



Minnesota  
Pollution  
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Agency

# Determining the Location of a Wetland For the Industrial Stormwater Multi-Sector General Permit

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**W**etlands are among the surface waters that are valued and protected in Minnesota.

For the purposes of complying with the Minnesota Industrial Stormwater Multi-Sector General Permit, this guidance document will help applicants to determine whether an industrial stormwater discharge flows from a facility to, and within a mile of, a wetland. This guidance explains the basic process that is already in place for other Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) water quality programs using the same maps and tools, designed for ease of use.

In addition to using the wetland resources identified in this guidance document, Permittees are encouraged to consult the local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) or other local units of government for assistance in locating wetlands.

## What is a wetland?

Wetlands are typically the areas in the transition between land and water and where the water table is usually at or near the surface. Sometimes a wetland surface is covered by shallow water. Some types of wetlands are dry most of the time. The following link explains types of wetlands: [www.bwsr.state.mn.us/wetlands/publications/wetland.pdf](http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/wetlands/publications/wetland.pdf).

## How can I identify wetlands for this purpose?

Both the United States Geologic Survey (USGS) Web site, <http://topomaps.usgs.gov> and the National Wetlands Inventory database,



[www.mngeo.state.mn.us/chouse/water\\_wetlands.html](http://www.mngeo.state.mn.us/chouse/water_wetlands.html), provide information about available maps which will be useful to the applicant. The Agency advises the use of both maps. The USGS topography maps have useful landmark features and contour lines. The National Wetlands Inventory maps have more clear wetland boundaries.

The USGS offers a wetland identification map series for the purposes of this permit: specifically, the 7.5-minute, 1:24,000-scale quadrangle series maps. These maps show considerable water detail. Using a map at this scale is sufficient to estimate:

1. whether a monitoring location is within one mile of a wetland
2. whether the discharge from the monitoring location flows to, and enters the wetland

## How do I find the maps?

These maps are widely available. Check the closest public library reference section or visit <http://msrmaps.com/default.aspx>.

USGS maps can be purchased online at the following link: <http://store.usgs.gov>. National Wetlands Inventory maps can be purchased from the following link: [http://www.comm.media.state.mn.us/bookstore/mnbookstore.asp?page=maps\\_nwi](http://www.comm.media.state.mn.us/bookstore/mnbookstore.asp?page=maps_nwi).

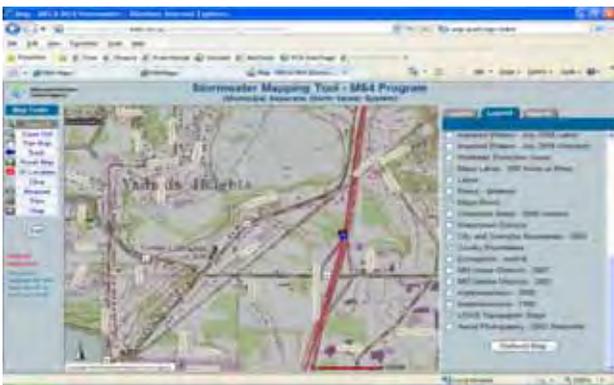
The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources created a helpful mapping tool that combines both USGS map capability and the National Wetlands Inventory.

Visit: [www.dnr.state.mn.us/maps/index.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/maps/index.html). In the “Interactive Maps” section, go to the “Recreation” topic and click on “Landview: Updated (beta).” Zoom in

(using the  tool) to your facility location. Then, in the Overlay Layers section, check and expand the “NWI-Circular 39 Classification” box on the left to see the wetlands legend and identify those near the facility. In the Background layers section, select Quad maps. To

take advantage of the measuring tool, click on the  icon. The measuring tool will determine the distance between your facility and the closest wetland.

The MPCA stormwater program has a link to a mapping tool on the MPCA stormwater Web site that can be used to access the USGS maps. This is a useful Web site for locating wetlands but it does not contain the National Wetlands Inventory. This is a useful tool for seeking out wetlands and other waters (see the example below): [http://pcagis04.pca.state.mn.us/website/stormwater/ms4\\_smt](http://pcagis04.pca.state.mn.us/website/stormwater/ms4_smt).



### How do I find wetlands and determine flow direction on the USGS map?

Interpreting the lines, areas, and other symbols is the first step in using topographic maps.

Geographic features identified on a topographic map are typically shown as vegetation (green) and water (blue). For larger buildings, the actual shapes are mapped and densely built-up areas are gray or red. Roads and railways are solid lines.

Contour lines are shown in solid and dashed brown lines. These can be useful in determining general direction of flow. Contour lines that are very close together represent steeper ground. Contour lines spaced apart generally

mean that the slope is relatively more flat. Flow runs down-gradient (from higher to lower elevation). Elevation can be determined by reading the numbers in the contour lines.

Wetland areas on these maps are shown by symbols in the map key.

### How do I determine whether a facility discharges industrial stormwater that flows to, and is within one mile of, a wetland?

Using a ruler and the scale on the map, estimate the direct horizontal distance from the monitoring location you have identified at the industrial facility to the location where the flow enters a wetland.

Another way is to use the mapping tool on the MPCA Web site, which has the ability to measure this distance. If the mapping tool is used, 5,280 feet equals one mile.

Keep documentation of the evaluation.

### What should I do if my facility's industrial stormwater discharge flows from a monitoring location to within one mile of a wetland?

The industrial stormwater permittee is required to protect the beneficial uses of wetlands.

This can be accomplished by implementation of stormwater control measures at a facility, as required by Part III of the permit in order to meet the requirements of Minn. R. 7050.0186 (Wetland Standards and Mitigation) as referenced in Appendix A of the permit. Control measures protect wetlands because they result in avoiding or minimizing the effect of a discharge of stormwater from the industrial facility to the wetland. Permittees are encouraged to contact their SWCD or other local units of government for further assistance.

### Additional resources

For more information, contact the Industrial Stormwater Program staff at 651-757-2119 or 800-657-3864. Other resources include:

National Wetlands Inventory Database:  
[www.mngeo.state.mn.us/chouse/water\\_wetlands.html](http://www.mngeo.state.mn.us/chouse/water_wetlands.html).

Soil and Water Conservation Districts:  
[www.maswcd.org/SWCDs\\_On\\_The\\_Web/swcds\\_on\\_the\\_web.htm](http://www.maswcd.org/SWCDs_On_The_Web/swcds_on_the_web.htm).

Please note that this guidance and its description of wetland identification are only for the purpose of compliance with the Industrial Stormwater Multi-Sector General Permit.