

These definitions apply to both the federally operated program and State administered programs after program approval. This part also describes those activities which are exempted from regulation. Regulations prescribing the substantive environmental criteria for issuance of section 404 permits appear at 40 CFR part 230. Regulations establishing procedures to be followed by the EPA in denying or restricting a disposal site appear at 40 CFR part 231. Regulations containing the procedures and policies used by the Corps in administering the 404 program appear at 33 CFR parts 320–330. Regulations specifying the procedures EPA will follow, and the criteria EPA will apply in approving, monitoring, and withdrawing approval of section 404 State programs appear at 40 CFR part 233.

§ 232.2 Definitions.

Administrator means the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency or an authorized representative.

Application means a form for applying for a permit to discharge dredged or fill material into waters of the United States.

Approved program means a State program which has been approved by the Regional Administrator under part 233 of this chapter or which is deemed approved under section 404(h)(3), 33 U.S.C. 1344(h)(3).

Best management practices (BMPs) means schedules of activities, prohibitions of practices, maintenance procedures, and other management practices to prevent or reduce the pollution of waters of the United States from discharges of dredged or fill material. BMPs include methods, measures, practices, or design and performance standards which facilitate compliance with the section 404(b)(1) Guidelines (40 CFR part 230), effluent limitations or prohibitions under section 307(a), and applicable water quality standards.

Discharge of dredged material. (1) Except as provided below in paragraph (3), the term *discharge of dredged material* means any addition of dredged material into, including redeposit of dredged material other than incidental fallback within, the waters of the

United States. The term includes, but is not limited to, the following:

(i) The addition of dredged material to a specified discharge site located in waters of the United States;

(ii) The runoff or overflow, associated with a dredging operation, from a contained land or water disposal area; and

(iii) Any addition, including redeposit other than incidental fallback, of dredged material, including excavated material, into waters of the United States which is incidental to any activity, including mechanized landclearing, ditching, channelization, or other excavation.

(2)(i) The Corps and EPA regard the use of mechanized earth-moving equipment to conduct landclearing, ditching, channelization, in-stream mining or other earth-moving activity in waters of the United States as resulting in a discharge of dredged material unless project-specific evidence shows that the activity results in only incidental fallback. This paragraph (i) does not and is not intended to shift any burden in any administrative or judicial proceeding under the CWA.

(ii) *Incidental fallback* is the redeposit of small volumes of dredged material that is incidental to excavation activity in waters of the United States when such material falls back to substantially the same place as the initial removal. Examples of incidental fallback include soil that is disturbed when dirt is shoveled and the back-spill that comes off a bucket when such small volume of soil or dirt falls into substantially the same place from which it was initially removed.

(3) The term *discharge of dredged material* does not include the following:

(i) Discharges of pollutants into waters of the United States resulting from the onshore subsequent processing of dredged material that is extracted for any commercial use (other than fill). These discharges are subject to section 402 of the Clean Water Act even though the extraction and deposit of such material may require a permit from the Corps or applicable state.

(ii) Activities that involve only the cutting or removing of vegetation above the ground (e.g., mowing, rotary cutting, and chainsawing) where the activity neither substantially disturbs

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the root system nor involves mechanized pushing, dragging, or other similar activities that redeposit excavated soil material.

(iii) Incidental fallback.

(4) Section 404 authorization is not required for the following:

(i) Any incidental addition, including redeposit, of dredged material associated with any activity that does not have or would not have the effect of destroying or degrading an area of waters of the U.S. as defined in paragraphs (5) and (6) of this definition; however, this exception does not apply to any person preparing to undertake mechanized landclearing, ditching, channelization and other excavation activity in a water of the United States, which would result in a redeposit of dredged material, unless the person demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Corps, or EPA as appropriate, prior to commencing the activity involving the discharge, that the activity would not have the effect of destroying or degrading any area of waters of the United States, as defined in paragraphs (5) and (6) of this definition. The person proposing to undertake mechanized landclearing, ditching, channelization or other excavation activity bears the burden of demonstrating that such activity would not destroy or degrade any area of waters of the United States.

