

# Wetland Workgroup March Meeting Minutes

March 2, 2020

CBPO Conference Room 305

## Purpose:

- 1) Identify actions in the workplan to start working on and gain support and commitment on these actions from workgroup members.
- 2) Provide new information on wetland mapping through presentations on the Virginia Wetland Condition Assessment Tool (WetCAT) and land use/land cover updates.

## Welcome and Introductions (*Pam Mason, Chair*)

**Bold – in person;** Unbolded – on phone

Pam Mason (VIMS)	<b>Megan Ossmann (CRC)</b>	<b>Jeremy Hanson (VT @ CBP)</b>	<b>Denise Clearwater (MDE)</b>
<b>Katheryn Barnhart (EPA)</b>	Greg Noe (USGS)	<b>Peter Claggett (USGS)</b>	<b>Labeeb Ahmed (CBP)</b>
Brittany Sturgis (DE DNREC)	Emily Farr (NOAA)	Kevin DuBois (DoD)	Greg Podniesinski (PA DCNR)
Michelle Henicheck (VA DEQ)	Aaron Blair (EPA)	<b>Danielle Algazi (EPA)</b>	Alana Hartman (WV DEP)
Alison Rogerson (DE DNREC)	Melissa Yearick (USC)	Joel Carr (USGS)	Mark Biddle (DE DNREC)
Kirk Havens (VIMS)	Robert Isdell (VIMS)	Breck Sullivan (CRC)	

## Action Items:

- Reach out to thought-leaders if you are interested in participating in any of the proposed actions (cc Megan and Pam).
  - Contact information:
    - Communication: Kevin DuBois ([kevin.dubois@navy.mil](mailto:kevin.dubois@navy.mil)) and Emily Farr ([emily.farr@noaa.gov](mailto:emily.farr@noaa.gov))
    - Data and Reporting: Mark Biddle ([mark.biddle@state.de.us](mailto:mark.biddle@state.de.us)) and Denise Clearwater ([denise.clearwater@maryland.gov](mailto:denise.clearwater@maryland.gov))
- Megan will schedule separate discussion with communication thought-leaders and volunteers for compiling state-specific action plans to identify timeline for completion.

- Megan will share blank application for GIT-funding project and example project that has been awarded.
- Megan and Pam will identify potential dates and will send out poll to group to identify best time for future meetings.
- Running list of future meeting topics/presentations:
  - Randy Owen - Upland conversions
  - Jeff Sweeney - Data and modeling
  - Danielle Algazi - Wetland Program Development grants
  - Joint meeting with Forestry Workgroup
  - Presentation from Fish Habitat Action Team on living shorelines GIT-funded project
  - WIP progress

**Discussion of Thought-Leader Project Ideas: Funding and Incentives, Communication, Data and Reporting, and Leadership and Commitment** (*Pam Mason, Thought-leaders*)

- Pam: We have a thought-leader for 3 of the 4 categories, we still need a volunteer for the leadership category.
  - As we identify actions we want to tackle, we can form “task-groups” so the thought-leaders do not take on this work alone.
- **Funding and Incentives:** Amy Jacobs couldn’t make the call.
- **Communication:** Kevin DuBois and Emily Farr
  - Two initiatives:
  - 1) *Action 5.4 – Work with the Communication Workgroup and State partners to develop state-specific factsheets that identify State plans, programs, and initiatives that encourage wetland restoration and implementation of living shorelines.*
    - Kevin prepared document for the state of Virginia that outline initiatives that promote living shorelines or encourage restoration (ex. State wildlife plan, outdoor recreation plan, etc.)
    - 10-12 different state programs support wetlands restoration and encourage implementation of living shorelines – recognized as co-benefits
    - Goal: Develop state-specific fact sheets and present to MB or EC to highlight importance of wetlands in state regulatory programs.
    - Need: A committee to research programs in other jurisdictions, using VA example as a template.
    - Workgroup white paper that circulates to MB
    - Working with communications workgroup to develop factsheets
    - Denise Clearwater volunteers to help for Maryland
    - Alison Rogerson volunteers to help for Delaware
    - Emphasizing co-benefits of wetland restoration will also help in the funding realm.
    - **Action: Schedule separate discussion with volunteers for this action to identify timeline for completion.**

