

Wetland Workgroup August Meeting Minutes

August 17, 2021

Pam Mason (VIMS)	Megan Ossmann (CRC)	Todd Lutte (EPA)	Vanessa Van Note (EPA)
Christine Mazzarella (EPA)	Breck Sullivan (CRC)	Neil Ganju (USGS)	Kevin Du Bois (DoD CBP)
Bill Jenkins (EPA)	Karina Nunez (VIMS)	Gina Hunt (MD DNR)	Emily Farr (NOAA)
Alison Santoro (MD DNR)	Carin Bisland (EPA)	Mark Biddle (DE DNREC)	Alana Hartman (WV DEP)
Michelle Campbell (DOEE)	Melissa Yearick (USC)	Ken Hyer (USGS)	Kayla Clauson (DE DNREC)
Danielle Algazi (EPA)	Rich Mason (FWS)	Leah Franzluebbbers (USFWS)	Megan Fitzgerald (EPA)
Neely Law (Fairfax County)	Sean Corson (NOAA)	Sarah Hilderbrand (MD DNR)	Mike Mansolino (EPA)
Alison Rogerson (DE DNRC)	Rachel Peabody (VMRC)	Mark Hoffman (CB Commission)	Jen Fulton (EPA)

Action Items:

- We will set up a follow-up meeting in September to discuss the BMP credit duration topic and invite anyone who is interested in being a part of this discussion to join.
- Reach out to Pam and Megan with ideas for future meeting topics.

Internal Marsh Loss in the Maryland Coastal Bays

Rich Mason (USFWS)

[Presentation slides](#)

Questions/comments:

- Pam M: The marshes in the Bay may have a bit more sediment supply than in the coastal bays, which might explain why it's not breaking up so much.
- Kevin D: Do you get any pushback from the waterfowlers since they would be affected by the draining?
 - Rich: We are still in the very early stages so not yet.
- Neil G: We have been trying to delineate the open water vs. marshes. Elevation and tide range play a large role in differences between the coastal bays and the Chesapeake Bay. We're still developing this dataset.

- Rachel P: Are these public or private-owned marshes?
 - Rich: Some are private, some are state lands, and some is NPS land.
- Alison R: How are you monitoring response to runnels on the ground?
 - Rich: We hope to use a drone with RTK survey capabilities to get elevation data that will tell us whether the marsh grasses are expanded or contracting. We will also do photo-monitoring at the points where we put the runnels in.
- Pam: Are you just going to use this timeframe (2005-2018) or is there another historic reference point you will use? How are you going to consider salt pans, which are part of a natural marsh system?
 - Rich: This was the best imagery we could find that showed the defined ditches. I don't think we would put runnels in these natural ponds. We are still working on developing the local expertise too since there is a lot we still don't know.

Development of a Wetlands Regional Monitoring Network

Todd Lutte (EPA)

[Presentation slides](#)

Questions/comments:

- Pam M: Are you formally reach out and collaborating with other states or do you want people to contact you?
 - Todd: You can contact me – we have a draft of the protocols. Jen Fulton knows better what the next steps are.
- Alison R: How many sites would EPA aim to have across R3 and did you say you would use NWCA sites to start with?
 - Todd: I would want all wetland types represented, all eco-regions represented, and I would want representatives from every state. In a perfect world, this would be 8-10 reference sites per state in R3 to start.
 - Carin B: Smithsonian Environmental Research Center has sites of different types of wetlands in Maryland with long-term monitoring.
 - Pam: In VA we have robust monitoring assessment so we can coordinate.
- Breck S: The CBP is going through a monitoring review and understanding what monitoring needs the outcomes might have. Do you foresee needing support from the CBP in the future for this monitoring or are there things currently being monitored by the CBP such as groundwater monitoring that is useful for you and should be supported by the CBP monitoring funds/networks?

Update on BMP Credit Duration of Wetland Restoration

Vanessa Van Note (EPA)

[Presentation slides](#)

Questions/comments:

- Carin B: Is this just wetland restoration on ag land? Is there another verification protocol if restoration is not on ag land?

