step 8

ASSESSING SOIL DRAINAGE

Conducted in the paddock or home

In this step you will identify Land Classes 5 and 6:

Land Class 5: Land suitable for less intensive agriculture such as high density grazing or farm forestry and cultivation associated with pasture development.

Land Class 6: Land suitable for grazing or farm forestry. Low capability to resist land disturbance such as cultivation due to physical features of the land and erosion risk. Good management required to preserve vegetative cover.

You will need:
Property plan
Overlay 2
Red permanent marker

Refer to the areas you outlined on Overlay 2 as being non-arable.

Poor drainage that allows the soil to remain saturated for long periods can kill or stunt the growth of many agricultural plants.

Large areas that experience seasonal water ponding, (defined as areas that experience surface ponding at least twice in five years i.e. swamps), are less productive than the surrounding areas.

Conversely, excessive drainage is also a limitation due to an insufficient amount of water available for plant growth. Soils that drain very quickly are more limiting for agriculture if they are located in a low rainfall area, such as the North Western Sands or Mallee Land Degradation Hazard Region (LDHR).

Poorly drained soils

Characteristics that are commonly attributed to poorly drained soils are:

- Presence of rushes
- Difficulty driving on the area during winter and spring
- Hardsetting grey clay soils

Figure 17 *The presence of rushes in the foreground indicates poorly drained soils.*

Excessively drained soils

Characteristics that are commonly attributed to excessively drained soils are:

- High sand content
- High gravel content
- Located in the North Western Sands LDHR and the Mallee LDHR

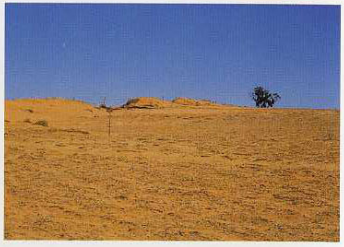

Figure 18 *High sand content in the North Western Sands LDHR would be classed as Land Class 5.*

Surface ponding

- Surface water evident at least twice in five years

Figure 19 *Surface ponding*

1. Refer to the previous definitions
2. On the plan, mark out the boundary and label with the appropriate label code the following areas using the red marker:
Poorly drained soils - 5PD
Excessively drained soils - 5ED
Surface ponding - 6SP
Other areas - continue
Note: The areas marked out as poorly drained and surface ponding should be large areas of land rather than drainage lines. It is necessary to take note of the drainage lines as they will become important in Step 9: Establishing Landscape Types.

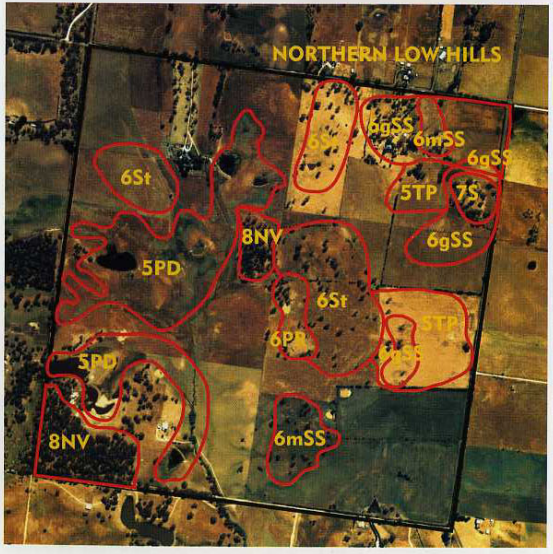

Figure 20 *Step 8: Marking out soil drainage on the plan.*