

For additional information, please contact your DEP District office at one of the following locations:

**Northwest District:**

*In Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, or Holmes Co.*

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

**Northwest District:**

*In Bay, Washington, Jackson, Calhoun, or Gulf Co.*

2353 Jenks Ave.  
Panama City, Florida 32405  
(850) 872-4357

**Northwest District:**

*In Franklin, Liberty, Gadsden, Wakulla, Leon, or Jefferson Co.*

2815 Remington Green Cir. #A  
Tallahassee, Florida 32308  
(850) 488-3704

**Northeast District:**

7825 Baymeadows Way, Suite 200B  
Jacksonville, Florida 32256-7577  
(904) 807-4300

**Southwest District:**

3804 Coconut Palm Drive  
Tampa, Florida 33619-1042  
(813) 744-6100

**Southeast District:**

*In Martin, St. Lucie or Okeechobee Co.:*

1801 S.E. Hillmoor Drive, Suite C 204  
Port St Lucie, Florida 34952  
(772)398-2806

**Central District:**

3319 Maguire Blvd.; Suite 232  
Orlando, Florida 32803-3767  
(407) 894-7555

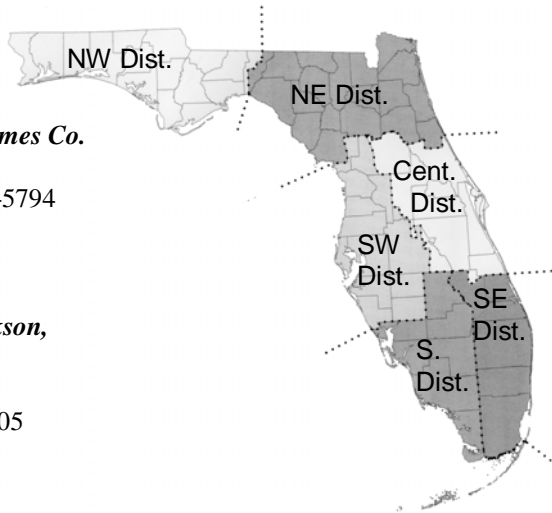
**South District:**

2295 Victoria Ave.; Suite 364  
Fort Myers, Florida 33901  
(239) 332-6975

**Southeast District:**

*In Dade, Broward or Palm Beach Co.:*

400 N. Congress Ave., Suite 200  
West Palm Beach, Florida 33401  
(561)681-6600



**Thank you for  
helping to protect  
Florida's environment**

## Know what you need *before* you build...



### **SINGLE-FAMILY DREDGE AND FILL and the Department of Environmental Protection**

DEP regulates dredging and filling in wetlands and other surface waters in order to protect our fragile environment. Most residential dredging and filling by homeowners will require a permit from DEP. If the proposed activities are located on State-owned submerged lands, written authorization to use these lands will also be required from DEP. Both the permit and authorization, if required, must be obtained prior to construction.

#### **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 does 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 wetlands or other surface waters. For example, dirt, sand, gravel, rocks, shell, pilings, concrete, grass clippings, and trash are all considered fill if they are placed in a wetland.

#### **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 projects involve dredging or filling?**

The following types of projects, when proposed by single-family homeowners and located in wetlands or surface waters, generally require permits from DEP:

- filling for a house pad, septic tank drainfield, driveway, lawn, etc.
- removing trees or other vegetation by pulling out the root ball
- installing a fence
- placing sand along the edge of a waterbody for a beach
- dredging in a waterway to provide new boating access
- dredging in a wetland to create a pond
- dredging a ditch to drain the property

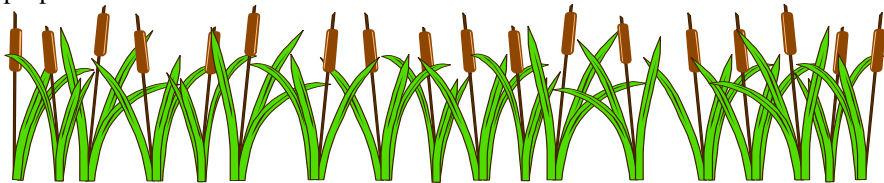
### **Do I need a permit for all dredging and filling?**

You may not need a permit to conduct certain exempt dredging and filling activities in wetlands or other surface waters. However, in order to be eligible to use any of these exemptions, you must meet a number of conditions. Please check with your DEP district office to see if you may conduct any of the following activities without a permit:

- maintenance dredging of manmade canals or channels
- replacement or repair of open-trestle foot bridges or vehicular bridges
- construction or maintenance of culverted driveways or bridges across non-navigable ditches or canals

### **How do I know if my property is a wetland?**

In many cases, the periodic occurrence of standing water or wet soil 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 you are familiar with common wetland plants like cypress, willows, cattails, or arrowhead, their presence will offer another helpful clue that you have found a wetland. Once you have identified the presence of a wetland you should be aware that it can be difficult to determine its full extent. When in doubt, you should contact the Department for assistance in determining whether or not your proposed work site is a wetland.



### **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, you will need a Wetland Resource Permit. If you are located anywhere else in Florida, you will need an Environmental Resource Permit. Some single family residential construction in isolated wetlands may qualify for a noticed general permit (except 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 NFWMD), 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 office.