

Day Two

Quote of the Day

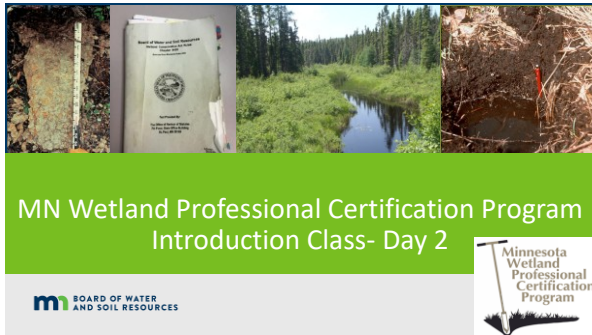
"You never smell plain air in a swamp – you smell the tang of mud and the sourness of rotting leaves and the cool musk of new leaves and the perfumes of a million different flowers floating by, each distinct but transparent like soap bubbles.

The biggest number in the universe would not be enough to count the things your eyes see.

Every inch of land holds up to a thatch of tall grass or a bush or a tree."

Book: The Orchid Thief, by Susan Orlean (2000)

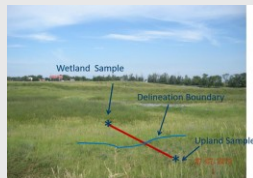
1



2

Quiz

- 1) Sampling transects should be?
- Used when conducting a routine level 1 delineation
 - Representative of wetland-upland transition areas
 - Located systematically using an established grid
 - Randomly located throughout the evaluation area



3

Quiz

2) What is the maximum average water depth for a special aquatic site to be classified as a wetland?

- a) 1 foot below the water surface
- b) 8.2 feet below the water surface
- c) 1 foot above the water surface
- d) 3 feet below the water surface



3) Wetland boundaries must be delineated using:

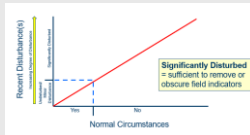
- a) Only the US Army Corps of Engineers 1987 manual for identifying and delineating jurisdictional wetlands
- b) The hydrogeomorphic method
- c) The WCA Rulebook
- d) US Army Corps of Engineers 1987 manual & Regional Supplements

4

Quiz

4) A seasonally flooded wetland on agricultural land is normally plowed and planted in most years. For delineation purposes, which of the following conclusions is most likely true?

- a) This is not a jurisdictional wetland
- b) Normal circumstances are not present
- c) Normal circumstances exist
- d) A level 2 delineation is required



5

Quiz

5) Explain the concept of a Problem area

- Indicators absent to seasonal, or annual variability; or permanent due to the nature of the soils or species
- Including seasonal wetlands, prairie soils, red parent material etc.



6) Explain the concept of an Atypical Situation

- One or more Indicators absent due to human activity or natural events (beavers, fire, river changing course)

6

7) Which of the following can be used for determining the start of the growing season?

- a) Soil temperature at 41 inches below the surface
- b) Soil temperature at the soil surface
- c) Soil temperature at 18 inches below the surface
- d) Soil temperature at 12 inches below the surface



7

8) What classification system uses Systems, Sub-systems and Classes?

- a) HGM
- b) Eggers and Reed
- c) Cowardin
- d) Circular 39



9) Which of the following plant communities would be characteristic of a Circular 39 type 6 wetland?

- a) Sedge meadow
- b) Bog
- c) Alder thicket
- d) Shallow marsh

8

Quiz

10) Which of the follow is not a parameter of the Hydrogeomorphic Method classification system?:

- a) geomorphology
- b) plant community
- c) hydrology
- d) hydraulics



11) A natural process in a wetland that can be scientifically assessed can also be described as a:

- a) wetland value
- b) routine assessment method
- c) exemption
- d) wetland function

9

Quiz

12) All wetlands have which of the following hydrology outputs?

a) precipitation

b) groundwater recharge

c) overland flow

d) evapotranspiration



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Basic Agenda

Monday

- 3 Parameters, Wetland Function & Classification Systems, Hydrology Indicators, Delineation Methods & Critical Definitions, Data Sheet Field Exercise

Tuesday

- Quiz 1, Antecedent Precipitation, Offsite Resources and Hydrology Methods, Soil Concepts, Hydric Soil Indicators, Web Soil Survey, Soil Texture Lab, Soil profile description field exercise

Wednesday

- Quiz 2, Intro to Regulatory Programs, WCA Basic Decision Types, LGU Duties, Technical Evaluation Panel, WCA Application Procedures, Wetland Vegetation, Vegetation Field Plots Exercise

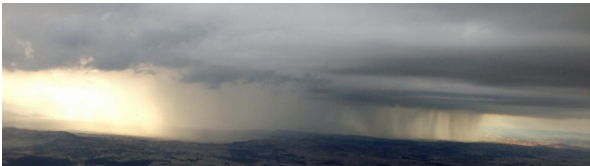
Thursday

- Quiz 3, Small Group delineation Field Exercise, Submitting Delineations, Replacement Plans, Wetland Banks, Monitoring

Friday

- WCA Enforcement, Altered Hydrology and Wetland Restoration, Functional Assessments Methods, Course Summary & Summary Quiz
- MWPCP Professional Exams

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Antecedent Precipitation Analysis





Precipitation | dnr.state.mn.us

12

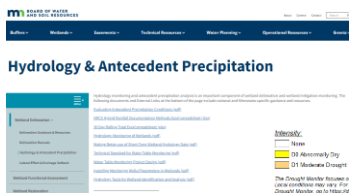
Learning Objectives

- **Antecedent Precipitation**
- Evaluate antecedent precipitation conditions using accepted analytical methods, including the Three-Prior-Month Method, Thirty-Day Rolling Total, and Hybrid Method.

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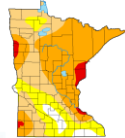
Precipitation

Hydrology and Antecedent Precipitation



Drought Monitor

August 25, 2026
(Released Thursday, Aug. 27, 2026)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT
U.S. Drought Monitor
Minnesota



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When in the process is it needed?

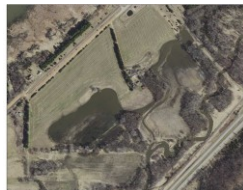
Off-site/Level 1 wetland delineation

On-site/Level 2

- Recommend this be done prior to site visit if possible
- Puts better perspective on site data collection

Other Observations Types

- For interpreting Well or Stage Gauge Data
- Establish baseline conditions for a potential wetland bank/monitoring post construction
- Further defining a wetland boundary/questionable wetland area in difficult/are cases
- May not be needed in advance but will be when interpreting data set.



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How to do it...

• Three-Prior Month Method

- Using State Climatology Tool
- Manual Completion

• Thirty Day Rolling Total

- Summing the prior 30-day precipitation totals for each day and plotting this "rolling total" on a daily basis

• Hybrid Method

- Essentially combines above methods

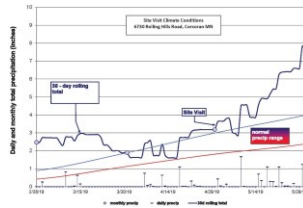


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Precipitation

What do we mean by Antecedent Precipitation?

Antecedent: "something that comes before something else"
The prior or preceding precipitation events or conditions, leading up to the site visit or when aerial photography was taken.



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Precip.

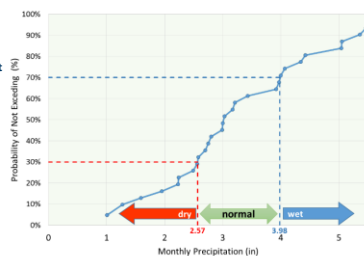
What does WET or DRY mean?

Dry: 30% chance precip will not exceed 2.57"

Wet: 70% chance will not exceed 3.98" in this example

What does NORMAL mean?

Between the 30 and 70 percentile.



