

Wetland Policies

By the 1920's, about 70% of the original wetland acreage in the Central Valley had been modified by levees, drainage, and water-diversion projects. Today, it is estimated that California has lost more than 90% of its historical wetlands while remaining wetlands are threatened. Below are some of the policies that prevent and protect against further wetland losses.

No Net Loss

The *no net loss policy* is a mitigation policy goal aiming to prevent and offset the destruction or degradation of wetlands. This policy was adopted as a national goal in 1988. In 1993, California became one of the first states to establish its own *no net loss policy*. This policy established several statewide initiatives including: a statewide wetlands inventory, wetlands conservation planning, improvement of wetland regulatory programs, landowner incentives, wetlands mitigation banking, and development of new wetland programs.

Fish & Game Commission Policies

Wetland Resources

The State Fish and Game Commission policy states:

"...it is the policy of the Fish and Game Commission to seek to provide for the protection, preservation, restoration, enhancement and expansion of wetland habitat in California".

Water

"The quantity and quality of the waters of this state should be apportioned and maintained respectively so as to produce and sustain maximum numbers of fish and wildlife." "...The Department shall inform the State Water Resources Control Board and Regional Water Quality Control Board of water quality problems affecting fish and wildlife and shall seek mutual cooperation in solving such problems."

Wetland Delineation and Mitigation

Filling the Gaps in Wetland Protection

On April 15, 2008, the State Water Resources Control Board adopted Resolution No. 2008-0026, which was a policy to ensure that wetlands and riparian areas remain protected by the State and Regional Water Boards. This was in response to the loss of protection under the federal Clean Water Act which previously included protections for "isolated wetlands" under the "Migratory Bird Rule" which Army Corp of Engineers used for its 404 Dredge and Fill Permits and the Water Board used for its 401 Water Quality Certifications.

Wetland Programs

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Central Valley Joint Venture

A regional partnership focused on the conservation of waterfowl and wetlands under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.

Wildlife Conservation Board

Inland Wetland Conservation Program

Assists in the mission of the Central Valley Joint Venture through acquisition of land or water for wetlands or wildlife friendly agriculture, conservation easements, restoration of public or private lands, or enhancement of existing degraded habitats.

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

Central Valley Project Improvement Act Refuge Water Supply Program

Provides CVP water to Central Valley federal, State, and private managed wetlands to support resident and migratory waterfowl, fish and wildlife resources, and the habitat they depend on.

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Swampbuster Provision

Removes federal Farm Program incentives to those that produce agricultural commodities on converted wetlands.

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program

The Wetland Reserve Easement portion of the program provides technical and financial

assistance directly to private landowners and Indian tribes to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands through the purchase of a wetland reserve easement.

U.S. Army Corp of Engineers

404 Dredge and Fill Permitting

Requires individuals to obtain a permit before discharging dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, including most wetlands.

State Water Resources Control Board

401 Water Quality Certification

Protects all waters, but has special responsibility for wetlands, riparian areas, and headwaters because of their high resource value and are not systematically protected by other programs.

Department of Fish and Wildlife

Comprehensive Wetland Habitat Program

Provides coordination, direction, and funding for many of the Department's wetland habitat programs and activities in the Central Valley.

California Waterfowl Habitat Program (Presley Program)

Provides economic incentives to private landowners who agree to manage their properties in accordance with a wetland management plan developed cooperatively between Department biologists and participating landowners.