(ii) Incidental movement of dredged material occurring during normal dredging operations, defined as dredging for navigation in *navigable waters of the United States*, as that term is defined in 33 CFR part 329, with proper authorization from the Congress or the Corps pursuant to 33 CFR part 322; however, this exception is not applicable to dredging activities in wetlands, as that term is defined at § 232.2(r) of this chapter.

(iii) Certain discharges, such as those associated with normal farming, silviculture, and ranching activities, are not prohibited by or otherwise subject to regulation under Section 404. See 40 CFR 232.3 for discharges that do not require permits.

(5) For purposes of this section, an activity associated with a discharge of dredged material destroys an area of waters of the United States if it alters

the area in such a way that it would no longer be a water of the United States.

NOTE: Unauthorized discharges into waters of the United States do not eliminate Clean Water Act jurisdiction, even where such unauthorized discharges have the effect of destroying waters of the United States.

(6) For purposes of this section, an activity associated with a discharge of dredged material degrades an area of waters of the United States if it has more than a *de minimis* (i.e., inconsequential) effect on the area by causing an identifiable individual or cumulative adverse effect on any aquatic function.

Discharge of fill material. (1) The term *discharge of fill material* means the addition of fill material into waters of the United States. The term generally includes, without limitation, the following activities: Placement of fill that is necessary for the construction of any structure or infrastructure in a water of the United States; the building of any structure, infrastructure, or impoundment requiring rock, sand, dirt, or other material for its construction; site-development fills for recreational, industrial, commercial, residential, or other uses; causeways or road fills; dams and dikes; artificial islands; property protection and/or reclamation devices such as riprap, groins, seawalls, breakwaters, and revetments; beach nourishment; levees; fill for structures such as sewage treatment facilities, intake and outfall pipes associated with power plants and subaqueous utility lines; placement of fill material for construction or maintenance of any liner, berm, or other infrastructure associated with solid waste landfills; placement of overburden, slurry, or tailings or similar mining-related materials;” after the words “utility lines; and artificial reefs.

(2) In addition, placement of pilings in waters of the United States constitutes a discharge of fill material and requires a Section 404 permit when such placement has or would have the effect of a discharge of fill material. Examples of such activities that have the effect of a discharge of fill material include, but are not limited to, the following: Projects where the pilings are so closely spaced that sedimentation rates would be increased; projects in

which the pilings themselves effectively would replace the bottom of a waterbody; projects involving the placement of pilings that would reduce the reach or impair the flow or circulation of waters of the United States; and projects involving the placement of pilings which would result in the adverse alteration or elimination of aquatic functions.

(i) Placement of pilings in waters of the United States that does not have or would not have the effect of a discharge of fill material shall not require a Section 404 permit. Placement of pilings for linear projects, such as bridges, elevated walkways, and powerline structures, generally does not have the effect of a discharge of fill material. Furthermore, placement of pilings in waters of the United States for piers, wharves, and an individual house on stilts generally does not have the effect of a discharge of fill material. All pilings, however, placed in the *navigable waters of the United States*, as that term is defined in 33 CFR part 329, require authorization under section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (see 33 CFR part 322).

(ii) [Reserved]

Dredged material means material that is excavated or dredged from waters of the United States.

Effluent means dredged material or fill material, including return flow from confined sites.

Federal Indian reservation means all land within the limits of any Indian reservation under the jurisdiction of the United States Government, notwithstanding the issuance of any patent, and including rights-of-way running through the reservation.

Fill material. (1) Except as specified in paragraph (3) of this definition, the term fill material means material placed in waters of the United States where the material has the effect of:

(i) Replacing any portion of a water of the United States with dry land; or

(ii) Changing the bottom elevation of any portion of a water of the United States.

(2) Examples of such fill material include, but are not limited to: rock, sand, soil, clay, plastics, construction debris, wood chips, overburden from mining or other excavation activities,

and materials used to create any structure or infrastructure in the waters of the United States.

