

Resolution to Improve Watershed Health Through Wetland Mitigation

Whereas, wetlands are vital to the health of Wisconsin waterways, the numerous species of wildlife that depend on them, and are valuable to people for the suite of services they provide; and

Whereas, Wisconsin has lost one half of its original ten million acres of wetlands due to agricultural, commercial and residential development; and

Whereas, wetland loss has contributed to the decline of watershed health due to the loss of filtration and storage of sediments, and an increased amount of nutrients and toxic substances; and

Whereas, Wisconsin law encourages the avoidance and minimization of adverse impacts to wetland functions; and

Whereas, pursuant to Wisconsin Administrative Rule, NR 1.95 (4) (a), it is state policy to reverse the loss of wetland functions in Wisconsin; and

Whereas, Wisconsin law requires compensatory mitigation to offset permitted wetland loss of wetlands due to filling; and

Whereas, effective mitigation should restore wetland hydrology in reclaimed wetlands in order to promote and restore watershed health; and

Whereas, the state of Wisconsin has a new in-lieu-fee mitigation program and federal guidance states that in-lieu-fee mitigation projects should be planned and developed to address the specific resource needs of a particular watershed; and

Whereas, currently, over 1,500 water bodies in Wisconsin have been designated as water quality impaired and wetland restoration should be used to reduce these impairments.

Now Therefore Be It Resolved, that the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation at its 2016 Annual Meeting on April 8th and 9th, 2016 in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin, urges the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the US Army Corp of Engineers to site in-lieu-fee wetland mitigation projects in order to promote and restore the health of impaired watersheds; and

Now Therefore Be It Further Resolved, that due to the urgency of the problem, the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation asks the agencies to implement this approach as soon as possible.

Submitted by the :

Wisconsin Conservation Leadership Corps:

Jordan Jensen

Kirsten Schmidt

Brenna Witek

Jake Wotnoske