- 2) *Action 5.6 - Identify the occurrence of wetland mowing throughout the Bay and prepare a Wetland Workgroup position on the regulation and cessation of wetland mowing and whether documented areas of restoration would count towards CBP wetland enhancement goals.*
  - Fish Habitat Action Team (FHAT) is looking for ways to implement community-based social marketing related to living shorelines, possible link to wetland mowing and working with this group to pool resources.
  - This action is within the context of social marketing – address behavior change through impact, opportunity, and likelihood.
  - How would the cessation of wetland mowing improve water quality?
    - Perhaps VIMs and other scientists could review literature to research impacts of mowing on water quality.
  - How many residents are mowing?
    - Kevin would like to quantify the amount of mowing, measure pre- and post- social marketing campaign.
  - How likely is the target audience to change their behavior?
    - Through either voluntary or regulatory action
  - Prepare fact sheet on wetland mowing to build awareness and establish WWG position.
  - Cessation of wetland mowing would help reach wetland enhancement goal.
  - Work position paper up through MB and EC, hopefully will result in actions in jurisdictions.
  - Start with a municipality/smaller area.
  - Kevin is looking for volunteers to help with this action.
  - Megan: have you considered approaching this through a GIT-funded project?
    - Kevin: definitely open to this
    - Pam: piggybacks on work done by Fisheries GIT and living shorelines social marketing
    - Pam: work must address MS and workplan - it works toward our enhancement goal
    - Fisheries, habitat, and climate resiliency aspects
  - **Action: Megan will share blank application for GIT-funding project and example project that has been awarded.**
- **Data and reporting:** Mark Biddle and Denise Clearwater
  - Gaps in data from a mapping standpoint
  - Jennifer was going to check with Chesapeake Conservancy about better LiDAR data for ridge and valley areas.
  - Need better wetland mapping and accounting for better tracking and crediting.
  - Lots of crossover between the four different groups – communication aspect of data and reporting, etc.
  - Need to look at how crediting is being done

- Denise: reporting is in good shape in MD because there's active outreach to major partners and cross-checking for duplication – unsure how it is in other states.
- Mark: Reporting in DE is better than it used to be as well, though some projects are not being reported and they need to do a better job of communicating with partners.
- Denise: May be timely to move into systems approach for BMP crediting. What's credited doesn't always support other goals.
  - Pam: we've heard a lot of conversations over the past few months about this -difficult to get credit for habitat factors that aren't quantifiable for load reductions
- Rolling list of actions related to leadership and commitment
- **Action: Reach out to thought-leaders if you are interested in participating in the proposed actions, and let Megan and Pam know.**

#### **Virginia Wetland Condition Assessment Tool (WetCAT) (Michelle Henicheck, VA DEQ)**

##### Questions:

- Peter Claggett: Why did you use the 2 km buffer? How come you didn't use 1m land use that VA has - why are you using NLCD instead?
  - The literature search suggested the buffers that they chose – average buffer across all the stressors
  - Kirk Havens: using NLCD so they could have a comparison across time scales
- Danielle Algazi: You mentioned you worked with VDOT on specific projects – can you explain how this was utilized in a project?
  - Kirk: Example in an EPA report; VDOT was using it for a linear corridor and the wetland impacts along several alternative routes
  - Danielle: Can you show it on the viewer?
  - Kirk: We don't have the polygons they used, will follow up
- **Action: Megan will add WetCAT URL to follow up email/calendar**

#### **Re-defining Wetland Classification and Mapping Updates (Peter Claggett, USGS)**

- Making changes to wetland classification between now and January 2021– need WWG support and regular input during this process.
  - Two options: standing agenda item at meetings or ad-hoc group of interest members (sitting in on calls, literature review, etc.)
- Mark: Definitely important to get WWG input and stay on top of it
  - Headwater mapping changes are especially important
  - NWI has a new 2.0 methodology where NHD and wetlands is together
    - DE is updating their data to NWI methodology
  - Denise: when will stream layer be available?
    - Peter; draft supposed to be available next summer, will be a distinct layer

- Pam: what process do we want moving forward to make sure we provide the necessary input?
- Regular check-ins at meetings with additional discussions as needed in between meetings

### **The Way Forward**

- Establish a set future meeting date:
  - First week of May conflicts with HGIT meeting
  - Possibly last week of April, and then last week of every other month
  - Action: Megan and Pam will identify potential dates and will send out poll to group to identify best time for future meetings.