



Natural Resources Conservation Service
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Mr. Marcus Mueller- Land Management Agent
Kenai Peninsula Borough
144 N. Binkley
Soldotna, Alaska 99669

July 27, 2004

Dear Mr. Mueller,

It has been brought to my attention that an error was made in the interpretation of soil capability classification on a parcel of land our office provided an opinion on in 1998. The legal description of the subject parcel is as follows: NW ¼ Section 5, Township 5S, range 11W.

In reviewing the existing published soil survey for this location we have determined that the SpB series, Spenard silt loam, 3-7% slopes, was incorrectly listed with a capability classification of 7W. This classification is reserved primarily for peat and muck soils that are very poorly drained, typically occurring in large muskegs and other isolated sites in the survey area.

The correct capability classification for the Spenard series, as listed in the revised Non-Irrigated Land Capability Classification Technical Distribution (dated 7/16/02:attached), is 6W. This series is accurately described as consisting of somewhat poorly drained, moderately sloping soils that border muskegs and lakes and occur in seep areas. From an agricultural stand point, artificial drainage would be necessary in most locations in order to provide for cultivation.

Our experience with the Spenard series has also been that it frequently meets all three of the required criteria for wetland soils as outlined in the 1987 Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual. Breaking out areas of wetlands to make them possible to produce an agricultural commodity results in a converted wetland designation with our Farm Bill programs and may disqualify potential participants from taking advantage of USDA cost share programs. In addition, development activities within these designated areas would most likely require a Section 404 permit from the Army Corps of Engineers.

I am enclosing several updated soil interpretation reports further describing capabilities and limitation of soils found on the subject parcel for you review and use. Please let me know if I can provide additional background information regarding this or other parcels you are considering in your land management program there.

Sincerely,

Mark P. Kinney
District Conservationist
Homer field office

Mapunit Descriptions - Continued

Homer-Ninilchik Area, Alaska

Note, data applies to the entire extent of the mapunit within the survey area. Mapunit and soil properties for a specific parcel of land may vary somewhat and should be determined by on-site investigation.

SpB - SPENARD SILT LOAM, GENTLY SLOPING

Mean annual precipitation

Mean annual temperature

Frost-free period:

HEL, mapunit: potentially highly erodible land

HEL, water: potentially highly erodible land

HEL, wind: not highly erodible land

SPENARD and similar soils

Extent: about 85 percent of the unit

Landform(s): depression

Slope gradient: 3 to 7 percent

Parent material:

Restrictive feature(s): none

Seasonal high water table: approximately 18 inches

Flooding hazard: none

Ponding Hazard: none

Soil loss tolerance (T factor): 1

Wind erodibility group (WEG) 1

Wind erodibility index (WEI) 160

Land capability class, non-irrigated 6w

Drainage class: poorly drained

Hydric soil: yes

Hydrologic group D

Potential frost action: high

<i>Representative soil profile:</i>	<i>Texture</i>	<i>Permeability</i>	<i>Available Water Capacity</i>	<i>pH</i>	<i>Kw</i>	<i>Kf</i>
H1 -- 0 to 5 in		moderate	1.3 to 1.5 in	4.5 to 5.0	.37	.37
H2 -- 5 to 16 in		moderate	2.8 to 3.3 in	4.5 to 5.0	.43	.43
H3 -- 16 to 40 in		moderately slow	3.6 to 4.8 in	4.5 to 5.0	.32	.55

Minor Components

COHOE and similar soils: 8 percent of the unit

MUTNALA and similar soils: 7 percent of the unit