



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®
Albuquerque District**

PUBLIC NOTICE

Date: December 7, 2011

Announcement of Change in Local Procedures for the Use of a Functional Assessment Method in the Albuquerque District Areas of Colorado

The purpose of this notice is to advise the general public of the implementation of the Functional Assessment of Colorado Wetlands (FACWet) Method. Effective immediately and until further notice, the FACWet method will be required for use when evaluating and assessing wetlands in conjunction with applications for certain Section 404 Permits from the Corps' Southern Colorado Regulatory Office.

FACWet is a stressor-based, rapid assessment method developed as a collaborative effort involving Colorado Department of Transportation, Colorado State University, EcoMetrics, LLC, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Denver Regulatory Office, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. FACWet was developed to assist the Corps of Engineers in Department of the Army Section 404 permit decisions that include assessment of potential wetland impacts and determination of compensatory mitigation.

FACWet will be used by the Southern Colorado Regulatory Office as a tool to assist in the pre-project planning phase (i.e., determining potential project-related wetland impacts and assessing the ability of mitigation plans to replace impacted functions) and post-project monitoring (i.e., to evaluate the success of wetland mitigation). Applicants will generally be required to use FACWet for the following types of projects:

- Projects requiring a Standard Individual Permit;
- Projects authorized by a nationwide permit, but where impacts to wetlands or riparian habitats would be 0.5 acre or greater;
- Selection and establishment of prospective mitigation banks and in-lieu fee sites; and
- Projects possessing unique conditions (e.g., fens) that warrant use of the FACWet method on a case-by-case basis

Please note, in addition to FACWet, the Southern Colorado Regulatory Office will continue to require minimum acreage replacement of impacted wetlands at a 1:1 ratio. This approach will help insure there is no-net-loss of both wetland acreage and function.

To obtain a copy of the FACWet report and user manual, please visit http://www.coloradodot.info/programs/environmental/wetlands/documents/FACWet_User_Manual_Version_2.0.pdf. It is recommended that persons involved in Section 404 permitting attend a training course. Notice of available training sessions can be found at <http://rydberg.biology.colostate.edu/FACWet/>.

News Release

The FACWet user guide can also be purchased at the following National Technical Information Service website: <http://www.ntis.gov/search/product.aspx?ABBR=PB2009106646>

Questions concerning the technical application of FACWet should be directed to Dr. Brad Johnson:

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Any questions concerning the implementation of FACWet within the regulatory framework should be directed to the Southern Colorado Regulatory Office at 200 South Santa Fe Avenue, Suite 301, Pueblo, Colorado 81003, or phone number (719) 543-6915.

News Release