



2013 National Wetland Plant List

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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Background: When USACE announced the roll out of the updated National Wetland Plant List (NWPL) in May 2012, it was noted that periodic updates would occur as taxonomy or nomenclature changed, new species were identified, or re-evaluation of uncertain status ratings by interagency regional panels of botanists were performed.

The NWPL plays a critical role in wetland determinations under the Clean Water Act and the Wetland Conservation Provisions of the Food Security Act. Wetlands are evaluated using three factors – soils, hydrology, and vegetation in accordance with the 1987 Wetland Delineation Manual and Regional Supplements. The NWPL is used in evaluating the vegetation factor.



The NWPL is a list of wetland plants and their assigned indicator statuses. An indicator status reflects the likelihood that a particular plant occurs in a wetland or upland. The five indicator statuses are: Obligate (OBL) plants that always occur in standing water or in saturated soils; Facultative Wet (FACW) plants that nearly always occur in areas of prolonged flooding or require standing water or saturated soils but may, on rare occasions, occur in non-wetlands; Facultative (FAC) plants that occur in a variety of habitats, including wetland and mesic to xeric non-wetland habitats but commonly occur in standing water or saturated soils; Facultative Upland (FACU) plants that typically occur in xeric or mesic non-wetland habitats but may frequently occur in standing water or saturated soils; and Upland (UPL) plants that rarely occur in water or saturated soils.

One of the primary advantages of a web-based list housed on the internet is the ability to make changes to this dynamic list more readily. The 2013 NWPL has been published and the updated list contains 7937 plant species, a reduction of 263 from the 2012 list. The majority of deletions were the removal of some upland species, taxonomic splits, merged species, and three errors. There were 12 requests for re-evaluation of indicator statuses and in seven of those species, the indicator status changed. All of these modifications accounted for 327 indicator status changes. Overall, these revisions represent a 2.4% change in species and 1.2% change in wetland ratings from the 2012 NWPL. Many of those plants that were updated are uncommon. A full list of all the changes can be found on the NWPL website under the “What’s New?” section.

Implementation: The Federal agencies will use the 2013 NWPL on all new Jurisdictional Determinations after September 1, 2013. Any delineations underway using the current list will be accepted, please just reference which list was used in your documentation. The NWPL can be found at http://wetland_plants.usace.army.mil.