

BIENNIAL STRATEGY REVIEW SYSTEM

Chesapeake Bay Program



Narrative Analysis

WETLANDS – NOVEMBER 12, 2020

The narrative analysis summarizes the findings of the logic and action plan and serves as the bridge between the logic and action plan and the quarterly progress meeting presentation. Based on what you learned over the past two years from your successes and challenges, you will describe whether the partnership should make adaptations or change course.

Use your completed pre-quarterly logic and action plan to answer the questions below. After the quarterly progress meeting, your responses to these questions will guide your updates to your logic and action plan. Additional guidance can be found on [ChesapeakeDecisions](#).

1. Examine your red/yellow/green analysis of your management actions. What lessons have you learned over the past two years of implementation?

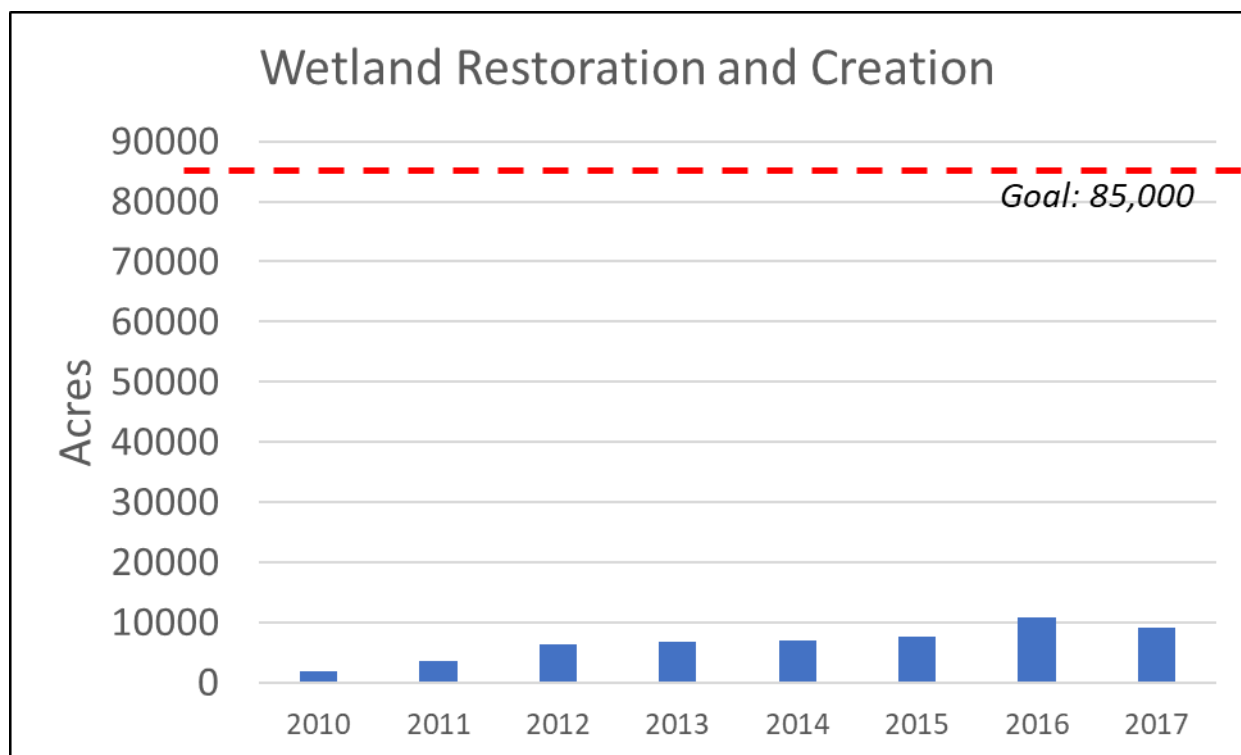
Summarize what you have learned about what worked and what didn't. For example, have you identified additional factors to consider or filled an information gap?

Only one year has passed since the Wetland Workgroup revised their Management Strategy and Logic and Action plan, since the group went through a major overhaul last year and went through the SRS process with the Healthy Watersheds cohort. Since only a year has passed, there are no major changes to the factors affecting progress or the gaps – everything we identified last year still stands. We are still trying to address our four major factors affecting progress (data and reporting, funding and incentives, communication with landowners/decision-makers/practitioners, and leadership). The workgroup has made progress on a few action items but has not yet started on others. We have made the most progress on actions addressing our gaps in communication but have not yet been able to focus on the actions related to data and reporting.

