

## **05/16/2023 - Nontidal Wetlands Workgroup Meeting**

**MEETING:** Nontidal Wetlands Workgroup Meeting

**DATE/TIME:** 05/16/2023, 2:00 - 4:00 ET

### **Welcome and Introductions**

*Presenter: Nancy Schumm (PRIME AE Group, Inc., Workgroup Vice Chair)*

- Round of Introductions: Name, Affiliation, Field of Work, Why Wetlands

### **Workgroup Restructuring Update**

*Presenter: Chris Guy (HGIT Coordinator)*

- Two new vice chairs
  - Nancy Schumm: Nontidal Wetlands
  - Tess Danielson: Tidal Wetlands
- The addition of these positions allows the workgroup to have 2 subgroups with dedicated meetings.
  - Alternating each month there will be a tidal or nontidal meeting.
- The wetlands workgroup chair remains Pam Mason and she will be responsible for the bureaucratic and administrative tasks.
- The vice chairs will be responsible for driving each workgroup meeting and day to day actions.
- The Habitat GIT staffer supports the workgroup chairs and vice-chairs.
- The separate meetings should lead to more effective use of workgroup members' time because they will be attending meetings on the topic of their interest.
- Joint meetings between tidal & nontidal will be on September 20th & December 12th.
  - These meetings will probably focus on indicators and progress towards the outcome.
- [Jamboard Activity:](#) What would you like non-tidal meetings to focus on?
  - **Pam Mason:** Wetlands crosswalk with almost all the other outcomes in the Chesapeake Bay. Including the conserved lands outcome, which has a specific amount of wetlands they are targeting to conserve and want to make sure they have some input on where the best places are to do that.
  - **Pam Mason:** There's a Logic & Action Plan (LAP) element to do more collaboration with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) on their cost share program. Could be a topic of discussion for a future meeting.
    - **Leon Tillman:** There is a great opportunity for partners to assist in implementing wetlands on private lands. Due to the size and scale of some of the projects NRCS can only fund part of the cost, so there is a need for partner funding/contributions to implement some wetland restoration projects.

## **05/16/2023 - Nontidal Wetlands Workgroup Meeting**

- **Denise Clearwater:** Ensure that other BMPs support, and do not degrade, existing nontidal wetlands.

### **Getting to 2025: Wetland Workshop Action Plan**

*Presenter: Dede Lawal (HGIT Staffer)*

- Due to the wetlands outcome being way off course the Principal Staff Committee (PSC) and Management Board (MB) directed the Bay Program to come up with a plan to accelerate progress towards the outcome by 2025.
- On August 2-3, Restoring the Wetlands of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Workshop was held where the participants identified barriers and 5 recommendations on how to move forward.
  - Cohesive Strategy
  - Long-term Capacity
  - Outreach & Design
  - Increased Funding
  - Reporting of Progress
- The [Wetlands Workshop Action Plan](#) was finalized January 2023.
- [Jamboard Activity](#): How can we replicate what is going well in other states and find solutions to challenges? Has anyone seen successful protection?
  - **Nancy Schumm:** In Illinois they have isolated wetlands regulation and an advanced identification system where they assess the quality of wetlands and prioritized wetlands protected from development based on the quality of the location.
  - **Leon Tillman:** Wetlands created or restored through the NRCS can be done in an easement that may be 15 years, 30 years, or in perpetuity. If not in perpetuity the land can be converted back to production agricultural land, but there are additional hurdles to go through.
    - **Steve Strano:** The possibility of conversion after being classified as a wetland depends on what the land was classified as previously. For example, if it was a farm wetland first then you can put it back to that. In my experience, it's rare to have someone undo a wetland that was restored.
  - **Sarah Koser:** Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) and the Chesapeake Bay Trust (CBT) have a partnership to create nontidal wetlands. Currently looking for 10 acres for wetlands restoration, creation, or enhancement but don't have any bites because there's only \$950,000 available. Increasing the in lieu fee payments is a great idea that MDE is trying to take on.
    - **Denise Clearwater:** Anything we spend on in lieu fees would be for mitigation and not on voluntary restoration.
  - **Nancy Schumm:** If we can encourage farmers to enhance wetlands, how about a program that encourages other people to enhance wetlands?

