



United States Department of Agriculture

Boot Camp 1

Wetland Awareness

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Wetland Awareness



What are wetlands?

The 3 criteria: hydrology, hydric soils, hydrophytic plants.

Who cares about wetlands?

Why do we care about wetlands?

How do we identify wetlands?

How do we deal with wetlands?



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What are wetlands?

Just like their name says, they are ‘WET’ ‘LAND’.
--the ‘land’ portion is vital



Not a wetland



Wetland



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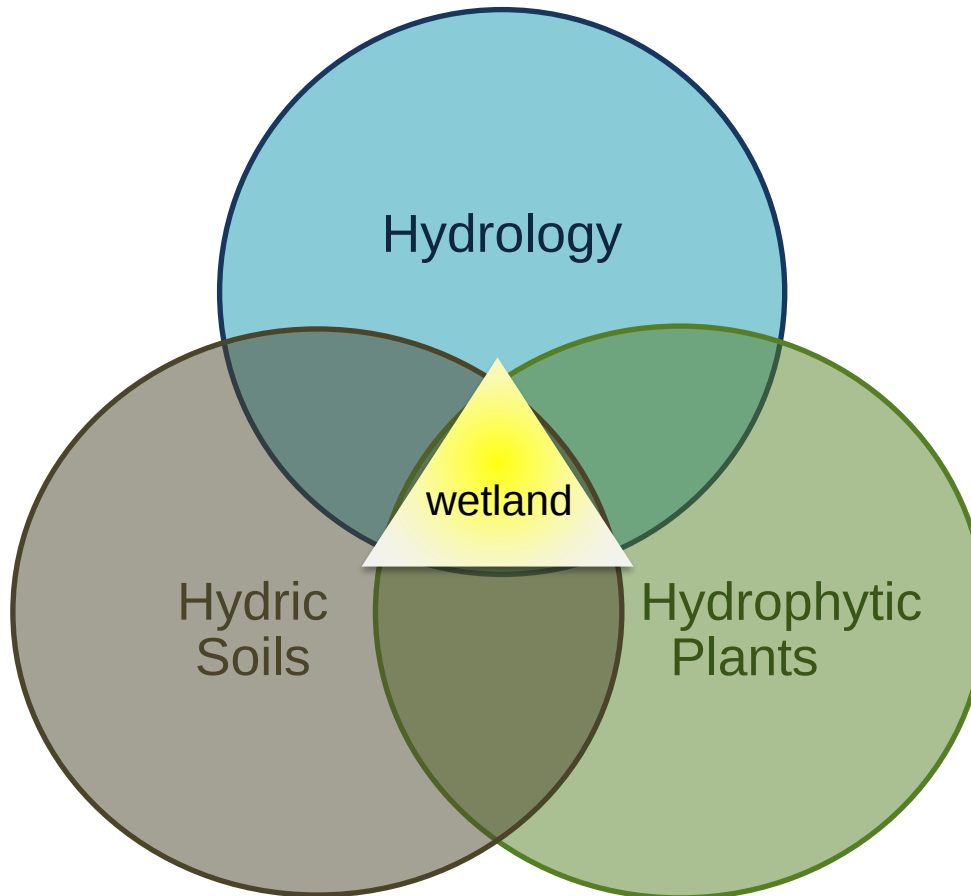


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What are wetlands?

Areas that show **all three** of the following criteria:



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Hydrology + **Hydric Soils** + **Hydrophytic Vegetation**

“**Water** saturates the soil often enough and long enough to create noticeably different plant communities.”



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Who cares about wetlands?

“Tree huggers”, environmentalists, biologists, regulatory agencies like DEP and the Corps, etc.

Who cares about wetlands after they're gone?

Hunters, flood victims (Hurricane Katrina and New Orleans), drought-prone areas, etc.

And everyone who relies on groundwater (all of us...).



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Why do we care about wetlands?

It's our job...

They're natural resources that provide public benefits

- groundwater recharge**
- water quality/filtration**
- flood absorption**
- wildlife habitat**

It's the law... (only landform protected by law)

- NEPA, Food Security Act, Executive Order 11990, etc.**
- NRCS policy**



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How do we identify wetlands?

Wetland specialists will use Food Security Act and Corps Manuals, and will have additional training and expertise...

...but *everyone has the capability to recognize wetlands*, by asking and answering two simple questions:

- 1. Is this area different from its surroundings?**
- 2. If so, what makes the area different?**



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1. Is an area different from its surroundings?
2. What makes it different?