(3) The term fill material does not include trash or garbage.

General permit means a permit authorizing a category of discharges of dredged or fill material under the Act. General permits are permits for categories of discharge which are similar in nature, will cause only minimal adverse environmental effects when performed separately, and will have only minimal cumulative adverse effect on the environment.

Indian Tribe means any Indian Tribe, band, group, or community recognized by the Secretary of the Interior and exercising governmental authority over a Federal Indian reservation.

Owner or operator means the owner or operator of any activity subject to regulation under the 404 program.

Permit means a written authorization issued by an approved State to implement the requirements of part 233, or by the Corps under 33 CFR parts 320–330. When used in these regulations, “permit” includes “general permit” as well as individual permit.

Person means an individual, association, partnership, corporation, municipality, State or Federal agency, or an agent or employee thereof.

Regional Administrator means the Regional Administrator of the appropriate Regional Office of the Environmental Protection Agency or the authorized representative of the Regional Administrator.

Secretary means the Secretary of the Army acting through the Chief of Engineers.

State means any of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, Guam, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, or an Indian Tribe as defined in this part, which meet the requirements of § 233.60.

State regulated waters means those waters of the United States in which the Corps suspends the issuance of section 404 permits upon approval of a State’s section 404 permit program by the Administrator under section 404(h). The program cannot be transferred for

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those waters which are presently used, or are susceptible to use in their natural condition or by reasonable improvement as a means to transport interstate or foreign commerce shoreward to their ordinary high water mark, including all waters which are subject to the ebb and flow of the tide shoreward to the high tide line, including wetlands adjacent thereto. All other waters of the United States in a State with an approved program shall be under jurisdiction of the State program, and shall be identified in the program description as required by part 233.

Waters of the United States means:

All waters which are currently used, were used in the past, or may be susceptible to us in interstate or foreign commerce, including all waters which are subject to the ebb and flow of the tide.

All interstate waters including interstate wetlands.

All other waters, such as intrastate lakes, rivers, streams (including intermittent streams), mudflats, sandflats, wetlands, sloughs, prairie potholes, wet meadows, playa lakes, or natural ponds, the use, degradation, or destruction of which would or could affect interstate or foreign commerce including any such waters:

Which are or could be used by interstate or foreign travelers for recreational or other purposes; or

From which fish or shellfish are or could be taken and sold in interstate or foreign commerce; or

Which are used or could be used for industrial purposes by industries in interstate commerce.

All impoundments of waters otherwise defined as waters of the United States under this definition;

Tributaries of waters identified in paragraphs (g)(1)–(4) of this section;

The territorial sea; and

Wetlands adjacent to waters (other than waters that are themselves wetlands) identified in paragraphs (q)(1)–(6) of this section.

Waste treatment systems, including treatment ponds or lagoons designed to meet the requirements of the Act (other than cooling ponds as defined in 40 CFR 123.11(m) which also meet the

criteria of this definition) are not waters of the United States.

Waters of the United States do not include prior converted cropland. Notwithstanding the determination of an area's status as prior converted cropland by any other federal agency, for the purposes of the Clean Water Act, the final authority regarding Clean Water Act jurisdiction remains with EPA.

Wetlands means those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas.

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§ 232.3 Activities not requiring permits.

Except as specified in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section, any discharge of dredged or fill material that may result from any of the activities described in paragraph (c) of this section is not prohibited by or otherwise subject to regulation under this part.

(a) If any discharge of dredged or fill material resulting from the activities listed in paragraph (c) of this section contains any toxic pollutant listed under section 307 of the Act, such discharge shall be subject to any applicable toxic effluent standard or prohibition, and shall require a section 404 permit.

(b) Any discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States incidental to any of the activities identified in paragraph (c) of this section must have a permit if it is part of an activity whose purpose is to convert an area of the waters of the United States into a use to which it was not previously subject, where the flow or circulation of waters of the United States may be impaired or the reach of such waters reduced. Where the proposed discharge will result in significant discernable alterations to flow or circulation, the presumption is that