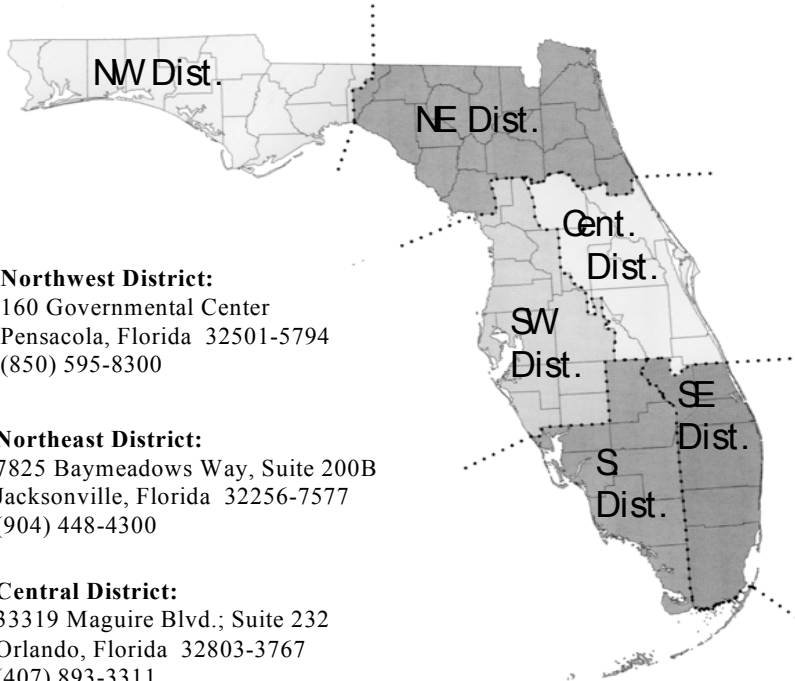


activity and can seek monetary fines of up to \$10,000 per violation per day. Additionally, other local, state and federal agencies may assess their own penalties and fines.

For assistance in determining whether or not your proposed work site contains a wetland or for additional information, please contact your DEP district Environmental or Wetland Resource Permitting office at one of the following locations:



Northwest District:
160 Governmental Center
Pensacola, Florida 32501-5794
(850) 595-8300

Northeast District:
7825 Baymeadows Way, Suite 200B
Jacksonville, Florida 32256-7577
(904) 448-4300

Central District:
33319 Maguire Blvd.; Suite 232
Orlando, Florida 32803-3767
(407) 893-3311

Southwest District:
3804 Coconut Palm Drive
Tampa, Florida 33619-8318
(813) 744-6100

South District:
2295 Victoria Ave.; Suite 364
Fort Myers, Florida 33901
(941) 332-6975

Southeast District:
400 North Congress Avenue
West Palm Beach, Florida 33401
(561) 681-6600

Thank you for helping to protect Florida's environment.

Know what you need *before* you install a Onsite Sewage System...



DREDGING AND FILLING ASSOCIATED WITH ONSITE SEWAGE TREATMENT AND DISPOSAL SYSTEMS

In addition to receiving an OSTDS (onsite sewage treatment and disposal system) permit from your county health department, you may also need to obtain a permit from the Department of Environmental Protection for dredging and filling in wetlands prior to installing a OSTDS.

What are wetlands?

Wetlands are areas where water inundates the land or saturates the soil long enough and regularly enough to support, and under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of plants that are specially adapted to these conditions. Wetlands are typically found along shorelines (floodplains, tidal marshes, etc.), in depressions (cypress domes, freshwater marshes, etc.), and at groundwater upwellings (springs, seepage slopes, etc.). All state, regional, and local governments use soils, hydrology (water patterns), and plants to identify wetlands. This procedure is explained in Chapter 62-340 of the Florida Administrative Code, under "Delineation of the Landward Extent of Wetlands and Surface Waters."

What is fill?

The term "fill" includes any material that is placed in, on, or over wetlands or other surface waters. For example, dirt, sand, gravel, rocks, shell, pilings, and concrete are all considered fill if they are placed in a wetland or other surface water.

What is dredging?

