



Chesapeake Bay Program  
Science. Restoration. Partnership.

## **12/12/2023 – Wetlands Workgroup Meeting: Tidal & Nontidal**

**MEETING:** Wetlands Workgroup Meeting: Tidal & Nontidal

**DATE/TIME:** 12/12/2023, 10:00 - 1:00 ET

### **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

*Presenter: Pam Mason (Workgroup Chair)*

- Roll Call

### **WETLAND WORKSHOP ACTION PLAN UPDATES**

*Presenters: Pam Mason, Mark Biddle (DE), Tess Danielson (DC), Elliott Campbell (MD), Cassie Davis (NY), Dave Goerman (PA), Ben Sagara (VA)*

- Management Board requested the Habitat Goal Implementation Team sponsor a workshop to identify actions for nontidal and tidal wetlands to increase progress towards the Wetlands Outcome.
- 2-day workshop held in 2022 and all but one justification created jurisdictional plans
- Delaware
  - Strategic Planning
    - DE Restoration Work Group meets biannually – making progress on connecting practitioners and programs/agencies; sharing project information; identifying capacity needs.
  - Capacity Building
    - Significant need for funding to support new staff that focus on on-the-ground projects; staff turnover is a significant issue.
  - Outreach
    - Past year reached thousands of citizens at the Sate Fair, Water Festival, Earth Day events, etc.; will create new materials to explain cost share and how to deal with competing influences.
  - Sustainable Funding
    - DE Restoration Workgroup is leveraging funding sources from agencies/groups.
- District of Columbia
  - Strategic Planning
    - Wetland Program Plan; Submitted proposal for Wetland Program Development Grant 2024-2026; Anacostia River Corridor Restoration project (on going), to name a few.
  - Capacity Building
    - Continuing partnerships with NPS and environmental stakeholders
  - Outreach
    - Enhanced and increased public outreach by creating fact sheets and storymaps
  - Sustainable Funding

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- Exploring grants (NFWF, CBT, USFWS, other federal agencies); need funding for maintenance.
- Maryland
  - Strategic Planning
    - State Wetlands Team outlined a Wetland Adaptation Strategy for Maryland – planned to be complete by the end of 2024. Integrated Blue Carbon in Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan.
  - Capacity Building
    - MD partnered on several proposals to access federal dollars for restoration, preservation, and regional planning. Hired a restoration field team in the Chesapeake and coastal service to help with ecological restoration including wetlands.
  - Outreach
    - Align wetland outreach with landowner engagement efforts and integrate landowner outreach into plan.
  - Sustainable Funding
    - MD DNR partnered with TNC on a blue carbon feasibility study.
- New York
  - Strategic Planning
    - Formed the Upper Susquehanna Coalition (USC) Wetland Action Team and addressed barriers to implementation.
  - Capacity Building
    - The USC Wetland Action Team hosted 6 wetland outreach events and increased collaboration between agencies.
  - Outreach
    - USC Wetland Team provides technical assistance to landowners.
  - Sustainable Funding
    - Focus efforts to secure funds to support staffing, planning, design, implementation, and administration of grant funds.
- Pennsylvania
  - Strategic Planning
    - Conducted training on what restoration is using EPA principles of ecological restoration. Focus on targeting legacy sediment removal restoration techniques; 326,000 feet of valley and 260 acres of wetlands restoration statewide.
  - Capacity Building
    - In year two of a four-year concerted training effort that addresses all sectors of capacity building, trainings are available to agencies and public alike.
  - Outreach

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- The training developed for DEP's Clean Water Academy forms the core of the Wetlands Program outreach efforts internally and through other agency and non-profit partners
- Sustainable Funding
  - Existing funds reduced and must compete with non-wetland projects, working to develop dedicated wetland funding (3-5 year process)
- Virginia
  - Strategic Planning
    - Working with several regional partners and focusing planning efforts on at risk areas and species.
  - Capacity Building
    - Ducks Unlimited received funding to provide technical assistance to advance on-the-ground wetland restoration in cooperation with NRCS working lands for wildlife on the Eastern Shore of VA. Western VA needs more staff capacity.
    - Capacity is largest concern because there is a lack of staff able to identify projects and provide technical assistance needed to design, permit, and construct.
  - Outreach
    - Need to reach out to more landowners.
  - Sustainable Funding
    - Pursuing funding for 4-5 large scale projects that could lead to thousands of acres restored, enhanced, or protected.