- Pam: It is nontidal wetlands.
- Vanessa: It could include tidal wetlands, though the incentive programs are focused on agriculture.
- Pam M: I wouldn't want to separate restoration and creation because a lot of the science around tidal wetlands is creation and for non-tidal it is restoration, but their end goal is still to mimic biological function.
 - Carin B: PA doesn't have tidal wetlands in the Bay watershed so they may not have been thinking about that difference.
 - Vanessa: Someone else mentioned at the last meeting that they were concerned about this being applied to creation, so I appreciate that comment.
- Pam M: I am comfortable extending all practices past 15 years. As far as the timeline, we can have a separate conversation in a small subgroup to help determine the next steps and the appropriate timeline. Should be James Davis Martin, VA DEQ, Denise Clearwater, Dave Goerman, etc.
- Rachael P: I met with James Davis Martin this morning to get an SOP and MOU started between us and so this would be a great opportunity to discuss these things as well. I'd be happy to continue the conversation.
- Vanessa: We would bring recommendations to you and then the WQGIT for approval.
- Neely L: We're trying to get better coordination between stream restoration and wetland restoration projects. If the wetland is created, enhanced, or restored as part of an urban stream restoration project, the verification cycle is 10 years. How would this affect verification of those wetlands? Would we have two different timetables?
 - Vanessa: It could be beneficial to have wetlands at 20 and then verify both at the same time. We can consider changing it, so they are on the same timetable. We hadn't spoken about stream restoration at the group (whether it should be extended past 10 years). Do you feel the 10-year inspection cycle is appropriate for stream restoration projects?
 - Neely: I would defer to the Urban Stormwater workgroup that developed the guidance where their verification is consistent with other urban BMPs.
- **Action: We will set up a follow-up meeting in September and invite anyone who is interested in being a part of this discussion to join.**

Wetlands Outcome Attainability

Carin Bisland (EPA)

[Presentation slides](#)

Questions/comments:

- Pam M: As part of our wetland program plans, VA has a priority to develop some science-based decision tools for wetland restoration. This is EPA supported through the state wetland development grants.
- Kevin D: I support the proposal and I think it will provide the background to get MB, PSC, or EC support/action. Two workshops because I wonder if the issues to be addressed are the same.

- Alana H: I support two workshops. Separating tidal from non-tidal would make the workshop (non-tidal) more useful to WV. We seem to have a lot of prioritization tools now but need ideas on how to proceed with implementation. I believe looking for opportunities to help communities with flood risk reduction would be good.
- Kevin D: What would the timeframe for the workshops be? I would want to have the marsh migration research underway to inform this conversation. We would want to restore wetlands where they are sustainable over time and preserve upland locations where marshes will migrate to ensure acreage sustainment over time.
 - Carin: The MB is anxious to get moving quickly. The workshops would occur this fall and we would present to the PSC in winter.
- Alison S: A virtual meeting would be good since we are looking at tighter travel restrictions heading into fall.
- Danielle A: Though the wetland program plans are supported by EPA, there are no funds for implementation. From my perspective we need a much higher-level discussion at EPA to support how the infrastructure money that's coming in can be set aside for implementation.
 - Carin: Absolutely, I'm not committing to EPA or any other funds. I was just suggesting that if we want to take advantage of what's coming down the pipe, it is a very limited time frame. The infrastructure bill has very specific dollars committed to CBP.
 - Danielle: The states are struggling with the wetland programs as well. If a workshop like this can help identify where those infrastructure funds could fit in, then it would be a helpful partnership at both the federal and state level.

FY2021 GIT-Funding Projects

[GIT Funding Program Manual](#)

[GIT Funding Appendices](#)

Questions/comments:

- Pam M: We are proposing to put forward the wetland mowing proposal from last year again.
- Kevin D: This project addresses the enhancement goal, which is a major plus.
- Pam M: If anyone has other ideas or wants to take the lead on another project, please email us.

The Way Forward

- Next meeting date: October 19th, 2021

Adjourn