

## 6.5. Preponderance of Evidence

The NRCS and the Corps of Engineers authorize and recommend the methods of Chapters 4 and 5 for routine and difficult situations. To finish up this part of the course,

Return to the beginning of Chapter 5 of the Supplement and re-read the last paragraph of the Introduction.

Question	Answer
What is the summarizing admonition underpinning all methods to identify wetlands, whether it is for hydrophytic vegetation, hydric soils, or wetland hydrology?	Determinations must be based on best professional judgment.
Discussion	
Do not be afraid to apply your professional training and experience when identifying wetlands. When physical or meteorological conditions are difficult, document that you have followed standard procedures to justify using the tools supplied in Chapter 5. Then document that you have used these tools and justify why. Then use your professional judgment to make a decision based on your experience and on all of the information you have gathered from these tools. The preponderance of evidence will lead you to a decision.	

Experienced wetland experts in both the NRCS and the Corps of Engineers repeatedly find that science is respected in both Agency appeals and in court. Do not feel tied down to the data forms. There are times that official forms are only the beginning. Trust the science underlying these other tools. And trust your judgment. To finish up this Module:

***“Wetland determinations must be based on the best information available to the field inspector, interpreted in light of his or her professional experience and knowledge of the ecology of wetlands in the region.”***