

California WETLAND AND RIPARIAN AREA PROTECTION POLICY

Purpose

**Provide comparable protection to all types of wetlands
“Wetland Definition”**

**Protect and restore wetlands that support the beneficial uses of
all aquatic resources in a watershed
“Watershed Approach”**

**Streamline regulatory and voluntary controls
with monitoring and assessment
“Integrated Reporting to the Public”**



A Phased Approach to Development and Implementation

Phase 1: Wetland Definition and Dredge/Fill Review Procedures

Phase 2: Water Quality Control Plan for Wetlands (“WQ Standards”)

Phase 3: Implementation Guidance for Aquatic (“*Riparian*”) Buffers

Science Threads

Sustain, improve and report the abundance, diversity, and condition of aquatic resources in a watershed area – “Watershed Profile”

Use a 3-level assessment approach when implementing controls and reporting their effectiveness – “Including CRAM”



DRAFT

WATER QUALITY CONTROL POLICY

for

**Wetland Area Protection and Dredge and Fill
Permitting**

STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD

PHASE 1

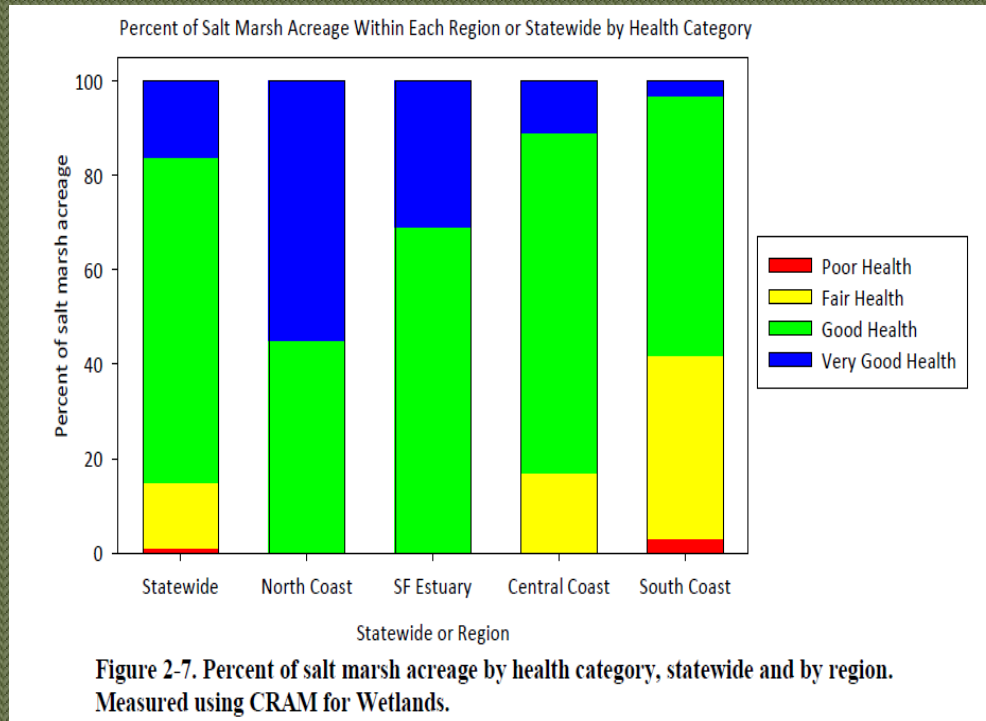
Definition: An area is wetland if, under normal circumstances, (1) the area has continuous or recurrent saturation of the upper substrate caused by groundwater, or shallow surface water, or both; (2) the duration of such saturation is sufficient to cause anaerobic conditions in the upper substrate; and (3) the area either lacks vegetation or the vegetation is dominated by hydrophytes.

Procedures: Complement federal procedures including use of wetland area delineation manuals, and watershed approach for mitigation determinations. State procedures apply to all waters of the state, including “isolated wetlands.”

PHASE 2 – WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN FOR WETLANDS

(“WATER QUALITY STANDARDS”)

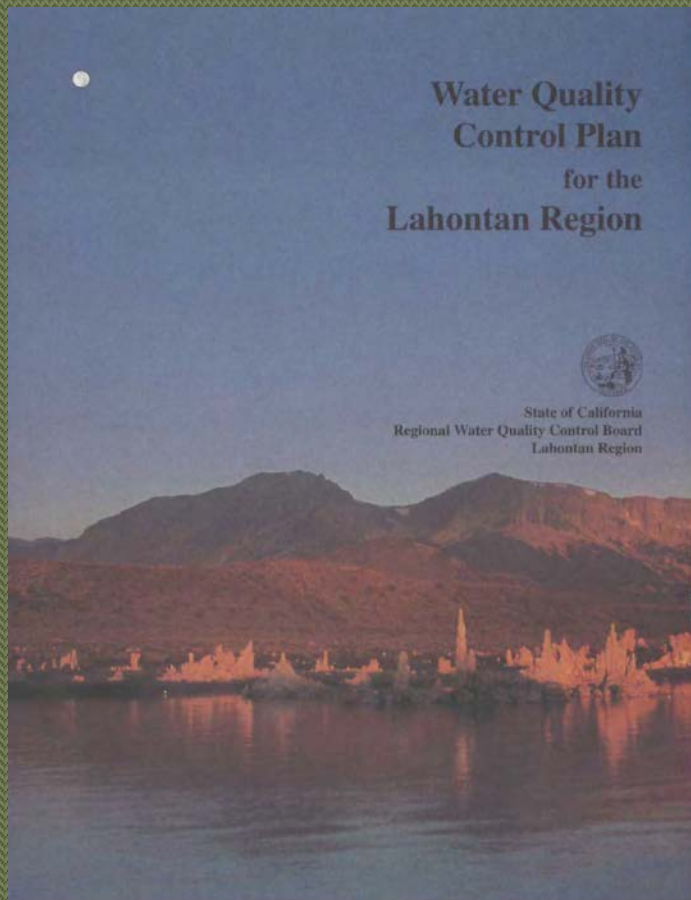
Beneficial Uses: Uses applicable to all wetland types: Wetland habitat, water quality enhancement and hydrology support.



