

Updating the National Wetland Plant List

US Army Corps of Engineers
North American Digital Flora:
National Wetland Plant List

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NATIONAL WETLAND PLANT LIST

BONAP

NRCS

Images courtesy of BONAP et. al.

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US Army Corps of Engineers

NWPL is Authorized: Start Date: 1 June 2012

So where do I get a List?

- State and Regional Lists are posted on the homepage of NWPL:
<https://rsgisais.crrel.usace.army.mil/apex/f?p=703:1>
- All input is transparent and hosted on the web site by regions and species
- You can challenge a rating and we have a process to handle simple to complex rating change requests

Acknowledgements

- A national effort lead by the Corps of Engineers
- National Panel (4 botanists) from the four Federal agencies; Corps, FWS, EPA, and NRCS
- 65 Regional Panel members and their alternates from the same four agencies
- 30 external professional botanists; museums and universities
- 377 public participants in the process; 6 other federal agencies, states, and professional ecologists

National Wetland Plant List

- What is it?
 - The National Wetland Plant List is a Federal species list that is used in a three factor approach with hydric soils, wetland vegetation and evidence of hydrology to make wetland determinations for the purposes of the CWA Section 404 program and other purposes
 - The NWPL is an independently derived list of wetland plant ratings for each species that is used within the wetland delineation protocols for the vegetation factor

Background

- The NWPL was transferred from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to the Corps of Engineers in December 2006
- Management of the list, including updating the scientific names, is an interagency effort of the Corps, FWS, EPA, and NRCS
- A National Panel, comprising botanists from the four agencies, was established in 2007; Regional Panels were established in 2008
- 1988 list had 6,728 species, 1996 had 7,662 and 2012 has 8,200
- Increase in NWPL species over 25 years is dominated by scientific nomenclature changes and only 200 newly proposed additions in 2012

