

Appendix B - Glossary

Producer Note: The following definitions are included to further define information discussed in this document. Some variations may exist between state and federal definitions.

10-year, 24-hour storm: A rainfall event of 24-hour duration and 10-year frequency that is used to calculate the runoff volume and peak discharge.

25-year, 24-hour storm: A rainfall event of 24-hour duration and 25-year frequency that is used to calculate the runoff volume and peak discharge.

Animal unit: A standard measure based on feed requirements used to combine various classes of livestock according to size, weight, age, and use.

Aquaculture: The production of aquatic plants or animals in a controlled environment, such as ponds, raceways, tanks, or cages, for all or part of their life cycle. In the United States, baitfish, catfish, clams, crawfish, freshwater prawns, mussels, oysters, salmon, shrimp, tropical or ornamental fish, and trout account for most of the aquacultural production. Less widely established but growing species include alligator, hybrid striped bass, carp, eel, red fish, northern pike, sturgeon, and tilapia.

Aquifer: A geologic formation or structure that transmits water in sufficient quantity to supply the needs for a water development; usually saturated sands, gravel, fractures, and cavernous and vesicular rock.

Best management practice (BMP): A practice or combination of practices that are determined to be the most effective and practicable (including technological, economic, and institutional considerations) means of controlling point and nonpoint pollutants at levels compatible with environmental quality goals.

Chemigation: Any process where pesticides or other chemicals are added to irrigation water applied to land, crops, or both through an irrigation distribution system.

Composting: A controlled process of degrading organic matter by microorganisms.

Conservation: The continuing protection and management of natural renewable resources, like soil, water, wildlife, and forests, in accordance with principles that assure their optimum economic and social enjoyment.

Conservation compliance: A provision authorized by the Food Security Act of 1985 that required farmers with highly erodible cropland to implement an approved conservation plan by 1990. Implementation of the plan was tied to eligibility for federal USDA program benefits.

Conservation easement: A legal interest granted for the purpose of restricting how property is used in order to protect various environmental or natural resource values.

Conservation practices: Methods which protect or improve the soil, water, or related natural resources. Major conservation practices include conservation tillage, crop rotation, contour farming, stripcropping, terraces, diversions, and grassed waterways.

Constructed wetland: Engineered systems designed to simulate natural wetlands to exploit the water purification value for human use and benefits. Constructed wetlands consist of former upland environments that have been modified to create poorly drained soils and wetlands flora and fauna for the primary purpose of contaminant or pollutant removal from wastewaters or runoff.

Cooperative Extension Service: In general terms, a system of state, local, and federal organizations working together to provide a practical educational network linking research, science, and technology to the needs of people where they live and work. The Cooperative Extension Service provides educational services outside the classroom on agriculture, household management, nutrition, and other topics. States participate mostly through their land grant universities, while the federal partner is the USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extensions Service. Other partners are the Extension professionals in nearly all of the nation's 3,150 counties, thousands of paraprofessionals, and nearly three million volunteers.

Diversion: A channel, embankment, or other manmade structure constructed to divert water from one area to another.

Ecosystem: The complex of a community and its environment functioning as an ecological unit in nature; a basic functional unit of nature comprising both organisms and their nonliving environment, intimately linked by a variety of biological, chemical, and physical processes.

Effluent: Solid, liquid, or gaseous wastes that enter the environment as a by-product of man-oriented processes.

Environmental audit: The process of investigating the environmental status and history of a property to determine if it complies with applicable environmental laws and whether it contains any sources of potential environmental liability.

Erosion: Wearing away of the land surface by running water, glaciers, winds, and waves. The term erosion is usually preceded by a definitive term denoting the type of erosion such as gully erosion, sheet erosion, wind erosion, or bank erosion.

Farm Bill: Major omnibus agricultural legislation, usually enacted every four or five years. The bill usually includes provisions on commodity programs, trade, conservation, credit, agricultural research, food stamps, and marketing.

Fertigation: Any process where fertilizers are added to irrigation water applied to land, crops, or both through an irrigation distribution system.

Fertilizer: Any organic or inorganic material of natural or synthetic origin that is added to a soil to supply elements essential to plant growth.

Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practices (GAAMPs): A form of right-to-farm law which gives nuisance protection to farms using GAAMPs as established by the state or common agricultural practices in the area.

Groundwater: Water beneath the earth's surface between saturated soil and rock that supplies wells and springs.

Habitat: The place where an organism naturally lives or grows.

Hazardous waste: Any waste or combination of wastes which pose a substantial present and potential hazard to human health or living organisms.

Herbicide: A chemical substance designed to kill or inhibit the growth of plants, especially weeds.

Highly erodible land: Land that has an erodibility index of greater than eight. This index is based on a soil's inherent tendency to erode from rain or wind in the absence of cover crop or other conservation practices. The erodibility index is based on factors from the Universal Soil Loss Equation (USLE) and the Wind Erosion

Equation (WEQ), along with a soil's T-value, which is a measure of the amount of erosion in tons per year that a soil can tolerate without losing productivity. For most cropland soils, T values fall in the range of three to five tons per acre per year.

Holding pond: A reservoir, pit, or pond, usually made of earth, used to retain polluted runoff water for disposal on land.

Insecticide: A pesticide compound specifically used to kill or control the growth of insects.

Irrigation: Application of water to lands, crops, or both for agricultural purposes.

Lagoon: A reservoir or pond built to contain water and animal wastes until they can be decomposed either by aerobic or anaerobic action.

Leachate: Liquids that have percolated through a soil and that contain substances in solution or suspension.

