

# California Native Plant Society

## STATEMENT OF POLICY – WETLANDS

Adopted August 1991

Concerns Relating To Conservation Of Wetlands:

The California Native Plant Society is concerned that:

WHEREAS wetlands support an important component of the flora of California and consist of many diverse types such as coastal and inland saltmarshes, brackish marshes, freshwater marshes, alkali marshes, alkali meadows, freshwater meadows, bogs, fens, riparian woodlands and forests, riparian scrubs, lake margins, vernal pools, seasonally wet swales and ponds, seeps and springs, and desert washes;

WHEREAS wetlands of all types and sizes provide valuable biological functions, such as: providing habitat for fish and aquatic wildlife, providing foraging habitat or water for terrestrial wildlife and birds, absorbing flood waters, reducing erosion and protecting upland sites, recharging aquifers, cleansing pollutants from California's waters, providing aesthetic values, providing unique plant assemblages and associations, and habitat for many rare species of plants and wildlife;

WHEREAS wetlands of all types have been greatly reduced from historic extent and are being lost or adversely impacted at a rapid rate throughout California;

WHEREAS wetlands are not provided legal protection except incidentally from laws and regulations enacted for other purposes; and

WHEREAS artificial creation of wetlands to mitigate for impacts to natural wetlands ecosystems is unproven and largely unsuccessful in providing all of the functions and values of the natural ecosystem, and in certain instances, has potential to damage existing wetlands;

The California Native Plant Society:

HEREBY supports all efforts to preserve and conserve wetlands of all types;

HEREBY opposes projects that adversely affect wetlands of any type unless there is a demonstrated net gain, in-kind, of wetlands prior to project impacts;

HEREBY recommends avoidance of impacts to wetlands;

HEREBY discourages the use of mitigation banks as wetlands mitigation except as a last resort and no other alternatives are available;

HEREBY urges full enforcement of all laws and regulations concerning wetlands that are consistent with CNPS policies and purposes;

HEREBY supports and recommends enactment of federal and state legislation to protect all wetlands;

HEREBY supports and recommends state and local government adoption of policies and ordinances to protect and conserve all types of wetlands; and





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HEREBY adopts definition of wetlands as follows:

"Wetlands are lands transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface or the land is covered by shallow water. Wetlands must have one or more of the following three attributes: (1) at least periodically, the land supports predominantly hydrophytes, (2) the substrate is predominantly undrained hydric soil, and (3) the substrate is nonsoil and is saturated with water or covered by shallow water at some time during the growing season each year." (adopted from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States, 1979).

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