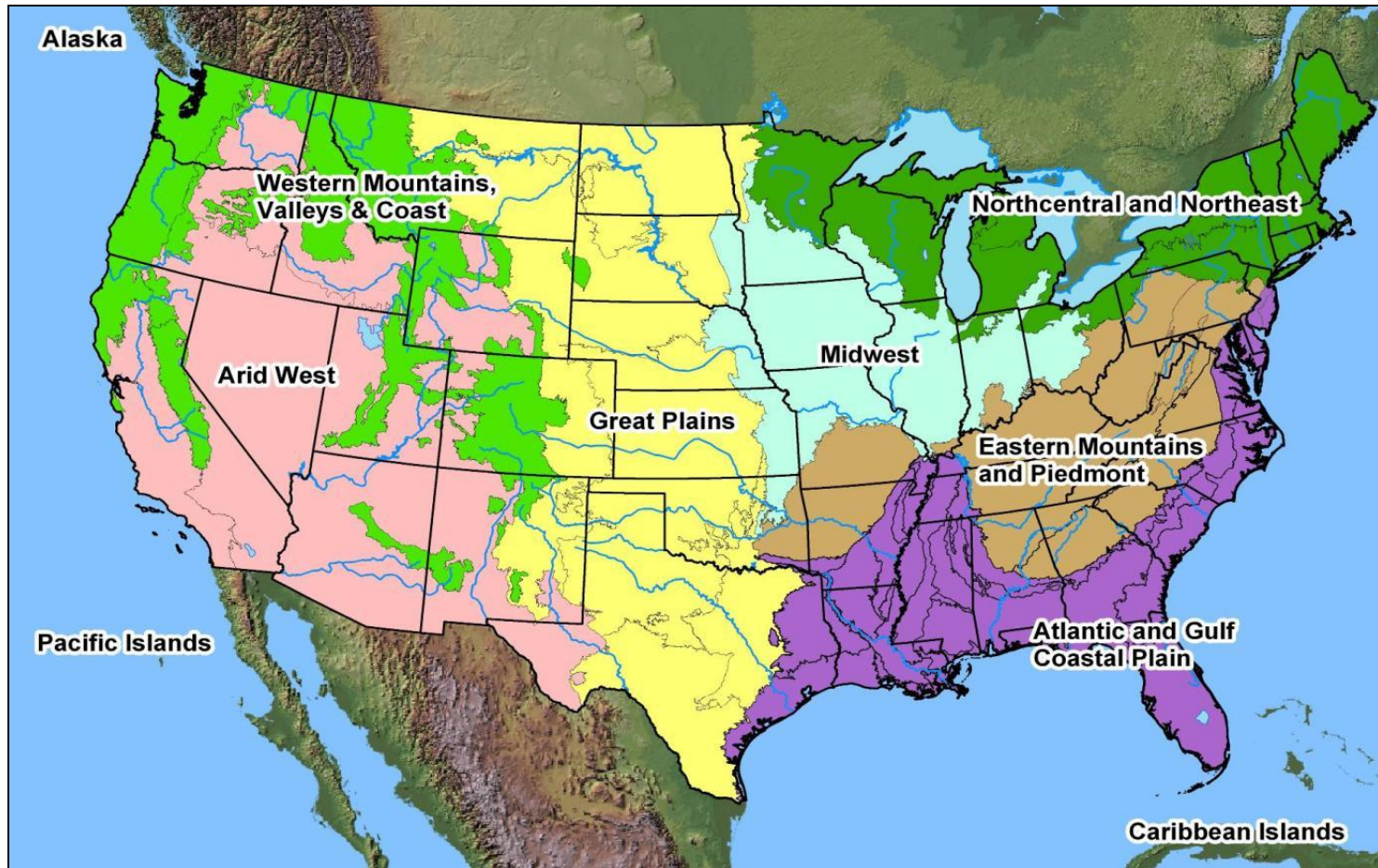


Introduction to the National Wetland Plant List

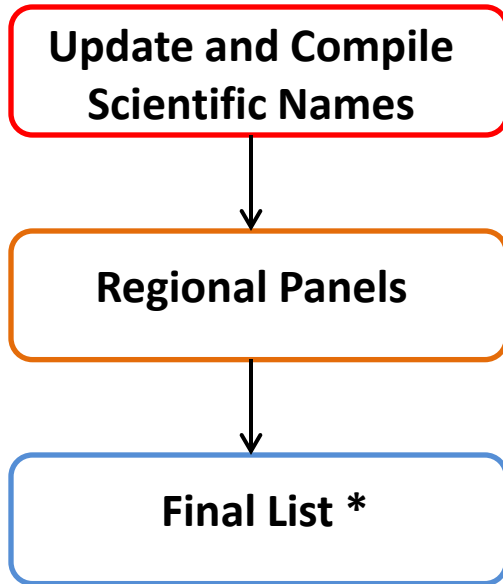
- The NWPL contains 8200 plants and their wetland indicator status (ratings) for the U.S. and territories
- A plant's indicator status represents the probability of occurrence in a wetland or upland area (Obligate (almost always occurs), Facultative (usually occurs)). There are five indicators – OBL, FACW, FAC, FACU, UPL
- NWPL dropped + and – indicator status ratings used in previous FWS lists
- NWPL Regional boundaries updated



