

PARKS AND WILDLIFE CODE

TITLE 2. PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT

CHAPTER 14. POWERS AND DUTIES CONCERNING WETLANDS

SUBCHAPTER A. GENERAL POWERS AND DUTIES

Sec. 14.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

(1) "Department" means the Parks and Wildlife Department.

(2) "Land office" means the General Land Office.

(3) "Mitigation" means the sequential process of avoiding impacts to wetlands, minimizing impacts to wetlands, and providing compensation for losses to wetlands.

(4) "State-owned coastal wetlands" mean wetlands owned by state agencies underlying or adjacent to tidal waters.

Added by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 265, Sec. 3, eff. June 5, 1991.

Sec. 14.002. STATE-OWNED WETLAND CONSERVATION PLAN. (a) The department and the land office, in conjunction, shall develop and adopt a State Wetlands Conservation Plan for state-owned coastal wetlands. The Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission and other state agencies and local governments shall assist in developing and implementing the plan. The department and the land office shall consult with federal agencies in developing and adopting the plan.

(b) The plan shall include:

(1) a definition of the term "wetlands" consistent to the greatest extent practicable with the definition under Subchapter J, Chapter 11, Water Code, and federal law;

(2) a policy framework for achieving a goal of no overall net loss of state-owned coastal wetlands, which framework shall include monitoring and enforcement of the no overall net loss policy;

(3) provisions for an inventory of state-owned coastal wetlands to determine gains and losses in areal extent, wetland types, wetland function, and the causes of wetlands alterations;

(4) provisions for an inventory of sites for

compensatory mitigation, enhancement, restoration, and acquisition priorities;

(5) clarification and unification of wetland mitigation policies within the department, the land office, and the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, and other state agencies and subdivisions;

(6) development of guidelines and regulations for mitigation done in advance for losses due to possible future development and for which credit may be received when such future development occurs;

(7) evaluation of requirements of freshwater inflow to estuaries that affect state-owned coastal wetlands;

(8) preparations for a long-range navigational dredging and disposal plan, in consultation with the Texas Department of Transportation, port authorities, and navigation districts, including the recommendations set out in the department's Texas Outdoor Recreation Plan;

(9) provisions for scientific studies examining the effects of boat traffic in sensitive coastal wetland areas and for education of the public with regard to the effects of boating in wetlands and proper nondamaging boating techniques;

(10) provisions to encourage the reduction of nonpoint source pollution of coastal wetlands, bays, and estuaries, in consultation with the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, including the monitoring and adoption of nonpoint source pollution standards as they are developed by authorized state and federal agencies;

(11) development of a networking strategy to improve coordination among existing federal and state agencies with respect to coastal wetland permitting, review, and protection responsibilities, including the assessment of current state agency permitting and other processes concerning coastal wetlands;

(12) a public education program on wetlands with the responsibility for the production of such material to be jointly that of the land office and the department;

(13) participation in the establishment of a National Wetlands Information Center by the federal government;

(14) evaluation of the feasibility and effect of sediment bypassing from reservoirs to bays and estuaries;

(15) consideration of sea level rise as it relates to coastal wetlands;

(16) provisions consistent with the department's Texas Wetlands Plan;

(17) a plan to acquire coastal wetlands, following the guidelines provided for in Subchapter G, Chapter 33, Natural Resources Code; and

(18) any other matter affecting state-owned coastal wetlands.

(c) The department and the land office shall submit the plan to the Parks and Wildlife Commission and the School Land Board for review, comments, and approval.

(d) Following approval of the plan, the Parks and Wildlife Commission and the School Land Board shall adopt rules, policies, standards, and guidelines to implement the plan fully.

Added by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 265, Sec. 3, eff. June 5, 1991.

Amended by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 76, Sec. 11.279, eff. Sept. 1, 1995; Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 165, Sec. 22(64), eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

Sec. 14.003. GIFTS AND GRANTS. The department and the land office may apply for, request, solicit, contract for, receive, and accept gifts, grants, donations, and other assistance from any source to carry out the powers and duties provided by this subchapter.

Added by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 265, Sec. 3, eff. June 5, 1991.