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With the State Climatology Tool

[illegible]

<https://climateapps.dnr.state.mn.us/index.htm>

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Hybrid Method

30-day rolling total

with

3-prior-month method

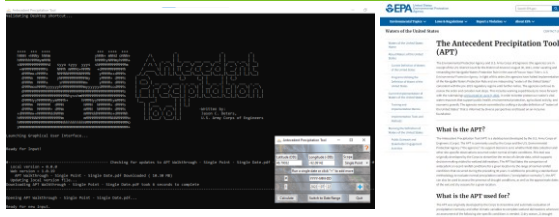
20

Precipitation Analysis - Farmington MN 6/15/15



21

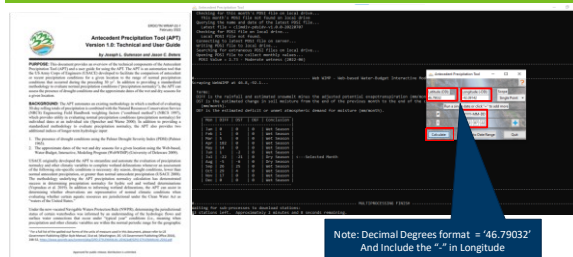
Corps Antecedent Precipitation Tool



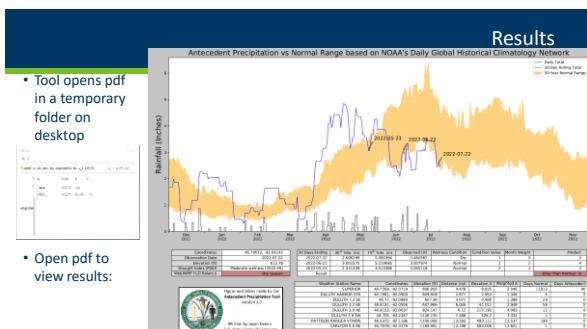
<https://www.epa.gov/wotus/antecedent-precipitation-tool-apt>

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Enter Lat-Long, Date and Calculate



23



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Antecedent Precipitation Evaluation Review

- Important for accurate interpretations/observations
- Done by the delineator
- Included in the report
- Should support your conclusion.
- Not always clear...Best Professional Judgement needed.
- Several methods available, each with certain strengths/weaknesses...

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Aerial Photo Interpretation and Offsite Methods



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Learning Objectives

- **Hydrology Methods**
- Interpret aerial imagery and other off-site resources to support wetland hydrology evaluations.

HYDROLOGY		WETLAND HYDROLOGY EVALUATION	
Wetland Hydrology Evaluation (Check all that apply)		(Check all that apply)	
☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H) ☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H) ☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H) ☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H) ☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H) ☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H)	☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H) ☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H) ☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H) ☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H) ☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H) ☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H)	☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H) ☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H) ☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H) ☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H) ☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H) ☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H)	☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H) ☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H) ☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H) ☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H) ☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H) ☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H)
Wetland Hydrology Evaluation (Check all that apply)		Wetland Hydrology Evaluation (Check all that apply)	
☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H) ☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H) ☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H) ☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H) ☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H) ☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H)		☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H) ☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H) ☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H) ☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H) ☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H) ☐ Surface Water (S) ☐ High Water Table (H)	

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Overview



- 87 Manual Definitions:
- Normal Circumstances
 - Atypical area
 - Problem area



Midwest and NC/NE require aerial review per Chapter 5:

- "Agricultural lands"
- "Wetlands that periodically lack indicators of wetland hydrology"

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Guidance

March 4, 2015

Guidance for Submittal of Delineation Reports to the St. Paul District Army Corps of Engineers and Wetland Conservation Act Local Governmental Units in Minnesota, Version 2.0

3.7.6 Using Aerial Imagery to Assess Wetland Hydrology

Procedures have been updated and improved for the assessment of wetland hydrology based on aerial imagery. The interagency approach to off-site wetland determinations on agricultural lands (also referred to as the state "Mapping Conventions") is required for CWA and WCA purposes. Refer to the guidance

Guidance for Offsite Hydrology

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Guidance



July 1, 2016



Guidance for Offsite Hydrology/Wetland Determinations

This document replaces all previous Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and St Paul District Corps of Engineers (District) issued guidance of guidance concerning wetland mapping conventions.

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Guidance

- Always use all* imagery in putting the pieces together, and place greatest reliance on more recent years; they tend to best reflect current conditions.

*Use only high quality/good resolution slides. Much better to focus on image quality than normalcy of antecedent conditions.

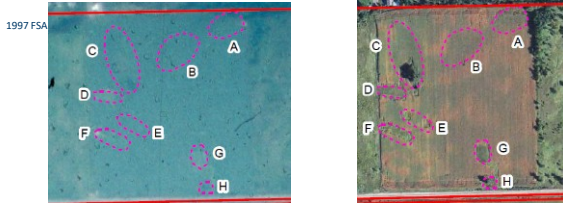


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Guidance

Moving away from FSA images 1979 – 2000

Using more recent and clearer images: 5 normal years



32

Variables

Vegetation Tolerance

Hydrophytic Veg.



Corn



Soybeans



33

Guidance

Vigor and stress responses to wetland conditions



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Other uses

Level 1 Delineations

Delineation Method	Review of offsite mapping resources	Site Visit	Sampling Approach	Complete Field Data Forms	Field Staking of Wetland Boundaries
Routine Level 1	Yes	Sometimes	Offsite	No	No
Routine Level 2	Yes	Yes	Onsite, qualitative	Yes	Yes
Comprehensive	Yes	Yes	Onsite, quantitative	Yes	Yes

WCA Application Type Examples	Commonly Used Delineation Method
Temporary impact under No-Loss	Routine Level 1
Banking application: pre-application scoping	Routine Level 1
Banking application: full application	Routine Level 2
Road Program Wetland Impact Documentation—Road project through a large continuous wetland	Routine Level 1
Road Program Wetland Impact Documentation—Scattered wetlands within construction corridor	Routine Level 2
Replacement plan	Routine Level 2
Enforcement actions	Routine Level 2 or Comprehensive
Wetland boundary approval (no project application)	Routine Level 2
Agricultural exemption determination (8420.0420, Subpart 2A)	Routine Level 1

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Other uses

Level 1 Delineations

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Incidental

2015



37

Incidental



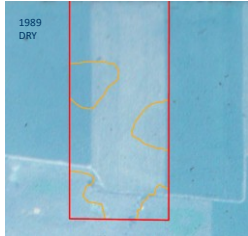
38

Incidental



39

Incidental



40

Incidental



41

Evaluating Images

Signatures:

- CS: Crop stress
- DO: Drowned Out
- NC: Not cropped
- SW: Standing water
- NV: Normal vegetative cover
- NSS: No soil wetness
- AP: Altered pattern
- SS: Soil wetness signature
- CS/DO... (can have multiple, use the /)

*Wetland
Signatures are
a positive
"hit"*

42

Evaluating Images

Crop Stress (CS)

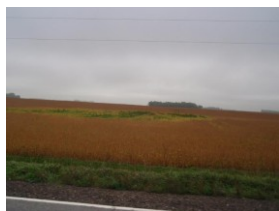
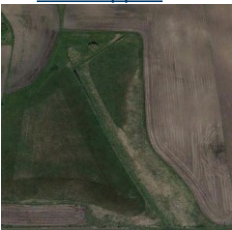
43

Evaluating Images

Drowned Out (DO)

44

Evaluating Images

NC – not cropped.

45

Evaluating Images

Standing Water (SW)



46

AP – altered pattern



47

Evaluating Images

WS – wetland signature.



