

2030 Comprehensive Plan - Conservation/Coastal Management Element Wetlands Categories

The 2030 Comprehensive Plan separates wetlands into three basic categories and these categories are identified in Conservation/Coastal Management Element (CCME) Policy 4.1.1.

CCME Policy 4.1.1 The City of Jacksonville has identified three categories of wetlands, as more specifically depicted on Maps C-3 and L-5:

- Category I wetlands shall mean those wetlands classified as Saltwater Marshes;
- Category II wetlands shall mean those wetlands classified as Riverine/Estuarine; and
- Category III wetlands shall mean those wetlands not classified as Category I or II wetlands.

CCME Wetlands Map C-3 and Future Land Use Element (FLUE) Map L-5 depict the three categories of wetlands. Data used to populate the map is sourced from the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetland Inventory. This data provides a high level generalized depiction that should be further refined for application at the parcel level.

In order to fine tune the data identified in the maps for application at the parcel level during development review, the Planning and Development Department relies on either a high intensity wetlands survey provided by the property owner or the Department reviews available Geographic Information System (GIS) data to make a site specific determination. Data utilized by staff to determine the wetlands category includes the Florida Land Use Code Classification System (FLUCCS), drainage patterns, soil types, elevations, and aerial photography.

Category I wetlands are defined in CCME Policy 4.1.1 as those wetlands classified as Saltwater Marshes. These wetlands are easily identified due to the flora that has a high salt tolerance and the soil series (Tisonia mucky peat). They are extremely valuable in removing pollutants and dissipating energy from coastal high hazard storms.

Category II wetlands defined in CCME Policy 4.1.1 as those wetlands classified as Riverine/Estuarine. These wetlands are associated with creeks, rivers, floodplains, and estuaries. These wetlands have a high propensity for water filtration thereby reducing downstream pollution and flood storage capacity which reduces downstream flooding during catastrophic storm events. There is a broad range of flora found in this wetland system. They are not salt tolerant but can tolerate high water tables found at or near the land surface. There are several hydric and alluvium soil series associated with these wetlands that are poorly and very poorly drained. Altering of these wetlands can have a direct impact to the City's waterways.

Category III wetlands are defined in CCME Policy 4.1.1 as those wetlands that are not classified as Category I or II wetlands. They are similar to "Category II" but are not associated with creeks, rivers, or estuaries. They also tend to have less alluvium soils but can be associated with isolated floodplains. Altering of these wetlands can have an indirect impact on

the City's waterways through storm sewer and drainage systems. However, many of these wetland systems are also associated with small isolated self-contained drainage basins where stormwater drains into the surficial aquifers.

CCME Definitions:

High Intensity Wetlands Survey – An on-site delineation by a qualified Wetlands Scientist or related Environmental Specialist using hydrology, vegetation, and soil field indicators to accurately determine wetland boundaries which are then plotted and mapped.

High Quality Wetlands – Wetlands which provide environmentally high functional values such as:

- containing unique plant communities
- and/or containing or providing habitat for listed species of wildlife
- and/or have a high flood water storage capacity thereby reducing downstream flooding
- and/or have a high filtration capacity for removing pollutants for improved water quality
- and/or provide passive recreation opportunities and aesthetic or visual-cultural values

Riverine/Estuarine Wetlands - Contiguous wetlands located downstream of the upper tidal limits or the point where the average annual flow is 5 cubic feet per second or greater, whichever is more inclusive, of the following major riverine/estuarine wetland systems as depicted on the Salt Marsh Marshes, Riverine/Estuarine Wetlands, and All Other Wetlands map.

- A. St. Johns River
- B. Trout River
- C. Broward River
- D. Arlington River
- E. Cedar River
- F. Durbin Creek
- G. Thomas Creek
- H. Ortega River
- I. Julington Creek

Salt Water Marshes - Wetlands included as salt water marshes are predominated by one or more of the following plant species:

- Cordgrasses *Spartina* Spp.
- Needlerush *Juncus Roemerianus*
- Seashore Saltgrass *Distichlis Spicata*
- Saltwort *Batis Maritima*
- Glassworts *Salicornia* Sp.
- Fringerush *Finbristylis Castanea*
- Salt Dropseed *Sporobolus Virginicus*
- Seaside Daisy *Borrchia Frutescens*
- Salt Jointgrass *Paspalum Vaginatium*

Note: This definition is used in the Florida Land Use and Cover Classification System and which the City adopts through the use of the St. Johns River Water Management District land cover maps.

Wetlands - Those areas which are inundated or saturated by surface water or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soils. Soils present in wetlands generally are classified as hydric or alluvial, or possess characteristics that are associated with reducing soil conditions. The prevalent vegetation in wetlands generally consists of facultative or obligate hydrophytic macrophytes that are typically adapted to areas having soil conditions described above. These species, due to morphological, physiological, or reproductive adaptations, have the ability to grow, reproduce or persist in aquatic environments or anaerobic soil conditions. Florida wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bayheads, bogs, cypress domes and strands, sloughs, wet prairies, riverine swamps and marshes, hydric seepage slopes, tidal marshes, mangrove swamps, and other similar areas. Florida wetlands generally do not include longleaf or slash pine flatwoods with an understory dominated by saw palmetto. The delineation by the SJRWMD of wetlands on site as determined by this definition shall be conclusive evidence of wetlands for purposes of City wetlands delineation. Where there is no SJRWMD delineation, Map L-5 of the Future Land Use Element shall be used for City wetlands delineation. For purposes of City wetlands programs, wetlands shall not include irrigation or drainage ditches constructed in the uplands or stormwater management systems.