## 05/16/2023 - Nontidal Wetlands Workgroup Meeting

- **Nancy Schumm:** In Illinois we had a lot of section 319 funding which brought in millions of dollars for the community and often it was the county that led efforts to protect wetlands and waterways. Everyone thinks stream restoration is the way to go in TMDL because they get more credit, but it can lead to the removal of old growth. It's important to make sure policies and practices are aligned because we don't want to destroy something to fix something.
- **Dave Goerman:** In PA we do legacy sediment removal where the floodplain may go from having 5%-25% wetlands present to 75%-95% wetlands present. We're restoring the whole valley system, so it's not just streams or wetlands.
- **Chris Spaur:** At this high level, the goals we set become very important. Saying things correctly matters in the long run when setting big picture goals.
- **Steve Strano:** In MD we have a partnership group doing outreach for wetlands and wildlife habitat. It's definitely shown benefits, but we don't have enough people on the ground to get things done. There's more opportunity than we can service right now in MD.
  - **Alison Santoro:** As a state government employee trying to hire new folks, we need dedicated funding for multiple years and not just a one year grant. Even a 2 or 3 year rolling grant would give us a better case to hire people.

### Moving Beyond 2025 Introduction

*Presenter: Nancy Schumm*

- **Jamboard Activity:** Do we like the current [Wetlands Outcome](#) for 2025? What do we think it should be? How do we get there? What are our thoughts on the outcome? Is it realistic, is it achievable?
  - **Denise Clearwater:** The outcome was never realistic, but it is technically doable.
  - **Chris Guy:** The NRCS is a large funder for nontidal voluntary restoration. The average project is only a few acres in size (5 - 10 acres), so when you take that and think about 85,000 acres of the outcome that means 17,000 individual landowners need to do restoration on 5 acres of their land. Shows how the outcome is doable but not realistic.
  - **Denise Clearwater:** Is there a goal in place for maintaining a certain base of agricultural land? If so, should we try to structure the outcome to be in sync with that? I'm guessing that there's an agricultural preservation goal.
  - **Chris Guy:** Are these even the right definitions? Should it include mitigation? One place to spend time in the future because the current wetlands outcome creation restoration and enhancement are inconsistent with the definition of wetlands practitioners.

### General Announcements & Updates

- Wetlands Work: Call for Wetland Restoration Success Stories
  - On the [Wetlands Work](#) website we have a page that is focused on success stories, so if you have any nontidal restoration success stories send them to Dede at [lawalh@chesapeake.org](mailto:lawalh@chesapeake.org).

## **05/16/2023 - Nontidal Wetlands Workgroup Meeting**

- The Wetlands Outcome Attainability document was submitted 5/19. A big thank you to all the workgroup members who gave input!
- The Chesapeake Land Use/Land Cover Data Project is revising its water and wetlands module in preparation for developing new 2021/22 LULC data. We are requesting any local wetlands data that may not be incorporated into NWI data. If any jurisdictions have wetland data that would be in addition to what is available through NWI, we ask that it be sent to [cic@chesapeakeconservancy.org](mailto:cic@chesapeakeconservancy.org) by June 30.
- The Chesapeake Bay Trust was provided funds from EPA to put into the [Green Streets, Green Jobs, Green Towns Grant Program](#). They are recommending \$349,000 in grants to provide funding for greening urban areas. 60% of the grants recommended are in environmental justice areas.

### **Meeting Adjourned**

- Next nontidal workgroup meeting date: **July 18, 2023; 2:00-4:00 ET**

**Participants (30):** Pam Mason (VIMS/WWG Chair), Nancy Schumm (PRIME AE Group Inc./WWG Vice Chair), Chris Guy (USFWS/Habitat GIT Coordinator), Dede Lawal (CRC/Habitat GIT Staffer), Bill Jenkins (EPA/Habitat GIT Chair), Cassandra Davis (NY DEC), Denise Clearwater (MDE), Megan Fitzgerald (EPA), Kevin McLean (VA DEQ), John Levitsky, Alison Santoro (MDNR), Ben Sagara (DWR), Sarah Koser (CBT), Gregory Noe (USGS), Leon Tillman (NRCS), Leah Franzluebbbers (USFWS), Natalie Yearick, Sarah Hilderbrand (MDNR), Patrick Fanning (CBF), Katie Walker (CC), David Goerman (PA DEP), Chris Spaur (USACE), Melissa Yearick, Jonathan Phinney (USFWS), Jay Ford (CBF), Gregory Podniesinski (PA DCNR), Sarah Roberts (Biohabitats), Amy Jacobs (TNC), Steve Strano (NRCS), Sadie Drescher (CBT)