10 NWPL Regions

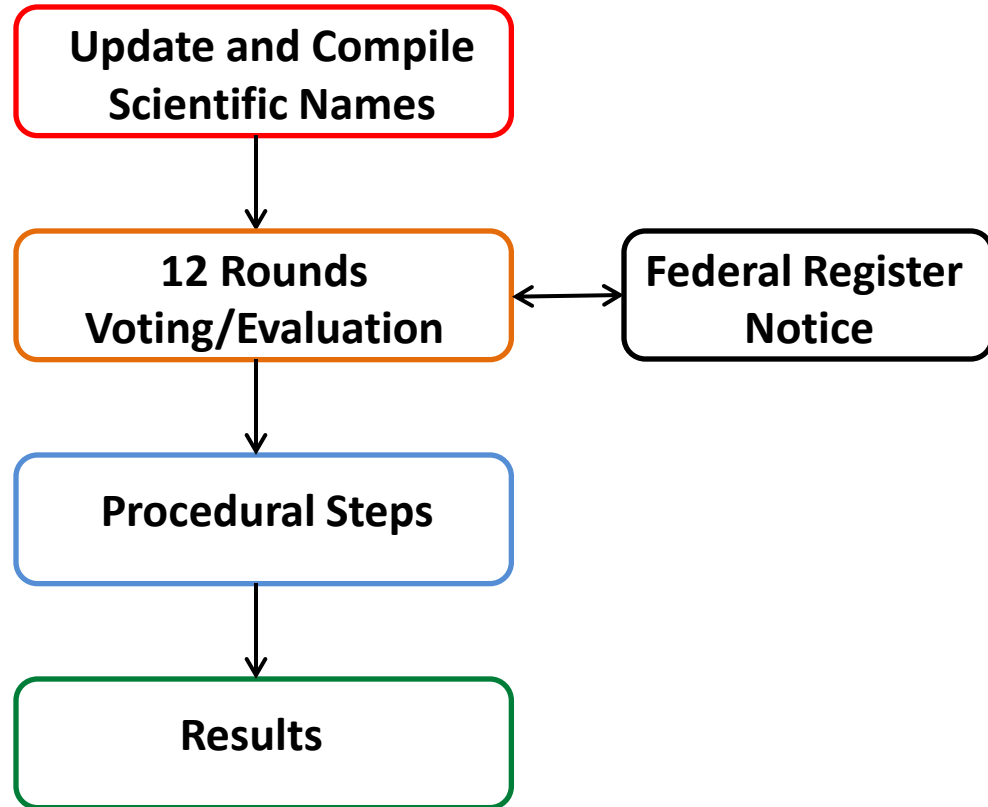


Former FWS 1988/1996 Lists



** No ratings were ever changed*

2012 NWPL Processes



Overview

- R1 – initial review by Regional Panels (1996 list used as baseline)
- R2 – 2nd review of unresolved species by Regional Panels
- R2.5 – Review of 1700 unresolved species by national expert
- R3 – External botanists review of former FAC- species
- R4 – All species with no baseline vote.
- R5 – Regional Panel review of external botanists' input
- R6 – Federal Register Notice soliciting public comment
- R7 – Regional Panels review FR comments and newly proposed species
- R8 – Regional Panels 2nd review of unresolved species
- R9 - National Panel review of unresolved species and changes from FAC>FACU, FACU>FAC, and changes of >2 rating categories (672 species)
- R10 – National Panel quality control review of entire list (136 species)
- R11 – Regional Panel rebuttal of National Panel's R10 votes (87 species)
- R12 – National Panel rates last unrated species (34 Caribbean species)

Update and Compile

- The list was updated using a web-based system to track input from the National and Regional Panels, states, Tribes, and all others
- Obtained all FWS datasets
- Rearranged list by 10 new regions based on ecological instead of geographic boundaries
- Updated scientific names following The Biota of North America Program (BONAP)



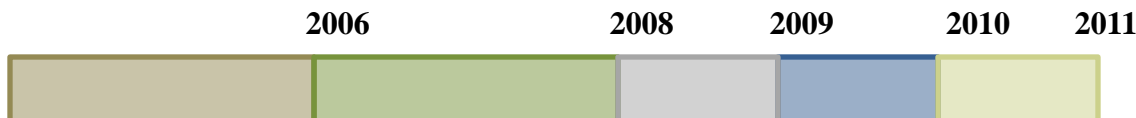
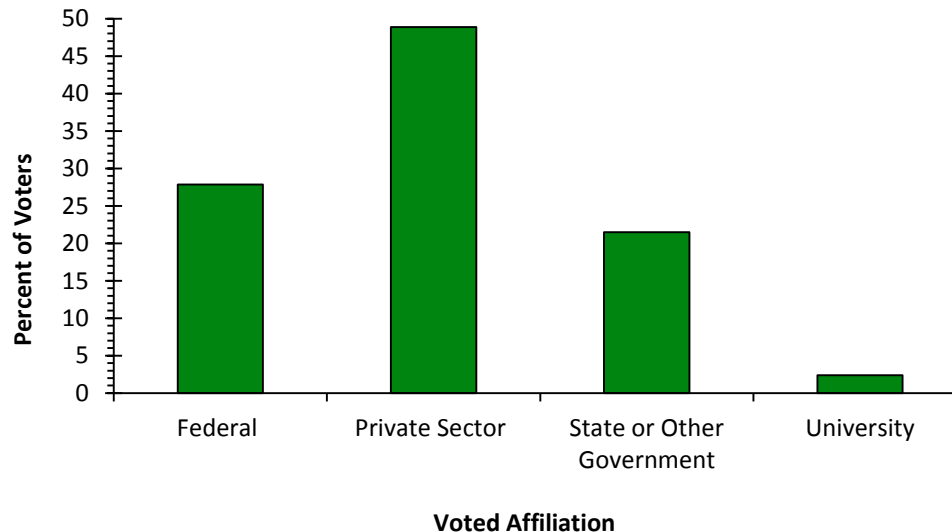
Scientific Method: Reviewers

