



# Environmental Dashboard

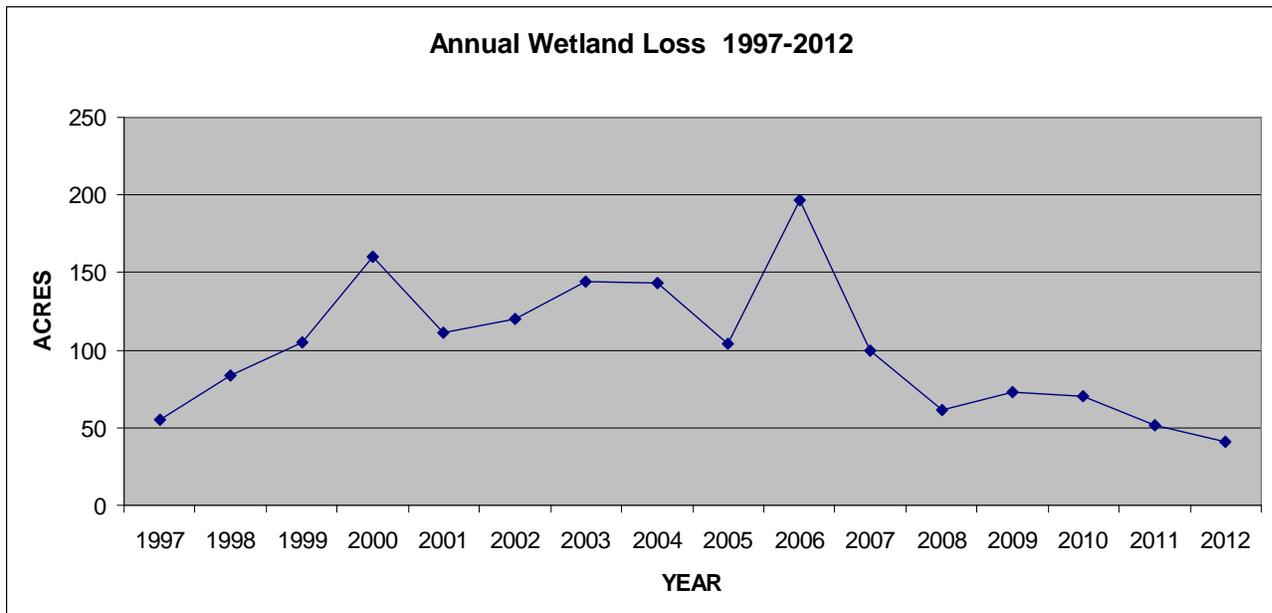


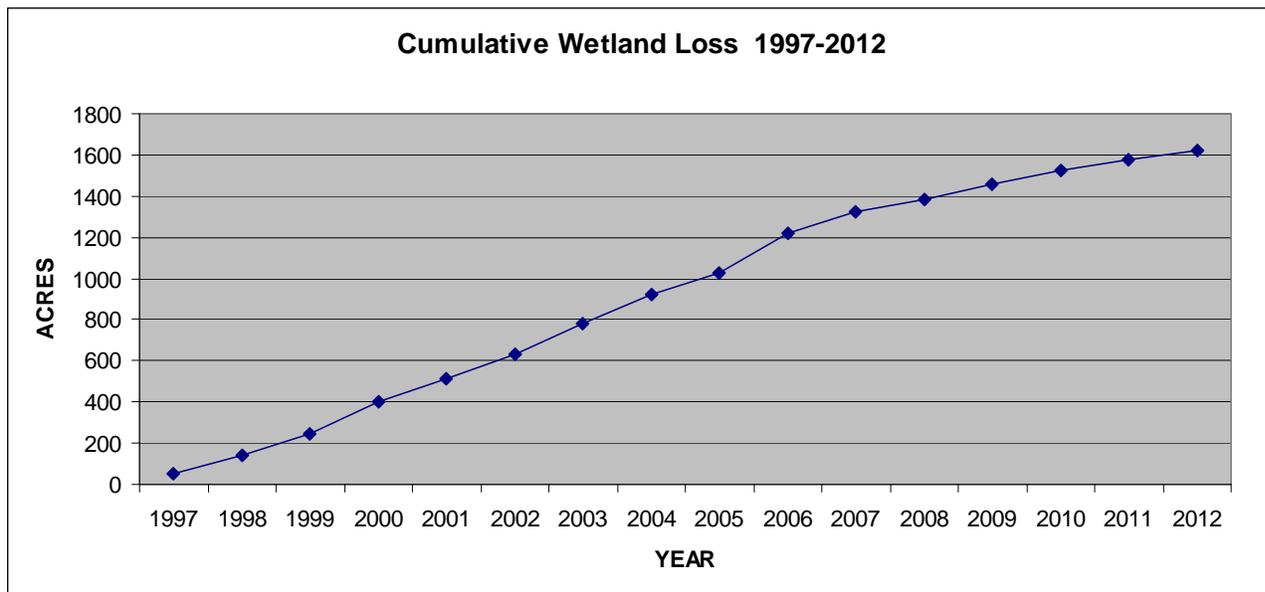
## Trends in New Hampshire's Environment Wetlands: Wetlands Loss and Mitigation

