Study Guide for Minnesota Wetland Delineator Certification Exam

General

- The exam is intended to determine if you have the background knowledge necessary to conduct wetland delineations in Minnesota. Secondarily, it tests your ability to apply some wetland delineation concepts in scenarios representative of real world situations.

- The exam does not test your ability to apply wetland delineation procedures in the field, it only tests whether or not you have the background and knowledge to become competent in conducting wetland delineations in Minnesota.

- In addition to the 87 Manual and Minnesota supplements (Midwest, Great Plains, and Northcentral/Northeast), the exam covers applicable delineation guidance documents developed nationally and specifically for Minnesota.

- Because all three 87 Manual supplements that apply in Minnesota are very similar, the test sticks to details and specifics that are common to all 3 supplements.

Reference Sources for Exam (see wetland delineation guidance on BWSR website: www.bwsr.state.mn.us for access to listed documents)

- 1987 Corps of Engineer Delineation Manual (on-line addition is most up to date)
- 1987 Manual Supplements (Great Plains, Midwest, Northcentral/Northeast)
- “2015 Guidance for Submitting Delineation Reports in MN V2.0” – BWSR/Corps-issued guidance
- “Guidance for Offsite Hydrology and Wetland Determinations” – BWSR/Corps-issued guidance
- “Wetland Delineations: Choosing the Appropriate Method” – BWSR-issued guidance
- Hydric Soils Field Indicators (latest version) – NRCS published document
- “Wetland Delineation Review Checklist” – BWSR-issued guidance
- “Technical Standard for Water Table Monitoring” – Corps-issued guidance
- “Water Table Monitoring Design” – Corps-issued guidance
- Web Soil Survey – NRCS web-based soil application
- “Installing Monitoring Wells and Piezometers in Wetlands” – Corps-issued guidance
- User’s Guide to National Wetland Inventory Maps Region 3 – USFWS publication
- Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States – USFWS publication
• Wetlands in Minnesota (Circular 39) – BWSR/DNR/USFWS publication
• Eggers & Reed Wetland Community Classification Key – MnRAM working group publication
• Field Book for Describing and Sampling Soils – NRCS publication
• Presentations from WDCP Basic Wetland Delineation Class

How to Study

• You should be familiar with basic concepts and methodologies associated with the reference documents. However, this is a large amount of information to study. A review of presentations from the WDCP Basic Wetland Delineation Class will provide you with guidance as to what concepts and methodologies are emphasized in the course and thus in the exam. However, not all information on the exam is covered in the course presentations. You can use the presentation material to focus your study on certain sections/portions of the reference documents. For example, if a presentation talks about “problem areas”, you should read the problem areas section of the 87 Manual. Another example, if the presentations talk about soil texture, you should read that section of the Field Book for Describing and Sampling Soils. Keep in mind that reviewing powerpoint presentation information is a “less than perfect” substitute for attending the class and benefiting from the verbal discussions and visual demonstrations.

• Taking the practice exam on the WDCP website will give you an idea of the type and format of questions asked on the exam.

• Do you have to memorize specific indicators (such as the detailed hydric soil indicators or wetland hydrology indicators)? The general answer is NO. However, there are some aspects of the indicators that are very important (and thus emphasized in the presentations), and therefore you will have to (and should) know them without having to look them up. In general, the exam will give you the information and ask you to apply the indicator or concept without you having to know the specific details of it. There are obviously definitions and concepts that you will have to memorize (know), but these generally do not include the exact details like (for example) “within how many inches of surface does a matrix with chroma 2 or less and redox concentrations have to be in order to meet the S5 hydric soil indicator?”

• You will note that some items covered in the class are not covered in any of the reference documents. Many of these items are basic concepts in soils, hydrology, and vegetation that the reference sources essentially assume that you already know (for example plant nomenclature, soil forming factors, hydrologic cycle, etc.). The experience and education requirements for taking the exam are there to emphasize the need to have this basic background and experience as a prerequisite for certification. Others items not in reference sources are more specific techniques/guidance. These are items that are typically more practical aspects of performing wetland delineations in Minnesota and they have often been developed/modified over time based on experience and new data/knowledge. They are based on the reference documents and covered on the exam.