



Chesapeake Bay Program

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WETLANDS WORKGROUP MEETING

December 12th, 2023

Wetlands Outcome Beyond 2025 – JAMBOARD RESPONSES

QUESTION 1: Should the Wetlands Outcome have a Chesapeake Baywide focus or jurisdictional focus? Is there a particular wetland loss the outcome should work to offset? What context should be used when determining the number of acres in the outcome?

- Bay/watershed focus - wetlands as a distributed green infrastructure
 - Both, local accounting and cumulative via the entire watershed (+3)
 - Don't want to leave out Jurisdictions without an action plan i.e., WV.
 - Will require higher level discussion in jurisdiction.
 - Each state develops an ambitious but realistic, time bound goal, sum for the watershed.
 - Final data should be as acreage as accurately as possible.
 - Have an ambitious target. Margin of safety for unanticipated changes/ losses/ stressors (+2)
 - If we know projected loss from climate change - can use that to set specific outcome to prevent/offset that loss or gain, several models predict significant wetland area gain, up to a point (+1)
 - Temporal goals. Near and long-term (+1)
 - Include a rational...
 - Should consider the percentage of goal reached during this period and work from there to set a new # of acres, considering barriers and potential losses and gains.
 - Review the new tracker to see what type of projects/areas were successful and if they can be duplicated and expanded.
 - Aggregated goal that is based on jurisdiction efforts.
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QUESTION 2: What other criteria or Chesapeake Bay Program Outcomes should be considered when making changes to the Wetlands Outcome? Water quality, fish habitat, DEIJ, stream health, black duck, fish passage, flooding, etc.?

- Vegetative quality (fewer invasives)
- Climate resilience, flood risk reduction (+1)
- Habitat use - and an assessment of function (e.g. waterfowl community response)
- Flooding and DEIJ are often coupled. This would be a good avenue to target restoration sites.
- Keep in mind the data we would need to generate to annually report out on the eventual outcome. (+1)
- Outdoor recreation



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- Wetlands should be integrated - SAV, tidal, and non-tidal together delivering the greatest value, wetlands, floodplains, valley side slopes and streams together as an integrated system.
 - Combine with forested buffer goal to create a more holistic wetland and floodplain goal that would include the whole wetland/ stream system.
 - Riparian Buffer Outcome
 - Most of GIT 1 (Fisheries) Outcomes, where wetlands/shallow water habitat intersect: Blue Crab Abundance Outcome; Oyster Restoration Outcome; Forage Fish.
 - All mentioned in the question, plus riparian forest buffer and fish passage.
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QUESTION 3: The current outcome includes creation/restoration and enhancement, should it include conservation as well? How would it be tracked?

- There is a wetland protection goal under the land protection goal. I would suggest leaving it there as then they are responsible and have the tools to track it.
 - Yes, protected land is a great goal. (+1)
 - Yes, this is important work, expensive, etc. and isn't really accounted for in the current goal.
 - Yes, including a goal of preservation of areas projected to be wetlands in the future.
 - Connect wetland goals to overall shallow water/living resource goals, consider systemic connections.
 - Track newly conserved/protected wetlands acquired as conservation easements, preserves, parks, etc.
 - Need to consider how to ensure no net loss of wetlands as well so that restoration efforts are additive.
 - Enhancement should be linked to habitat services.
 - Yes, conservation is the most cost-effective approach and should be part of our goal statement.
 - Yes, Conservation/Preservation should be included and will be important for migration/adaptation of wetlands.
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Comments on the Outcome Language itself: Continually increase the capacity of wetlands to provide water quality and habitat benefits throughout the watershed. Create or reestablish 85,000 acres of tidal and non-tidal wetlands and enhance function of an additional 150,000 acres of degraded wetlands by 2025. These activities may occur in any land use (including urban), but primarily occur in agricultural or natural landscapes.

- The wetland restoration/enhancement/rehabilitations should be distributed through the watershed, not focused on ag and natural areas (+2)
- Opportunities in ag and natural land cover types are likely greater, but let's not bias where wetlands should be placed.
 - Agreed unless the opportunities really are on agricultural lands...either way, we need NRCS/FSA and other cost-share funders fully on board or we won't succeed.



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- We need to figure out where these historic impacts occurred and think about creating jurisdictional specific "targets", so we have an idea where opportunities really are.
- Even the highest quality resources need continued management. Actions for these measures are worth considering as part of the outcome.
 - Would this management and maintenance fall under enhancement activities?
- Any goal for protection of existing wetlands?
- Tidal and non-tidal goals?
- Include enhancements of urban non-tidal wetlands