

EXECUTIVE ORDER 89-10

PROTECTION OF WETLANDS

WHEREAS, wetlands:

- (A) provide, protect and preserve drinking water supplies by purifying surface water and ground water;
- (B) provide a natural means of flood and storm damage protection through the absorption and storage of water during high runoff periods, thereby reducing flood crests and preventing loss of life and property;
- (C) often serve as transition zones between dry land and water courses, thereby retarding soil erosion;
- (D) provide essential breeding, spawning, rearing, feeding, nesting and wintering habitats for a major portion of the state's fish and wildlife;
- (E) provide special vegetation and vegetative communities;
- (F) maintain surface waters through the gradual release of stored flood waters and ground water, particularly during drought periods;
- (G) provide readily accessible outdoor biophysical laboratories, living classrooms and training and educational resources; and
- (H) provide ecological as well as economic benefits; and

WHEREAS, more than fifty percent of the state's original wetlands have been drained, dredged, filled or otherwise altered; and

WHEREAS, over ninety percent of the original saltwater wetlands in some urban estuaries of Puget Sound have been eliminated; and

WHEREAS, wetlands losses statewide are as much as two thousand acres annually; and

WHEREAS, in urban areas in the state of Washington, freshwater wetlands losses are estimated at seventy-five acres per month or more than nine hundred acres per year; and

WHEREAS, the loss of wetlands often leads to economic and ecological harm of the state; and

WHEREAS, wetlands conservation is a matter of state concern, since wetlands of one county may be affected by activities on rivers, lakes, streams, or wetlands of other counties and because they support migratory animal species which cross local government boundaries; and

WHEREAS, use of artificial structures, such as stormwater treatment systems, to provide wetlands functions and values may be more costly than protection of existing wetlands; and

WHEREAS, there is need for stronger state coordination to ensure wetlands protection;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Booth Gardner, Governor of the State of Washington, by virtue of the power vested in me, do hereby order:

Section 1. It is the interim goal of my administration to achieve no overall net loss in acreage and function of Washington's remaining wetlands base. It is further the long-term goal to increase the quantity and quality of Washington's wetlands resource base.

Section 2. In the interest of preserving and protecting valuable resources, the Department of Ecology shall provide guidance and each affected state agency shall provide to the Governor an action plan, where appropriate, to lessen the destruction, loss, or degradation of wetlands and to preserve and enhance the natural and beneficial values of wetlands.

Section 3. Each affected state agency shall ensure that it avoids any activities that would adversely affect wetlands, and that unavoidable impacts are adequately mitigated.

Section 4. To meet the long-term goal of this order, each affected state agency, in pursuing its agency mandate, should seek opportunities for voluntary wetlands restoration and creation of additional wetlands.

Section 5. In carrying out the intent of this order, each affected state agency shall consider the ecologic and hydrologic benefits provided by wetlands. Each affected state agency shall strive to prevent environmental and economic harm that results from continuing loss of wetlands, consistent with human health and safety and the general welfare of the state.

Section 6. Each affected state agency shall encourage sensitive site design and planning on a watershed basis, where appropriate, to avoid or minimize damage to wetlands.

Section 7. Each affected agency shall, when possible, direct its agency-mandated activities not dependent upon wetlands locations to suitable upland locations.

Section 8. Nothing in this Executive Order shall apply to assistance provided for emergency work that is essential to save lives and protect property and public health and safety.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the State of Washington to be affixed at Olympia this 11th day of December A.D., Nineteen hundred and eighty-nine.

By:

BOOTH GARDNER
Governor of Washington

BY THE GOVERNOR:

Secretary of State