## **BEYOND 2025 SHALLOW WATER HABITATS SMALL GROUP**

- The Beyond 2025 Steering Committee created 5 small group teams: Climate, Healthy Watersheds, Clean Water, People, and Shallow Water Habitats
- Goal of the small teams:
  - Engage other partnership groups in addressing guiding questions and crosscutting considerations to provide five recommendations that are broad and include a solid rationale for the Steering Committee final product to the Executive Council.
- Shallow Water Habitats Vision:
  - Healthy and sustainable shallow water habitats that support resources, communities, and economies that are resilient to long-term changes in watershed conditions.
- Shallow Water Habitats Scope:
  - Edges and Nearshore Waters of 3 ecological zones: Non-tidal Fresh, Tidal Fresh, & Tidal Estuarine
- [Jamboard Activity](#)

- Comments/Questions:
  - **Denise Clearwater:** Does shallow water include headwater streams and wetlands anywhere in the watershed? If so, how does that differ from the healthy watershed small group?
    - **Gina Hunt:** Yes, it does go into the headwaters, and it could overlap with healthy watersheds, but not sure if we will have the same topics in those geographic areas. I think healthy watersheds are more focused on land use impacts. We tried to make the scope everybody in the watershed because didn't want to narrow recommendation to tidal waters.

### **WETLANDS OUTCOME BEYOND 2025 DISCUSSION**

- In previous workgroup meetings workgroup members decided the wetlands outcome beyond 2025 should be separate for tidal and nontidal wetlands.
- What should the wetlands outcome look like after 2025?
- [Jamboard Activity](#)
- Comments/Questions:
  - **Pam Mason:** Should the outcome be bay wide or jurisdictional? The original outcome is bay wide, do you have thoughts on that?
  - **Chris Guy:** If we change the outcome, we have to think about how we get the data and monitor it.
  - **Pam Mason:** Should our goal be pragmatic or aspirational?
    - **Joe Berg:** We should be aspirational in setting goals and set high targets because we are aware of this changing baseline.
  - **Dave Goerman:** I don't recall what the basis was for our current goal. It should be acknowledged how we arrived to it.
    - **Pam Mason:** Wetlands were acknowledged for being efficient for load reductions and the goal was set around BMP service instead of habitat/other services.
  - **Pam Mason:** Should we include conservation? Do we want to keep creation, restoration, and enhancement?
    - **Dave Goerman:** If we include land conservation, I encourage regulatory projects to be counted towards the goal. The mitigation banks that have substantial wetland gains do not get counted towards the Bay Program wetland's goal.
  - **Megan Fitzgerald (in chat):** Do the current outcomes account for ease/challenges to restore a particular resource?
    - **Pam Mason:** I don't think so. It wasn't geographically parsed or based on historic loss/future stressors.
  - **Elliot Campbell (in chat):** In the Maryland plan we are looking to establish a goal around preservation of the projected tidal wetland migration corridor.



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- **Dave Goerman:** Tidal should get credit for forward thinking planning for migration corridors because it will offset some of the losses of wetlands.
- **Andrew Larkin:** How digestible would the goal be if there was a sub goal for each state for each category of the goal. Like conservation for each state, restoration for each state, etc.
  - **Pam Mason:** I think we would keep it as a higher level.
- **Elliott Campbell:** Having an aggregated goal for the watershed makes sense but make sure it's not just top down. Need to look at the resources available and ongoing efforts at each state level and come from the bottom up with a realistic time bound goal.
- **Pam Mason:** Might be helpful if jurisdiction leads gather estimates of what might be in the pipeline and what is already in wetland action plans or wildlife action plans. It would be helpful moving forward if we can pull together the numbers to create a framework and add values to the conversation.

**PARTICIPANTS (36):**

<b>Pam Mason (VIMS)</b>	<b>Nancy Schumm (City of Gaithersburg)</b>	<b>Tess Danielson (DOEE)</b>	<b>Dede Lawal (CRC)</b>
<b>Gina Hunt (MDNR)</b>	<b>Chris Guy (USFWS)</b>	<b>Joe Berg (Biohabitats)</b>	<b>Scott Heidel (PA DEP)</b>
<b>Delaney Samons (CBT)</b>	<b>Aaron Wendt (DCR)</b>	<b>Denise Clearwater (MDNR)</b>	<b>Cassandra Davis (NY DEC)</b>
<b>Elliott Campbell (MDNR)</b>	<b>Megan Andreasen (CBT)</b>	<b>Alison Stouffer (DNREC)</b>	<b>Sadie Drescher (CBT)</b>
<b>David Goerman (PA DEP)</b>	<b>Sarah Koser (CBT)</b>	<b>Katheryn Barnhart (EPA)</b>	<b>Andrew Larkin (NOAA)</b>
<b>Mark Biddle (DNREC)</b>	<b>Alicia Berlin (USGS)</b>	<b>Kevin Mclean (VA DEQ)</b>	<b>Sarah Brzezinski (EPA)</b>
<b>Matt Robinson (EPA)</b>	<b>Amy Jacobs (TNC)</b>	<b>Melissa Yearick (USC)</b>	<b>Ben Sagara (DWR)</b>
<b>Megan Fitzgerald (EPA)</b>	<b>Chris Spaur (USACE)</b>	<b>Katlyn Fuentes (CRC)</b>	<b>Alison Santoro (MDNR)</b>
<b>Heather Hepburn (MDE)</b>	<b>Sarah Hilderbrand (MDNR)</b>	<b>Sherri Degraphenreed (NRCS)</b>	<b>BeKura Branch (First Alliance Consulting)</b>