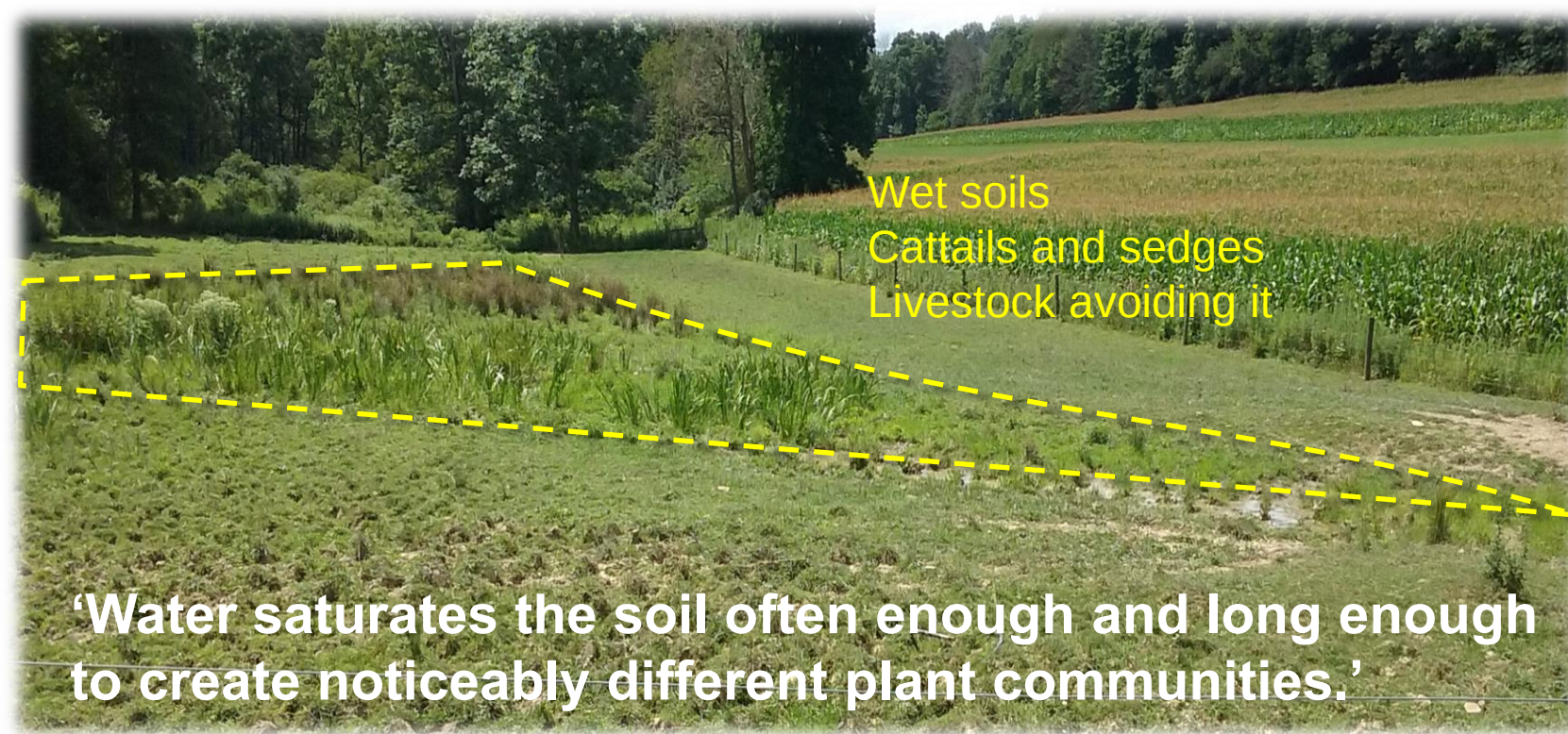
‘Water saturates the soil often enough and long enough to create noticeably different plant communities.’



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1. Is an area different from its surroundings?
2. What makes it different?



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1. Is an area different from its surroundings?
2. What makes it different?



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Even if you don't know for sure that an area's a wetland, you can recognize that it's different, and *then treat it differently.*



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How do we deal with wetlands?

We **AVOID** negative impacts, first and foremost.

- if impacts can be avoided, we do what it takes to avoid them. Period.
- change practices, change practice layouts, etc.

When negative impacts are unavoidable, we **MINIMIZE** the impacts and get appropriate permits if necessary.