- 65 Regional Panel and National Panel members selected using technical credentials
- Thirty professional external botanists from museums and universities were contracted to participated in the update
- All others: 377 people (explained later)



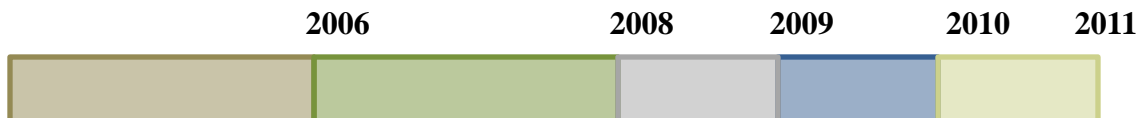
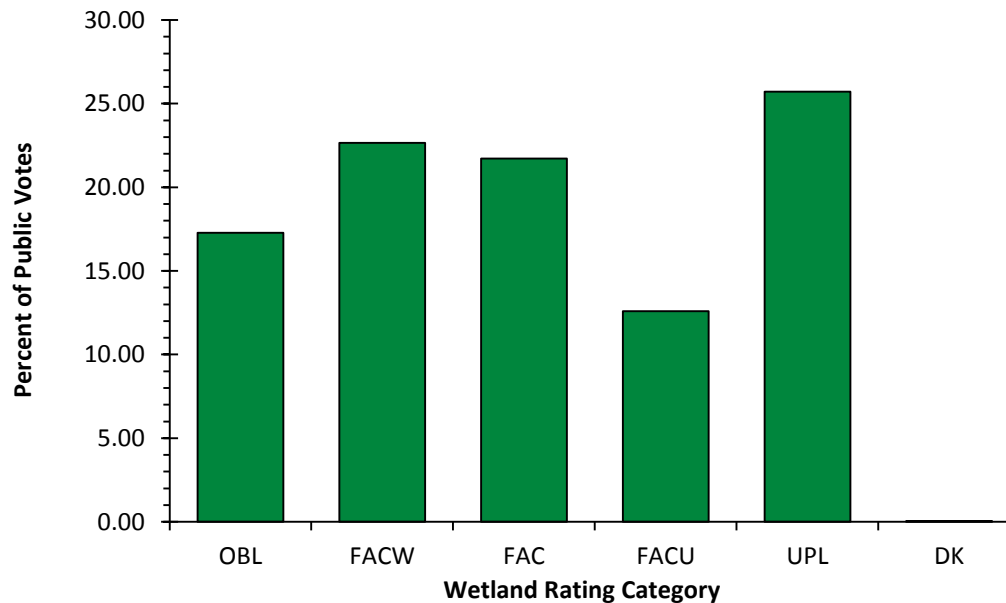
Input Received During the Federal Register Announcement

- 377 people made technical comments
- Those people placed 16,432 species specific input ratings
- They also wrote 1,159 technical comments on the web site
- 35 written comment letters were received



