

Glossary

Acid - A substance which yields positively charged Hydrogen ions when in solution.

Acidic - Solutions (including soil moisture and water vapor) which have a pH value less than 7.

Acidophilic Vegetation (Acidophile) - Vegetation adapted to living in acidic conditions.

Aerobic - A condition in which molecular oxygen is a part of the environment and freely available to organisms.

Alkali (Base) - A substance which yields negatively charged hydroxide or carbonate ions when in solution.

Alkaline (Basic) - Solutions (including soil moisture and water vapor) which have a pH value greater than 7.

Anaerobic - A condition in which molecular oxygen is absent (or effectively so) from the environment.

Aquifer - A geologic formation that is capable of yielding a significant amount of ground water to a well or spring.

Bog - A peatland which is isolated from ground or surface water (only significant water inputs are directly from rain) and dominated by mosses (Sphagnum spp.), sedges, shrubs, sedges, and evergreen trees such as black spruce and tamarack.

Buttressed - The swollen or enlarged bases of trees developed in response to wet conditions or prolonged inundation.

Calcareous - Containing calcium carbonate, calcium, or lime which typically causes an alkaline condition.

Concentric - A series of circles, each progressively smaller, nested inside one another.

Detritus - Any non-living plant or animal material.

Drained, effectively - A condition where ground or surface water has been removed by artificial means

to the point that an area no longer meets the wetland hydrology criterion.

Drift line - A accumulation of water-carried debris along a topographical contour of the land surface or on vegetation that provides direct evidence of prior inundation and often indicates the directional flow of flood waters.

Ecological Integrity - A term used to describe intact ecosystems that are diverse, productive, and otherwise function normally.

Ecosystem - A community of plants and animals and the physical environment they inhabit, e.g., wetlands, rivers, upland. The ecosystem reflects the interaction among soil, climate, vegetation, and animal life.

Erosion - The process by which soil particles are detached and transported by water, ice, wind, and gravity down slope or to some downstream point.

Eutrophication - Process by which a body of water becomes highly productive either due to natural causes or excessive inputs of pollution rich in dissolved nutrients.

Evapotranspiration - Conversion of liquid water to vapor both by evaporation and by transpiration of the water by plants growing thereon.

Facultative Plant Species (FAC) - Plant species that are estimated to occur in wetlands approximately 34-66% of the time.

Facultative Upland Plant Species (FACU) - Plant species that are estimated to occur in wetlands approximately 1-33% of the time.

Facultative Wetland Plant Species (FACW) - Plant species that are estimated to occur in wetlands approximately 67-99% of the time.

Fen - A type of peatland that receives mineral-rich inputs of ground or surface water and dominated by sedges and other grass-like vegetation.

Field Tiles (Drainage Tiles) - Perforated plastic or clay pipes that are buried under the surface of the ground to facilitate drainage.

Flora - Plant life.

Gleyed - Distinctive blueish-gray soil color which develops under conditions of poor drainage, resulting in reduction of iron and other elements.

Ground water - Water that seeps below the surface of the ground and fills interconnected pores in soil and cracks in rocks.

Growing season - The portion of the year when soil temperatures are above biologic zero (41 degrees F) as defined by "Soil Taxonomy."

Habitat - The environment in which the requirements of a specific plant or animal are met.

Herb - Nonwoody plants including grasses and grass-like plants, forbs, ferns, fern allies, and nonwoody vines. For the purposes wetland delineation, seedlings of woody plants that are less than three feet in height are also considered herbs.

Hydric soil - A soil that is saturated, flooded, or ponded long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in the root zone.

Hydrology - The science dealing with the properties, distribution, and circulation of water.

Hydroperiod - The duration of a particular flooding event. The period during which surface water remains on a wetland.

Hydrophyte or Hydrophytic Vegetation: Literally, water-loving vegetation. Any macrophyte that grows in water, or on a substrate that is at least periodically deficient in oxygen as a result of excessive water content; plants typically found in wetlands and other aquatic habitats.

Indicator - An event, entity, or condition that typically characterizes a prescribed environment or situation; indicators determine or aid in determining whether or not certain circumstances exist or criteria are satisfied.

Infiltration - The downward movement of water from the atmosphere into soil and rock formations.

Interdunal Swale - A type of wetland usually dominated by grass-like vegetation that occurs between sand dunes and beach ridges along the Great Lakes shoreline.

