



## WETLANDS FACT SHEET #27

# What is a State Wetland Conservation Plan?

A new tool that States are using to protect wetlands is the State Wetland Conservation Plan (SWCP). A State Wetland Conservation Plan is not meant to create a new level of bureaucracy. Instead, it improves government and private sector effectiveness and efficiency by identifying gaps in wetland protection programs and finding opportunities to make wetlands programs work even better.

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*SWCP's are strategies for States to achieve no net loss and other wetland management goals by integrating both regulatory and cooperative approaches to protecting wetlands.*

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## Advantages

A large number of land and water-based activities impact wetlands. These activities are not addressed by any single Federal, State or local agency program. While many public and private programs and activities protect wetlands, these programs are often limited in scope and not well coordinated. Neither do these programs address all of the problems affecting wetlands.

States are well positioned between Federal and local government to take the lead in integrating and expanding wetland protection and management programs. They are experienced in managing Federally mandated environmental programs under the Clean Water Act and the Coastal Zone Management Act. They are uniquely equipped to help resolve local and regional conflicts and identify the local economic and geographic factors that may influence wetlands protection.

## What are States doing?



Currently, nineteen States are at various stages of developing an SWCP and have received financial assistance from EPA.

- Michigan's SWCP will focus primarily on non-regulatory aspects of wetlands management to complement their regulatory programs. Initiatives will be developed for wetland water quality, reclamation of valuable wetland functions, coordination of existing wetland protection and management efforts, and wetland education and outreach.

- California plans through its SWCP to inventory its wetlands, identify crucial wetlands, develop a statewide strategy to plan wetlands protection and restoration, and take a crucial role in overall wetland regulation.

- New York will work towards a "no net loss/net gain" goal under its SWCP. Because one purpose of an SWCP is to integrate wetlands protection into other programs, wetland issues and references to the SWCP have been integrated into several State programs.

Other States working on SWCP's include: MO, TN, DE, NJ, ND, OH, OK, OR, TX, AL, AR, IL, MT, NE, VT, WA.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- See the Statewide Wetlands Strategies guidebook, which is available from Island Press (1-800-828-1302).
- Call the EPA Wetlands Hotline\* at 1-800-832-7828.
- Ask for copies of the SWCP brochure "Why Develop a State Wetland Conservation Plan?" from the hotline\*.

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