§ 323.2 Definitions.

For the purpose of this regulation, the following terms are defined:

(a) The term "waters of the United States" means:¹

(1) The territorial seas with respect to the discharge of fill material. (The transportation of dredged material by vessel for the purpose of dumping in the oceans, including the territorial seas, at an ocean dump site approved under 40 CFR 228 is regulated by Section 103 of the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act of 1972, as amended (33 U.S.C. 1413). See 33 CFR 324. Discharges of dredged or fill material into the territorial seas are regulated by Section 404.)

(2) Coastal and inland waters, lakes, rivers, and streams that are navigable waters of the United States, including adjacent wetlands;

(3) Tributaries to navigable waters of the United States, including adjacent wetlands (manmade nontidal drainage and irrigation ditches excavated on dry land are not considered waters of the United States under this definition);

(4) Interstate waters and their tributaries, including adjacent wetlands; and

(5) All other waters of the United States not identified in paragraphs (1)-(4) above, such as isolated wetlands and lakes, intermittent streams, prairie potholes, and other waters that are not part of a tributary system to interstate waters or to navigable waters of the United States, the degradation or destruction of which could affect interstate commerce.²

¹ The terminology used by the FWPCA is "navigable waters" which is defined in Section 502(7) of the Act as "waters of the United States including the territorial seas." For purposes of clarity, and to avoid confusion with other Corps of Engineers regulatory programs, the term "waters of the United States" is used throughout this regulation.

² In defining the jurisdiction of the FWPCA as the "waters of the United States," Congress, in the legislative history to the Act, specified that the term "be given the broadest constitutional interpretation unencumbered by agency determinations which would have been made or may be made for administrative purposes." The Footnotes continued on next page
The landward limit of jurisdiction in tidal waters, in the absence of adjacent wetlands, shall be the high tide line and the landward limit of jurisdiction and all other waters, in the absence of adjacent wetlands, shall be the ordinary high water mark.

(b) The term “navigable waters of the United States” means those waters of the United States that are subject to the ebb and flow of the tide shoreward to the mean high water mark (mean higher high water mark on the Pacific coast) and/or are presently used, or have been used in the past, or may be susceptible to use to transport interstate or foreign commerce. (See 33 CFR 329 for a more complete definition of this term.)

(c) The term “wetlands” means those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs and similar areas.

(d) The term “adjacent” means bordering, contiguous, or neighboring. Wetlands separated from other waters of the United States by man-made dikes or barriers, natural river berms, beach dunes and the like are “adjacent wetlands.”

(e) The term “natural lake” means a standing body of open water that occurs in a natural depression fed by one or more streams and from which a stream may flow, that occurs due to the widening or natural blockage of a river or stream, or that occurs in an isolated natural depression that is not a part of a surface river or stream.

(f) The term “impoundment” means a standing body of open water created by artifically blocking or restricting the flow of a river, stream, or tidal area. As used in this regulation, the term does not include artificial lakes or ponds created by excavating and/or diking dry land to collect and retain water for such purposes as stock watering, irrigation, settling basins cooling, or rice growing.

(g) The term “ordinary high water mark” means the line on the shore established by the fluctuations of water and indicated by physical characteristics such as a clear, natural line impressed on the bank; shelving; changes in the character of soil; destruction of terrestrial vegetation, the presence of litter and debris; or other appropriate means that consider the characteristics of the surrounding areas.

(h) The term “high tide line” means a line or mark left upon tide flats, beaches, or along shore objects that indicates the intersection of the land with the water’s surface at the maximum height reached by a rising tide. The mark may be determined by a line of oil or scum along shore objects, a more or less continuous deposit of fine shell or debris on the foreshore or berm, other physical markings or characteristics, vegetation lines, tidal gages, or other suitable means that de-
lineate the general height reached by a rising tide. The term includes spring high tides and other high tides that occur with periodic frequency, but does not include storm surges in which there is a departure from the normal or predicted reach of the tide due to the piling up of water against a coast by strong winds such as those accompanying a hurricane or other intense storm.

(i) The term "headwaters" means the point on a non-tidal stream above which the average annual flow is less than five cubic feet per second. The District Engineer may estimate this point from available data by using the mean annual area precipitation, area drainage basin maps, and the average runoff coefficient, or by similar means.

(j) The term "primary tributaries" means the main stems of tributaries directly connecting to navigable waters of the United States up to their headwaters, and does not include any additional tributaries extending off of the main stems of these tributaries.

(k) The term "dredged material" means material that is excavated or dredged from waters of the United States.