Macrophyte - Any plant species that can be readily observed without the aid of optical magnification, including all vascular plant species or bryophytes (e.g. Sphagnum spp.), as well as large algae (e.g. Chara spp., and Fucus spp.).

Mineral soil - Any soil consisting primarily of mineral (sand, silt, and clay) material, rather than organic matter.

Mottles - Spots or blotches of different color or shades of color interspersed within the dominant matrix color in a soil layer.

Muck - Dark colored, finely textured, well-decomposed organic soil material.

Nonhydric soil - A soil that has developed under predominantly aerobic conditions.

Nonwetland - Any area that has sufficiently dry conditions that hydrophytic vegetation, hydric soils, and/or wetland hydrology are lacking, including former wetlands that have been effectively drained (synonymous with Upland).

Nutrient - Any mineral, compound, or element that promotes biological growth or development.

Obligate Upland Plant Species (UPL) - Plant species that are estimated to occur in wetlands less than 1% of the time.

Obligate Upland Plant Species (UPL) - Plant species that are estimated to occur in wetlands less than 1% of the time.

Obligate Wetland Species (OBL) - Plant species that are estimated to occur in wetlands more than 99% of the time.

Oxidation-Reduction - A complex of biochemical reactions that influence the valence state of elements and their ions. Long periods of soil saturation during the growing season tend to elicit anaerobic conditions that shift the overall process to a reducing condition.

Oxidized Root Channels - Iron oxide concretions (orange or red-brown in color) that form along the length of a root channel in wetland conditions. Oxidized rhizospheres serve as a common field indicator of wetland hydrology in mineral soils.

Peat - A low-density, slightly decomposed fibrous organic soil composed largely of plant material.

Peatland - A generic term used to refer to peat accumulating wetlands, such as fens and bogs.

Perennial (plant) - Living for more than one year.

Permeability - The quality of the soil that enables water to move downward through the profile, measured as the number of inches per hour that water moves downward through the saturated soil.

Piezometer - A shallow well used to measure ground water fluctuations.

Plant Community - The various plant species that share a single habitat.

Propagules - The structure of an organism involved in dispersal and reproduction, as in seeds or spores of plants.

Rhizosphere - The zone of a soil in which interactions between living plant roots and micro-organisms occur; root zone.

Riparian - Adjacent to a body of water; a person who resides on a shoreline property.

Sapling - Woody vegetation between 0.4 and 5.0 inches in diameter at breast height and greater than or equal to 20 feet in height, not including woody vines.

Saturated - A condition in which virtually all voids (pores) between soil particles are temporarily or permanently filled with water.

Shrub - Woody vegetation usually greater than 3 feet but less than 20 feet tall, including multi-stemmed, bushy shrubs and small trees and saplings.

Staff Gauge - A fixed point in a body of water from which the surface water level is measured.

Soil Horizon - A layer of soil or soil material approximately parallel to the land surface and

differing from adjacent layers in physical, chemical, and biological properties or characteristics (e.g., color, structure, and texture).

Substrate - The surface beneath a wetland in which organisms grow or to which organisms are attached.

Stewardship (Land) - To care for and manage natural land in a way that maintains its ecological integrity for the benefit of present and future generations.

Swamp - A forested wetland.

Transpiration - The process in plants by which water is released into the gaseous environment (atmosphere).

Tree - A woody plant 5 inches or greater in diameter at breast height and 20 feet or taller.

Upland - Any area that does not qualify as a wetland because the associated hydrologic regime is not sufficiently wet to elicit development of vegetation, soil, and/or hydrologic characteristics associated with wetlands.

Wetland - An area that is inundated or saturated to the surface for a sufficient time to foster the growth of hydrophytic plants and/or the development of hydric soils.

Wetland Boundary - The point on the ground at which a shift from wetland to upland occurs.

Wetland Delineation - The process by which the boundaries of a particular wetland are defined.

Wetland Determination - The process by which an area is identified as a wetland or nonwetland.

Wetland Hydrology - In general terms, inundation or prolonged soil saturation for a duration sufficient to support wetland vegetation or foster the development of hydric soils (approximately 14 days or more during the growing season in the temperate zone).

Wetland Indicator Status - One of five categories which provide an estimate of the percentage of time a particular plant species would occur in a wetland.

Zone of influence - The area contiguous to a ditch, channel, or other drainage structure that is directly drained by it.