48

Evaluating Images

Normal Vegetative Cover (NV) or No Soil Wetness (NSS)

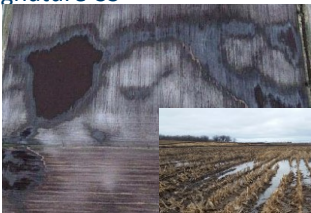


49

Evaluating Images

Soil Wetness Signature-SS

- In Bare soil images, dark, or wet-appearing photo tone from early growing season
- May even include some standing water
- Note the drift lines around the edge of the basin



50

Variables

Stem Density



Alfalfa



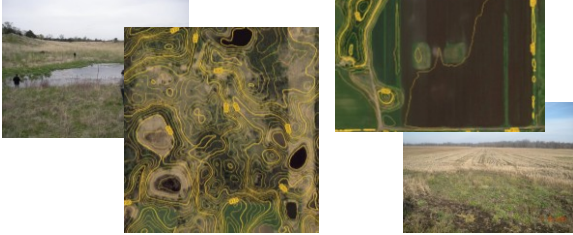
Soybeans



Corn

51

Variables

Topography

52

Variables

Reference
Areas

53

Variables

Deep Peat Soils

54

Variables

Iron Chlorosis



Winter Freeze

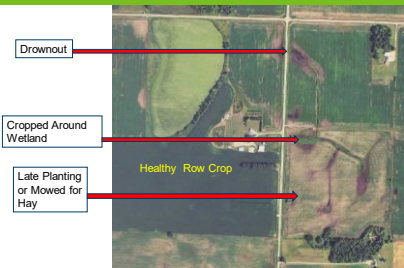


Business Decisions



55

Wet Signatures

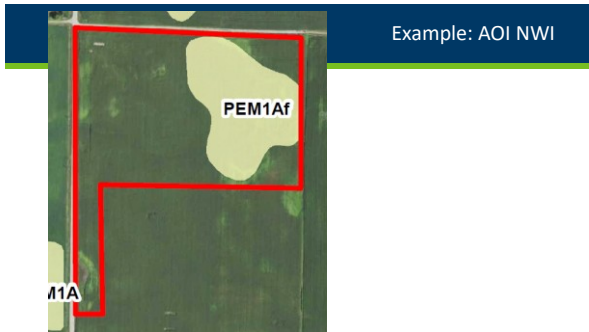


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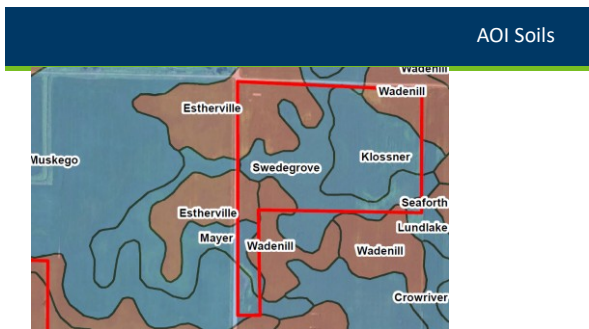
Recording on Data Sheet

HYDROLOGY	
Wetland Hydrology Indicators: Primary Indicators (minimum of one is required; check all that apply): Surface Water (A1) _____ High Water Table (A2) _____ Saturation (A3) _____ Water Marks (B1) _____ Sediment Deposits (B2) _____ Drift Deposits (B3) _____ Algal Mat or Crust (B4) _____ Non-Deposits (B5) _____ Saturation Visible on Aerial Imagery (B7) _____ Excessively Vegetated Concave Surface (B8) _____	
Secondary Indicators (minimum of two required): Surface Soil Cracks (B9) _____ Drainage Patterns (B10) _____ Moss Trim Lines (B16) _____ Dry-Season Water Table (C2) _____ Crayfish Burrows (C4) _____ Saturation Visible on Aerial Imagery (C9) _____ Mottled or Mottled Pattern (C11) _____ Geomorphic Position (D2) _____ Shallow Aquifer (D3) _____ Monstrous Relief (D4) _____ FAC Neutral Test (D5) _____	
Field Observations: Surface Water Present? Yes _____ No _____ Depth (inches): _____ Water Table Present? Yes _____ No _____ Depth (inches): _____ Saturation Present? Yes _____ No _____ Depth (inches): _____ Wetland Hydrology Present? Yes _____ No _____ (includes capillary fringe) 2016 Joint Guidance for Offsite Hydrology was used. Remarks: _____	

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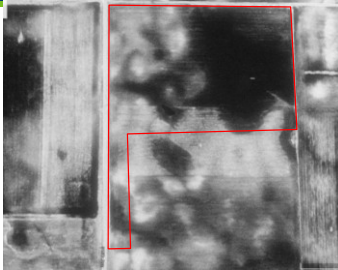
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[illegible]

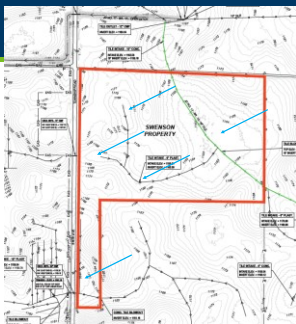
60

Pick wet or current year



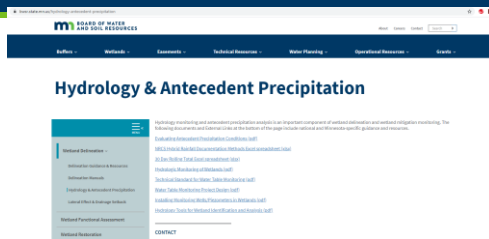
61

AOI Detailed Topo



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Antecedent Precip

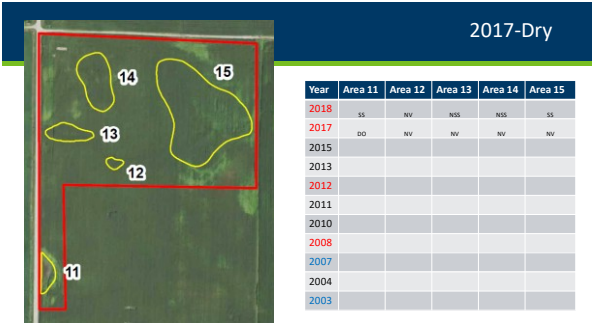


bwsr.state.mn.us/hydrology-antecedent-precipitation

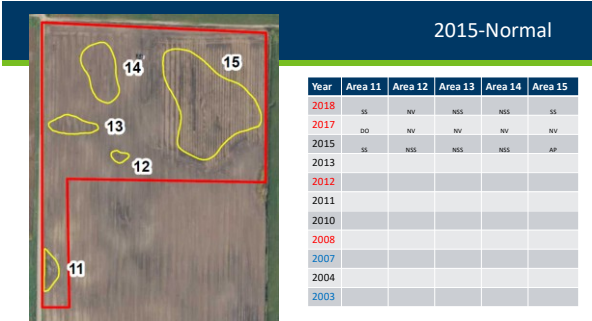
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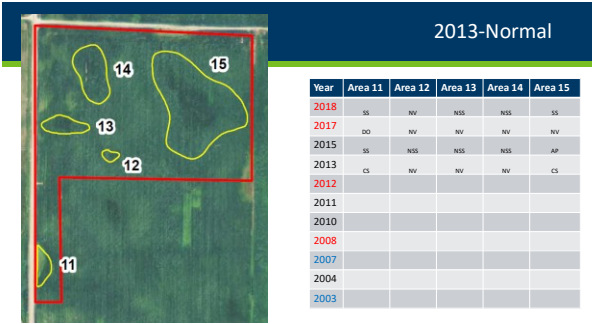
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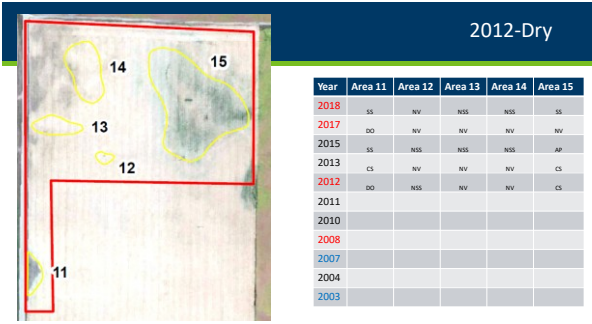
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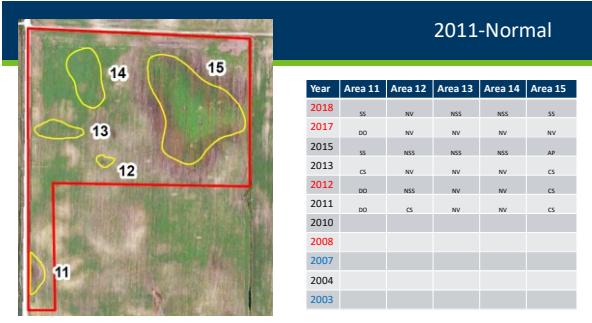
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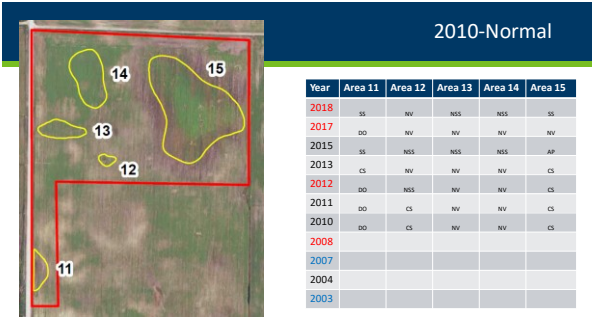
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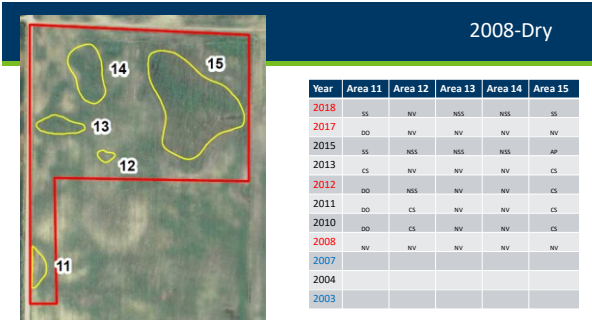
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69



