

**WAC 173-700-100 Background and purpose.** (1) The Wetlands Mitigation Banking Act, chapter 90.84 RCW, identifies wetland mitigation banking (banks) as an important regulatory tool for providing compensatory mitigation for unavoidable impacts to wetlands and declares it the policy of the state to support banking. The act directs the department of ecology (department) to adopt rules establishing a state-wide process for certifying banks.

(2) The department anticipates that banks will provide compensatory mitigation in advance of unavoidable impacts to wetlands and will consolidate compensatory mitigation into larger contiguous areas for regionally significant ecological benefits.

(3) Banks prioritize restoration of wetland functions and as such should be complementary to the restoration of ecosystems and ecosystem processes as identified in state or locally adopted science-based watershed management plans.

(4) The purpose of this chapter is to encourage banking by providing an efficient, predictable statewide framework for the certification and operation of environmentally sound banks. This chapter sets out to accomplish the following:

(a) Provide timely review of bank proposals;

(b) Establish coordination among state, local, tribal, and federal agencies involved in the certification of banks;

(c) Ensure consistency with existing federal mitigation rules; and

(d) Provide incentives to encourage bank sponsors (sponsors) to locate and design banks that provide the greatest ecological benefits.

[Statutory Authority: Chapter 90.84 RCW. WSR 09-19-013 (Order 04-13), § 173-700-100, filed 9/3/09, effective 10/4/09.]