



## American Association of Petroleum Geologists Statements

# Reformation of the Clean Water Act – Wetlands Access

**Issue:** Federal wetlands conservation efforts need clarity and stability to improve accessibility to the wetlands for environmentally sound development of natural resources and other human needs.

**Background:** Wetlands were once considered unhealthy areas, hindrances to settlement and travel, and nuisances that needed to be eliminated. For most of U.S. history, Government offered incentives to convert wetlands to non-threatening, productive, cultivated lands. More than one-half of the 221 million acres of wetlands that once existed in the continental United States have been drained or altered to accommodate human needs. Society's views of wetlands have changed considerably over the last half-century, however, and since the 1970's there has been an increased awareness that wetlands are: valuable habitats for wildlife, play a role in enhancing water quality, control soil erosion and flooding, and provide other general benefits to society as a whole. Net rates of wetland conversion have dropped from more than 800,000 acres per year prior to 1954, to less than 80,000 acres per year in the period 1982—92, and today are approaching the nationwide goal of no net loss of wetlands acreage nationwide. Section 404 of the Clean Water Act provides for Federal regulation of wetlands.

**Statement:** AAPG supports reforms of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1972 (Clean Water Act) to bring clarity and stability to Federal wetlands conservation efforts and to improve accessibility to wetlands for environmentally sound development of natural resources and other human needs.

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As a professional, scientific association, AAPG is a credible source of information of interest to a wide spectrum of individuals. AAPG has a proud history of providing information to decision-makers and the public on matters concerning the science and profession of petroleum exploration.

In this role, AAPG has given testimony before the U.S. Congress, provided information to lawmakers on a national, state and local level, and has adopted statements that the association believes are of importance.

The following are the statements that are currently in effect. These were revised or added in June 2007 and will be reviewed periodically. They can also be accessed at: <http://dpa.aapg.org/gac/index.cfm>