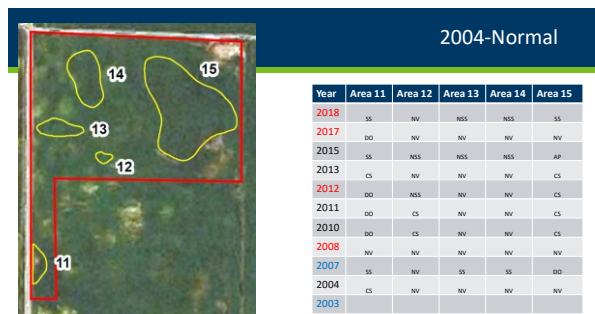
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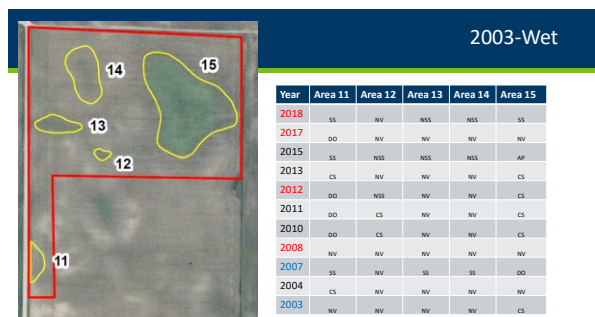
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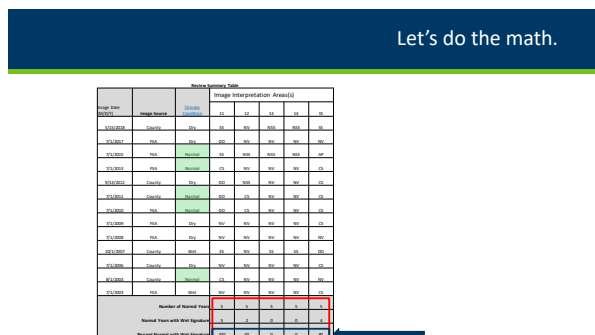
72



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Document

Hydric Soils present ^a	Identified on NWI or other wetland map ^b	Percent with wet signatures from Exhibit 1	Field verification required ^c	Wetland?
Yes	Yes	>50%	No	Yes
Yes	Yes	30-50%	No	Yes
Yes	Yes	<30%	Yes	Yes, if other hydrology indicators present
Yes	No	>50%	Yes	Yes
Yes	No	30-50%	Yes	Yes, if other hydrology indicators present
Yes	No	<30%	No	No
No	Yes	>50%	No	Yes
No	Yes	30-50%	No	Yes
No	Yes	<30%	No	No
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No	No	30-50%	Yes	Yes, if other hydrology indicators present
No	No	<30%	No	No

Area	Hydric Soils Present	Identified on NWI or other wetland map	Percent with wet signatures from Exhibit 1	Other hydrology indicators present	Wetland?
11	Yes	No	100	NA	Yes
12	Yes	No	40	NA	No
13	Yes	No	0	NA	No
14	Yes	No	0	NA	No
15	Yes	Yes	80	NA	Yes

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Document

Hydric Soils present ^a	Identified on NWI or other wetland map ^b	Percent with wet signatures from Exhibit 1	Field verification required ^c	Wetland?
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Yes	Yes	30-50%	No	Yes
Yes	Yes	<30%	Yes	Yes, if other hydrology indicators present
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Yes	No	30-50%	Yes	Yes, if other hydrology indicators present
Yes	No	<30%	No	No
No	Yes	>50%	No	Yes
No	Yes	30-50%	No	Yes
No	Yes	<30%	No	No
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13	Yes	No	0	NA	No
14	Yes	No	0	NA	No
15	Yes	Yes	80	NA	Yes

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Document

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Yes	No	<30%	No	No
No	Yes	>50%	No	Yes
No	Yes	30-50%	No	Yes
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No	No	30-50%	Yes	Yes, if other hydrology indicators present
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12	Yes	No	40	NA	No
13	Yes	No	0	NA	No
14	Yes	No	0	NA	No
15	Yes	Yes	80	NA	Yes

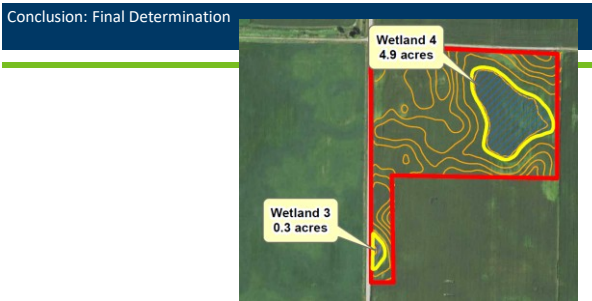
78

Document

Hydric Soils present ¹	Identified on NWI or other wetland map ²	Percent with wet signatures from Exhibit 1	Field verification required ³	Wetland ⁴
Yes	Yes	<10%	No	Yes
Yes	Yes	10-50%	No	Yes
Yes	Yes	>50%	Yes	Yes, if other hydrology indicators present
Yes	No	<10%	No	Yes
Yes	No	10-50%	Yes	Yes, if other hydrology indicators present
Yes	No	>50%	No	Yes
No	Yes	<10%	No	No
No	Yes	>10%	No	No
No	Yes	10-50%	No	No
No	Yes	>50%	Yes	Yes, if other hydrology indicators present
No	No	<10%	Yes	Yes, if other hydrology indicators present
No	No	>10%	No	No

Area	Hydric Soils Present	Identified on NWI or other wetland map	Percent with wet signatures from Exhibit 1	Other hydrology indicators present	Wetland ⁵
11	Yes	No	100	NA	Yes
12	Yes	No	40	NA	No
13	Yes	No	0	NA	No
14	Yes	No	0	NA	No
15	Yes	Yes	40	NA	Yes

79



80

- Final Point
- Except for Level 1 delineations, the results of aerial imagery review are not necessarily the final determination.
 - Other data to support conclusions.
 - Results do not override site specific data (Level 2, Level 3, Comprehensive).

