



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
NEW ORLEANS DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P.O. BOX 60267
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA 70160-0267

February 17, 2012

Operations Division
Regulatory Branch

SPECIAL PUBLIC NOTICE

NEW ORLEANS DISTRICT MODIFIED CHARLESTON METHOD

**METHOD FOR ASSESSING ADVERSE WETLAND IMPACTS AND
COMPENSATION REQUIREMENTS**

The New Orleans District, Corps of Engineers (CEMVN) Regulatory Branch hereby releases the "New Orleans District Modified Charleston Method" (MVN MCM) for use in assessing adverse impacts and compensation requirements for wetland impacts associated with activities permitted under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899. The MVN MCM replaces the MCM 2010. The revised workbook and guidebook are available on the RIBITS webpage at:
https://rsgis.crrel.usace.army.mil/ribits/f?p=107:27:4139126077345287::NO:RP:P27_BUTTON_KEY:20.

BACKGROUND

The MVN MCM is an updated version of the Modified Charleston Method (MCM) which is based on the methodology developed by the Charleston District (RD-SOP-02-01, Standard Operating Procedure, Compensatory Mitigation; September 19, 2002). CEMVN Regulatory Branch, working with interested state and federal resource and regulatory agencies modified the Charleston Method to account for regional wetland type differences and incorporate provisions in 33 CFR Part 332, "Compensatory Mitigation for Losses of Aquatic Resources".

On January 31, 2011, CEMVN notified the public that effective May 1, 2011 the 'MCM 2010' would become CEMVN's method for calculating compensation for unavoidable impacts to wetlands. On October 4, 2011, CEMVN placed a special public notice soliciting public comments regarding any additions, updates, corrections, or clarifications to the 'MCM 2010.' CEMVN considered all comments received from the public as well as input provided by state and federal resource agencies. A summary of the comments received and CEMVN's approach to each comment can be downloaded from our Regulatory webpage at:
http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/ops/regulatory/Mit_program.asp.

A brief summary of changes implemented in the MVN MCM includes, but is not limited to, modification in service area labels on the 'Bank' worksheet, definition modification in rehabilitation and enhancement mitigation types, modification to the 'Location' factor on the 'Bank' and 'Restoration' worksheets, modification to the negative influence factors on the

‘Restoration’ worksheet, and the addition of a ‘Comments’ worksheet that provides the user an opportunity to discuss selections made on the ‘Impact’ and ‘Restoration’ worksheets.

IMPLEMENTATION

This guidebook is structured such that the definitions and explanations of factors and options used in a particular worksheet are provided in that worksheet discussion. Factor tables and sample worksheets are also provided in that section.

The MVN MCM does not measure functional capacity directly but considers the functional quality of the impacted site weighed against the perceived functional lift of the mitigation project (conditional assessment model). The model consists of evaluation criteria (factors) weighted for their importance. Each factor has a number of options that qualify the site conditions for that factor. The evaluator selects the option that best fits conditions for the site under consideration. Options used in the tables are defined so as to establish a clear and understandable interpretation of the existing conditions at the impacted and the mitigation site and are intended to provide consistent results among users with diverse backgrounds.

We do not anticipate that the MVN MCM will result in substantive differences in the Compensation Requirement or Compensation Credit obtained using the MCM 2010 as most of the changes are clarification of definitions.

The MVN MCM workbook and guidebook are intended for immediate use. The ‘MCM 2010’ will no longer be utilized or updated with additional mitigation bank information.

Questions regarding the methodology should be directed to Mr. Stephen Pfeffer at (504)862-2227 (stephen.d.pfeffer@usace.army.mil) of the Regulatory Branch.

Sincerely,

James A. Barlow, Jr.
Chief, Special Projects and Policy Team