(l) The term "discharge of dredged material" means any addition of dredged material into the waters of the United States. The term includes, without limitation, the addition of dredged material to a specified disposal site located in waters of the United States and the runoff or overflow from a contained land or water disposal area. Discharges of pollutants into waters of the United States resulting from the onshore subsequent processing of dredged material that is extracted for any commercial use (other than fill) are not included within this term and are subject to Section 402 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972.

(m) The term "fill material" means any material used for the primary purpose of replacing an aquatic area with dry land or of changing the bottom elevation of a waterbody. The term does not include any pollutant discharged into the water primarily to dispose of waste, as that activity is regulated under Section 402 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act.

(n) The term "discharge of fill material" means the addition of fill material into waters of the United States. The term generally includes, without limitation, the following activities: Placement of fill that is necessary to the construction of any structure in a water of the United States; the building of any structure or impoundment requiring rock, sand, dirt, or other material for its construction; site-development fills for recreational, industrial, commercial, residential, and other uses; causeways or road fills; dams and dikes; artificial islands; property protection and/or reclamation devices such as riprap, groins, seawalls, breakwaters, and revetments; beach nourishment; levees; fill for structures such as sewage treatment facilities, intake and outfall pipes associated with power plants and subaqueous utility lines; and artificial reefs. The term does not include plowing, cultivating, seeding and harvesting for the production of food, fiber, and forest products.

(o) The term "individual permit" means a Department of the Army authorization that is issued following a case-by-case evaluation of a specific project involving the proposed discharge(s) in accordance with the procedures of this regulation and 33 CFR 325 and a determination that the proposed discharge is in the public interest pursuant to 33 CFR Part 320.

(p) The term "general permit" means a Department of the Army authorization that is issued for a category or categories of discharges of even though the extraction and deposit of such material may require a permit from the Corps of Engineers. The term does not include plowing, cultivating, seeding and harvesting for the production of food, fiber, and forest products.
dredged or fill material that are substantially similar in nature and that cause only minimal individual and cumulative adverse environmental impact. A general permit is issued following an evaluation of the proposed category of discharges in accordance with the procedures of this regulation (§323.3(c)), 33 CFR Part 325, and a determination that the proposed discharges will be in the public interest pursuant to 33 CFR Part 320.

(q) The term "nationwide permit" means a Department of the Army authorization that has been issued by this regulation in §323.4 to permit certain discharges of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States throughout the Nation.

§ 323.3 Discharges requiring permits.

(a) General. Department of the Army permits will be required for the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States. Certain discharges specified in §§323.4-1, 323.4-2 and 323.4-3 are permitted by this regulation. If a discharge of dredged or fill material is not permitted by this regulation, an individual or general Section 404 permit will be required for the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States in accordance with the following phased schedule:

(1) Before July 25, 1975, discharges into navigable waters of the United States.

(2) After July 25, 1975, discharges into navigable waters of the United States and adjacent wetlands.

(3) After September 1, 1976, discharges into navigable waters of the United States and their primary tributaries, including adjacent wetlands, and into natural lakes, greater than 5 acres in surface area. (See also §323.4-2 for discharges that are permitted by this regulation.)

(4) After July 1, 1977, discharges into all waters of the United States. (See also §323.4-2 for discharges that are permitted by this regulation.)

(b) Individual permits. Unless permitted by this regulation (§§323.4-1, 323.4-2 and 323.4-3) or authorized by general permits (§323.3(c)), the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States will require an individual Department of the Army permit issued in accordance with the policies in §320.4 and procedures in 33 CFR Part 325.

(c) General permits. The District Engineer may, after compliance with the other procedures of 33 CFR Part 325, issue general permits for certain clearly described categories of structures or work, including discharges of dredged or fill material; requiring Department of the Army permits. After a general permit has been issued, individual activities falling within those categories will not require individual permit processing by the procedures of 33 CFR Part 325 unless the District Engineer determines, on a case-by-case basis, that the public interest requires individual review.

(1) District Engineers will include only those activities that are substantially similar in nature, that cause only minimal adverse environmental impact when performed separately, and that will have only a minimal adverse cumulative effect on the environment as categories which are candidates for general permits.

(2) The District Engineer shall include appropriate conditions as specified in Appendix C of 33 CFR Part 325 in each general permit and shall prescribe the following additional conditions:

(i) The maximum quantity of material that may be discharged and the maximum area that may be modified by a single or incidental operation (if applicable);

(ii) A description of the category or categories of activities included in the general permit; and

(iii) The type of water(s) into which the activity may occur.

(3) The District Engineer may require reporting procedures.

(4) A general permit may be revoked if it is determined that the effects of the activities authorized by it will have an adverse impact on the public interest provided the procedures of 33 CFR 325.7 are followed. Following revocation, applications for future activities in areas covered by the general permit shall be processed as applications for individual permits.