81



82

Learning Objectives

- **Soil Concepts**
- Differentiate organic and mineral soil materials and identify major soil horizon characteristics.
- Describe key soil properties used in wetland delineation, including soil color, matrix color, redoximorphic features, texture, and contrast.
- Use the Munsell Soil Color System to describe soil color accurately.

83

Overview

- Basics of Soil
 - Soil formation
 - Landscape position
- Soil Properties
 - Texture
 - Color
- Hydric soil development
- Web Soil Survey
 - Interpreting soil reports
- Hydric soil indicators
 - All
 - Fine
 - Sandy
- Common soil indicators



84

What is Soil?

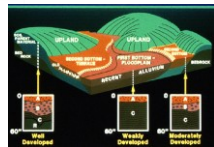
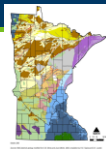
- Natural body that occurs on the land surface, occupies space, and is characterized by one or both of the following:
 - Horizons or layers, or
 - The ability to support rooted plants in a natural environment
 - Upper limit is air or shallow (>2.5 m) water
 - Lower limit is either bedrock or the limit of biological activity
 - Lower limit for classification set at an arbitrary 2 m



85

Factors That Influence Soil Development

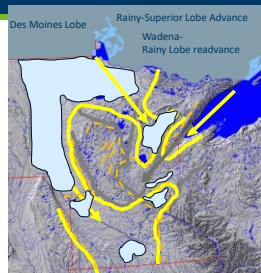
- Climate- weather conditions prevailing over long period of time
- Parent material- geologic material from which soils form
- Topography- landscape position and slope processes
- Organisms- essential role of microbes in the soil, includes humans
- Time- soil doesn't "age", it develops. vegetation, organisms and climate "act on" parent material and topography to develop soil.



86

Parent Material Relates to Glacial Geology

Recent Glacial Geology of MN



87

Soil Taxonomy

- 12 orders of soil taxonomy
- Which ones are common in MN

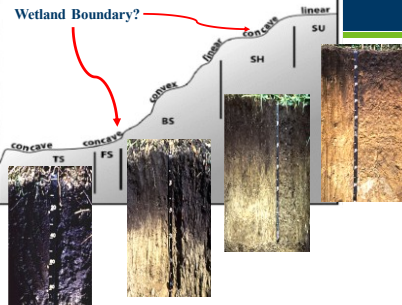


- **Alfisols**: wide range of climate, forest soils, clay in subsoil
- **Andisols**: volcanic, high nutrient
- **Aridisols**: desert soils
- **Entisols**: recent deposition, dunes, slopes, floodplains, sandy
- **Gelisols**: permafrost, high latitudes and/or elevation
- **Histosols**: high organic, most saturated year round
- **Inceptisols**: wide range of climate, moderate weathering
- **Mollisols**: "prairie soils", dark colored, high organic
- **Oxisols**: highly weathered tropical, stable, low fertility
- **Spodosols**: coarse-textured, acidic, conifer forests
- **Ultisols**: humid climate, weathered, clay-rich
- **Vertisols**: high content of expanding clays, Red River Valley

88

Soil Catena

Wetland Boundary?



89

Two Categories of Soil Material
- Mineral Soil/HorizonsMineral horizons

- Primarily sand, silt, and clay, with varying amounts of organic matter

Organic horizon

- consists of mostly decomposed organic material



90

Organic Matter Decomposition

- Fibric (peat)
 - Least decomposed
 - Plant fibers identifiable
 - After rub – >40% of fibers still visible (2/3)
- Hemic (mucky peat)
 - Intermediate decomposition
- Sapric (muck)
 - Most decomposed, <1/3 ID of plant fibers
 - <1/6 of fibers visible after rubbing

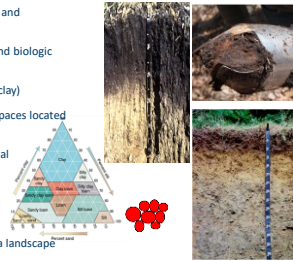


91

Key Soil Properties

Properties that are important to hydric soil development and recognition:

- Horizons- layer of soil with similar physical, chemical, and biologic properties
- Texture- relative proportion of soil particles (sand, silt, clay)
- Structure- arrangement of solid parts and of the pore spaces located between them
- Permeability- ability of water to move through a material
- Color- hue, value, chroma
- Organic matter- percent, thickness, and level of organic decomposition
- Drainage- presence of natural and human drainage on a landscape



92

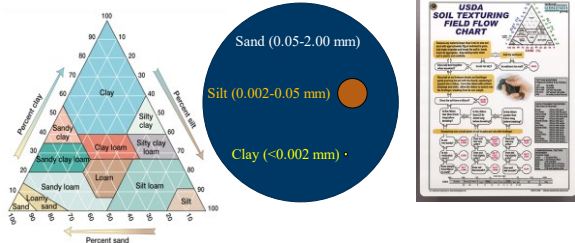
Soil Horizon- layer of soil with similar physical, chemical, and biologic properties



- ← O horizon- Organic horizon, thickness varies
- ← A Horizon- Organic accumulation (typically ~10%), ideally granular structure
- ← E Horizon- Coloring agents (Fe, Organics) removed
- ← B Horizon- Subsoil accumulation of minerals, organics, and sometimes chemicals, blocky structure
- ← C Horizon- Similar to parent material, often less developed with little structure
- ← R Horizon- Parent material

93

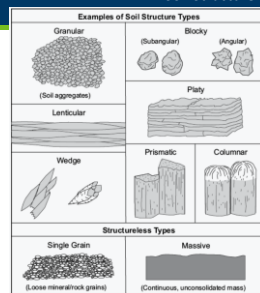
Soil Texture- Relative proportion of soil particles



94

Soil Structure

- Soil Structure- arrangement of solid parts and of the pore spaces located between them
- Aggregation- interaction and arrangement of soil particles
- Precipitation of oxides, carbonates and silicates
 - Cementation
- Can decline under cultivation & irrigation



95

Permeability- ability of water or air to move through the soil profile

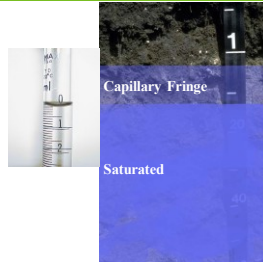
- Variables in permeability:
 - Structure- arrangement of soil characterized by size, shape (blocky, columnar, platy, etc.) and grade (weak, strong)
 - Texture- pore space of different particle sizes
- Permeability is "measured" in inches per hour
 - Permeability is an estimated property
- Larger grain sizes= higher permeability



96

Capillary Fringe

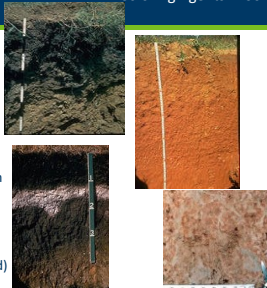
- Based upon permeability
- The zone above the free water table that is effectively saturated
 - Water held at tension
 - Theoretical values much higher than “real life”
 - Difficult to measure



97

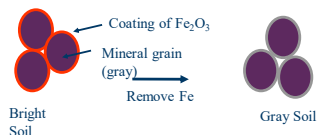
Coloring Agents in Soil

- Organic matter
 - OM will mask all other coloring agents.
- Iron (Fe)
 - brown colors are the result of Fe oxide stains coating individual particles
- Manganese (Mn)
 - resulting in a very dark black or purplish black color
- Calcium
- Lack of coatings
 - Color of the mineral soil grains (stripped)



98

Soil Color

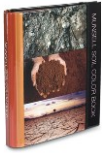


“Bright-colored” soil is bright because the gray-colored mineral grains are coated with a thin layer of “paint” formed by Fe oxides. Stripping the paint off the particles leaves the mineral grains exposed.