Water Quality Objectives: Narrative expressions of wetland attributes, and based on least-disturbed reference condition (biotic structure, physical structure, chemical constituents, hydrological regime)

Assessment Framework: A “benchmark” for attainment of objectives accounts both ambient condition and reference condition within a region. A “numeric translation of narrative objectives can be used e.g., CRAM scoring.

PHASE 2 – WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN FOR WETLANDS (Implementation Strategy)



Adopt wetland water quality objectives (WWQOs) within Basin Plans: (1) Basin plans would describe an approach for reporting the condition of wetlands and for reporting wetlands that do not meet water quality objectives (*link to CWA integrated reporting guidance*)

(2) Basin plans would describe how existing waste discharge permits, requirements and waivers for stormwater runoff, erosion and sedimentation will be applied to the protection of wetlands. They would describe general measures used to sustain and, as needed, recover beneficial uses. Aquatic resource buffers are an example of a type of control measure. Controls may be regulatory and voluntary in nature.

PHASE 3 – WQS Implementation Guidance for Aquatic (“Riparian”) Buffers

Early “scoping” and “pilot projects”
Balance of regulatory and voluntary controls
Use of web-enabled GIS mapping tools

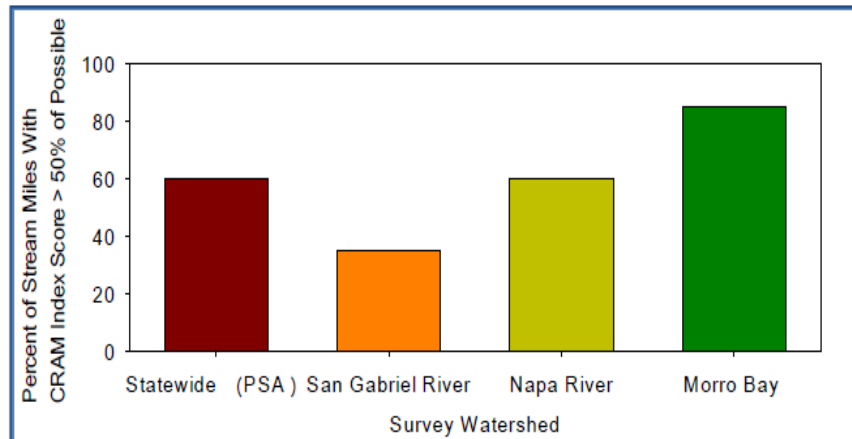


Figure 2-8. Percent of stream miles with riparian habitat in the fair-excellent health scoring range.

California
WETLAND AND RIPARIAN AREA PROTECTION
POLICY
Next Steps

- 1) Close coordination with Corps of Engineers and EPA
- 2) Public notification of draft Phase 1 Policy
- 3) Training of Regional Board staff in collaboration with the California Wetland Monitoring Workgroup
- 4) “Pilot projects” for Phase 2 refinement and Phase 3 scoping
- 5) Public reporting of wetland condition and program effectiveness (*“EcoAtlas”*)

California WETLAND AND RIPARIAN AREA PROTECTION POLICY Follow Our Progress – Advice Always Welcomed

Search

“California Wetland Policy”

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the California State Water Resources Control Board website. The page title is "Clean Water Act Section 401 – Certification and Wetlands Program". The main heading is "WETLAND AND RIPARIAN AREA PROTECTION POLICY". The text on the page states: "As directed by the State Water Board in Resolution No. 2009-0026, the Wetland and Riparian Area Protection Policy is being implemented in three phases which will allow for necessary infrastructure and program development. The current Phase 1 effort is now called the 'Wetland Area Protection and Dredge and Fill Permitting Policy.' The purpose of Phase 1 is to protect all waters of the State, including wetlands, from dredge and fill discharges. It includes a wetland definition and associated delineation methods, an assessment framework for collecting and reporting aquatic resource information, and requirements applicable to discharges of dredged or fill material. Phases 2 and 3 are not under consideration at this time. Current efforts on Phase 1 are focused on developing a Draft Program Environmental Impact Report and accompanying draft policy and draft regulation text." The page also features a "Quick Links" section with links to "Announcements", "Recent Events", "Historical Events", "Technical Advisory Team", "Related Information", and "More Information". The "Announcements" section lists three items: "2012 September – Technical Memoranda 2, 3 and 4 have been revised in response to peer review comments and other comments", "2012 May – Wetlands: Frequently Asked Questions", and "2012 March 9 – Preliminary Draft Wetland Area Protection Policy". The "Recent Events" section lists "2011 December 22 – CRAM Peer Review and Staff Comments".



*Yolo Wildlife Area and the Sacramento Skyline
(C. Vouchilas, Department of Fish and Game)*