



Wetlands Update on Best Available Science Projects

As part of the Department of Ecology's ongoing efforts to improve wetlands protection in Washington, we are developing several new guidance documents and management tools that incorporate current scientific information. These documents/tools are intended to assist local governments working on updating wetland policies and regulations to include the best available science as required by the Growth Management Act. The following is an update on three projects:

- ❖ **A new effort underway by Ecology to revise two publications** pertaining to regulatory guidance and guidelines for mitigation plans and proposals.
- ❖ **A continuing effort by Ecology to revise the WA State Rating System,**
- ❖ **A continuing effort by Ecology and Fish and Wildlife to synthesize the scientific literature on freshwater wetlands** and develop management options and recommendations.

This Update, from this point on, will be called "Wetlands Update" to encompass various wetland projects undertaken, over time, in which the public may be interested. The subject matter therefore will vary accordingly.

The mailing list, developed through the project synthesizing the science on freshwater wetlands, has been or will be used by those revising the rating system and publications. Notify Dana L. Mock if you no longer want to be on this mailing list (see contact info on the next page).

To reduce costs and use of resources, we are encouraging interested persons, if possible, to receive this Wetlands Update via email. If you received this Update via the postal system, we don't, for some reason, have your email address even if you have sent it to

us in the past. Please send or email it to Dana using the form in this Wetlands Update.

Wetland Publications Being Revised

Are you interested in wetlands, compensatory mitigation & policy? Ecology, through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), is undergoing an effort to update two of its publications. The updates are being completed in coordination with the Seattle Corps of Engineers and the EPA (Region 10). The documents undergoing revision are:

- ❖ ***How Ecology Regulates Wetlands***, January 1997, Publication #97-112 (<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/97112.html>). This policy guidance document provides an overview of the role that Ecology plays in regulating wetlands and the factors that go into the agency's wetland permitting decisions.

- ❖ ***The Guidelines for Developing Freshwater Wetlands Mitigation Plans and Proposals***, March 1994, Publication # 94-29 (<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/94029.html>). This document provides guidance from five state and federal agencies on how to prepare mitigation plans for projects that impact freshwater wetlands.

An important part of revising these documents is your input and review! Ecology would like these documents to be useful tools to applicants and consultants for developing wetland mitigation plans. The ultimate goals are improving the design and implementation of wetland compensatory mitigation and providing clear guidance to streamline the regulatory process when compensatory wetland mitigation is required.

We will be holding two focus group meetings to get public input on the mitigation guidelines. Please sign-up for the focus group meetings by filling out the form in this update or sending an email. See attached flyer for details.

If you would like more information about this project please contact the project coordinator, Dana L. Mock (See contact info on the next page) or visit www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/wet-updatedocs.htm.



Revisions Underway for Wetland Rating System

Ecology is revising the "Washington State Wetland Rating System for Eastern Washington," and we hope to have a final draft available in April or May.

We have started revising the western WA rating system and hope to have a final draft by early fall.

The goal is to have the rating system reflect the best, and most current, science on wetlands and how they function and what is needed to protect them. Neither version of the rating system has been updated recently. The rating system for eastern Washington wetlands has not been revised since its original publication in 1991, while the western Washington rating system was revised in 1993.

The Department's intention in revising the rating system is to maintain the concept of four wetland categories, while adding refinements that reflect the progress we have made in understanding how wetlands function and are valued. Five of the original seven criteria for categorization (sensitivity to disturbance, rarity, local significance, ability to replace them, and the functions they provide) have been kept.

For those interested in the latest version, the draft revision of the system for Eastern Washington can be obtained by downloading three pdf files from our web site at www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/0206019a.html. *Comments or questions can be sent to Tom Hruby at the Department of Ecology, or write via e-mail at thru461@ecy.wa.gov. If you want to talk directly, give Tom a call at (360) 407-7274.*

Draft of Synthesis of the Science Available in Early Spring

In late April, Ecology and state Fish and Wildlife will be distributing a draft of *Freshwater Wetlands in Washington State: Volume 1 - A Synthesis of the Science for peer and public review*. The two agencies (with funding and assistance by EPA) and Sheldon and Associates are developing the document. They will also produce a second volume, at a later date, containing management options and recommendations based on the scientific literature.

Volume 1 will contain a synthesis of the literature pertaining to:

- ❖ Freshwater wetlands in Washington and how they function.
- ❖ The effects of human activities on freshwater wetlands and their functions.
- ❖ The tools used to protect and manage freshwater wetlands and their functions.

The tools will include the science regarding planning tools, buffers, rating, compensatory mitigation, and non-regulatory options. Volume 1 will also explain the methods used to obtain and synthesize the literature.

We invite you to comment on the draft synthesis. You can obtain a draft of Volume 1 for review in one of three ways:
1) Downloading it from our web site after it is posted at www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/bas_wetlands.
2) Receiving a CD.
3) Receiving a hard copy.

We encourage you to download the document from our web-page when it is posted to save on postage and other resources. The draft will be approximately 300 pages of text with graphics and tables in a PDF format. The PDF file may, therefore, be fairly large.

We will email an announcement to those on our mailing list for whom we have an email address when Volume 1 is posted on the web site. Please send your email address or the form in this update to Dana Mock if you want to receive the announcement and your email is not in our system. If you received this Update via the postal system, we don't, for some reason, have your email address even if you have sent it to us in the past.

If you want to receive a CD or hard copy of the draft of the synthesis please send in the form in this Update, or email Dana Mock, to notify us which you need. The file on the CD will be in Microsoft Word.

We will NOT be sending out an announcement via the postal system. When the draft document is ready for review, we will automatically mail a CD or hard copy to those that request them now.

You will have a month to review the draft of the synthesis and provide comments. We will provide instructions, include a short questionnaire and invite you to submit additional written comments. We will revise the document after reviewing your comments. We expect that the final synthesis will be available sometime in mid-summer.

For more information, go to our web site at www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/bas_wetlands or contact Teri Granger at or 360-407-6857, email tgra461@ecy.wa.gov.

Complete these forms per your interest and mail or email to the address in the box below.

Freshwater Wetlands in Washington: Volume 1 – A Synthesis of the Science

- Please email me an announcement when the draft of *Freshwater Wetlands in Washington: Volume 1 – A Synthesis of the Science* is ready for review and available on the web. I do not want a hard copy or CD.

My email address is: _____

- Please send me a hard copy of *Freshwater Wetlands in Washington: Volume 1 – A Synthesis of the Science* via the postal system when the draft is ready for review. (Provide your address below if not on the mailing list.)
- Please send me a CD of *Freshwater Wetlands in Washington: Volume 1 – A Synthesis of the Science* via the postal system when the draft is ready for review. (Provide your address below if not on the mailing list.)

Focus Groups: Wetland Publication Revisions

I would like to attend the following meeting(s) of focus groups discussing revisions to the two Ecology publications:

- March 11th 2003 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM Seattle
- April 8th 2003 1:30 PM – 4:30 PM Moses Lake

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Mailing List

- Someone passed this on to me and I am not on your mailing list. Please add me using the information below.

Name: _____

Organization: _____

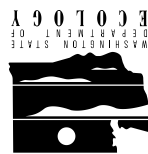
Address: _____

Phone: _____ *Email: _____

**To reduce costs and resources*

- You must not have my email address. Please send me these Wetland Updates and other communiqués via email.

If you require this document in alternative format, please contact Dana L. Mock at 360-407-6947 (Voice) or 711 or 1-800-833-6388 (TTY).



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