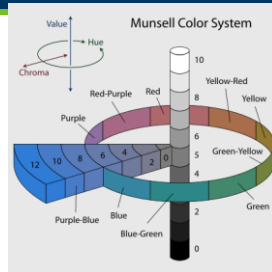
99

Color

- Hue- the spectrum color
- Value- lightness or darkness
- Chroma- "purity" or grayness of color



Hue Value Chroma
10YR 2/1



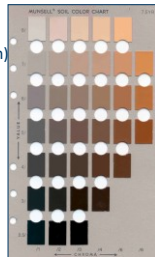
100

Color

- Matrix (predominant) color
- Color of redoximorphic features (concentration or depletion)
 - Contrast, abundance, location, and size of redox features



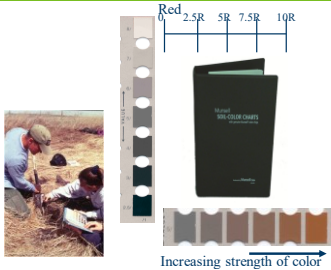
What is the percent of redox?
30%



101

Reading Soil Color

- Optimum conditions
 - Natural light
 - Clear, sunny day
 - Midday
 - Light at right angles
 - Soil moist



Increasing strength of color

102

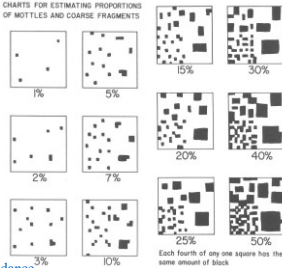
Abundance and Size of Redox

CHARTS FOR ESTIMATING PROPORTIONS
OF MOTTLES AND COARSE FRAGMENTS**Abundance**

- Few -- less than 2%
- Common -- 2 to 20%
- Many -- more than 20%

Size

- Fine -- < 5 mm
- Medium -- 5 to 15 mm
- Coarse -- > 15 mm



Several indicators require at least 2% abundance

103

Contrast

- Contrast refers to the degree of visual distinction between associated colors
- Faint -- evident only on close examination
- Distinct -- readily seen at arms length
- Prominent -- contrast strongly

Contrast Class	$\frac{R}{U}$	Difference in Color Between Matrix and RMF (A means "difference between")	
Faint [†]	F	Hue (h)	chroma (c)
		Value (v)	
Distinct [†]	D	$\Delta h = 0; \Delta v \leq 2$ and $\Delta c \leq 1$	
		$\Delta h = 1; \Delta v \leq 1$ and $\Delta c \leq 1$	
		$\Delta h = 2; \Delta v = 0$ and $\Delta c = 0$	
Prominent [†]	P	$\Delta h = 0; \Delta v \leq 2$ and $\Delta c > 1$ to < 4	
		or $\Delta h > 2$ to < 4 and $\Delta c < 4$	
		$\Delta h = 1; \Delta v \leq 1$ and $\Delta c > 1$ to < 3	
		or $\Delta h > 1$ to < 3 and $\Delta c < 3$	
		$\Delta h = 2; \Delta v = 0$ and $\Delta c > 0$ to < 2	
		or $\Delta h > 0$ to < 2 and $\Delta c < 2$	
		$\Delta h = 0; \Delta v \geq 4$ or $\Delta c \geq 4$	
		$\Delta h = 1; \Delta v \geq 3$ or $\Delta c \geq 3$	
		$\Delta h = 2; \Delta v \geq 2$ or $\Delta c \geq 2$	
		$\Delta h \geq 3;$	

[†] If compared colors have both a value ≤ 3 and a chroma of ≤ 2 , the contrast is Faint, regardless of hue differences.

Several indicators require distinct or prominent contrast!

104

Definition of a Hydric Soil

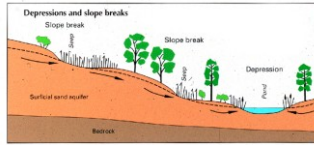
- A hydric soil is a soil that formed under conditions of saturation, flooding, or ponding long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in the upper part.



105

Landscape and formation of hydric soils

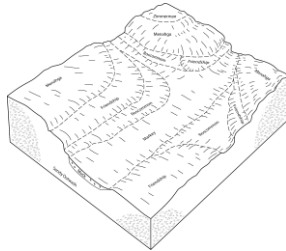
- Landscape position
 - Surface shape (linear, concave, convex)
 - Erosional or depositional
- Hydraulics
 - How water moves
- Hydroperiod- seasonal pattern of water table depth in a wetland
 - Long term- organic
 - Seasonal inundation- thick O, dark A
 - Seasonal saturation- thin O
 - Floodplain- thin, stratified layers



106

Landscape Position

- Location relative to other landforms
- Critically influences water flow and soil formation
- Most wetlands, even groundwater seeps, are on some sort of concave surface



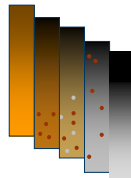
107

Hydric Soil Development

Hydric soils indicators develop in **anaerobic** conditions by the process of :

1. **Reduction** and Re-oxidation of Iron
2. **Organic Matter** Accumulation

Foundation of the Field Indicator Manual.



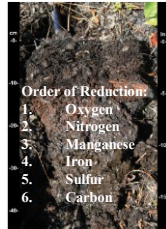
108

Hydric Soil Development

Soil microbes that drive reduction require:

1. Anaerobic conditions i.e. (saturated soil)
2. Organic matter (energy source)
3. Soil temperature warm enough for microbial respiration ($>41^{\circ}\text{F}$)
4. Duration of conditions (Time)

In anaerobic conditions decomposition slows and leads to organic accumulation



109

Conceptual overview of aquic conditions

- Here's what happens when water moves into a soil profile:
 - Downward movement
 - Lateral movement
 - Lose some things
 - Changes in chemical state in others



Think old car left in the elements-chemical reactions leave "rust in the soil"

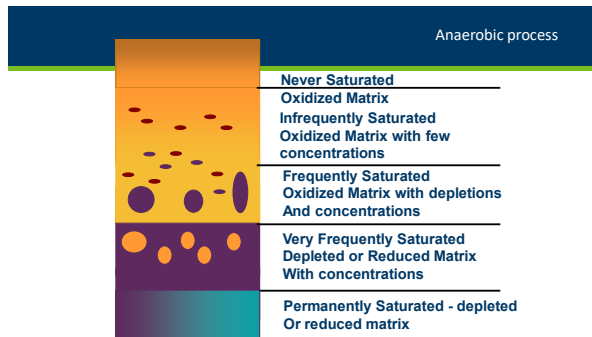
110

Change in the state of iron

- Available O_2 , NO_3 , and Mn depleted
- $\text{Fe}^{3+} \longrightarrow \text{Fe}^{2+}$ (Mobile)
- **Bluish Grey** when **reduced**
- **Grey** when **depleted** from soil
- **Orange** or **Red** when **oxidized**



111



112

Depleted Matrix

Iron removed or re-organized in profile leaving Grey matrix

- Value 4 or More
- Chroma 2 or Less

113

Depleted Matrix Requirement

Do Not Need Concentrations

Need Concentrations (2%)

High Value (4 or more)

Low Chroma (2 or Less)

114

Gleyed Matrix Requirements

Gleyed Matrix

- Iron Present, but in reduced state (Fe²⁺) Gleyed color with value ≥ 4




Gley colors noted as: 10GY 4/1

Darkest black noted as: N 2.5/0

Hues on bottom of page

115



Hydric Soil Indicators




116

Learning Objectives

- Hydric Soil Indicators**
- Define hydric soils and explain the soil-forming processes that produce hydric soil characteristics.
- Apply the current Field Indicators of Hydric Soils in the United States to identify hydric soils in the field.
- Evaluate diagnostic zones and soil profile characteristics to determine whether hydric soil indicators are present.