Any loss of wetlands is a permanent loss of important functions provided by these natural resources, such as wildlife habitat, water quality improvements and flood water storage. Since the late 1990's, protection of the upland area surrounding wetland areas that have significant habitat value has been the preferred form of mitigation for a permitted wetland loss. And this approach has increased in importance over time. Other mitigation options include wetland restoration, enhancement and creation, but good results from these options are difficult to achieve and are often unsustainable in the long term.

### Current Condition

In 2012, 41 acres of wetlands were permanently impacted. Over the past five years the average wetlands loss has been 59 acres per year. This compares to an average wetland lost of 111 acres for the period 1997-2007. The cumulative loss recorded from 1997-2012 is just over 1,600 acres from projects permitted by DES. However, during this same time period, greater than 28,000 acres of wetlands and upland habitat have been protected through wetland mitigation and conservation.





### Explanation of Indicator and Trend

The amount of total wetland loss in the early years of the agency was approximately 100 to 150 acres per year with no compensation for the lost functions and values. Since 2007 Wetland loss has since remained fairly constant at approximately 66 acres annually due to improved regulations and mitigation requirements, as well as improved application guidance from DES.

In 2007, a new mitigation option was instituted, which allows applicants to pay compensation for wetland impacts into a special fund. These monies are then pooled and distributed for wetland restoration and protection projects in the watershed where the funds were generated. This option has resulted in better protection of ecologically valuable parcels that are identified through scientific analysis, planning and incorporation of priorities on a watershed scale. The amount of land protected has increased accordingly. Conservation efforts have resulted in 28,000 acres that are protected in perpetuity through conservation easements, ensuring that they will never to be altered or developed over time.

### How Does DES Address This?

The goal of the DES Wetlands Bureau is to minimize wetland loss, or shift impacts to lower value wetlands if impacts are unavoidable, and to offset losses of wetlands through high quality mitigation activities. The DES mitigation program involves a strategic process of saving natural habitat by directing development away from sensitive areas and protecting or restoring resources in a targeted and effective way. The placement of land protection projects in a landscape to optimize functional performance of wetlands on a regional scale is very important to the environment, public health and public safety across New Hampshire.

### For More information, Including What You Can Do to Help

Wetland Mitigation: <http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wetlands/wmp/index.htm>

New Hampshire Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund Final In-Lieu Fee Program Instrument:

<http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wetlands/wmp/index.htm>

FAQ's on Wetland Mitigation:

<http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wetlands/wmp/categories/faq.htm>

Clues to Identifying Forested Wetlands (DES Fact Sheet WD-WB-14):

<http://des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/pip/factsheets/wet/documents/wb-14.pdf>

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