The workgroup has had a lot of consistent engagement at our bi-monthly meetings since we started incorporating more presentations designed to share research, knowledge, and information related to wetlands and living shorelines. One major information gap is that it is unclear what restoration data is getting collected and reported, especially related to living shorelines projects.

2. Regardless of how successful your short-term progress has been over the past two years, indicate whether we are making progress at a rate that is necessary to achieve the outcome you are working toward. The example graph below illustrates this concept.

We are not making sufficient progress to meet the outcome. We need updated data to reflect the progress made in 2018 and 2019.



3. What scientific, fiscal and policy-related developments will influence your work over the next two years?

This may include information learned at the previous biennial SRS meeting or more specific information about your outcome such as an increase or decrease in funding, new programs that address gaps, and new scientific data or research. Describe how these developments are likely to impact your recommended measure(s) of progress, the factors you believe impact your ability to succeed, and newly created or filled gaps. These changes should be reflected in the first three columns of your revised logic and action plan after your quarterly progress meeting.

- Fiscal – The COVID-19 pandemic has been impacting available funding for restoration projects and will likely continue to do so.
- Policy:
 - Virginia has a new living shorelines law that may be helpful in promoting and accelerating living shorelines implementation in the state.
 - The new WOTUS rule that has been implemented may exclude some wetlands from federal jurisdiction which were federally regulated prior to the Rule under

§404 of the Clean Water Act. Many headwater and isolated wetlands may lose their current federal jurisdictional status, which means that states without their own non-tidal wetlands acts (like Delaware) may be restricted on the types of restoration projects they can complete.

- Scientific – there has been new research on the connectivity of tidal shores and their resilience benefits. The workgroup has also discussed the concept of co-benefits at length and would like to bring the discussion to a large Bay Program audience through a STAC workshop (for example, the WQ benefits that wetlands provide help the WIP, but wetlands also provide numerous co-benefits such as wildlife habitat and flood protection – these co-benefits should be promoted and counted in some way).

4. Based on your response to the questions above, how will your work change over the next two years?

Describe the adaptations that will be necessary to more efficiently achieve your outcome and explain how these changes will lead you to adjust your management strategy or the actions described in column four of your logic and action plan. Changes that the workgroup, GIT or Management Board consider significant should be reflected in your management strategy.

Since only a year has passed since our last review, there will likely be no major changes to our actions. Instead, we will focus on making progress on our current actions. We need to be as effective as possible at communicating and sharing information about funding opportunities and new science in order to maximize restoration where possible, considering funding restrictions. We would also like to get more cross-sector engagement in the workgroup, such as non-profits.

5. What, if any, actions can the Management Board take to help ensure success in achieving your outcome?

Please be as specific as possible. Do you need direct action by the Management Board? Or can the Management Board direct or facilitate action through other groups? Can you describe efforts the workgroup has already taken to address this issue? If this need is not met, how will progress toward your outcome be affected? This assistance may include support from within a Management Board member's jurisdiction or agency.

The Wetlands Outcome is largely driven by jurisdictional partners – we need leadership from the Management Board to help keep them engaged in restoration projects and the workgroup. We need state leadership to be supportive of the goal by helping to promote financial investment and jurisdictional involvement. To address this, the workgroup is currently working on fact sheets for local leadership (elected officials, wetlands divisions) and Bay Program leaders (PSC, EC) to better understand the co-benefits of wetlands and the numerous ways that wetland restoration and living shorelines help advance other state plans, programs, and initiatives, such as recreation and outdoors plans, wildlife plans, climate change and resiliency plans, etc. Bay Program leaders can help promote these ideas to jurisdictions to help encourage wetland restoration projects.

We also need assistance from the MB in facilitating collaboration among the state agencies that gather the wetland restoration data. Regulatory and non-regulatory agencies are both responsible for collecting different types of restoration data, and the lack of communication between the two is confusing. It is also unclear what restoration data is or is not being counted towards the WIPs or the

Outcome, especially work that is done outside of programs like NRCS or tidal restoration projects. If there is an annual data call, then there needs to be more support and collaboration to ensure accuracy.