



United States Department of Agriculture  
**Questions and Answers Related to  
Wetland Point Symbols**  
National Notice CP-614

Before the implementation of the FSA Common Land Unit (CLU) project, maps created for producers contained labels and delineations of Natural Resource Conservation Service wetland determinations. The move to use CLU and other digital data to create producer maps brought about the blue dot to represent these wetland determinations. **A blue dot on a map provides no information other than the fact that a determination exists in the area.** The intent of the blue dot was simply to provide a wetland symbol on producer maps until a wetland layer, including delineations of the wetland area, can be completed by NRCS.

The blue dot issue on FSA maps has been a concern for many producers. Therefore the blue dots are being replaced with a symbol that will help to identify the type of wetland in the field.

### **Q-1 What do the new symbols signify?**

**A-1** The new symbols represent the approximate locations of USDA identified wetlands. Your map with colored symbols is not an actual USDA wetland determination. You can request a copy of your USDA wetland determination from either FSA or NRCS.

- **“Restricted Use”** (W, CW, CW+YR, AW/W, GFW, GFW+YR, RSW, RSW+YR, RPW), which is represented by a **red octagon**
- **“Limited Restrictions”** (FW, FWP, CWNA, AW/FW, CWTE, TP, WX, MIW, MW, MWM, CMW, NI, OW, Easement), which is represented by an **upside-down yellow triangle**
- **“Exempt from Conservation Compliance Provisions”** (PC, NW, PC/NW, CC, NW/NAD, AW), which is represented by a **green square**.

### **Q-2 Does the use of these new wetland symbols change the procedure for a producer to update or complete their AD-1026 Highly Erodible Wetland and Wetland Conservation Certification?**

**A-2** No, producers will still need to come in and complete AD-1026 if they are planning to take action on land they own and/or operate. Such actions include installing a new tile line, improving or modifying an existing drainage system that has not been evaluated by NRCS, performing maintenance on an existing drainage system that has not been evaluated by NRCS. All USDA participants are responsible to understand the wetland compliance provisions and limit their actions and drainage activities so that wetlands are not converted.

### **Q-3 Will any wetland designations change with the use of these new symbols?**

**A-3** No, the use of the colored map symbols will not change any USDA wetland determinations. All wetland points were previously entered into the CLU database based on the NRCS CPA-026 wetland determination.

### **Q-4 When will these new symbols be put on producer maps?**

**A-4** The software is scheduled to be installed in county offices in May 2007. Counties have been preparing for acreage reporting and in many cases have already printed producer maps using the current software. Any producer maps printed after the software is installed will automatically print with the new symbols.

### **Q-5 Are these color coded wetland maps available to the general public?**

**A-5** No, public maps that are printed do not display the wetland identifiers. Information on USDA wetland determinations is protected under the Freedom of Information Act.

**Q-6 How will the new map symbols be used by FSA and NRCS?**

A-6 The purpose of the new symbols is to provide producers another, more visual display of the previously identified wetlands for your tract. FSA will provide these maps to producers for acreage certification.

**Q-7 If there is no wetland point, does that mean there is no wetland in that area?**

A-7 Not necessarily, determinations have not been made on all land in the state. For most of the state the wetland symbols displayed are only for the cropland fields on your tract. Therefore, if a producer intends to take action they should still complete AD-1026 to ensure they remain in compliance.

**Q-8 If there is a green square which indicates it is “Exempt from Wetland Compliance Provisions” (PC, NW, PC/NW, CC, NW/NAD, AW), do I need to worry about any actions that I take?**

A-8 USDA in Minnesota has issued different types of wetland determinations. Only a “certified” wetland determination accurately identifies and displays all wetlands on your land. If the wetlands symbols for your land were transferred from a non-certified determination there may be additional wetlands, not identified on your tract map that are immediately adjacent to or within your tract boundary lines. These wetlands could be converted by drainage activities conducted on areas identified as a green square. You are responsible to restrict drainage activities and protect all wetlands from conversion whether they reside within non-inventoried areas of your property or are immediately outside of your property. When in doubt, check with NRCS on actions to be taken.

**Q-9 What do producers need to know about the disclaimer language?**

A-9 The disclaimers are reminders to producers to check their original determination (CPA-026 and attached maps) for exact wetland boundaries and labels. They also remind producers they do not necessarily reflect all wetland determinations. Ultimately the producer is responsible for being in compliance with the wetland conservation compliance provisions. When in doubt, check with NRCS on actions to be taken.