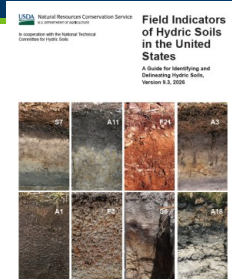
117

Field Indicators of Hydric Soils

Natural Resources
Conservation Service

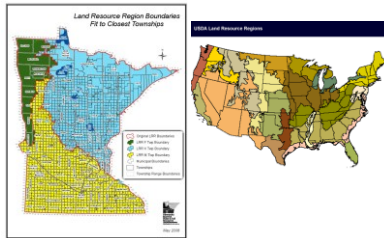
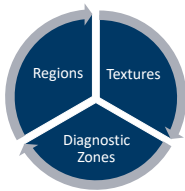
- National Technical
Committee for Hydric
Soils

Used for **on-site**
verification of hydric soils



118

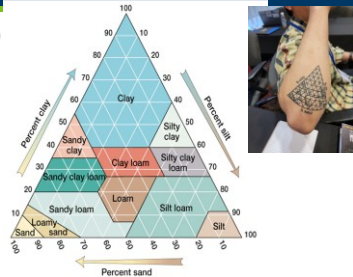
Field Indicator Organization- Regions



119

Field Indicator Organization- Texture

- Use regardless of texture(s)
 - All Mineral
 - All Organic
- Typically, organic matter influences near the surface
- Includes smell
 - Rotten egg

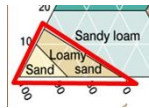


120

Soil Indicator Groups- Texture

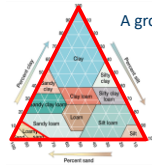
Sandy Soil Indicators (S):

- Use when texture is:
 - Loamy Fine Sand or coarser



Fine Grained Soil Indicators (F):

- Use when texture is:
 - Loamy Very Fine Sand or finer

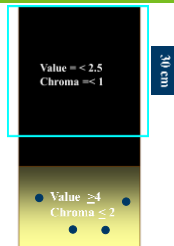


A group- all textures

121

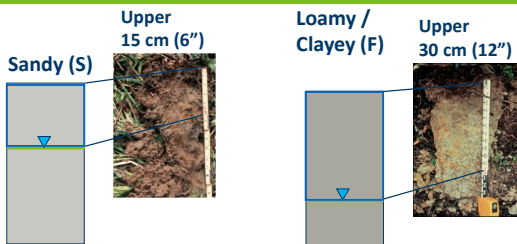
Diagnostic Zones

- Layers with :
 - Certain **Colors**
 - high value and low chroma
 - redoximorphic features
 - organic matter accumulations
 - Specific **Depths** from Surface
 - **Thickness** requirements



122

Diagnostic Zones for S and F indicator groups



123



Field Indicators of Hydric Soils in the United States
A Guide for Identifying and Describing Hydric Soils
Version 3.2, 2025

Credit: USDA & NRCS for following pictures

Key terms to help interpret indicators:

- Aquic- moisture regime, reducing regime virtually free of dissolved oxygen
- Histic- saturated organic horizon
- Epipedon-horizon near the surface
- Depletions- areas of low chroma where oxides have been stripped away
- Concentrations-zones where oxides have accumulated

124

A1- Histosol or Histel. For use in **all LRRs**. Classifies as a Histosol (except Folist) or as a Histel (except Folistel).



Figure 7—Indicator A1 (Histosol or Histel). This soil has more than 40 cm (16 inches) of organic material, starting at the soil surface.

Format of Indicator Descriptions

- Alpha-numeric designation
 - A1
- Short name
 - Histosol
- Applicable land resource regions (LRR)
 - Use in all LRRs
- Description of the indicator
- User notes
 - Additional information, explanation and guidance
- Supplement adds regional likelihood, locations

125

A1- Histosol

- **A1. Histosol:** Classifies as a Histosol. A Histosol has a layer of organic matter accumulation of ≥ 16 inches in the upper 32 inches of soil material.
- Use in all LRRs

A1.—Histosol or Histel. For use in all LRRs. Classifies as a Histosol (except Folist) or as a Histel (except Folistel).

User Notes: In a Histosol, organic soil material is typically 40 cm (16 inches) or more of the upper 80 cm (32 inches) (fig. 8). Organic soil materials have organic carbon content (by weight) of 12 percent or more. These materials include muck (sapric soil material), mucky peat (hemie soil material), and peat (fibric soil material). See "Keys to Soil Taxonomy" (Soil Survey Staff, 2022) for a complete definition.

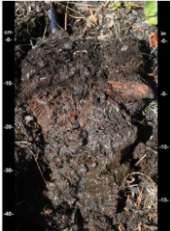


Figure 7—Indicator A1 (Histosol or Histel). This soil has more than 40 cm (16 inches) of organic material, starting at the soil surface.

126

A2- Histic Epipedon

Histic epipedon-saturated, organic horizons 8 inches or more thick in the upper part

- Applicable land resource regions (LRR)
 - Use in all LRRs

A2.—Histic Epipedon. For use in all LRRs. A histic epipedon underlain by mineral soil material with chroma of 2 or less.

User Notes: Most histic epipedons are composed of surface horizons with organic soil material 20 cm (8 inches) or more thick (fig. 9). Aquic conditions or artificial drainage is required. See "Keys to Soil Taxonomy" (Soil Survey Staff, 2022) for a complete definition.



Figure 8.—Indicators A2 (Histic Epipedon) and A3 (Black Histic). This soil meets the depth criterion of A2 and the color and depth criterion of A3. The black color is a requirement of A3, results from the accumulation of organic matter when the soil is saturated and anaerobic.

127

A3- Black Histic

- A layer of peat, mucky peat, or muck 8 in or more thick that starts at a depth of ≤ 6 in from the soil surface; has hue of 10YR or yellower, value of 3 or less, and chroma of 1 or less; and is underlain by mineral soil material with chroma of 2 or less.

- Applicable land resource regions (LRR)
 - Use in all LRRs

A3.—Black Histic. For use in all LRRs. A layer of peat, mucky peat, or muck 20 cm (8 inches) or more thick starting at a depth of 15 cm (6 inches) or less from the soil surface with a hue of 10YR or yellower, value of 3 or less, and chroma of 1 or less and underlain by mineral soil material with chroma of 2 or less. User Notes: Unlike indicator A2, this indicator does not require proof of aquic conditions or artificial drainage (see fig. 9).

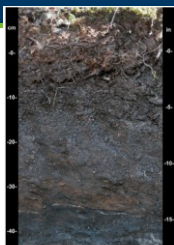


Figure 8.—Indicators A2 (Histic Epipedon) and A3 (Black Histic). This soil meets the depth criterion of A2 and the color and depth criterion of A3. The black color is a requirement of A3, results from the accumulation of organic matter when the soil is saturated and anaerobic.

128

A11- Depleted Below Dark Surface

- Applicable land resource regions (LRR)
 - Use in all MN LRRs

A11.—Depleted Below Dark Surface. For use in all LRRs except for W, X, and Y; for testing in LRRs W, X, and Y. A layer with a depleted or gleyed matrix that has 60 percent or more chroma of 2 or less, starting at a depth of 30 cm (12 inches) or less from the soil surface and having a minimum thickness of either

1. 15 cm (6 inches), or
2. 2.5 cm (2 inches) if the 5 cm consists of fragmental soil material

Organic, loamy, or clayey layer(s) above the depleted or gleyed matrix must have value of 3 or less and chroma of 2 or less starting at a depth of less than 15 cm (6 inches) from the soil surface and extend to the depleted or gleyed matrix. Any loamy fine sand and coarser material above the depleted matrix must have value of 3 or less and chroma of 1 or less starting at a depth of 15 cm (6 inches) or less from the soil surface and extend to the depleted or gleyed matrix. When viewed through a 10x or 15x hand lens, at least 70 percent of the visible sand particles must be masked with organic material.

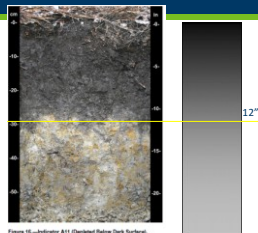


Figure 16.—Indicator A11 (Depleted Below Dark Surface). This soil does not meet the criteria for the requirements of indicator A11. Unlike the matrix in figure 15, the depleted matrix below the dark surface horizon in this soil starts at a depth of about 20 cm, which is too deep to meet the requirements of indicator A11 (Depleted Matrix). Indicator A11 allows a deeper depleted matrix than indicator A5.

