



1 Wetlands Protection - Overview

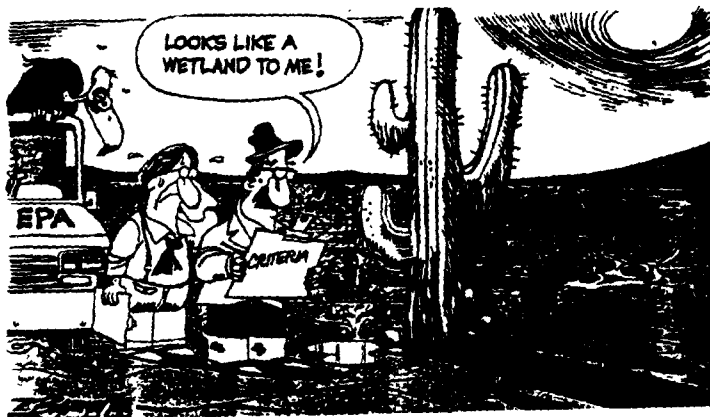
Over the past few years, the issue of wetlands protection seems to come up everywhere you turn. It's in the newspapers and on T.V. and radio news and talk shows.



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Why all the fuss?

Wetlands are the link between water and land. "Wetlands" is the collective term for marshes, swamps, bogs, and similar areas found in flat vegetated areas, in depressions in the landscape, and between dry land and water along the edges of streams, rivers, lakes, and coastlines. However, water may be on the surface for only a short time and look dry the rest of the year, making it hard to "know it when you see it." The unrecognized "natural" values of wetlands have historically competed with their obvious value as "dry" land converted for purposes such as development or agriculture.



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We now realize that wetlands are important and valuable ecosystems. They are home to many beautiful and rare species. They filter runoff and adjacent surface waters to protect the quality of our lakes, bays and rivers. Wetlands also protect many of our sources of drinking water. They are the source of many commercially and recreationally valuable species of fish, shellfish and wildlife. They retain flood waters and protect shorelines from erosion.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) needs partners—including you—to help protect wetland resources. This collection of fact sheets offers some basic information about wetlands and the programs that affect them. Sources of more specific information are listed and the EPA WETLANDS INFORMATION HOTLINE (contractor operated) is there for everyone.

For more information, contact the EPA Wetlands Information Hotline at 1-800-832-7828 (contractor operated).



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77 West Jackson Boulevard, 12th Fl
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