

Wetland Workgroup October Meeting Minutes

October 20, 2020

Conference Call

Pam Mason (VIMS)	Megan Ossmann (CRC)	Chris Guy (USFWS)	Alison Santoro (MD DNR)
Sarah Hilderbrand (MD DNR)	Angel Gillette (FEMA)	Bill Jenkins (EPA)	Kevin Du Bois (DoD)
Leah Franzluebbbers (USFWS)	Elizabeth Byers (WV DEP)	Todd Lutte (EPA)	Peter Claggett (USGS)
Jaclyn Woollard (EPA Region II)	Michelle Henicheck (VA DEQ)	Mark Biddle (DE DNREC)	Alana Hartman (WV DEP)
Alison Rogerson (DE DNREC)	Melissa Yearick (USC)	BeKura Shabazz, First Alliance Consulting	Joel Carr (USGS)
Danielle Algazi (EPA)	Greg Podniesinski (PA DCNR)	Jeremy Hanson (Virginia Tech)	Denise Clearwater (MDE)
Jake McPherson (Ducks Unlimited)	Carin Bisland (EPA CBPO)	Rich Mason (USFWS)	Labeeb Ahmed (CBPO)
Sarah McDonald	Steven Allison		

Action Items:

- Reach out to Pam and Megan with ideas for future meeting topics.
- Running list of future meeting topics/presentations:
 - Joint meeting with Forestry Workgroup
 - Wetland mowing
 - Proposed changes to stream restoration protocol 1
 - Restore America's Estuaries coastal restoration toolkit (<https://restoreyourcoast.org/>)
 - Beaver management and wetland restoration
 - Communications factsheets – wetland restoration supporting state plans, programs, initiatives

Re-mapping Wetlands (Peter Claggett, USGS)

Following up on previous discussions with the workgroup, Peter is soliciting input on a new approach to re-mapping wetlands. The proposed approach would change the non-tidal classification from “floodplain/header” and “other” to “riverine (groundwater fed)”, “riverine (surface water fed)”, and “non-riverine”.

Questions/Comments:

- Peter C: Tidal: We want to update tidal mapping in VA, rely on state datasets in addition to remote sensing imagery, use 1 ft rather than 1 m elevation gain. Would enforce adjacency to tidal waters, would not use NWI at all.
 - Non-tidal: Do want to have more than one riverine class, distinguish between headwater and floodplain? Do we want to use NWI?
- Pam: When did you access the TMI data?
 - Peter: Yesterday
 - Pam: There is new dataset built for flood co-benefits project that is all NNBF at elevations below 10 ft – how would this compare to elevation improvements you are making? Would be interesting to compare.
- Denise C: Can you clarify how you are identifying tidal waters that in turn identify tidal wetlands?
 - Peter: Propose to use MD DNR state-wide mapping wetland layer, but would augment based on elevation data
 - Denise: Suggests that you use NWI in connection with state layer and elevation data – we find that using them together helps plug in the gaps in both
- Pam: Possible issue – common occurrence of non-tidal adjacent wetlands that are fed by upland waters, not tidal/riverine waters, that complicates differentiating them
- Mark B: Why did you decide not to use the NWI in Delaware?
 - Peter: Thought it was outdated, coarsely digitized, and doesn't align with the current shoreline and marshes
 - Mark: Just finished mapping in DE based on 2017 imagery, and the NWI process is now starting to use more elevation data rather than soils data (which can be misleading). Take a look at some of the new methods that NWI is using, can maybe pull some steps from their process. Part of the NWI verification tool is a smoothing process so they are not as digitized. Vegetation information is important to keep in mapping.
 - Pam: agree with Mark- noticed that classification is mixed in some slides, which can create problems
 - Peter: that is our fault – it should have said forested instead of floodplain
- Dave G: We're going through an effort to build off the Chesapeake Conservancy landform mapping -wondering if this can be informative to wetland mapping. The purpose of the classification will also inform what different classes are recommended.
 - Peter: What we're doing this for is open – nontidal wetlands are treated the same as forest in the watershed model, but tidal wetlands are in the water quality model. The partnership is developing a new hydrologic model at a finer-scale that we want to be informed by this high-resolution data that we are developing. The sooner we can start mapping, the more likely that updates can be incorporated in the next phase of the model to inform Bay restoration.
- Elizabeth Byers: In WV we have done a GIS-based functional assessment of our wetlands and have found it is important to look at landscape position. NWI is the best available data we have

in WV. Have looked at lotic and lentic, isolated and headwaters. Found that floodplain/non-floodplain dichotomy is important, and all wetlands are characterized as floodplain or non-floodplain. We don't want to lose the vegetation structure that is in NWI – important to retain forest, emergent and shrub-scrub classes. Happy to share more data or methods on our process. Landscape position, floodplain/non-floodplain, and vegetation type are all key elements for us.

