

Wetlands

What are wetlands?

Wetlands are lands that are saturated long enough to support plants adapted for life in wet soils. Florida wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bayheads, bogs, cypress domes, sloughs, wet prairies, riverine swamps and marshes, hydric seepage slopes, and similar areas. Wetlands often have fluctuating water levels above and below land surface, which means sometimes they can be dry. Wetlands generally have at least two of the following characteristics:

- Wetland vegetation
- Indicators of saturation or high water levels, such as water stains
- Soils that are saturated for significant periods of time

What are other surface waters (OSWs)?

Other Surface Waters (OSWs) are waters (other than wetlands) contained within artificial or natural boundaries. Examples of Florida OSWs include the Gulf of Mexico, bays, bayous, rivers, springs, estuaries, lagoons, lakes, ponds, impoundments, ditches and canals.

25-foot Buffer

Avoid any construction or land clearing 25 feet from the wetland or OSW boundary.

Why are wetlands and OSWs important?

Wetlands and OSWs provide a habitat for essential fish and wildlife, flood control, and recreational and aesthetic value, and also improve water quality by acting as a natural filter.

How do I apply for a permit with Wetland or Other Surface Waters (OSW) impacts?

Schedule a free pre-application meeting with District staff to discuss proposed activities and determine whether an environmental consultant should be hired for the project.

Application fee:

- \$100.00 - Exemption (62-330.051, F.A.C.)
- \$250.00 - General Permit (62-330.052, F.A.C.)
- \$1,190.00+ (minimum) - Individual Permit

Supporting documentation required:

- Wetland and OSW boundaries determined by an environmental consultant and verified by District staff.
- Wetland and OSW boundaries and buffers added to site plans.
- A wetland impact mitigation plan, if required.
- Section B or Section C supplemental application forms, if applicable.

Refer to ERP Applicant's Handbook Vol. 1 Section 10 and Application Form Sections B & C for more information on what is required for an individual permit with wetland or OSW impacts.

How do I know if I have wetlands or OSWs on my property?

- Online resources can provide estimated wetland and OSW locations. These tools provide approximate locations and cannot be used for official wetland and OSW boundaries in permit applications:
 - National Wetlands Inventory (NWI)
 - Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD) Flood Report
- Wetlands and OSW boundaries can only be confirmed through on-site evaluations by hiring an environmental consultant properly trained in wetland evaluations.
- SRWMD maintains a list of consultants who have submitted applications to the District: www.mysuwanneeriver.com/553/Engineers-Surveyors-Environmental-Consul

What do I need to do if I have wetlands or OSWs on my property?

- Avoid construction or land clearing in wetlands and OSWs on your property and within the 25-foot setback from the wetland or OSW boundary.
- If wetland or OSW impacts are unavoidable, minimize construction impacts.
- Apply for a permit to develop your property for any dredge or fill impacts in wetlands and OSWs.
 - Dredge: digging, ditching, stump removal, channel dredging, excavation, etc.
 - Fill: any material deposited in wetlands or OSWs (buildings, soil/fill material, concrete, debris, seawalls, pilings, etc.)

What is wetland mitigation?

Wetland mitigation is an action taken to offset permanent or temporary adverse impacts to wetlands and OSWs. Mitigation can include purchasing mitigation credits from a mitigation bank; creating, restoring, enhancing, or preserving wetlands and OSWs; or a combination of these actions.

Please note: This document is intended as a guide. Activities with proposed wetland or other surface water impacts may require additional permitting through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and local government agencies: <https://www.flrules.org/gateway/ChapterHome.asp?Chapter=40B-4>

Please visit our website at www.mysuwanneeriver.com to learn more or email us at resourcemanagement@srwmd.org for all your permitting questions.



SUWANNEE RIVER
WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT