

Wetland restrictions

Agency	Implemented by local governments; the Department of Ecology provides technical assistance
Year Established	1989
Relevant Statute	State Hydraulic Code – Hydraulic Project Approval Program (HPA) – 1943; State Water Pollution Control Act (SWPCA) – 1945; Shoreline Management Act (SMA) – 1971; State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) – 1971; Forest Practices Act (FPA) – 1974; Growth Management Act (GMA) – 1990; Wetlands Mitigation Banking (WMB) – 1998; Clean Water Act – 1972
Program Goal	To achieve no net loss in acreage and function of WA's remaining wetlands; and to increase the quantity and quality of Washington's wetlands resource base
Agency Summary	<p>The Department of Ecology implements state and federal laws to protect, restore, and regulate wetlands. Local governments are required to identify and designate wetlands under the Growth Management Act's critical areas regulations. Ecology provides technical assistance for local efforts to adopt wetlands regulations that are based on best available science.</p> <p>Ecology also issues permits for wetland protection and conditions wetland permits to meet state water quality standards.</p> <p>Proposed developments would alter wetlands must go through mitigation sequencing before a permit is issued to identify whether impacts can be avoided or minimized or if compensatory mitigation is needed.</p>
Existing Outcome Measures	<p>Washington State does not currently have a coordinated wetland monitoring or assessment program: each agency (local, state, federal governments) is responsible for monitoring compliance and effectiveness of their mitigation and permit requirements. Local governments may collect data and conduct outcome evaluations.</p> <p>Ecology's draft <i>Coordinated Wetland Monitoring and Assessment Strategy</i> identifies monitoring objectives and questions. Ecology maintains a wetlands database that tracks permits and compensatory mitigation. The agency has a compliance program to verify the success of compensatory mitigation.</p> <p>Ecology's 1992 <i>Wetland Buffers: Use and Effectiveness</i> report summarizes and evaluates scientific literature, an agency survey, and a recent field study on wetland buffer use and effectiveness. Ecology's 2000 <i>Phase 1 Wetland Mitigation Evaluation Study</i> assessed the effectiveness of compensatory wetland mitigation statewide. Ecology's <i>Phase 2 Wetland Mitigation Evaluation Study</i> examined the ecological success of the mitigation projects.</p>
Other benefits identified by agencies	<p>Community: education, tribal input, cultural resources, recreation opportunities</p> <p>Economy: ecosystem services,</p> <p>Environment: aquifer recharge, habitat,</p> <p>Safety: flood management, erosion control, pollution reduction</p>