

Wetland Workgroup June Meeting Minutes

June 16, 2020

Conference Call

Welcome and Introductions (*Pam Mason, Chair*)

Pam Mason (VIMS)	Megan Ossmann (CRC)	Jeremy Hanson (VT @ CBP)	Alison Santoro (MD DNR)
Steve Allison (Rodgers Consulting)	Dave Goerman (PA DEP)	Bill Jenkins (EPA)	Breck Sullivan (CRC)
Leah Franzluebbbers (USFWS)	Emily Farr (NOAA)	Kevin DuBois (DoD)	Katie Brownson (USFS)
Jaclyn Woollard	Rich Mason (USFWS)	Mark Biddle (DE DNREC)	Alana Hartman (WV DEP)
Alison Rogerson (DE DNREC)	Melissa Yearick (USC)	Danielle Algazi (EPA)	Sarah Hilderbrand (MD DNR)
Christine Conn (MD DNR)			

Action Items:

- Reach out to Pam and Megan if you are interested in working on STAC workshop proposal.
 - Reach out to Pam, Amy, and Megan if you are interested in working with the finance consultant.
 - Reach out to Kevin and Emily if you can help fill out the table that identifies state programs and initiatives that encourage wetland restoration or living shorelines ([google drive folder](#) and table shared in follow up email).
 - Kevin will write a few sentences about the state programs that support wetland restoration, and send to Megan to share with HGIT chairs.
 - Reach out to Pam and Megan with ideas for future meeting topics.
 - Running list of future meeting topics/presentations:
 - Randy Owen - Upland conversions
 - Joint meeting with Forestry Workgroup
 - Hearing from VMRC rep
 - Wetland mowing
 - WV Wetlands Functional Assessment Tool
- <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=3dc1de0e2c334e648318317dfd1eb18f>

- FEMA region III person - mitigation work and more broadly how their programs might support wetland restoration
- Proposed changes to stream restoration protocol 1

Wetland Program Development Grants *(Danielle Algazi, EPA)*

Questions/comments:

- Rich M: It doesn't sound like NGOs are eligible?
 - Danielle: No not eligible directly, but if it relates to a state's wetland program plan, you can work with that state
- Pam: Do we have any tribal entities in the region that have a wetland development plan?
 - Danielle: we do not – we have seven federally recognized tribes – two have gotten gap grants, which means they are developing the capacity for an environmental program. They are eligible to apply.
- Rich: What percent of the applications are funded?
 - Danielle: not sure – it depends each year and the number of applications. Not as competitive as national grants. Typically, more than 60 – 70% of applications are funded.
- Allison Rogerson: what is the difference between an application and a proposal?
 - Danielle: a proposal requires the basics – the workplan, budget detail, but doesn't include all the forms that are needed

Update on Compilation of State Plans that Encourage Wetland Restoration

(Kevin DuBois, DoD CBP and Emily Farr, NOAA Office of Habitat Conservation)

Action 5.4 from Workplan: *Work with the Communication Workgroup and State partners to develop state-specific factsheets that identify State plans, programs, and initiatives that encourage wetland restoration and implementation of living shorelines.*

Kevin and Emily have compiled relevant documents for Virginia and DC and will soon be working on the rest of the jurisdictions. They are welcoming volunteers to help gather the information for other jurisdictions.

Questions/comments:

- Pam: These factsheets will be helpful for cross-communication. It would be helpful if anyone has ideas/experience with graphics.
 - Kevin: In the DoD's annual progress report, there are several icons to represent co-benefits – maybe we can do something similar in these factsheets.
- Pam: Do we have a sense of the timeline?
 - Kevin: hoping to get information for MD by early July (working with Denise Clearwater)
- Pam: A lot of these crosswalk – each jurisdiction has a WIP, a wildlife action plan, etc. Could easily populate these and then focus on more state-specific documents
- Pam: is there a shared place that multiple people can work on this?

- Emily Farr: I can upload what we have in google drive and share it that way
 - Kevin: we can also just share the table, have people fill it out, and transcribe it later
- Emily Farr: We use a basic template with the name of the plan, page number, and the relevant text
- Danielle A: There is a lot of use to this – the Mid-Atlantic WWG has been trying to improve communication. This would be a good resource for them to have
 - Pam: this will be helpful in helping decision-makers identify the actor
- Kevin: We have talked about growing the constituency for wetlands – not just wetland professionals who care, but including birders, outdoor enthusiasts, etc. who should also care about wetlands.

