

TOPICS



February 2008

Wetland Permit Compliance Can Cost You: How to Minimize the Sting

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers made wetland permit compliance tougher in the last few years, and they are not alone. Other wetland agencies have also raised the bar for wetland replacement success.

Rigorous "Special Conditions" have appeared in 21 Corps permits obtained by Westwood staff since August 2005. These Special Conditions increase the cost of permit compliance and mitigation acceptance.

You can minimize the sting of these requirements by building better wetlands. The following practices can help you obtain timely signoff and release of cash surety from regulatory agencies:

- Conduct as-built topographic surveys immediately after grading to ensure that wetlands are constructed correctly.
- Install automated shallow groundwater monitoring wells to obtain the required water level data while minimizing labor costs and site visits.
- Ensure that native seeding and vegetation management are coordinated with specialized native landscape contractors to meet vegetation goals.
- Consistently compare new native plant communities against agency-required performance standards, and adjust management as needed.
- Have your wetland scientist work with your native landscape contractor to ensure that vegetation management practices correspond to wetland monitoring results.



These practices will help eliminate bad news and facilitate the diligent wetland construction and monitoring steps required by the Corps' Special Conditions. Typical Special Conditions include:

- Regular inspections by wetland professionals during wetland construction.
- Topographic as-built surveys with one-foot contours.
- Weekly water elevation monitoring during much of the growing season.
- Prescriptive hydrology success criteria for created wetlands.
- Identification of all plant species within vegetation sample plots.

TOPICS



- Vigilant control of invasive and non-native plant species.
- Establishing 75 percent cover of dominant native plant species by the fifth year of monitoring.
- Jurisdictional wetland delineations at the end of the monitoring period.

Getting wetlands built right the first time means that you can prevent expensive corrections at the tail end of your project. Protect your investment in wetland permitting by making sure replacement wetlands comply with increasingly rigorous requirements throughout the process.



For more information on Westwood's wetland permitting and monitoring services, contact **Matt Vollbrecht**, Environmental Scientist
matt.vollbrecht@westwoodps.com,
320-229-2311 or 1-800-270-9495

Solutions
for *your* **Success**
LAND · ENERGY



Westwood