



Chesapeake Bay Program

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Wetlands Workgroup Meeting: Tidal & Nontidal

Tuesday, February 18, 2025, 10:00-12:00 ET

[Link to the Meeting Materials](#)

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Presenter: Pam Mason (VIMS retired)

OUTCOME LANGUAGE: TIDAL WETLANDS

Presenter: Pam Mason (VIIMS retired) & Tess Danielson (DOEE)

- At the last Wetlands Workgroup meeting there was agreement on updating the current wetlands outcome to have a nontidal and tidal goal, so we will start crafting the updated language for tidal wetlands.
- A poll was conducted asking if there was preference to use percentage of tidal wetlands (value to be discussed) instead of acreage in the updated language.

Discussion:

- **Chris Spaur:** Can't control the rate of sea level rise (SLR), so don't know if we can even set a number or percentage. Rather say "we will do our best".
 - **Chris Guy:** One of the charges from the Bay Program is that the outcome has to be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound).
- **Pam Mason:** A percentage would mean we are also committed to better tracking the aerial extent, the status and trends of the resource. It changes the way we do the accounting. If we go with a percent, we can be adaptive because it will be relative to the resource.
- **Amanda Poskaitis:** Curious how the percentage would work. What's the baselines? Is that something we still need to discuss?
 - **Pam Mason:** We are proposing to change our outcome to add protection, so the outcome includes restoration, protection, and enhancement. Potentially, we can have percents for each one.
 - **Amanda Poskaitis:** Would it be a percentage of the existing wetlands we have, or would it be the percent of area related to the watershed area?
 - **Chris Guy:** I think it would make sense to use the baseline used in the 2014 Agreement.
- **Greg Noe:** Do we want more, the same, or less? It's important to set a goal that matches the vision for why we're trying to restore the Chesapeake. Yes, SLR is essentially beyond the control of the CBP, but there are a lot of actions that can be taken: stopping loss by development, enabling migration, etc. The 'ledger' book of no net loss is conserve,



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restore, and manage. The current goal to increase acreage through restoration/creation is not working. Net loss is still happening.

- **Andrew Larkin:** So, could this goal take the shape of something like conserve 95% of existing wetlands? (to be achieved by preservation, restoration, enhancement, rehabilitation).
- **Alison Santoro:** I'd add an acreage note to a % goal of existing wetlands. Otherwise, folks may interpret it as specific map parcels which may be lost because of SLR.
- **Ben Sagara:** I like the idea of having iterative steps. Has anyone discussed management plans for a first step for number of acres in each state? To get an idea of which sites need to be restored and what they need.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The link to register for the National Association of Wetlands Managers states only listening session for 2/19: <https://nawm.org/nawm-states-only-virtual-meeting-on-wetland-program-funding>
- The Chesapeake Bay Trust seeks assistance for Chesapeake Bay tidal wetlands through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Chesapeake Bay Program Office (EPA's CBPO) as part of the Tidal Wetlands Capacity Building project for two Request for Proposals ("RFPs"): For more information visit: <https://cbtrust.org/grants/bidder-opportunities/>
- Looking for a black duck (or waterbird) co-chair for the Black Duck Action Team

MENTIMETER RESPONSES

Do you prefer using % increase of tidal wetlands (value to be discussed) instead of acreage in the updated outcome language?

Poll results:

- 14 - Yes, with reservations
- 2 - Yes
- 1 - No Preference
- 0 - No

Follow-up Responses

- Need to know what the baseline is. If we use 2014 acres as a baseline, we accept that we don't need to increase acreage?
- OK if a baseline is referenced from where we're starting. Also, need a mention of prioritized/important wetlands? Where are these located for tracking purposes?
- Are we trying to keep pace with loss because of SLR or are we trying to avoid loss OTHER than SLR related?



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- I like Pam's idea and point about having an outcome on wetlands permanently protected by easement or fee simple. (Whether it is in terms of acres or percentage)
- The target should consider bay-wide ecosystem function given projected distribution with SLR
- Is the question between acreage and percentage simply a messaging question? Because a percentage can be converted to an acreage and vice versa, right?
- % of baseline is still linked to an acreage (or whatever metric is chosen for the baseline), but it will give the workgroup time to figure out what to use as a baseline.
- Thinking ahead, should our % start with how many tidal wetlands are expected to be lost due to SLR? To make sure we at least replace.
- The old outcome ignored losses of wetlands. The new outcome should have a goal of increasing tidal wetland extent. That can be quantified as acreage or %, the key attribute is "increase".
- I agree that confidence in using a % depends somewhat on quality of the baseline acreage available.
- How about a sub outcome for the amount of wetlands to be permanently protected through easement/fee simple/PLI. You could also have an outcome on how much protected through regulation if you want.

ATTENDEES (29): Pam Mason (VIMS retired), Tess Danielson (DOEE), Dede Lawal (CRC), Chris Guy (USFWS), Bill Jenkins (EPA), Greg Noe (USGS), Jeryl Phillips (VIMS), Alison Rogerson (DNREC), Aaron Wendt (DCR), Elise Fraizer (DEQ), Breck Sullivan (USGS), Aaron Blair (EPA), Alison Santoro (MD DNR), Lorie Staver (UMCES), Andrew Larkin (NOAA), Chris Spaur (USACE), Kevin Mclean (VA DEQ), Ben Alexandro (CCP), Julia Fucci (CRC), George Doumit (DNREC), Marla Stelk (NAWM), Amanda Small (MD DNR), Amanda Poskaitis (Underwood & Associates), Emily Young (ICPRB), Su Fanok (TNC), Julie Reichert-Nguyen (NOAA), Erin Reilly (VIMS), Chris Spaur (USACE), Ben Sagara (DWR)