

EXECUTIVE ORDER 88-03

1988 Wetlands Study

WHEREAS, wetlands 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; and,

WHEREAS, wetlands serve as a transition zone between dry land and water courses, thereby retarding soil erosion and improving water quality through natural filtration and absorption; and,

WHEREAS, wetlands provide essential breeding, spawning, rearing, feeding, nesting, and wintering habitats for a major portion of the state's fish and wildlife; and,

WHEREAS, wetlands maintain surface waters through the gradual release of stored flood waters and ground water, thereby preserving drinking water supplies, particularly during drought periods; and,

WHEREAS, more than fifty percent of the state's original wetlands have been drained, dredged, filled, or otherwise altered and over ninety percent of the original saltwater wetlands in urban estuaries of Puget Sound have been destroyed; and,

WHEREAS, wetlands management is a matter of state concern since benefits and impacts related to wetlands resources are regional or state-wide in scope;

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

Section 1. That in the interest of understanding Washington State's wetlands management and protection needs the Washington Department of Ecology is directed to undertake the following:

A. Define the term "wetlands," including an assessment of this term as applied to regulatory programs throughout the state;

B. Assess the major functions and values of the state's types of wetlands;

C. Determine the need for a state wetlands mitigation policy;

D. Determine the need for increased public information and education;

E. Examine landowner incentive programs that promote wetland preservation and recommendations on how those programs can be improved or expanded;

F. Analyze the existing programs of federal, state, and local agencies that deal with wetlands; and,

G. Propose legislative and other options that can be implemented to reduce adverse impacts to wetlands identified as valuable and threatened.

This study shall be presented to me by November 30, 1988.

Section 2. To assist and advise the Department in Section (1) of this Order, the Director may form a committee co-nposed of representatives of those interests most directly affected by the management of wetlands. Members from each caucus in both the House and Senate may serve as exofficio members of the committee.

Section 3. In addition to the issues identified in Section I of this Order, the Department win work closely with other state and federal agencies to evaluate the extent of Washington's wetlands, including a quantitative assessment of types and sizes; and will also examine the extent of wetlands alteration in the state, including degradation, destruction, creation and restoration, and the activities responsible for such alterations.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the State of Washington to be affixed at Olympia this 9th day of May A.D., Nineteen hundred and eighty-eight.

Booth Gardner
Governor of Washington

BY THE GOVERNOR:

Acting Deputy Secretary of State