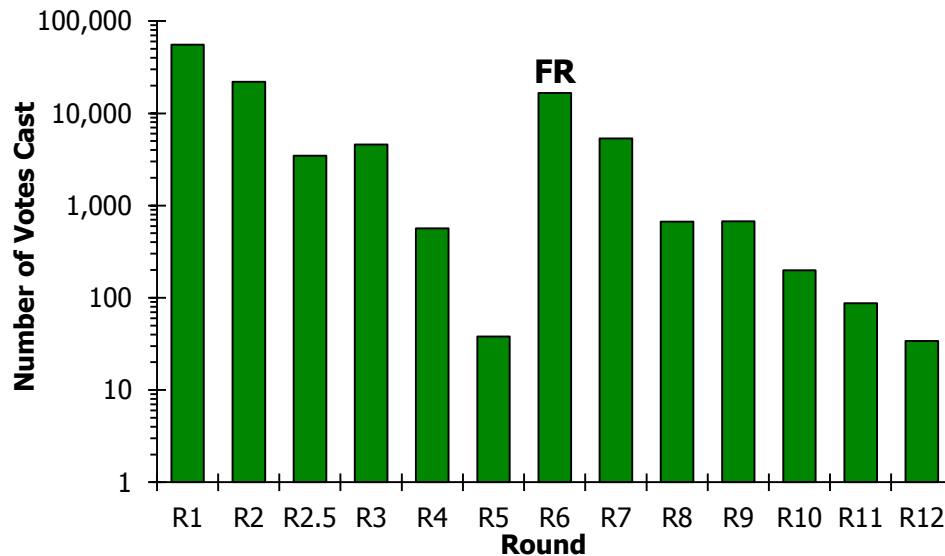
Federal Register Rating Inputs

- Distribution of Federal Register 16,432 sets of input on wetland ratings across 5,315 species

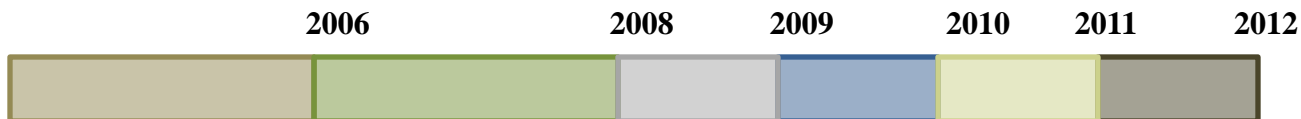


Overview of all 12 Rounds of Voting and Evaluation

- A total of 130,000 individual ratings made as species ratings
- 442 individuals participated from Federal, state, and all others
- Federal Register Round resets a second series reevaluation rounds

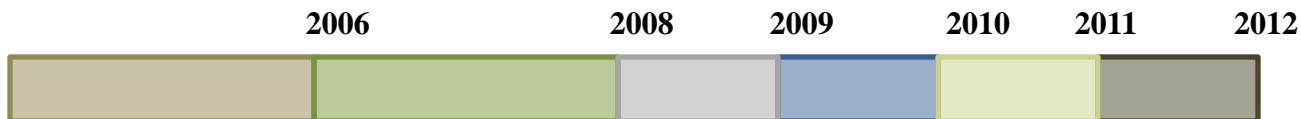
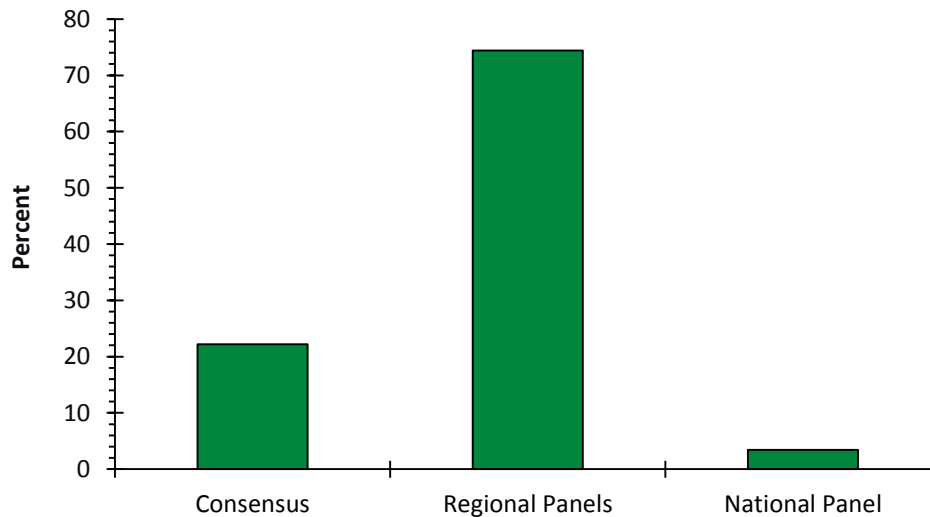


