

# Free research paper on natural resource policy wetland issues

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Emergency Wetland Resources law in 1986 was approved in November 10, 1986 (Digest of Federal Resource Laws of Interest to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Web), Authorizing the act of purchasing of wetlands from both Land and Water Conservation budget funds, it resulted in removing prohibition in effect prior on the acquisitions. It also resulted in requiring the Secretary to impose a “ National Wetlands Priority Conservation Plan”, this imposed ruling required all the States to make sure to include wetlands in their overall Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Planning, and then transferred to the” Migratory Bird Conservation Fund” (MBCF) with amounts exactly equal to the import duties imposed on arms and ammunition tariff. This act covers wetlands, migratory waterfowl, fish, spawning, nesting, migration, wintering and breeding habitat essential to the survival of migratory and resident fish and wildlife.

The Act of 1986 called for the formulation by the federal government of a National Wetland Priority Conservation Plan (Crosson, Frederick Impacts of Federal Policies and Programs on Wetlands). The Plan was to emphasize both conservation and restoration approaches to wetland protection. One of the outcomes of the Act was the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, involving the U. S., Canada and Mexico. This Plan called for restoration of former waterfowl habitat, prominently including former wetlands (Us-code. vlex. com 16 USC 3931 - Sec. 3931. National wetlands inventory project).

The Sec. 315 of the Fiscal Year 1996 Interior Appropriations Act successfully established a program called Demonstration Fee for that is being charged on entrance fees and recreational use, this also allows refuges to participate to other agency areas in retaining not less than 80% of the accumulated fees at

the collecting sites; this will supersede the 70-30 fee as stipulated in the “Emergency Wetlands Act.”

The purpose of this act is to establish the importance of wetlands conservation to be able to maintain the benefits it can provide to the public as well as to fulfil the obligations stipulated in many migratory bird treaties. The act also calls for a continuous inventory projects by the National Wetlands in relation to the preparations of mapping wetlands for all the states by the year 1998 (Redstonegroup. org Land). The act requires the Department of Interior to submit reports to the Congress regarding the status, trend and conditions of the wetlands and to gauge how effective were the Federal Programs on wetlands were.

Wetlands are a key source of wildlife habitat, but only recently have the benefits of wetlands been recognized as more than just wildlife habitat. Wetlands perform a variety of useful functions. They are among the earth’s most productive ecosystem. Many fish and wildlife populations rely on wetlands for habitat and food. Nearly half of all federally listed threatened and endangered species depend upon wetlands for some part of their life cycle. They are also the source of harvestable resources such as timber, berries, fish, fur, rice, and peat. Wetlands purify water by filtering and settling sediments and pollutants, and they reduce flooding by dispersing high water flows over time and area. They are also the site for recreational activities such as hunting, canoeing, bird-watching, and fishing. Wetlands serve as water storage areas, flood protection from storms, areas of timber production, and recreation. The federal government treated wetlands as part of the wild that needed to be tamed until the 1980’s. Until then the tactic in

place to tame the wetlands was just to reduce it by draining them. This would just reduce the amount of total wetlands in the U. S. from 220 million acres to around 104 million acres, as provided by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Emergency Wetlands Resources Law in 1986 was a step to restoring lost wetlands and helps stop the continuing loss of wetlands. About 80% of wetlands that are lost are due to agricultural activities. Incentive programs have been put into place in order to protect wetlands and have been an important part of wetland restoration. Even with things in place such as incentive programs for wetland protection, it still had to make crucial impacts because the land owners still have to agree to certain terms and orders to receive the incentives. Of the remaining U. S. wetlands, around 75% belong to private land owners (Eel. erdc. usace. army. mi Emergency Wetlands Resources Act). Property owners can see these programs and even laws in wetland acts to be very intrusive on themselves and their land. Along with the intrusiveness of certain laws effecting wetlands, there are many laws that just don't seem to tie in together logically or even at all which makes abiding by each law that much more difficult. There are different kinds of laws towards wetlands and there are actually different kinds of wetlands. All wetlands are not created equal and so one particular law may not fit every type of wetland. The national standards for wetlands have been bashed from all groups of people trying to get their ideas and interests in wetlands being put into use. Congress has made efforts into solving this problem by establishing 3 tiers of areas in reference to wetlands starting

from more highly significant areas that need more crucial protection down to the wetlands with the least amount of value.

There are defiantly laws and programs in place that will help the restoration of wetlands for now and the future. It will take combined effort of the Federal and state lawmakers as well as the public to put best practices into place. Without wetlands in our environment, the way the earth operates will be very different. It will not only affect the wildlife that live in these areas, which in fact almost 80% of wildlife spend some portion of their life in wetland areas, it will affect the human population because that's where abundant amounts of food and resources reside for us. More natural disasters like the one in New Orleans will continue to happen if you put development ahead of wetlands and natural levy zones for ocean rise and fall. Federal laws, policies, and programs have had and continue to have major impacts on the quantity and quality of our wetland resources. Initially they encouraged and subsidized the draining and filling of wetlands and the damming and diversion of rivers and streams, contributing to the sizeable loss in the nation's wetland endowment. More recently, policy initiatives have been directed to conserving and preventing further net losses of wetlands.

