

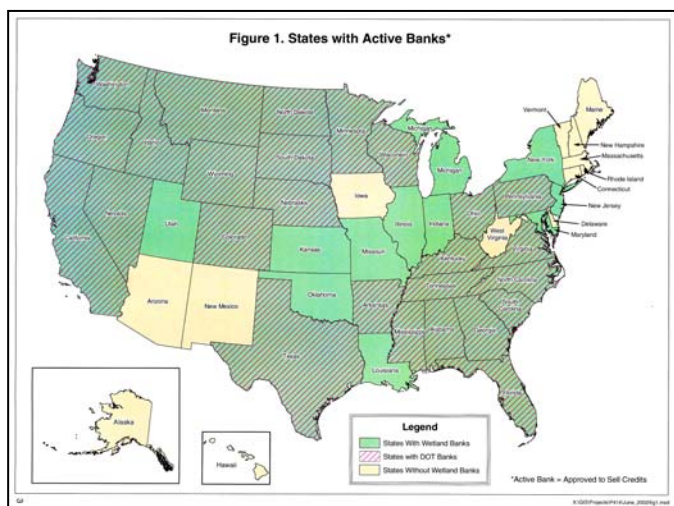
NATIONAL COOPERATIVE HIGHWAY RESEARCH PROGRAM

NATIONWIDE

The objective of this study (NCHRP 25-16, Report 482) was to develop guidance for state departments of transportation (DOTs) for the selection of compensatory wetland mitigation options. The need for such guidance arose from the understanding that many state DOTs simply lacked the opportunity to exercise consolidated options despite the overwhelming belief that these options, particularly wetland banking, would provide more functional replacement wetlands. This was most often attributed to (1) a lack of agency coordination; (2) a restriction of mitigation to specific watersheds as well as; (3) the DOTs' inability to forecast compensatory wetland needs, their reluctance to delay projects, their lack of expertise regarding the time and cost required to pursue banking and, finally, the absence of banking or in-lieu fee agreements or guidance.

To accomplish the project objectives, current literature, databases, and Internet sites were evaluated, in conjunction with an agency survey and personal interviews, to compare the rates of success for project-specific versus consolidated wetland mitigation, such as in-lieu fee programs and wetland banks. Additionally, the study involved the development of eight state DOT wetland mitigation program case studies, as well as a comparison of wetland banking agreements. The case studies described each state DOTs level of mitigation need and how they satisfied this need with a variety of in-lieu fee or banking programs. The comparison of wetland banking agreements illustrated how the states define the numerous permit requirements, from bank credit approval, length of monitoring, as well as the long-term management requirements.

NCHRP Report 482 should prove to be an invaluable tool for DOT wetland managers who are looking to expand their wetland mitigation programs. It is hoped that this project will encourage DOTs to become more proactive in addressing their mitigation needs, to invest in consensus-building among agencies, and to ultimately produce functional wetland mitigation projects whose benefits are maintained for the long term.



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