

WAC 173-158-080 Wetlands management. Wetlands are areas of great natural productivity and hydrological utility, providing natural flood control, flood desynchronization, and flow stabilization of rivers and streams. The unrestricted use and development of wetlands will destroy many of these beneficial qualities which directly affect human health and safety during flood events. The piecemeal alteration and destruction of wetlands through draining, dredging, filling and other means has an adverse cumulative impact on their ability to reduce flood damages.

Communities should, to the maximum extent possible, seek to avoid the short and long term adverse impacts associated with the destruction or modification of wetlands, especially those activities which limit or disrupt the ability of the wetland to ameliorate flooding impacts. Proposals for development within special flood hazard areas (base flood plains) should be reviewed for their possible impacts on wetlands located within the flood plain. Communities should ensure that development activities in or around wetlands do not negatively affect public safety, health, and welfare by disrupting the wetlands' ability to reduce flood and storm hazards.

Communities may request technical assistance from the department of ecology in identifying wetland areas. Existing wetland map information from the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) can be used in conjunction with the community's FIRM to prepare an overlay zone indicating critical wetland areas deserving special attention. Local wetlands management strategies can also be developed which will preserve these valuable areas.

[Statutory Authority: Chapter 86.16 RCW. WSR 88-10-058 (Order 88-6), § 173-158-080, filed 5/4/88.]