

Chapter NR 1

NATURAL RESOURCES BOARD POLICIES

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NR 1.01 Great Lakes fishery management. (1) In accordance with the Conservation Act (23.09, Wis. Stats.) and other legislative direction, the policy of the natural resources board is to provide a flexible system for the protection, development and utilization of the waters and fish populations of the Great Lakes for the maximum public benefit.

(a) Since management of the Great Lakes is a matter of intrastate, interstate, federal and international interest, cooperation shall be sought in developing management objectives and measures for stocks of common concern.

(b) The Great Lakes fisheries are to be considered part of a diverse community in the environment of man. It is the policy of the natural resources board to promote efforts which will maintain and enhance the quality of this community and its environment.

(c) Management of the fishery resources shall be based on a sound understanding of the dynamics of interacting fish stocks. To this end, it is the policy of the natural resources board to encourage research, inventories of the resource base, and collection of harvest and utilization statistics on which to base management decisions.

(d) The fishery resources of the Great Lakes, though renewable, experience dynamic changes and are limited. The resources shall be managed in accordance with sound biological principles to attain optimum sustainable utilization. Management measures may include but are not limited to seasons, bag and quota limits, limitations on the type and amount of fishing gear, limitation as to participation in the fisheries and allocation of allowable harvest among various users.

History: Cr. Register, March, 1976, No. 243, eff. 4-1-76.

Register, March, 1978, No. 267

NR 1.015 The management of wildlife, preamble. (1) The conservation act (section 23.09(1), Wis. Stats.) requires the department of natural resources to provide an adequate and flexible system for the protection, development and use of forests, fish and game, lakes, streams, plant life, flowers and other outdoor resources in this state. Specific authorities and missions of the department for wildlife protection and use besides the general authority are:

- (a) Protect and manage nongame species, particularly endangered, threatened and uncommon species;
- (b) Acquire and lease lands;
- (c) Conduct research and surveys;
- (d) Establish long-range resource management plans and priorities;
- (e) Manage wildlife habitat on public land;
- (f) Provide regulations to govern the harvest of game species and furbearing mammals;
- (g) Establish resource management information and education programs; and
- (h) Propagate wildlife.

(2) The primary goal of wildlife management is to provide healthy life systems necessary to sustain Wisconsin's wildlife populations for their biological, recreational, cultural and economic values. Wildlife management is the application of knowledge in the protection, enhancement and regulation of wildlife resources for their contribution toward maintaining the integrity of the environment and for the human benefits they provide.

(a) The department's wildlife program ranges from endangered and threatened species management to the production of huntable game. At its best, wildlife management is a process that requires a considerable degree of harmony between people and land to provide the quality landscapes and diverse habitats necessary to produce and support all types of wildlife.

(b) Public concern for the welfare of wildlife resources can help to instill a land ethic in what has become a predominantly urban population. Public support for the maintenance of native or near-natural plant communities, as necessary wildlife habitat, indirectly assures continued opportunities for a whole range of human interactions with nature that goes well beyond hunting or wildlife-oriented recreation.

(c) The department's wildlife management program is financed in large part by user contributions, particularly license fees and excise taxes on selected equipment purchased by hunters; however, management programs directed at hunted game species provide very significant indirect benefits for a wide range of other wildlife. New sources of funds are needed to supplement the existing financial base and

for daily entrance to state parks and forest areas and shall be stipulated prior to the granting of state aid. Fees shall not be increased without the written approval of the department.

History: Cr. Register, April, 1975, No. 232, ed. 5-1-75; renun. from NR 1.32, Register, October, 1977, No. 262, ed. 11-1-77.

NR 1.95 Wetland preservation, restoration and management. (1) PURPOSE. The natural resources board adopts this statement to establish necessary guidelines for conservation and restoration of Wisconsin wetlands by setting wetland management objectives and by protecting them from:

- (a) The adverse effects of dredging, drainage or filling;
- (b) Pollution from wastewater, solid waste and nonpoint sources; and
- (c) Degradation by other physical, chemical or biological means.

(2) **BACKGROUND.** (a) Wetlands offer special natural values which are becoming increasingly important to the citizens of this state and to the nation and as a result warrant extraordinary protection. Wetlands are an essential part of the environment and support many species of flora and fauna. They provide critical habitat for marsh and bog plants, and often are the only suitable sanctuary and nursery area for fish and wildlife populations. The very existence of some species is now endangered or threatened because of wetland destruction. Wetlands moderate extremes in waterflow, aid in the natural purification of water, shield shores from wave action and are a protective link with the groundwater. They offer unique educational opportunities in the natural sciences, add aesthetic diversity to the landscape, and also produce an abundance of harvestable resources. Wetlands support adjacent or downstream environments and much of the complex web of life that is the essence of a quality environment.

(b) Protection of wetlands and their natural functions requires that any development be carefully planned and pollution from construction activities be controlled to prevent significant disturbance or impairment of the quality of the wetland area. Alteration of the quality or quantity of the historical, natural flow of water that nourishes the wetland should be minimized.

(c) Wetlands span a continuum of environments integrating land and water systems. Plant succession and other biological adjustments are constantly underway in response to the wetness conditions. Human activity often interjects a permanent change toward an altered environment, so that a concerted management effort is required to assure that the many benefits of wetlands will be maintained. Alterations or supporting measures performed in the course of an improvement plan require judgment so as not to maximize single benefits to the exclusion of other natural values or to risk environmental degradation. Within limits, wetlands can be managed for various objectives including:

- 1. Preservation of natural conditions;
- 2. Restoration of a former natural state; or
- 3. Enhancement of special values.

(3) **DEFINITION.** Wetlands are here defined as those land areas characterized by surface water or saturated soils during at least a part of the

growing season such that moist soil vegetation or shallow water plants can thrive. The permanent channels of streams and rivers and the open water areas of lakes and reservoirs are not included in this definition.

(4) **ACQUISITION AND MAINTENANCE.** (a) The department shall in its land acquisition program place a particular emphasis on the acquisition of wetlands that provide quality fish and wildlife habitat, significantly affect the maintenance or improvement of water quality, or exhibit value as scientific areas.

(b) For wetlands under its management and control, the department shall:

1. Preserve and protect them from harmful effects by every lawful means.

2. Recognize their obvious and subtle natural values in preparing management plans and take all reasonable steps to minimize harmful effects.

(c) In order to foster the maintenance and protection of Wisconsin's other wetlands, the department shall:

1. Support protective legislation designed to foster public involvement, review and control in all types of wetland development decisions.

2. Cooperate in wetland inventories and the preparation of essential wetland information to include research where needed to facilitate governmental and private management programs.

3. Encourage local units of government to purchase and protect wetlands important to community interests.

4. Support incentive practices that encourage voluntary protection of privately-owned wetlands and adjacent areas.

5. Cooperate with all local, state and national agencies and groups concerned with wetland conservation to accomplish the foregoing objectives.

6. Conduct and encourage educational programs to increase citizen understanding of the importance of wetlands as a part of our natural ecosystems.

7. As a matter of public policy, not grant permits that alter/destroy wetlands conditioned upon conveyance of land to local units of government, the state of Wisconsin or the federal government, except as specifically approved by the board.

(5) **EXERCISE OF EXISTING REGULATORY AUTHORITY.** The department shall fully exercise all of its authority under the law to:

(a) Minimize adverse changes in the quality or quantity of the flow of waters that nourish wetlands.

(b) Protect wetlands from all environmentally incompatible uses, activities and substances.

(c) Restore wetlands which were unlawfully altered.

History: Cr. Register, March, 1978, No. 267, eff. 4-1-78.