* FR = Federal Register



Procedural Steps

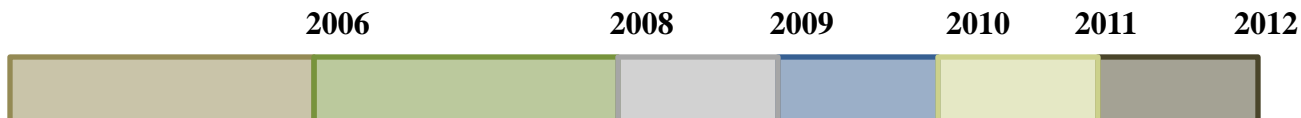
- Final wetland ratings were assigned using consensus input or 18 weighted algorithms to analysis various levels of input and best professional judgment
- For those species lacking consensus at any level, the National Panel assigned ratings using newly published protocols
- The public input resolved 73.4% of the species they commented on



NWPL Results

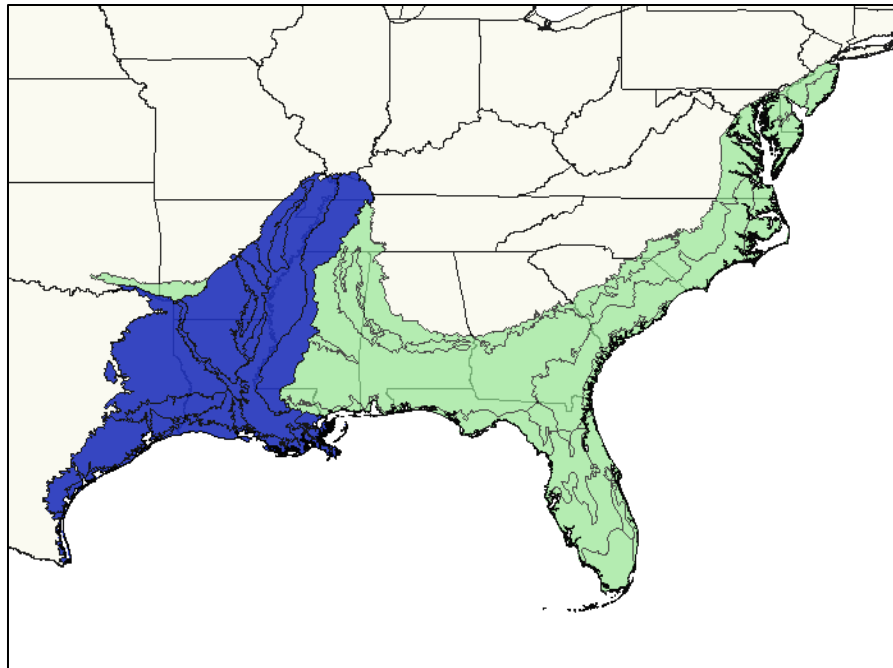
- 444 former FAC- species were equally split into updated ratings of FAC and FACU categories
- Estimated 12% overall change from 1988-2012 (issues with new Corps boundaries and changes in nomenclature)
 - 4% went wetter, 4% drier and 4% were former FAC- which went almost 50% wetter and 50% drier

1996 Default	2012 NWPL Draft Final					
Rating	OBL	FACW	FAC	FACU	UPL	Total
OBL	97.8	1.5	0.5	0.2	0.0	100
FACW	2.2	93.6	3.5	0.6	0.2	100
FAC	0.1	2.7	87.1	9.2	0.9	100
FACU	0.1	0.3	1.9	96.3	1.4	100
UPL	0.0	0.0	0.8	9.8	89.3	100



NWPL Results (con't)

- Within the 10 NWPL regions, 18 subregions were added for short lists of species whose wetland ratings are locally modified for better resolution



2006

2008

2009

2010

2011

2012



NWPL Results (con't)

- Distribution of 2012 final wetland ratings across 8,200 species

