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July 6, 2011

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Date

## **Wetlands Protection and Preservation**

### **I. Introduction**

#### **A. Purpose**

This Policy Statement directs employees to protect and preserve wetlands, to ensure no net loss of wetlands is caused by department actions, and to increase the quantity and quality of wetlands in the long term.

#### **B. Supersession**

This Policy Statement supersedes and replaces Directive D 31-12 *Washington State Department of Transportation Protection of Wetlands Action Plan* dated August 1, 1990. All references to D 31-12 now reference P 2038.00.

#### **C. What Has Changed**

The format, content, and policy are updated.

### **II. Wetland Policy**

It is the policy of Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to mitigate for adverse effects to wetlands in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order 90-04. Mitigation emphasizes avoiding impacts as a preference, because avoidance has the greatest reliability and is the simplest and most effective way to preserve and protect wetlands.

Employees must:

- Avoid, where practical, any actions that would adversely affect wetlands in planning, designing, constructing, and maintaining the state's transportation system.
- Minimize impacts where it is not possible to avoid wetlands.
- Ensure no net loss of wetlands by compensating for unavoidable impacts using cost-effective and environmentally responsible options.
- Protect, preserve, and maintain wetlands under department stewardship.

**Exceptions:** No part of this policy shall impede or delay emergency work essential to save lives or to protect health and safety.

### III. Information to Carry Out This Policy Statement

Employees must incorporate this policy into the day-to-day operations of the department and the ongoing development of the state's transportation plans and facilities in the following ways:

- **System and Corridor Planning:** Identify areas of potential wetland impact as early as possible in the planning process, to inform project scoping and advance mitigation planning.
- **Project Plan and Scope:** Identify wetlands based on field information and include avoidance measures in scoping. Consider early compensatory mitigation options including wetland banks, in-lieu fee programs, excess mitigation, and other practicable environmentally preferable options that replace lost functions.
- **Design:** Avoid wetlands when practical and employ design innovations to minimize adverse effects.
- **Environmental Review:** Develop compensating mitigation for unavoidable wetland impacts using appropriate interdisciplinary technical expertise.
- **Permits:** Include terms and conditions of permits in contract documents.
- **Construction:** Ensure that construction personnel are aware of requirements for work in, and avoidance of, wetlands. Monitor construction to assure compliance with permits and initiate remedial actions when needed. Implement compensatory mitigation plans, monitor site performance and manage mitigation sites to meet permit conditions.
- **Long-Term Stewardship:** Manage mitigation sites and other department-owned wetlands for long-term stewardship.
- **Record on Right of Way Plans:** Record mitigation sites on right of way plans to ensure long-term protection.

### IV. Contact for More Information

For more information about this Policy Statement, please contact the Environmental Services Office in your organization or Headquarters Environmental Services Office at 360-705-7480.

### V. References

- Governor's Executive Order 89-10 *Protection of Wetlands*  
[www.governor.wa.gov/execorders/eoarchive/eo89-10.htm](http://www.governor.wa.gov/execorders/eoarchive/eo89-10.htm)
- Governor's Executive Order 90-04 *Protection of Wetlands*  
[www.governor.wa.gov/execorders/eoarchive/eo90-04.htm](http://www.governor.wa.gov/execorders/eoarchive/eo90-04.htm)
- WAC 468-12 *State environmental policy act rules*  
<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=468-12>
- Secretary's Executive Order E 1018 *Environmental Policy Statement*  
[wwwi.wsdot.wa.gov/publications/policies/fulltext/1018.pdf](http://wwwi.wsdot.wa.gov/publications/policies/fulltext/1018.pdf)
- Secretary's Executive Order E 1031 *Protections and Connections for High Quality Natural Habitats*  
[wwwi.wsdot.wa.gov/publications/policies/fulltext/1031.pdf](http://wwwi.wsdot.wa.gov/publications/policies/fulltext/1031.pdf)

- *Environmental Procedures Manual* 31-11, Chapter 431  
[www.wsdot.wa.gov/publications/manuals/m31-11.htm](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/publications/manuals/m31-11.htm)

## **VI. Review and Update Requirements**

When changes are necessary to update this document, please inform the Assistant Secretary of Engineering and Regional Operations. The Assistant Secretary for Engineering and Regional Operations periodically reviews and updates this Policy Statement.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information**

Materials can be provided in alternative formats by calling the ADA Compliance Manager at 360-705-7097. Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may contact that number via the Washington Relay Service at 7-1-1.