

For: State and County Offices

Clarifications on Wetland Layer

Approved by: Acting Deputy Administrator, Farm Programs



1 Overview

A Background

State and County Offices are receiving questions that indicate there is a misunderstanding about the meaning of the wetland points on the maps sent to producers during the common land unit (CLU) certification. In some cases, the wetland points have been misinterpreted by producers and others as new wetland determinations.

In addition, concerns have been raised within the Service Centers about losing the boundary information recorded on the FSA paper maps when County Offices convert to digital maps. To address the concern about the potential loss of data, an NRCS effort is underway to determine the feasibility of scanning the remainder of the paper maps that were not scanned as part of the digitizing effort.

Preliminary steps are also being taken by NRCS to begin defining the data that will be associated with a wetland polygon layer. This future layer will be created and maintained by NRCS, but will be considered a shared layer for Service Centers, much like CLU.

B Purpose

This notice:

- reminds State and County Offices of the purpose of the wetland point layer
- gives an overview of the project to finish scanning the paper maps
- provides the basic concepts of a future wetland polygon layer
- explains eventual changes for the wetland point layer.

Disposal Date	Distribution
August 1, 2006 8-26-05	State Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices

2 Wetland Point Layer

A Background of Wetland Point Layer

When data was transferred from the paper maps to digital format during the CLU digitizing effort, tabular wetland information was associated with a point. Both basic certified and inventoried wetland information from the existing aerial maps was associated with the existing wetland point layer. This information includes:

- approved wetland label from 2-CP, subparagraph 495 D
- acreage of wetland if shown on aerial map
- whether wetland is certified or inventoried
- date certified.

B Purpose of Wetland Point Layer

The wetland point layer was intended to hold existing data from the paper maps because a certified wetland polygon layer was not available. NRCS continues to be responsible for official wetland determinations made as the result of a producer's request.

3 Overview of Scanning Effort

A Background

Scanning of paper maps during the CLU digitizing process occurred:

- in States contracted out as a component of the digitizing effort
- when part or all of a State was being digitized by a center outside of their own State.

State Offices recently provided updated data to the National Office on which counties were scanned. This data will be used to target future scanning efforts. NRCS is heading up a project to complete the scanning of the paper maps. In conjunction with Lincoln University, NRCS is piloting a process to ship the paper maps to a centralized site, scan the maps, and ship the maps back to the Service Center.

Scans will be archived at a centralized site and a copy will be sent to the originating county's State Office.

B FSA Participation in Scanning

FSA will:

- make the maps available for scanning upon request
- assist NRCS with the scheduling of scanning efforts
- ensure that maps are disposed of properly according to 2-CP.

4 Overview of Wetland Layers Concept

A Concept of Wetland Polygon Model

A future wetland polygon layer will be created by NRCS and contain the following:

- shape and location of certified wetlands
- date wetland was certified
- other data necessary for NRCS and FSA to administer the highly erodible land (HELCS) and wetland conservation (WC) compliance provisions of the Food Security Act of 1985.

An initial step will be the determination of basic data to be recorded about newly certified wetlands in an interim county layer held by NRCS in standardized file structure. This ensures that data is captured as it is created and does not have to be recreated when the ultimate wetland polygon layer is built.

B Future of Wetland Point Layer

The wetland point layer will continue to exist as long as deemed necessary by NRCS and FSA. Forthcoming procedure will provide instructions on how to update the existing layer as needed to remove any certified wetlands that exist in an interim county wetland polygon layer. Eventually, the maintenance of the wetland point layer will become the responsibility of NRCS. FSA and NRCS at the National Office will determine how and when the transfer will occur. Until notified, County Offices will continue to maintain the wetland point layer.

5 Action

A State Office Action

State Offices shall:

- answer questions about the purpose of the wetland point layer according to 8-CM, paragraph 194 and this notice
- cooperate with FSA and NRCS at the National Office on the scanning feasibility study.

B County Office Action

County Offices shall:

- ensure that producers understand the purpose of wetland point layer
- package and ship maps when directed by State Office.