- Peter: We will try to finalize our procedures and meet again in the February timeframe. Will provide draft and ask for comments around December. Would like to finalize approach around February – new data for CAST 21 is due in June. We will have a draft LULC map this summer that will inform the TMDL, and a final one next December that will include this final classification that we are discussing. Would like to get as much of this decided in the next couple of months as possible.
 - Pam: How do want to handle additional questions/comments?
 - Peter: Can provide a brief 15-minute update in December to get additional feedback. Can put together a powerpoint with the descriptions and ask for direct feedback as well.
 - Peter: Will work on a write-up accompanied with illustrations and take into account what's been said today and send it to Pam in the next couple of weeks to share with WG members.

Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Grant Program *(Angel Gillette, FEMA)*

Angel gave an overview of FEMA's [Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities \(BRIC\) grant program](#), which places an emphasis on addressing the effects of climate change; strengthening building codes; and using natural barriers such as wetlands, floodplains and reefs to build resilience to riverine flooding and sea-level rise. The application period opened on September 30th, 2020 and closes January 29th, 2021.

Questions/Comments:

- Why were West Virginia and Delaware not in the criteria for the building codes?
 - They would need to have adopted either the 2015 or 2018 IRC building codes – these two states have not yet adopted them
- What does a small and impoverished community mean? Is this different from a county, city, or town?
 - There is a definition – 3000 or fewer individuals identified as economically disadvantaged, with residents having an average per-capita annual income not exceeding 80% of the national per-capita income based on best-available data
- How does BRIC funding prioritize other federal plans and efforts like the ACE hazard mitigation plans or joint land use studies?
 - BRIC highly encourages applications for integrated planning, such as land use planning, partnerships, capital improvement projects in an area. Incentivizes applications with a planning framework
- What are the efforts to get under-served and marginalized communities involved in this work?

- If there have been steps taken to directly benefit under-served communities, that leads to increased scoring of the application. You can cite data showing steps taken to address these communities and will earn more points and be more competitive at a national level

Seeking Support: Involving Input & Action from the Management Board *(Pam Mason)*

Pam did a dry-run of the presentation scheduled for the November Management Board (MB) meeting, which is designed to inform MB members of the progress made on our actions, the challenges the workgroup is facing, and how the MB can provide support.

Questions/Comments:

- Chris G: In the ask for MB, the Black Duck workgroup is asking for something similar – it would be good to tie in what they are asking for and coordinate a joint ask. It would also be good to include the total for enhancement, to point out that it's zero. The NEIEN system does not allow for an input of wetland enhancement, so we can't even track it.
- Carin B: Did a lot of work last year to identify the need for a Living Resource Data Analyst but did not have the funding available. How do we get the people already doing data analysis and support in our office to take this on?
 - The MB assumes the WG has more authority than they actually do to get things done so they push back on requests for funding, technical support, etc. The trick is to identify what the WG and MB has the authority to do and what it doesn't – asking for improved data collection is a good ask.
 - Forest buffers added up what was in the WIPs and found that that commitment is even higher and they are falling short – may want to do the same for wetlands.
- Kevin: Can provide a graphic with the communications factsheet – supporting wetlands in VA – to show progress on an action item
 - Carin: important to emphasize what you've accomplished in a year, what other WGs and GITs you've collaborated with
- Kevin: include GIT-funding projects
- Carin: focus on work you've been doing with Forestry WG

The Way Forward

- The next meeting: December 15th 2-4 pm
- Chris: sales pitch for Habitat GIT meeting on November 16th and 17th. Meeting focused on cross-WG and cross-GIT collaboration and leveraging of resources to help meet our outcomes
- Kevin: please put me on the December agenda to present the state-specific factsheets