Numerous federal laws, policies, and programs influence activities that in turn affect wetlands came into effect which was underlying to the Emergency Wetland Resources Act of 1986. The U. S. General Accounting Office (1998) identified 36 federal agencies that, to varying degrees, undertook wetlands-related activities during fiscal years 1990 through 1997. These activities are regulated by over 25 federal statutes that have resulted in regulation of

activities in areas designated as wetlands, acquisition of wetlands through purchase or protective easements, restoration or creation of wetlands, and incentives to protect wetlands (Nplnews. com Report to the Chairman, Subcommittee on VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies, Committee on Appropriations, U. S. Senate). In addition, wetlands are impacted by a variety of federal laws and programs that affect the use and management of land and water resources by private interests and state and local governments.

This Act was the stepping stone in creating policies that would ensure the success of efforts to restore, enhance and create wetlands; however this must also confront and make headway in overcoming a number of difficult problems of which are separated into technical, institutional and economic. The fundamental technical problem is that wetlands are so heterogeneous in their characteristic that the functions they perform and the ways in which they perform them are highly complex and different across the whole range of wetlands. Consequently, exact restoration of a wetland is difficult and probably impossible. Institutionally the problems here are how to create or modify institutions that give people incentive to restore or create wetlands. Wetland mitigation (restoration, enhancement or creation) is achieved, in principle, by requiring developers or anyone else who wants to convert a wetland to show that they have designed their project so as to minimize the wetland impact and that the impacts that remain will be " mitigated" by restoring, enhancing or creating an equivalent wetland in the same area where conversion occurs. The key economic issue is to establish the social value of an acre of wetland restored, enhanced or created relative to the

social value of an acre converted. In accepting the "no net loss" policy the Bush and Clinton administrations have implicitly concluded that across the country as a whole the social value of an additional wetland acre is greater than its social value converted to some other use.

But to establish criteria for wetland mitigation in specific situations, information is needed about the social value of wetlands in those situations. In general, such information is not available. The reason is that most wetland functions, and the social services they provide, are not priced in markets. The only exception is where farmers, or other wetland owners, in exchange for a fee, permit access to their wetlands by hunters and birdwatchers. The fee is a quantitative measure of those groups' willingness to pay for the wildlife habitat services of the wetland, and is comparable to the prices paid for any good or service traded in markets. However, this market for habitat services of wetlands does not exist everywhere that the service is provided, and no markets of any kind exist for other important wetland services, such as melioration of floods, detoxification of chemicals, and capture of sediment. Thus, in general, quantitative measures of the social value of wetlands are not available. Economists have sought to deal with this valuation problem by undertaking surveys in which people are asked how much they would be willing to pay for differing amounts of wetland services. In principle, the responses give estimates of wetland values that are comparable to the prices of goods and services traded in markets. But since the responses of these contingent valuation surveys do not rely on observed behavior the results are likely to be controversial.

Scientific questions about wetlands, with answers that can be important to

policy makers, include how to define wetlands; how to catalogue the rate and pattern of wetland declines and losses as well as restorations and increases; and how to assess the importance of wetland changes to broader ecosystems. Wetlands science has made considerable strides in developing a fuller and more sophisticated knowledge about many aspects of wetlands in the more than two decades since protecting wetlands became a general policy goal in federal law and program administration. Two topics where scientific information and wetland protection policies remain inconsistent continue to be: should all regulated wetlands be treated equally; and if all scientifically-defined wetlands are not covered by the federal regulatory program, what subset should be covered, and how should such decisions be made? As we have seen, wetlands have numerous functions, and replicating nature in all its variations and complexities is not just difficulty, it is probably impossible. Most natural wetlands are the result of lengthy geologic and hydrologic processes, and require more or less continuous supplies of water, a balanced regime of sedimentation and erosion, and periodic events (floods, fires, droughts) to interrupt succession sequences (Kusler 1989). Although disturbed restoring wetlands is usually easier than creating new ones, success in restoration / creation depends upon how we are exacting in our demands for replacement.

The idea that the Federal Government Should Avoid behave more consistently and promoting development in environmentally sensitive areas that it is simultaneously trying to protect have not have had its origins with the Coastal Barrier Resources Act of 1982 (CBRA) CBRA but gave a great boost to wider application and adoption of the concept (Doi. gov Reducing

Federal Incentives for Wetland Development). CBRA made any new development projects in designated areas ineligible for most federally financed assistance programs. In the intervening years there have been significant several other pieces of legislation have attempted to correct Which Federal Which financial incentives distort resource allocation to the detriment of wetlands and the environment.

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