

Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) Topic of the Week

WCA Wetland Determinations for Channels, Ditches, Streams

December 14, 2022

WCA topics of the week are a series of informal fact sheets that provide practical information on WCA program implementation in a question-and-answer format. They are intended to better clarify and summarize certain aspects of WCA implementation and should be considered as supplemental to WCA statutes, rules and any associated BWSR guidance and policy. Information in these fact sheets is subject to change over time.

Is this channel that contains and/or conveys water a WCA wetland?

1. Yes No Is the channel a Public Watercourse in the DNR's Public Water Inventory?

If **yes**, the channel up to the OHWL is not regulated by WCA. If **no**, **proceed to 2**.

2. Yes No Was the channel created in an area that was naturally upland (use soil mapping, aerial imagery, landscape position, etc. to make this determination)?

If **yes**, the channel is not within the scope of WCA (incidental wetland). If **no**, **proceed to 3**.

3. Yes No Under normal conditions, is the channel 8.2 feet or more deep and lacking emergent vegetation?

If **yes**, the channel is not a wetland. If **no**, **proceed to 4**.

4. Yes No Does the channel have characteristics of a stream including pool/riffle areas, deposition bars, and meandering?

If **yes**, then the channel is a stream not subject to WCA wetland regulations. If **no**, **proceed to 5**.

5. Yes No Does the channel have wetland indicators per 87 Manual?

If **yes**, then the channel is a wetland subject to WCA wetland regulations. If **no**, then channel is not a wetland.

These questions can be used as a general guide for making a WCA wetland determination for a channel-like water feature. They involve application of the 87 Wetland Delineation Manual (and supplements) and WCA rules/policies. This document is specific to the WCA regulatory program.

Mapped Public Watercourse during drought (Question 1)



Non-Public Watercourse with wetland indicators (Question 5)



Stream Indicators (Question 4)



Wetland Indicators (Question 5)



Channel created in upland (Question 2)

