



Wetlands

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Wetlands Goals

Wetlands are a critical habitat that provides for and interacts with Water Quality, Aquatic (Blue crab, Fish Habitat, Black Duck) and Terrestrial Habitat, Healthy Watersheds, Outdoors Space and Access. Often co-occur with Streams, Floodplains, Riparian Buffers, SAV. Influence attainment of many/most CBP goals. **We need for the continued focus to be on wetlands.**

What is our Outlook and Recent Progress?



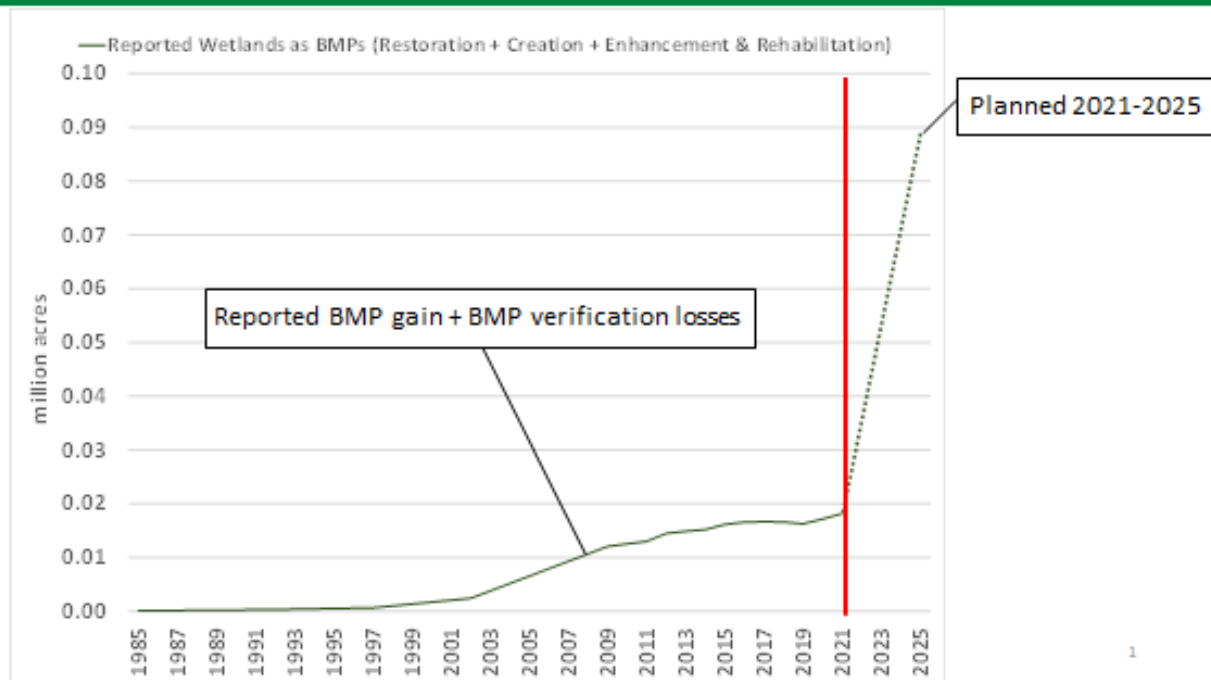
RECENT PROGRESS
INCREASE



OUTLOOK
OFF COURSE



Wetland BMP Changes (1985–2021 + 2025)





What is our Outlook and Recent Progress?

Recent Progress

Between 2010 and 2021, 16,000 acres of wetlands were established (created), rehabilitated or reestablished (restored) on agricultural lands. While this outcome includes a target to restore 85,000 acres of tidal and non-tidal wetlands in the watershed, 83,000 of these restored acres should take place primarily on agricultural lands. The wetlands restored between 2010 and 2017 mark an 18.8% achievement of the 85,000-acre goal. May not include all submitted data.

Outlook: Achievement Uncertain

Significant Wetlands acreage gains from restoration and creation are not occurring in the watershed. Wetland acreage data are inconsistently reported and inaccurate for assessing progress toward this outcome. Work is underway to identify a consistent means for collecting data by maximizing existing data reporting processes. Small cumulative gains in tidal wetlands not accounted for.



Where we are ...

- Newly appointed Vice- chairs:
- Tess Danielson, DC – TIDAL
- Nancy Schumm, Prime Engineering, NONTIDAL
- Meetings monthly, alternating focus area
- Meet twice annually as entire WWG



Where we are ...

- Jurisdictions have completed Wetlands Action Plans
- New wetlands (habitat) accounting system
- Initiate conversation on outcomes: tidal/ nontidal, urban/ ag, jurisdiction, MS4/ nonMS4
- Refine the outcome to define creation vs. restoration vs. enhancement



Where we are ...

- ▀ Collaborate with CBT, CRWG and others on tidal wetlands.
- ▀ Collaborate with comms on wetlands outreach materials
- ▀ Provide leadership and support for GIT projects (3 in review)
 - Tidal marsh mowing
 - Tidal vegetated health
 - Improved mapping for areas with old NWI maps



On the Horizon

POLICY DEVELOPMENTS:

- Wetland Action Plans
- New living shorelines law in VA may help with implementation
- WOTUS & the Clean Water Act: may exclude some wetlands from federal jurisdiction
- Beyond 2025

FISCAL DEVELOPMENTS:

- Historic levels of Funding
- Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)
- NOAA/ NFWF/ FEMA and other funding



What's next

Maintain commitment to increase capacity, engagement of all wetland project processes, and additional support to progress in outcome attainability.

Work to identify opportunities to restore/conserves/create wetlands within this historic loss and as it related to climate change

Look beyond 2025 for wetland progress toward a net gain in acreage to support ecosystem services