



US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
Seattle District

# Special Public Notice

Regulatory Branch  
Post Office Box 3755  
Seattle, Washington 98124-3755

Public Notice Date: June 16, 2014  
Expiration Date: July 7, 2014

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## CLEAN WATER ACT INTERPRETIVE RULE FOR 404(f)(1)(A)

### Reopening of Comment Period for the Interpretive Rule Regarding the Exemption from Permitting under Section 404(f)(1)(A) of the Clean Water Act to Certain Agricultural Conservation Practices

On April 21, 2014, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) published a Notice of Availability and Public Comment (79 FR 22276) to announce the availability of an interpretive rule regarding the applicability of the exemption from permitting provided under section 404(f)(1)(A) of the Clean Water Act (CWA) for discharges of dredged and/or fill material associated with certain agricultural conservation practices based on the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) conservation practice standards that are designed and implemented to protect and enhance water quality. The interpretive rule was effective on April 3, 2014. The public comment period has been reopened through July 7, 2014, in response to stakeholder requests. Comments submitted between the close of the original comment period and the re-opening of this comment period will be accepted and considered.

Under the CWA, section 404 regulates the discharges of dredged and/or fill material into waters of the U.S. and section 404(f)(1) includes a list of activities that are exempt from regulation under section 404. Section 404(f)(1)(A) provides an exemption for discharges of dredged and/or fill material from “normal farming, silviculture, and ranching activities, such as plowing, seeding, cultivating, minor drainage, harvesting for the production of food, fiber, and forest products, or upland soil and water conservation practices.” The interpretive rule clarifies that certain NRCS conservation practices that are designed and implemented to protect and enhance water quality are included under these “normal farming, silviculture, and ranching activities.”

The USEPA, the Corps, and NRCS have also entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to guide their future coordination on the exemption. The interpretive rule, Memorandum of Understanding, as well as a list of NRCS practices that meet the exemption, are available via the Internet on the USEPA websites: <http://water.epa.gov/lawsregs/guidance/wetlands/agriculture.cfm> and <http://www2.epa.gov/uswaters>; as well as on the Corps website under Latest News: <http://www.usace.army.mil/Missions/CivilWorks/RegulatoryProgramandPermits.aspx>.

The Federal Register notice provides the public an opportunity to become familiar with the interpretive rule and understand what has become effective as of April 3, 2014. The agencies recognize the importance and value of receiving public input on the implementation of this interpretive rule; input

which may inform future revisions to the list of activities included under the interpretive rule. The agencies welcome comments in response to the Notice of Availability in the Federal Register.

**DATES:** The comment period is reopened through July 7, 2014. Comments must be received on or before July 7, 2014. The comment period was originally scheduled to end on June 5, 2014.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit your comments, identified by Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OW-2013-0820 by one of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- *E-mail:* [ow-docket@epa.gov](mailto:ow-docket@epa.gov). Include EPA-HQ-OW-2013-0820 in the subject line of the message.
- *Mail:* Send the original and three copies of your comments to: Water Docket, Environmental Protection Agency, Mail Code 2822T, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20460, Attention: Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OW-2013-0820.
- *Hand Delivery/Courier:* Deliver your comments to EPA Docket Center, EPA West, Room 3334, 1301 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20460, Attention Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OW-2013-0820. Such deliveries are accepted only during the Docket's normal hours of operation, which are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays. Special arrangements should be made for deliveries of boxed information. The telephone number for the Public Reading Room is 202-566-1744 and the telephone number for the Water Docket is 202-566-2426.

For further information please contact: Ms. Stacey M. Jensen, Regulatory Community of Practice (CECW-CO-R), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 441 G Street, NW, Washington, DC 20314; telephone number 202-761-5856; e-mail address: [USACE\\_CWA\\_RULE@usace.army.mil](mailto:USACE_CWA_RULE@usace.army.mil); and include the EPA Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OW-2013-0820 in the subject line of the message.