Minimum Qualifications for Wetland Biologists

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WSDOT wetland biologists and consultant biologists working on WSDOT projects must have qualifying wetland experience, training, and education, as listed below. The principal biologist assigned to WSDOT wetland and stream project work is responsible for the quality of work of the deliverables as outlined below and on the WSDOT wetland reconnaissance & assessment page. Junior biologists may not meet all outlined requirements and must work under the supervision of the principal biologist. At a minimum, junior biologists must have completed a five-day wetland delineation class, revised Washington State wetland rating system (2014) class, and meet the education requirements outlined below.

Experience

Two or more years of full time employment in the Pacific Northwest, where wetland assessment tasks were the primary job duties including:

- Identifying plants in the field and using technical keys to identify plants to species
- Identifying and documenting hydric soils, including proficiency with NRCS hydric soil indicators
- Identifying wetland hydrology indicators
- Delineating wetland boundaries using the US Army Corps of Engineers 1987 Wetlands Delineation Manual, and the appropriate regional supplement for the project location: Arid West Regional Supplement or Western Mountains, Valleys, and Coast Regional Supplement
- Classifying wetlands using the Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States (Cowardin/National Wetland Inventory [NWI]) and the Hydrogeomorphic Wetland Classification System (HGM)
- Rating wetlands, including preparation of all required wetland rating figures
- Assessing wetland functions using Wetland Functions Characterization Tool for Linear Projects
- Preparing wetland delineation reports or wetland and stream assessment reports
- Informing the project on avoidance, minimization, and compensation for unavoidable impacts.
- Understanding mitigation concepts outlined in the current version of state and federal guidance on Wetland Mitigation in Washington State Part 1 and Part 2 (referred to as “Joint Guidance”)

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AND

Training
Successful completion of all the following classes:

- A five-day wetland delineation class, including a field practicum
- Wetland rating class, taught by Washington Department of Ecology: Using the Revised Washington State Wetland Rating System (2014), or any update or revision version newer than 2014
- A training on field indicators for hydric soils, including a field practicum

AND

Education (one of the following options)

- A Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Arts, or equivalent degree in biology, botany, ecology, environmental studies, resource management, soil science, hydrology, wildlife, fisheries, landscape architecture or related field, or
- Certification as a Professional Wetland Scientist from the Society of Wetland Scientists, or
- Completion of the University of Washington Wetland Science & Management Certificate program, or similar program, or
- Five years of wetland experience with progressively increasing responsibility