The term “dredging” refers to any type of excavation conducted in wetlands or other surface waters. Dredging includes digging, pulling up vegetation by the roots, leaving vehicular ruts, or any other activity that disturbs the soil.

What types of OSTDS projects involve dredging or filling?

The following examples are different types of activities associated with a OSTDS, which generally require permits from DEP:

- installing an OSTDS in a wetland
- installing an OSTDS drain field in a wetland
- any dredging or filling, as defined in this pamphlet, in wetlands associated with an OSTDS

The activities listed above will still require a DEP permit even if the house itself is located on the uplands. You should be aware that if the Department of Health is requiring that the OSTDS drain field be elevated due to a high water table, the OSTDS may be located in a wetland.

There also are many other activities that may require DEP permits for wetland impacts. Examples of these activities include: constructing a dock or seawall, installing a fence, filling for a house pad or driveway, dredging a pond, dredging a ditch, removing trees, or dredging a channel for boat access.

How do I know if my property is a wetland?

In many cases, the periodic occurrence of standing water will be a good indication that you have a wetland. However, many wetlands have standing water for only part of the year, so they may be difficult to recognize during dry periods. If the property contains saturated or hydric (wet) soils, there is a good chance that the property may contain wetlands. Because of varying natural conditions, it often can be difficult to determine whether a soil would be considered hydric. The local Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) office or DEP District Office should be able to assist you in determining if your property contains hydric soil. If you are familiar with common wetland plants like cypress, willows, cattails, or arrowhead, their presence will offer another helpful clue that you have a wetland. Once you have identified the presence of a wetland, it may be difficult to determine its exact boundaries. When in doubt, you should contact the DEP for assistance in determining whether or not your proposed work site is a wetland, and where its limits are.

Why do we need to protect wetlands?

At one time, people thought of wetlands as being “useless wastelands.” We now know that wetlands are one of our more important natural resources because of the many environmental and economic benefits that they provide.

What Benefits are provided by wetlands?

- *Water Quality Improvement* ~ Wetlands filter and remove toxins and excess nutrients from the water passing through them to keep surface water bodies suitable for swimming, fishing, and sometimes as a source of drinking water.
- *Productivity* ~ Regular inputs of water, sediments, and nutrients cause most wetlands to be highly productive. Vegetation grows very quickly in wetlands, producing a great deal of timber and food for plant-eating animals.
- *Habitat* ~ Many animals live in wetlands for all or part of their lives and many others depend on wetland creatures as a food source. Wetlands are especially important as nesting and nursery grounds.
- *Economic Benefits* ~ Wetlands are important to Floridians because they support our commercial fishing, tourism, and recreation industries.
- *Flood Control* ~ After storm events, wetlands intercept and slowly release large quantities of water, which could otherwise flood upland areas.
- *Erosion Control* ~ Maintaining wetlands between moving water and uplands is an effective and economical way to protect property from erosion.
- *Aquifer Recharge* ~ Most ground water supplies are recharged from the water that collects in wetlands and then infiltrates into the ground.

What kind of permit do I need for dredging and filling?

If you are located in the Florida panhandle within the limits of the Northwest Florida Water Management District (NFWFMD), you may need a Wetland Resource Permit. If you are located anywhere else in Florida, you may need an Environmental Resource Permit. Some single family residential construction in isolated wetlands may qualify for a noticed general permit (except in the Panhandle), although the construction of an onsite sewage disposal systems in wetlands is very limited under this general permit. Isolated wetlands are not regulated in the panhandle.

What other agencies regulate dredge and fill?

Dredging and filling is also regulated by many local governments, the water management districts (except for the NFWFMD), and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). When you submit your application to DEP, a copy is automatically forwarded to the Corps. Although the water management districts share this regulatory program with DEP, they are usually not involved with residential activities by homeowners. For information on local government regulations, please contact your county building permit / inspection office.

What happens if I dredge or fill in jurisdictional wetlands without a DEP permit?

Dredging or filling in jurisdictional wetlands or surface waters without an appropriate permit is a violation of Sections 373.430(1)(b) and 403.161(1)(b) Florida Statutes. The DEP may require complete restoration of the unpermitted