**Q-10 If I have a CPA-026 does that mean that determination is final and accurate?**

A-10 The wetlands identified on your CPA-026 are only considered to be accurate if you have a “certified” wetland determination. Contact NRCS if you require a certified wetland determination. If you are relying on a “non-certified” wetland determination you are still responsible to protect all omitted obvious wetlands from conversion. USDA wetland determinations only apply to the 1985 Food Security Act (FSA) as amended. Other federal, state or local permits or restrictions may apply to activities impacting wetlands. It is the responsibility of the participant to obtain other necessary permits. Contact the Army Corps of Engineers for Clean Water Act permits, the Local Government Unit (LGU) for State Wetland Conservation Act permits, and MN Department of Natural Resources for protected water permits prior to initiating wetland activities. The participant can contact these agencies using the “Minnesota Combined Project Application Form” available from the Local Government Unit.

**Q-11 Do CPA-26 maps have both official and certified determinations on them?**

A-11 Yes. Prior to the mid 1990’s official wetland determinations were issued to participants, these are not as accurate because they were never ground truth with an on-site review, however producers can choose to rely on them. NRCS will stand behind an official determination unless there is conversion involving an obvious wetland. Current policy which starting in the summer of 1996 requires that NRCS only make certified determinations. The map symbology does not indicate whether it is a certified or official determination. Producers wanting to know if they have a “certified” determination will have to ask NRCS field staff.

**Q-12 Why would producers request a certified determination?**

A-12 Only “certified” determinations are not subject to change.

**Q-13 When are certified determinations required?**

A-13 Certified determinations are required when; 1) a producer wants to do drainage activity where there is no official determination; 2) producers request to mitigate a wetland; and 3) NRCS identifies a possible conversion violation. NRCS has a CRP -038 form used for producers interested in requesting a certified determination.

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**\*DEFINITIONS OF WETLAND LABEL CODES**

AW	Artificial Wetland. An area that is artificial or irrigation induced wetland. These wetlands are not subject to the wetland conservation provision.
AW/FW	An area that contains both AW and FW.
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CC	Commenced Conversion exemption.
CPD	Corps Permit Decision. Corps of Engineers permit decisions regarding section 404 of the Clean Water Act will be relied upon to satisfy the wetland conservation provisions of the Food Security Act of 1985, as amended.
CMW	An area that receives a Categorical Minimal Effect determination.
CW	Converted Wetlands. An area converted between December 23, 1985 and November 28, 1990. IN any year that an agricultural commodity is planted on these converted wetlands, you will ineligible for USDA benefits.
**CW+year	An area converted after November 28, 1990. You will be ineligible for USDA program benefits until this wetland is restored.
CWNA	Converted Wetland Non-Agricultural use. A wetland area converted to other than agricultural commodity production.
CWTE	Converted Wetland Technical Error. An area converted or commenced based on an incorrect NRCS determination or misinformation from a NRCS or FSA employee.
FW	Farmed Wetland. An area that is farmed wetland; was manipulated and planted before December 23, 1985, but still meets wetland criteria. These may be farmed and maintained in the same manner as long as they are not abandoned.
FWP	Farmed Wetlands Pasture. An area that is pasture or hayland, manipulated before December 23, 1985 but still meets wetland criteria. These may be farmed and maintained in the same manner as long as they are not abandoned.
MIW	Mitigation Wetlands. Wetlands on which a person is actively mitigating a frequently cropped area or a wetland converted between December 23, 1985 and November 28, 1990. A converted wetland, farmed wetland, or farmed wetland pasture on which functions and values were lost are compensated for through wetland restoration, enhancement or creation.
MW	Minimal effect Wetland. An area determined to be minimal effect. These wetlands are to be farmed according to the minimal-effect agreement signed at the time the minimal-effect determination was made.
MWM	An area determined to be minimal effect with mitigation.
NI	Not Inventoried – No wetland determination has been completed.
NW	Non-Wetland. An area that does not contain a wetland.
NW/NAD	An area determined to be a non-wetland resulting from a decision from the National Appeals Division.
OW	Other Waters of the U.S. Area that fall under the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act.
PC	Prior Converted cropland, which was drained filled, or manipulated before December 23, 1985; was cropped prior to December 23, 1985; was not abandoned; and does not meet FW criteria. These are not subject to the wetland conservation provision unless the area reverts to wetland as a result of abandonment.
PC/NW	An area that contains both PC and NW.
TP	Third Party Exemption.
W	Wetlands. An area meeting wetland criteria, including wetland farmed under natural conditions. If you plan to clear, drain, fill, level or manipulate these areas, contact NRCS and the Army Corp of Engineers prior to any such activity.
WX	A wetland area that has been manipulated after December 23, 1985, but was not, for the purpose of making production possible and production was not made possible. These include wetlands manipulated by drainage maintenance agreements.