

Wetlands/Forest Preservation: North Carolina Governor Signs Executive Order Addressing Conservation/Restoration



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02/14/2024

North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper executed February 12th Executive Order (“EO”) that is titled:

An Order to Protect and Restore North Carolina’s Critical Natural and Working Lands

See Executive Order No. 305.

The EO is described as setting statewide goals for North Carolina public and private partners to collectively achieve the following by 2040:

- Permanently conserve one million (1,000,000) new acres of forest and wetlands
- Restore one million (1,000,000) new acres of forest and wetlands
- Plant one million (1,000,000) new trees in urban areas

The EO also:

- Establishes a Native Plant Policy for North Carolina State Government, expanding the policy implemented by the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources to apply to all future state-owned projects.
- Directs the state to avoid or minimize new projects that would adversely impact vulnerable wetlands like pocosins, Carolina Bays, and mountain bogs.
- Directs state agencies to study the social, economic, and environmental value of protecting North Carolina’s wetlands, particularly wetlands that recently lost state and federal protections.
- Directs agencies to go after federal funding to protect and restore wetlands to enhance flood resiliency, improve water quality, and sequester carbon.
- Directs agencies to promote and support new and ongoing conservation and restoration, and climate resiliency efforts within tribal communities.
- Directs Department of Natural and Cultural Resources to research impacts of future climate conditions on the state’s biodiversity.

A copy of the EO can be downloaded [here](#).