- unavoidable means “*avoidance is not possible.*”

Not preferred $\neq$ Not possible



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Not preferred $\neq$ Not possible



Where should the gravity trough go?



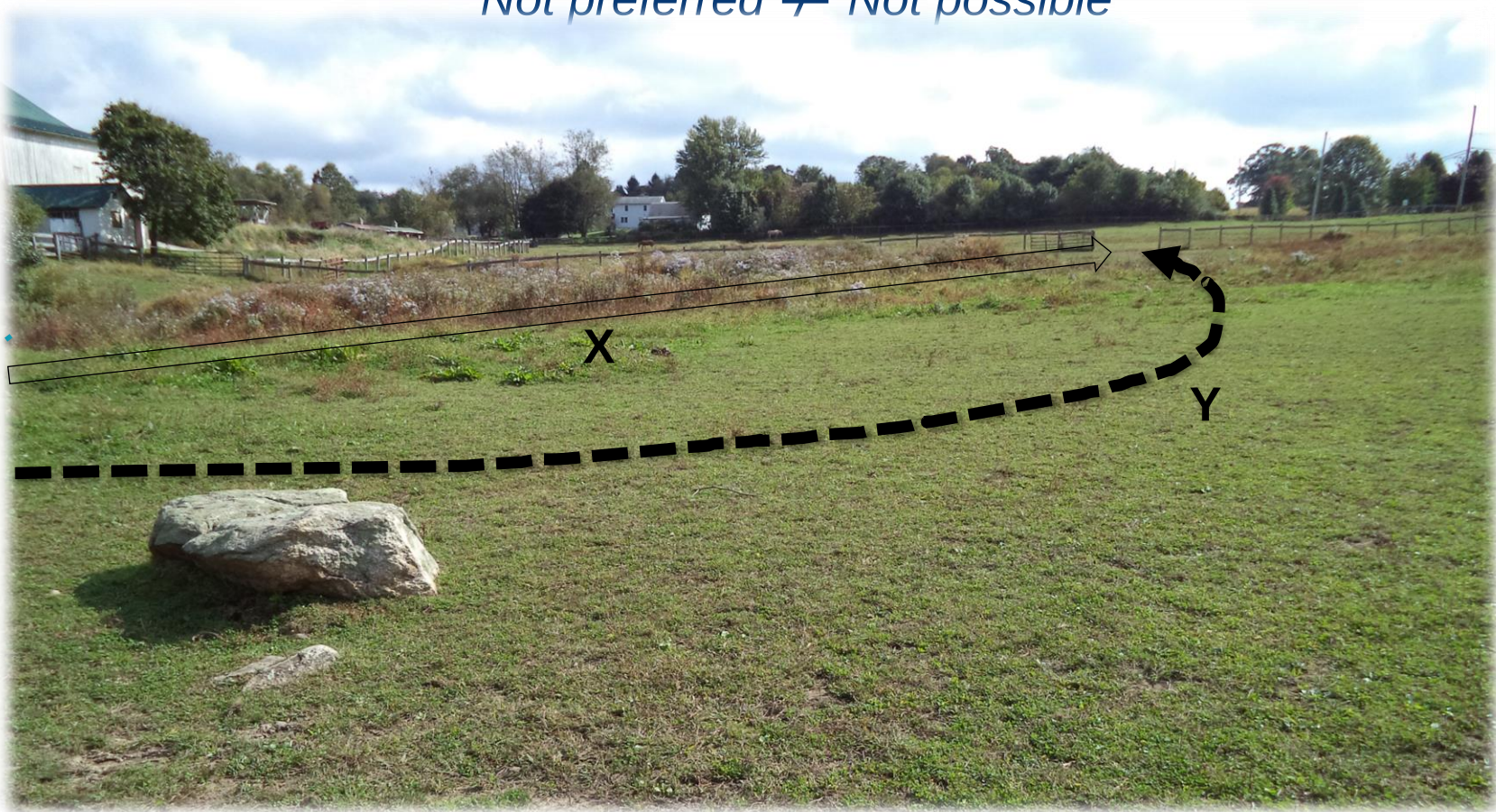
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Not preferred $\neq$ Not possible



Where should the animal trail go?

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Wetland Awareness - Summary

What are wetlands?

The 3 criteria: hydrology, hydric soils, hydrophytic plants.

Who cares about wetlands?

We do: they're resources, and it's the law.

How do we identify wetlands?

Is the area different, and why?

How do we deal with wetlands?

AVOID, then minimize, any negative impacts.



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