

SUBJECT: Wisconsin Wetland Strategy - Reversing the Loss

FOR: MAY **BOARD MEETING**

TO BE PRESENTED BY: Cherie Hagen, Wetland Team Leader

SUMMARY:

At the request of the Natural Resources Board, the department Wetland Team developed and released the first wetland strategy in December of 2000 titled Reversing the Loss - A Strategy for Protecting & Restoring Wetlands in Wisconsin. The initial strategy outlined department goals and performance measures for 2001 - 2007. In an effort to update our goals and performance measures the strategy was updated by an expanded Wetland Team consisting of department staff and wetland partners. Wetland partners on the team include: U.S. EPA, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. FWS, WI Coastal Management Program, WDOT, DATCP, UW-Extension, Southeastern Regional Planning Commission, Natural Resources Foundation, WI Wetlands Association, WI Wildlife Federation, WI Waterfowl Association and Ducks Unlimited.

The team's goal was to develop a statewide wetland strategy with a common vision for Wisconsin's wetland resources. The updated strategy is titled Reversing the Loss - A Strategy to Protect, Restore, & Explore Wisconsin Wetlands. This document provides a broad statewide wetland strategy that can guide DNR, wetland partners and anyone interested in reversing the loss of Wisconsin's wetlands. To implement the strategy the team has created 2-year actions plans outlining specific goals and actions DNR and team members will take to achieve our vision. Biennial reports will be prepared to report on the team's progress and accomplishments.

The updated strategy is consistent with the first Reversing the Loss the Natural Resources Board approved and adopted as policy in Section NR 1.95, Wisconsin Administrative Code. Therefore, an amendment to NR 1.95 is not anticipated. For additional background, attached is an outline of the updated strategy.

RECOMMENDATION: Information Item

Note:
Updated Strategy was not available at the time of this posting.

LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS:

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|---|----------|
| No <input type="checkbox"/> | Fiscal Estimate Required | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Attached |
| No <input type="checkbox"/> | Environmental Assessment or Impact Statement Required | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Attached |
| No <input type="checkbox"/> | Background Memo | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Attached |

APPROVED:

Susan Sylvester

Bureau Director

for [Signature]

Administrator

[Signature]

Secretary Matt Frank

cc Laurie J Ross

5-22-08
Date

5/22/08
Date

5/22/08
Date

DATE: May 22, 2008

TO: Natural Resources Board

FROM: Matthew Frank, Secretary 

SUBJECT: Reversing the Loss – An Update to the Wisconsin Wetland Strategy

History:

In the late 1990's former Natural Resources Board Member, Betty Jo Nelson, asked about the department's vision and goals for protecting and restoring Wisconsin wetlands. At the time, the department did not have a "big picture" strategy for wetlands. The Wetland Team was assigned to develop a department vision and goals for protecting and restoring wetlands. In December of 2000 the initial wetland strategy, *Reversing the Loss – A Strategy for Protecting & Restoring Wetlands in Wisconsin*, was released. In 2001 the Natural Resources Board codified the wetland strategy as policy in section NR 1.95 of Wisconsin Administrative Code.

Why update the wetland strategy?

The initial strategy was a six-year plan that outlined actions for the department from 2001 through 2007. With a number of accomplishments made, changing conditions, and new relationships, it was time to revisit the wetland strategy.

How is the new wetland strategy different from the first?

When revisiting the initial strategy it was evident that the department could not possibly carry out all that is needed to reverse the loss of Wisconsin wetlands alone. Many accomplishments of the initial strategy were done in collaboration with partners. So the natural approach for the second edition of *Reversing the Loss* was to create a broad statewide wetland strategy with a common vision for wetlands that the department could use to guide its work plans as well as other interested wetland partners. This approach resulted in expansion of the Wetland Team beyond department staff to include wetland partners from federal, state and regional agencies, as well as conservation organizations. And Wisconsin Builders and Realtors Associations have signed on as supporting organizations.

We have made considerable progress in protecting and restoring wetlands while improving the efficiency and consistency of our regulatory process. As we address the issue of wetland protection and development in the state, we will continue our efforts to work with all of the team members and supporters of the strategy to ensure a strong wetland protection program as part of a strong, growing economy. The broad support for the Wetland Strategy demonstrates that both of these goals, so important to Wisconsin, can be achieved by working in partnership.

Strategy Overview:

The strategy consists of three major approaches – Protect, Restore and Explore and outlines eight strategic objectives to achieve our vision. The Department will develop 2-year Action Plans outlining specific goals and actions for its staff, including agreed-upon actions with partners and supporters, to implement the strategy and make progress toward achieving reversing the loss. Biennial reports will outline our

progress. Progress will be measured by:

- regaining wetlands historically lost by acreage, type and function;
- preserving and protecting remaining wetlands;
- avoiding and minimizing new wetland loss; and
- restoring biodiversity, health and function to degraded wetlands.