

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Soil and Plant Science Division

Soil Survey Region 2 Office, Davis, CA

September 2019



Arcata MLRA Soil Survey Office

Wetlands Identification for Food Security Act Purposes— Phase 2: Application

Purpose

On September 23-27, 2019, soil scientists, soil conservationists, wetland compliance specialists, and cartographic technicians traveled from all over the United States to Indianapolis, Indiana, to learn about the process and policy of wetland determination for the Food Security Act. They learned about the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers policy and how the NRCS policy varies.

Wetland laws, regulations, and policy and the history of their development were discussed. Topics were discussed in the classroom in the morning and then applied in the field in the afternoon. For example, hydrophytic vegetation was discussed on September 26. The attendees practiced the rapid test, dominance test, and prevalence test in the classroom. Then they went to a soybean field that was adjacent to a possible wetland area and looked at the vegetation. They identified plants and the dominant ones and then performed the various tests until a positive indicator was determined. They also looked for hydrologic and hydric soils indicators.

On the last day, the attendees discussed specific cases encountered in the field and received feedback from colleagues.



Figure 1.—Attendees looking at wetland indicators.

Key Outcomes / Products

The attendees left the class with a better grasp of the NRCS wetland policy and how to determine the appropriate methods for sampling and data analysis. They also now are part of a network of experts.





Figure 2.—One of many plants observed in a wetland area.



Figure 3.—A group of attendees that performed wetland exercises together.