

WETLAND POTENTIALS

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ABSTRACT

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Wetlands are generally highly productive in multy-ecosystems, providing many important benefits. These benefits, sometimes described as 'good and services', may be wetland functions (e.g. groundwater recharge, flood control), uses of the wetland or its product (e.g. site for wood collection or research site) or attributes of the wetland (e.g. aesthetic component of the landscape, religious significant).

*Many of the benefits provided by wetlands are essential to communities, and industrial and agricultural activities. Loss of wetlands will remove these benefits. This is not to put a case for 'development versus conservation', but simply to state that **maintenance of wetlands as functioning ecosystems will often ensure that important contributions to development are maintained.***

The reminder of this thesis describes the range of kind, benefits, function and values of wetlands and discussing the main activity that causes wetland impairment.