1987) and Regional Supplements.

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### WETLAND MITIGATION BANKING

Do you have marginal land that often drowns out crops? Are you looking for a way to increase profit on marginal lands, provide hunting land, add natural habitat, or improve water quality? If you answered yes to any of these questions, then wetland mitigation banking may be a great opportunity for you.

#### WHAT IS WETLAND BANKING?

The ramifications of wetland impacts vary from state to state, but the majority of the time require some form of replacement or mitigation. Since impacts to wetlands constantly occur due to urban development, road construction projects and improvements to agricultural drainage, options for off-site wetland replacement are needed. One option available for wetland replacement is a practice called wetland banking.

Wetland banking is a program that offers replacement acreage from landowners who have restored or created wetlands on their property. By restoring or improving wetlands on a property, the landowner is generating wetland banking credits that can be sold to others who have wetland impacts and are in need of replacement wetland acres.

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## WETLAND DELINEATION

### WHY ARE THEY REGULATED?

Wetlands have many functions and public benefits, including filtering, cleaning, and storing water within the landscape as well as providing habitat for a variety of wildlife and plants. Total wetland acreage has significantly been reduced within the last 100 years due to development and agricultural activities that have filled or drained the majority of the pre-settlement wetlands. Public concern for lost functions and values of wetlands has resulted in laws that regulate activities in wetlands, such as Section 404 of the Federal Clean Water Act, as well as several state programs.

### WHEN DOES A LANDOWNER NEED A WETLAND DELINEATION?

A wetland delineation is necessary when platting a property, or if any land alterations are proposed in or near a wetland. Land use changes may include draining, excavating, or filling of a wetland. Wetland delineations are required for Section 404 Federal Clean Water Act compliance, and several local and state programs such as Minnesota's Wetland Conservation Act and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources permits.

### HOW CAN ISG HELP?

ISG has certified Wetland Delineators experienced in the practice of identifying wetland areas and precisely locating boundaries. If you have a project that is located in or near a wetland, ISG can provide assistance by conducting a wetland delineation to assist in the planning process.

## WETLAND MITIGATION BANKING

Desirable wetland bank sites are located on partially drained or ditched basins, or tilled agricultural land with drained hydric soils, and are at least five acres in size. Components of wetland bank applications typically include survey, engineering, and environmental services. After construction, a site is eligible to sell a portion of the wetland credits generated and then a minimum five-year monitoring period is required before final certification.

Once certified by the Army Corps of Engineers and applicable state programs, wetland credits are deposited into the wetland bank. The bank is administered for the life of the account by the Army Corps of Engineers and individual state programs. The credits are then eligible for sale. All lands are retained by the landowner and a permanent conservation easement is placed on the created wetland area and adjacent upland buffer.

### HOW CAN ISG HELP?

Managing wetland issues requires the proper professional training and expertise to garner the most opportunity and value from each site. ISG's environmental team is experienced at performing wetland delineations, assessing wetland functions and values, analyzing wetland impacts and recommending and designing wetland mitigation and banking projects. If you are interested in considering a wetland bank, ISG can provide you with the approximate value of the bank site based on location, type and recent purchases.