Manure: The fecal and urinary defecations of livestock and poultry; may include spilled feed, bedding, or soil.

Nonpoint source pollution: Pollution that enters the environment from diffuse areas instead of a single point of origin or a specific outlet. Examples include areas in which fertilizer, animal manure, or other chemicals have been applied.

Noxious weeds: Undesirable plant species, excepting those protected by the Endangered Species Act of 1973, that are considered harmful, exotic, injurious, or poisonous and are targeted for control management under state and federal law. The U.S. Secretary of Agriculture may provide cost sharing assistance to state and local agencies to manage noxious weeds in an area if a majority of the landowners in that area agree to participate in a noxious weed management program.

Nuisance: An offensive, annoying, unpleasant, or obnoxious thing or practice; a cause or source of annoyance, especially a continuing or repeated invasion or disturbance of another's right, or anything that works a hurt, inconvenience, or damage. Nuisances are commonly classified as public, private, or mixed.

Nutrients: Elements or compounds essential as raw materials for organism growth and development, such as carbon, nitrogen, and phosphorus.

Pesticides: Chemicals, including herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, nematocides, and rodenticides, used by farmers to control plant and animal pests, to regulate plant growth, or to simplify harvest.

Point source pollution: As defined by the Clean Water Act, a source of pollution from "any discernable, confined and discrete conveyance, including but not limited to any pipe, ditch, channel, tunnel, conduit, well, discrete fissure, container rolling stock, concentrated animal feeding operation, or vessel or other floating craft, from which pollutants are or may be discharged."

Pollutant: Dredged spoil, solid waste, incinerator residue, sewage, garbage, sewage sludge, munitions, chemical wastes, biological materials, radioactive materials, heat, wrecked or discarded equipment, rock, sand, cellar dirt, and industrial, municipal, and agricultural waste discharged into water.

Prescribed burning: Controlled application of fire to wild-land fuels in either their natural or modified state, under such conditions of weather, fuel moisture, and soil moisture as allow the fire to be confined to a predetermined area and at the same time to produce the intensity of heat and rate of spread required to further planned objectives of silviculture, wildlife management, grazing, and fire hazard reduction.

Return flow: That portion of the water diverted from a stream that finds its way back to the stream channel either as surface or underground flow.

Right-to-Farm: Protection from nuisance suits for existing agricultural operations, so long as the agricultural operations meet specific requirements. Generally, an operation is required to have been in existence before the change in the area which resulted in the nuisance suit (the farmer/rancher was there first), and the nuisance must not have been created by the producer's actions.

Rill erosion: Erosion which leads to the land becoming scoured and soil removed so that small channels, or rills, remain.

Riparian rights: Legal water rights to banks, beds, or waters of a person owning land containing or bordering on a water course or other body of water.

Runoff: That part of precipitation, snow melt, or irrigation water that runs off the land into streams or other surface water. It can carry pollutants from the air and land into the receiving waters.

Sediment: The product of erosion processes; the solid material, both mineral and organic, that is in suspension, is being transported, or has been moved from its site of origin by air, water, gravity, or ice.

Seepage: Water escaping through or emerging from the ground along an extensive line or surface as contrasted with a spring, where the water emerges from a localized spot.

Sheet erosion: Erosion which leads to a generally uniform removal of topsoil over all of a field as a result of strong rains.

Soil: A dynamic natural body composed of mineral and organic materials and living forms in which plants grow on the surface of the earth. In the U.S. there are about 70,000 kinds of soil recognized in a nationwide system of soil classification.

Soil Conservation District: A legal subdivision of state government, with a locally-elected governing body, responsible for developing and carrying out a program of soil and water conservation within a geographic boundary usually coinciding with county lines. The nearly 3,000 districts (also called soil and water conservation districts, natural resources districts, resource conservation districts, resources districts, and conservation districts) provide assistance to producers and landowners.

Solid waste: Generally, any garbage, refuse, sludge from a waste supply treatment plant or air pollution control facility, and other discarded material.

Surface water: All water whose surface is exposed to the atmosphere.

Underground storage tank: Any one of a combination of tanks, including connected underground pipes, which is used to contain an accumulation of regulated substances, and the underground volume is 10 percent or more.

Vegetated buffer: Strips of vegetation separating a waterbody from a land use that could act as a nonpoint pollution source. Vegetated buffers are variable in width and can range in function from vegetated filter strips to wetlands or riparian areas.

Vegetated filter strip: Created areas of vegetation designed to remove sediment and other pollutants from surface water runoff by filtration, deposition, infiltration, adsorption, decomposition, and volatilization. A vegetated filter

strip is an area that maintains soil aeration, in contrast to a wetland, which at times exhibits anaerobic soil conditions.

Vegetative cover: Trees or perennial grasses, legumes, or shrubs with an expected lifespan of five years or more.

Waste: Material that has no original value or no value for the ordinary or main purpose of manufacture or use; damaged or defective articles of manufacture; a superfluous or rejected matter or refuse.

Watershed: A drainage area or basin in which all land and water areas drain or flow toward a central collector such as a stream, river, or lake at a lower elevation. The United States is generally divided into 18 major drainage areas and 160 principal river drainage basins containing some 12,700 smaller watersheds.

Waterway: A natural or artificially constructed course for the concentrated flow of water.

Wetlands: Land that is characterized by an abundance of moisture and that is inundated by surface or groundwater often enough to support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.

Zoning: The division of an area by legislative regulation into districts and the prescription and application in each district of regulations having to do with structural and architectural designs of buildings and of regulations prescribing uses to which buildings within designated districts may be put.