

Resolution to Establish Education and Restoration for Wisconsin Urban Wetlands

1. WHEREAS, Wisconsin pre-settlement had 10 million acres of wetlands which has been reduced by urban and agricultural development to 5.4 million acres; and
2. WHEREAS, the 2017-2018 Wisconsin Legislature proposed a bill to remove protection of 1 million acres of wetlands and but as a result of opposition of conservation and environmental groups like the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, the loss was narrowed to approximately 100,000 acres of urban wetlands; and
3. WHEREAS, wetlands serve a multitude of ecological and economic purposes, including but not limited to, supplying habitat to fish and wildlife including 30% of Wisconsin's endangered species, mitigating floods that have become more prevalent and catastrophic due to the increasing yearly precipitation, and acting as a buffer between the polluted surface runoff and the states' drinking water sources; and
3. WHEREAS, Wisconsin's reliance on wetlands as flood mitigation is clearly represented in the case of Purdue University's case study of wetland filling, citing an acre of wetland sitting one foot deep can hold 330,000 gallons of flood waters; and
4. WHEREAS, the countless dangers associated with the untethered filling of urban wetlands are surpassed only by the safety concerns for Wisconsin residents, 70% of which live within an urban area; and
5. WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation dedicates its work to the preservation and conservation of fish and wildlife habitat, as well as representing those natural communities; and
6. WHEREAS, it would be beneficial to further educate state and local policy makers on the importance of maintaining and developing wetlands for the purpose of protecting fish and wildlife, infrastructure, and the state's general wellbeing; and
7. WHEREAS, in addition to the education of policy makers and the general public of the dangers of wetland filling, establishment and restoration of Wisconsin wetlands would further benefit and mitigate previously listed dangers as well as reducing significant flooding events and local and state costs for the funding and creation of flood protection; and
8. NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation at its annual meeting assembled April 12-13, 2019 in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin support the implementation of outreach programs to educate citizens and policy makers about the importance of wetland management as well as back the creation of new wetlands to preserve Wisconsin's natural and biological beauty; and
9. NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation urges collaborative efforts between the Legislature, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Agriculture, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, as well as other conservation groups to protect, expand and advocate for Wisconsin wetlands, including restoring previous DNR protection for the 100,000 acres of urban wetlands left unprotected by the 2017 Wisconsin Act 183; and

10. NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation supports a goal of creating and developing substantial acreage of urban wetlands for the protection of wildlife and infrastructure over a 20-year period.

Submitted by the Wisconsin Conservation Leadership Corps by:

Jonathan LaValley
Bradley Varner

Advisor: George Meyer
Executive Director
Wisconsin Wildlife Federation

Resources

- [https://www.icip.iastate.edu/tables/population/urban-pct-states\)](https://www.icip.iastate.edu/tables/population/urban-pct-states)
- <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/wetlands/function.html>
- <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/wetlands/acreage.html>
- <https://www.wisbuild.org/news-1/2018/5/01/the-blueprint-plain-english>
- <https://wisconsinwetlands.org/for-communities/why-wetlands/>