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# Priorities for State Wetland Programs in the New Administration: Association of State Wetland Managers Position Paper

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The Association of State Wetland Managers, Inc. ("ASWM") issued a document titled:

*Priorities for State Wetland Programs in the New Administration ("Priorities Paper")*

ASWM describes itself as a "nonprofit membership organization established in 1983 to promote and enhance protection and management of wetland resources, to promote application of sound science to wetland management efforts and to provide training and education for its members and the public."

The Priorities Paper states by way of introductory summary that:

- Just over half of the wetlands in the lower 48 states have been lost through conversion to upland or open water since the American Revolution
- Wetlands make up an estimated 5% of the surface area of the lower 48 states
- The remaining wetlands deliver important natural ecosystem services that benefit all Americans including:
  - the ability to maintain and improve water quality
  - soak up excess stormwater runoff
  - reduce flood damages
  - replenish drinking water supplies
  - buffer damage from storm surges along coastlines
  - maintain healthy and abundant fish and wildlife populations
- Wetland protection and restoration has been shown to be a viable tool to reduce harmful algal blooms plaguing the nation's waterbodies resulting in lost recreational opportunities/impacting public drinking water supplies
- A 2011 report estimates that the loss of wetlands in the U.S. since the 1950's has resulted in an economic loss of more than \$81 billion in wetland related ecosystem services

The priorities ASWM identify include:

- Supporting open communications between Federal and State Agencies
- Encouraging state assumption of the Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit Program
- Fully funding Clean Water Act programs including Wetland Program Development Grants

- Offering technical support and training to state wetland programs to deliver effective and efficient permitting that ensures compliance with state water quality requirements and other applicable standards
- Providing accurate maps of the nation's aquatic resources
- Leveraging opportunities to reduce pollution and natural hazards, protect drinking water, and reduce costs through natural infrastructure solutions

[A copy of the Priorities Paper can be downloaded here.](#)