



RESRFP22-1 Appendix 3. NYSERDA Guidance for Wetland and Stream Screenings for Large-Scale Renewable Energy Projects

Introduction and Purpose:

Unless a Proposer's Bid Facilities has received final Jurisdictional Determinations of the entire proposed Bid Facility's planned Facility Area from the Authorities Having Jurisdiction over waterbodies within the Bid Facility, Proposers must adhere to these requirements contained herein when performing a required wetland and stream screening for Bid Proposals submitted under RESRFP22-1.

Collectively, the approximation of wetland and waterbody resources conducted via the desktop and field screening will serve to identify areas of potential impacts so that preliminary measures to avoid and minimize wetland impacts can be identified, evaluated, and implemented. This will assist Proposers and NYSERDA to ensure that the site has enough land void of wetlands and waterbodies that it can support the Bid Facility as proposed. The field effort does not need to be comprised of all components associated with a full wetlands and waterbody delineation, and should serve as a field-verified approximation of the wetlands and waterbodies identified via the desktop screening.

Desktop Screening:

The Proposer shall conduct a desktop review of available online data sources and maps of wetlands and waterways to identify areas within the proposed project site that likely have wetlands or waterbodies. At a minimum, the Proposer will utilize available on-line data sources including:

- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) Environmental Resource Mapper wetland inventory;
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) for federal wetlands;
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Web Soil Survey maps.

Proposers are encouraged to use other available data to support this task, including but not limited to, the most currently available aerial imagery, LIDAR, topographic field survey, or other suitable data to approximate the boundaries. The Proposer shall specify the source(s) of data used for this task.

The Proposer will then be required to physically (i.e., not remotely) conduct a site reconnaissance field effort on all parcels included within the Bid Facility that are proposed to host the major generating equipment. This field effort is required to ground truth information gathered during the desktop review and approximate the wetland and waterway boundaries. Proposers must have necessary permission from landowners to access the site for these purposes, which does not necessarily mean site control, but can take the form of an access agreement (or equivalent) between the landowner and the developer.

Field Effort:

The field effort shall involve preliminary identification and general description of wetland and water resources, spot checking of soils, shallow hydrography and vegetation at selected locations, apparent functional status, and ground-truthing of various color tones and corresponding ecotones on aerial

photographs and maps - thereby following the general guidance within the [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers \(USACE\) 1987 Wetland Delineation Manual](#) and the applicable version of the [2012 Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual](#) and the 1995 New York State Freshwater Wetlands Delineation Manual. The field effort should be a presence confirmation of currently mapped NYSDEC or NWI wetland and an investigation of unmapped wetlands on parcels included within the Bid Facility.

The following information is offered to assist complying with this task. This reconnaissance-level screening effort does not require features to be marked in the field (i.e., flagging tape) or the preparation of USACE Wetland/Stream Data Forms.

Wetland Screening Requirements:

- If the Proposer confirms the field conditions and mapped boundaries are consistent, no GIS datapoints are required and these wetlands can be represented as mapped.
- Areas where either the wetland boundary is extended, or, if spot checking of a soils and lack of hydric soil and vegetation indicate mapped boundaries may vary from actual field conditions, the Proposer shall take a point every approximately 150-feet to estimate anticipated boundary changes in either scenario.
- For non-mapped wetlands that are within 500-feet of other wetlands or waterbodies that may have hydrogeological connections to existing mapped wetlands or waterbodies, boundary points shall be taken every 150-ft to provide an approximate wetland boundary.
- For non-mapped wetlands that are not within 500-feet of wetlands or waterbodies, that do not have apparent hydrogeological connections to other wetlands waterbodies, boundary points may be taken every 150-feet to provide an approximate wetland boundary, as practicable given the size of the wetland
- For non-mapped wetlands over 12.5-acres, the Proposer may use aerial imagery, LIDAR, topographic field survey, or other suitable data to approximate the boundaries, and shall specify the data used, to aid the site reconnaissance field effort.

Waterbody Screening Requirements:

- For mapped waterbodies, if field conditions confirm presence, waterbodies can be presented as mapped in currently available data.
- For unmapped waterbodies, the Proposer should include data points as practicable, at 150-foot intervals.
- For mapped waterbodies that are not found in the field, or waterbody boundary adjustments, the Proposer shall include data points at 150-foot intervals, as practicable, indicating no waterbody or stream was identified.

Following the field effort, the Proposer will prepare a “Preliminary Wetlands and Waterbodies Report” that summarizes the field effort and any wetlands, streams, or relatively permanent waterbodies (RPWs)/ditches, etc. identified onsite. This report should include a map of the extents of the proposed Bid Facility’s major generating equipment in the report, the parcel boundaries included in the Bid Facility, approximate areas screened in the field effort, the approximate boundaries of wetlands and waterways, supported by photographic documentation, in particular, field conditions, soils of wetland boundary adjustments areas, and Geographic Information System (GIS) shapefiles of the approximate boundaries including wetland or other waterbody boundary adjustment areas.

Additionally, the Proposer shall provide resumes of the lead wetland scientist(s) who performed the screening to NYSERDA as part of this report.

Impact Estimation:

Agency verifications are not requested, as these should be based on a formal delineation and not reconnaissance-level screening; however, Proposers are encouraged to use best-professional-judgement to offer a forecast of likely or presumed jurisdictional statuses (both state and federal) of all features documented during the screening. It is understood that presumed jurisdictional statuses are non-binding and being provided to assist with planning purposes only.

Proposers are permitted and encouraged to submit a full wetland and waterbody delineation report if completed at the time of the Step Two Bid Proposal submission.

A map depicting the proposed site layout of the major generating equipment overlaid with the boundaries of all screened features should be provided to clearly identify where jurisdictional impacts, such that might require state or federal permitting and/or mitigation, may occur within the design. Anticipated steps for addressing permitting and mitigation should be summarized in the Proposer's Permit Plan.