



# Preliminary Wetland Screening

For Land Development  
Project Planning

Regulation of wetlands and other water features can be one of the most important factors controlling the time and cost to permit a land development project. It is critical to identify water features early in the planning process to avoid costly delays. Water & Wetlands Consulting offers Preliminary Wetland Screening as an economical first step in determining the extent of water features on a project site.

A Screening includes available data review and field inspection of the site to identify potential water features that may require consideration in project planning. A report will be provided describing any features found, with a potential water feature map and recommendations for any further delineation. This provides the land development planner with the information needed to make initial decisions regarding project layout and viability prior to committing to more detailed mapping of water features. A Preliminary Wetland Screening constitutes the first phase of a full jurisdictional delineation and can be applied to any additional studies needed for the site. Please contact WWC for a free consultation on the options available for your project.

## A Preliminary Wetland Screening Includes:

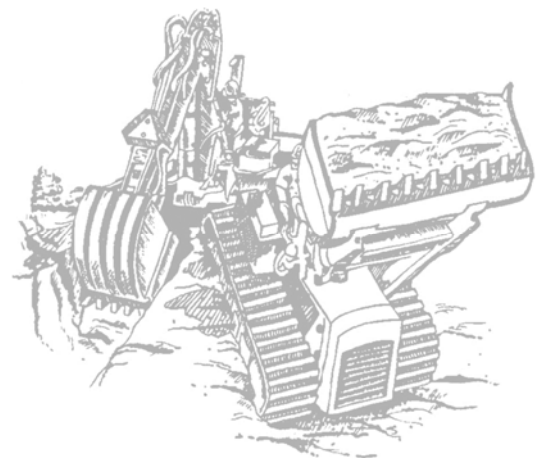
- Aerial Photography Review
- USDA Soil Survey Review
- National Wetland Inventory Review
- Site Inspection
- Potential Water Feature Map
- Wetland Screening Report

**Flat Rate \$195 + \$10/acre\***

\*For 2014 in Adams and adjacent counties in Pennsylvania and Maryland – please contact WWC for pricing outside of this service area.



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# Project Planning for Wetlands and Water Features

Most wetlands and other water features (such as streams, ponds, lakes, and estuaries) are regulated primarily by the Army Corps of Engineers (COE) and state agencies. A project that will impact regulated water features is required to first obtain a permit through these agencies. The costs and time to obtain a permit depend on the size of the impact.

Simple permits are available for certain types of small projects, but larger projects will normally require an environmental professional to identify water features and an engineering firm to prepare the permit. The following are typical steps and common terms involved with permitting impacts to wetlands and water features:

## Typical Steps in Project Planning for Wetlands and Water Features

<input type="radio"/> Conduct a Preliminary Wetland Screening ⇒ Are potential water features present?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Document absence and proceed	No	Yes <input type="radio"/> Conduct a Jurisdictional Delineation <input type="radio"/> Survey features and prepare mapping/report <input type="radio"/> Obtain a Jurisdictional Determination from Corps <input type="radio"/> Design project to avoid or minimize impacts ⇒ Are any water features impacted?	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Document avoidance and proceed	No	Yes <input type="radio"/> Determine area and type of impacts <input type="radio"/> Review impacts with regulatory agencies <input type="radio"/> Determine type of permit needed ⇒ Is mitigation required?
		<input type="checkbox"/> Submit permit for approval	Yes <input type="radio"/> Develop a mitigation plan <input type="radio"/> Submit permit for approval <input type="radio"/> Construct mitigation activity <input type="radio"/> Monitor mitigation for success <input type="checkbox"/> Document success with agencies to complete project

## Common Terms in Wetland and Water Feature Permitting

**Jurisdictional Wetland** – an area defined by COE criteria as having sufficient water during the growing season to support plants adapted to saturated conditions and develop soils showing evidence of saturation

**Jurisdictional Delineation** – the process of using COE criteria to determine and mark wetland boundaries in the field; usually includes simultaneous mapping of other non-wetland water features

**Jurisdictional Determination** – a confirmation from the COE that mapped wetland boundaries are correct and usable for permitting; can be Preliminary from COE office review or Approved with field inspection

**Mitigation** – replacement of an impacted wetland or water feature, usually done on an area basis with a ratio of replacement to impact depending on the value of the impacted area. May include constructed wetland creation, restoration of former wetlands, enhancement of existing wetlands, or rarely forms of wetland protection and preservation

**Monitoring** – periodic inspections often required in permit conditions to assure that a mitigation project is meeting development expectations; typically a five year period from construction

## Some Common Signs That Wetlands May Be Present



### Plants Found in Fields



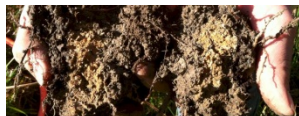
#### **Soft Rush**

Clumps of dark green, **round leaves** resembling soft knitting needles. May have a cluster of very small flowers emerging from one or more leaves.



#### **Sedges**

Grass-like clumps, but having **triangular stems** in cross-section and long clusters of seed capsules resembling small bottle brushes.



#### **Soils**

Mottles, gray colors, and/or lots of organic matter are formed by prolonged exposure of soils to water.

### Plants Found in Woods



#### **Sensitive Fern**

Light green fern with shallowly lobed, leathery leaflets **merging along the stem**; may have a spike of small, round seed bodies resembling a cluster of grapes.



#### **Skunk Cabbage**

Thick, dark green clumps of leaves appearing in early spring with a strong, **skunk-like odor** when broken; flower like a lidded pitcher.



#### **Water**

Standing water, wet spots, difficult areas to plow in the spring and summer.

↑ **Cattails** – Easy to identify, almost always found in wetlands.

*If you see any of these, please call for advice.*