Finance Forum Follow-up Actions

- Pam: After the Finance Forum in March, the Habitat GIT has been granted time with a consultant. Amy was going to talk about this and pull together a group of people who are interested in working together with the consultant on strategies for wetland restoration finance.
- Bill Jenkins: There are some deadlines for the hours to be used – the first deadline is 10 hours by August 3rd and another 10-20 by the end of October.
- Megan: if you interested in this topic, let me or Amy know, and we can start some discussions on this with a small group
- Christine Conn: George Kelly is our consultant. We identified all the various co-benefits that wetlands provide and what funding sources could potentially be leveraged. We never settled on one aspect, but George has a lot of expertise in wetland mitigation banking. We also considered flood mitigation as a co-benefit.
- Pam: If we do schedule a call, we will share with the group so if you are not certain now, you can think about it and decide to join later.
- Kevin: It might be helpful to share the state program information that illustrate the co-benefits – this might spark conversation about how to leverage funding
 - Bill: This would be helpful to the broader HGIT in developing ideas
 - Megan will share this information with the Habitat GIT (Bill and Christine), Kevin will write up a few sentences for description (follow-up)

Discussing a Systems Approach to BMP crediting (*Discussion Lead – Pam Mason*)

- Pam: This idea came up last fall – to develop a STAC workshop that addresses unintended consequences and perverse incentives caused by BMPs. There are situations where BMPs are siloed in different habitats, which can lead to habitat restoration in places that don't provide the greatest benefits, or habitat conversion, or other situations where one BMP is prioritized over another because it provides greater credit. We realized that there would be a lot of interest in this topic from other groups, such as Healthy Watersheds, or WQGIT, and other GITs and WGs, and that more collaboration is needed. We didn't have enough time to get this together last year but would like to get this ready for the next workshop proposal call this winter. We should have some planning discussions in late summer/early fall. Are people still interested in this idea,

and is there anyone interested in being a part of a smaller group to help develop the proposal and potentially participate on the steering committee?

- Alana Hartman: Do you have examples of unintended consequences?
 - Pam: Sometimes the load reduction credits drive people towards certain actions – for example, stream restoration and wetland restoration often compete - we are trying to look at it from a more systems perspective.
 - Alana: The Urban Stormwater Workgroup just updated a guidance document that addresses how you can credit for a floodplain reconnection – the comments are due this Friday.
 - Dave Goerman: PA has the case where in order to justify certain agricultural practices, the Bay pollution reduction is being used as a reason to eliminate resources rather than repair the damage to them – for example, converting headwater streams and wetlands to engineered constructed BMPs (underground drain systems, swales), which means a loss in resources and habitat benefits.
 - Jeremy: Putting a link in the chat to the Urban Stormwater memo. (Feedback requested by COB 6/19, email feedback to David Wood (Wood.CSN@outlook.com), Tom Schueler (watershedguy@hotmail.com), and Norm Goulet (NGoulet@novaregion.org).
 - https://www.chesapeakebay.net/channel_files/40320/external_review_draft_group_4_memo_5.15.20.pdf
 - Alison Santoro: Looked at memo a couple of times – can give a quick rundown. It suggests changes to protocol 2 and 3 calculations for legacy sediment removal and projects that raise the stream bed.
- Kevin Du Bois: Would some of the unintended consequences include jurisdictions that use an edge of stream and edge of tide analysis, which doesn't include coastal projects like a tidal wetland restoration to be counted for BMPs in the model?
 - Pam: I would suspect yes, if this is happening.
- Pam: We wanted to look at these BMPs at a systems scale, rather than forcing people on the ground to make a choice between crediting options.
- Rich M: Some recent projects in Anne Arundel County for floodplain reconnection have made areas wetter but have changed the stream systems which impacts the aquatic life.
- Pam: We have had similar conversations adhoc as part of the expert panel process, but a STAC workshop would bring these conversations together in one place and connect different groups.
- Rich: We need a more broad-based ecological approach to these projects – not just the crediting.
- Alison Santoro: What is the workload you expect from those involved?
 - Pam: First step is a couple hours a month working to participate in calls and gather support from other GITs and workgroups to prepare for writing a proposal. If STAC selects the proposal, it takes a lot of work to plan the workshop and write the report following the workshop.
 - Megan: the call for proposals comes in December, and they are due in February

- Jeremy: Do you still need to recruit a STAC member to be the STAC liaison for the proposal?
 - Megan: Yes, you still do
- Pam: Let me or Megan know if you are interested in getting involved in this, probably kicking up around our next meeting in August
- Dave G: I am still interested

The Way Forward

Pam: Our next meeting date is August 18th – Megan has sent out calendar invites for the rest of the year. Please reach out if you have ideas for future agenda topics.

Kevin D: There are proposed changes to stream restoration protocol 1 – it would be interesting to hear more about those proposed changes or updates at a future meeting.

Adjourn