129

A12- Thick Dark Surface

- Applicable land resource regions (LRR)
- Use in all LRRs
- User notes
 - Most often associated with overthickened soils in concave landscape positions.

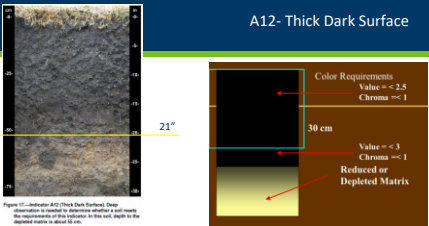


Figure 17.—Indicator A12 Thick Dark Surface. Note: Description is modified to determine whether a soil meets the requirements of this indicator to the soil depth the mineral matrix is about 30 cm.

A12.—Thick Dark Surface. For use in all LRRs. A layer 15 cm (6 inches) or more thick with a depleted or gleyed matrix that has 60 percent or more chroma of 2 or less starting at a depth of more than 30 cm (12 inches) from the soil surface. The layer(s) above the depleted or gleyed matrix and starting at a depth of less than 15 cm (6 inches) from the soil surface must have value of 2.5 or less and chroma of 1 or less to a depth of 30 cm (12 inches) or more and a value of 3 or less and chroma of 1 or less in any remaining layers above the depleted or gleyed matrix. In any loamy fine sand and coarser material above the depleted or gleyed matrix, at least 70 percent of the particles must be masked with organic material when viewed through a 10x or 15x hand lens.

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F3- Depleted Matrix

- Applicable land resource regions (LRR)
- Use in all LRRs

F3.—Depleted Matrix. For use in all LRRs, except W, X, and Y; for testing in LRRs W, X, and Y. A layer that has a depleted matrix with 60 percent or more chroma of 2 or less and that has a minimum thickness of either: 1. 5 cm (2 inches), starting at a depth of 10 cm (4 inches) or less from the soil surface, or 2. 15 cm (6 inches), starting at a depth of 25 cm (10 inches) or less from the soil surface.



Figure 18.—Indicator F3 Depleted Matrix. Note: This soil has value of 4.5-5.0-4.1 with 2% redox concentrations starting at a depth of 10 cm. When the indicator matrix starts at depth of 25 cm from the soil surface, the minimum thickness requirement is only 1.5 cm.

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F6- Redox Dark Surface

- Applicable land resource regions (LRR)
- Use in all LRRs

F6.—Redox Dark Surface. For use in all LRRs, except W, X, and Y; for testing in LRRs W, X, and Y. A layer that is 10 cm (4 inches) or more thick, starting at a depth of 20 cm (8 inches) or less from the mineral soil surface, and has 1. matrix value of 3 or less and chroma of 1 or less and 2 percent or more distinct or prominent redox concentrations occurring as soft masses or pore linings, or 2. matrix value of 3 or less and chroma of 2 or less and 5 percent or more distinct or prominent redox concentrations occurring as soft masses or pore linings.

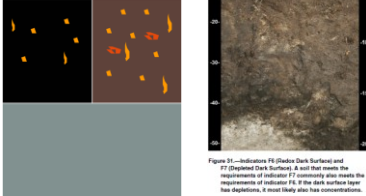


Figure 19.—Indicators F6 (Redox Dark Surface) and F7 (Depleted Dark Surface). A soil that meets the requirements of indicator F7 automatically also meets the requirements of indicator F6. If the dark surface layer has depletions, it must likely also have concentrations.

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- Applicable land resource regions (LRR)
 - Use in all LRRs
- User notes
 - Careful to not mistake an E horizon for depletions!

F7.—Depleted Dark Surface. For use in all LRRs except W, X, and Y; for testing in LRRs W, X, and Y. Redox depletions with value of 5 or more and chroma of 2 or less in a layer that is 10 cm (4 inches) or more thick, starting at a depth of 20 cm (8 inches) or less from the mineral soil surface, and has 1. matrix value of 3 or less and chroma of 1 or less and 10 percent or more redox depletions, or 2. matrix value of 3 or less and chroma of 2 or less and 20 percent or more redox depletions.

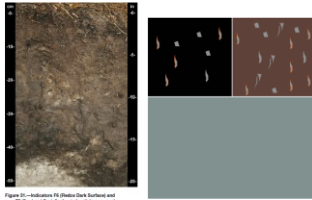


Figure 31.—Indicator F6 (Reduced Dark Surface) and F7 (Depleted Dark Surface). A soil that meets the requirements of indicator F7 commonly also meets the requirements of indicator F6. If the dark surface layer has depletions, it most likely also has concentrations.

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[illegible]

S5- Sandy Redox

- Applicable land resource regions (LRR)
 - Use in all LRRs

SS.—Sandy Redox. For use in all LRRs, except for Q, V, W, X, and Y. A layer starting at a depth of 15 cm (6 inches) or less from the soil surface that is 10 cm (4 inches) or more thick and has a matrix with 60 percent or more chroma of 2 or less and 2 or more percent distinct or prominent redox concentrations occurring as soft masses and/or pore linings.



Figure 22.—Indice requirements of 2 or less starting at a

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[illegible]

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Problematic Hydric Soils

- Covered in Chapter 5 of the regional supplements
- Problematic hydric soils are the norm in some landscapes

- **Red** Parent Material (*inhibited, or difficult to see redox features*)
- Active floodplains (*deposition of new material*)
- Drained systems (*relict hydric indicators*)
- **High Value** (*bright*) / Low Chroma (*grey*),
- Thick prairie soils
- Sandy soils

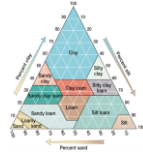
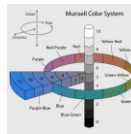


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Review

- Soil formation
 - Parent material, landscape position, horizons
- Soil Properties
 - Texture
 - Sand, silt, clay
 - Color
 - Hue, value, chroma
- Hydric soil development
 - Anaerobic conditions, reduction, organic accumulation

- Hydric soil indicators
 - All, Fine, Sandy
- Common soil indicators
 - Organic Indicators (A1, A2, A3)
 - Depleted Matrix (A11, A12, F3)
 - Redoximorphic features (F6, S3)



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Soil Survey Overview



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Attributes from Soil Survey to help understand Functions

- Geomorph description
 - Landform
 - Slope shape
 - Parent material
- Typical profile
 - Textures
 - Depths
- Properties and qualities
 - Slope
 - Restrictive layer
 - Drainage class
 - Depth to water table
 - Frequency of flooding/ponding

Description of Normanna

Setting
Landform: Moraines
Longform position (two-dimensional): Summit, backslope
Down slope shape: Linear
Across slope shape: Linear
Parent material: Loamy material over dense loamy till

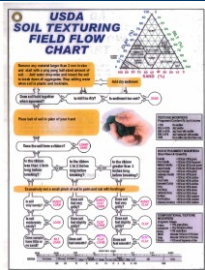
Typical profile
A - 0 to 4 inches: loam
Bw - 4 to 43 inches: gravelly sandy loam
2Bw,BC,2BC - 43 to 48 inches: gravelly sandy loam
2BCd - 48 to 80 inches: gravelly sandy loam

Properties and qualities
Slope: 3 to 8 percent
Depth to restrictive feature: 30 to 60 inches to dense material
Natural drainage class: Moderately well drained
Capacity of the most limiting layer to transmit water (Ksat): Very low to moderately low (0.00 to 0.06 in/hr)
Depth to water table: About 18 inches
Frequency of flooding: None
Frequency of ponding: None
Available water storage in profile: Low (about 5.2 inches)

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Order of Operation when Describing Soil Profile

- 1) First order observations
- 2) Color
- 3) Texture
- 4) Apply indicator

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