



Public Notice

**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
Sacramento District**

BUILDING STRONG®

Informational Public Notice

Issue Date: December 22, 2011

Announcement of Change in Local Procedures Regarding the Use of a Functional Assessment Method for Colorado Wetlands in the Sacramento District

The purpose of this notice is to advise the general public of the availability of the Functional Assessment of Colorado Wetlands (FACWet) Method. Effective immediately and until further notice, the FACWet method is encouraged for use when evaluating and assessing wetlands in conjunction with application for certain Section 404 Permits from the Corps' Western Colorado Regulatory Offices.

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 as a tool 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. This functional assessment method has been in use by the Denver Regulatory Office since 2009 and is now adopted for statewide implementation in Colorado. Permit review decisions for Department of the Army Section 404 permits that include assessment of potential wetland impacts and mitigation are encouraged to incorporate the use of this functional assessment tool (in the absence of other locally specific assessment methods) for pre- and post-project evaluation and mitigation planning.

FACWet should be used by the Western Colorado Regulatory Offices 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 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 that warrant use of the FACWet method on a case-by-case basis.

Please note, in addition to FACWet, the Western Colorado Regulatory Offices 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/>.

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>

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS – Sacramento District
1325 J Street, Room 1350, Sacramento, CA 95814-2922
<http://www.spk.usace.army.mil/organizations/cespk-co/regulatory/index.html>

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

Brad Johnson
Department of Biology
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, CO 80523-1878
bjohnson@lamar.colostate.edu

Any questions concerning the implementation of FACWet within the regulatory framework should be directed to Susan Nall of the Grand Junction Colorado Regulatory Office at 400 Rood Avenue, Room 134, Grand Junction, Colorado 81501, or phone number (970) 243-1199.