Question	Answer
Does the NFSAM require a specific number days of saturation or **ponding** for wetland hydrology?	No
Discussion	
See discussion after next question	

1987 Manual, Part III, Wetland Hydrology, Sections 46-49(a)

These sections of the 1987 Manual provide background to the Regional Supplements. The NRCS has not adopted Part III explicitly as part of our procedure, but the Regional Supplements assume the principles expressed here.

Read 1987 Manual, §46.

Question	Answer
Does the 1987 Manual require a specific number days of saturation or ponding for wetland hydrology?	No
Discussion	
The NRCS and Corps both define wetland hydrology in an operational manner. Wetland hydrology is the long-term water regime required to support the hydrophytic vegetation and develop the hydric soils of the wetland on a given site. Biological responses of plants and soil microbes to water stress vary too much for there to be a single **hydroperiod** common to all wetlands. Occasionally, a site has been disturbed severely enough to merit collection of information regarding the hydroperiod. This may include water table measurements at specific depths, lengths of time, and frequencies. This information is only a surrogate to approximate the altered hydrologic regime.	

See Table 1 of the Supplements, reproduced below. Chapter 4 of the Regional Supplements replaces only §49(b) of the 1987 Manual and associated references to these indicators in the chapter on Atypical Situations.

Read the Regional Supplement, Wetland Hydrology Indicators, Introduction, 1st paragraph.

Question	Answer
Does the Regional Supplement change the concept of wetland hydrology provided in the 1987 Manual, §46?	No
Discussion	
The Regional Supplements do not replace the 1987 Manual; they only regionalize the indicators and incorporate two decades of improved knowledge since the Manual was first adopted.	

Skim through 1987 Manual §49.a & 49.b, -and read highlighted rows of Table 1 below

Table 1. Sections of the Corps Manual replaced by the Regional Supplements.

Item	Replaced Portions of the Corps Manual (Environmental Laboratory 1987)	Replacement Guidance (this Supplement)
Hydrophytic Vegetation Indicators	Paragraph 35, all subparts, and all references to specific indicators in Part IV.	Chapter 2
Hydric Soil Indicators	Paragraphs 44 and 45, all subparts, and all references to specific indicators in Part IV.	Chapter 3
Wetland Hydrology Indicators	Paragraph 49(b), all subparts, and all references to specific indicators in Part IV.	Chapter 4
Growing Season Definition	Glossary	Chapter 4, Growing Season; Glossary
Hydrology Standard for Highly Disturbed or Problematic Wetland Situations	Paragraph 48, including Table 5 and the accompanying User Note in the online version of the Manual	Chapter 5, Wetlands that Periodically Lack Indicators of Wetland Hydrology, Procedure item 3(g)

Question	Answer
Are stream gage data, flood predictions, and historic records still authorized for use by the Regional Supplements?	Yes
Discussion	
Per Table 1 above, the Regional Supplements only replace §49(b) of the Wetland Hydrology chapter of the 1987 Manual. Use of other data is allowed by the NRCS and the Corps, as was emphasized in Module 2, Selection of Methods. When they are available, ascertain that they apply to the specific site being evaluated.	

1987 Manual §49(b), Field data.

Only now is it appropriate to switch from the 1987 Manual proper to the Regional Supplements. As pointed out in Table 1 above, the Regional Supplements only address the '*Field data*' portion of the 1987 Manual Hydrology procedures.

Read the Introduction to Chapter 4, Wetland Hydrology Indicators in your Supplement

Question	Answer
What information critical to wetland delineation do Wetland Hydrology indicators supply that is not given by the soils and vegetation indicators?	Wetland hydrology information tells us whether a parcel of ground currently receives sufficient water to support hydrophytic vegetation and hydric soils, or whether those wetland indicators might be relicts of earlier hydrologic conditions.
Discussion	

Remember that hydrology information is the most current information about the wetness regime of a site. Vegetation may reflect hydrologic regimes of previous years and decades; soils reflect hydrologic regimes of previous centuries. Only hydrology information provides knowledge sufficient to manage lands as they are functioning *now*.

Question	Answer
What are some of the major problems with the Hydrology Indicators, as raised in the Introduction?	Hydrology indicators may not be present at the time of a site visit, though they were there at the beginning of the wet season. Weather conditions vary considerably so even if saturation or inundation is observed, they may not indicate whether Normal Environmental Conditions exist at the time of a site visit.
Discussion	
Because hydrologic data are rarely available for a site, a decision about the presence of wetland hydrology is often made by looking for field indicators during a site visit. Direct observations of inundation and saturation are strong indicators that wetland hydrology is present on a site. However, any observations must be tempered by knowledge of the ~~w~~hydrologic~~eather~~ conditions at the time of the field visit. A state climatology office may publish weekly maps indicating the precipitation that fell during a week and relating that total to the normal amount received during the growing season up to that point. An example is shown in Figure 20. If the site has been experiencing a drought period, or an unusually wet period, the field visit observations must be evaluated in that context. If a large rain event occurred the day before a field visit, sites that normally do not meet the wetland hydrology criteria may have inundation. Also, in a wetter than normal season, sites that are not wet in normal circumstances may have standing water or saturation within 12 inches of the surface. It is important to stress that *lack* of an indicator is *not* evidence for the absence of wetland hydrology.	