

Wetland Workgroup Meeting

January 8, 2015

Chesapeake Bay Program Office

1:00-3:00PM

Participants:

Amy Jacobs, TNC (Co-Chair)

Erin McLaughlin, MDNR (Co-Chair)

Hannah Martin, CRC (Staff)

Marian Norris, NPS

Chris Spaur, USACE

Christine Carpenter, FWS

Rich Mason, FWS

Jill Whitcomb, PA DEP

Jayme Arthurs, NRCS

Joe Berg, Biohabitats

Lora Zimmerman, FWS

Steve Strano, NRCS

Sara Nicholas, TNC

Mike Slattery, FWS

Jennifer Greiner, FWS

Melissa Yearick, USC

Alana Hartman, WVDEP

Anne Wakeford, WVDNR

Sarah Hilderbrand, MDNR

Alicia Berlin, USGS

Mark Biddle, DNREC

Dave Rider, EPA

Sharon Scarborough, NRCS

Actions:

- Send comments on Wetland MStrat to McLaughlin or Martin
- Send McLaughlin/Jacobs presentation ideas for future meetings

Minutes:

1. Wetland Management Strategy (Erin McLaughlin, MDNR)
 - a. McLaughlin shared the draft with the workgroup and received comments from 5 members.
 - i. Presentation highlighted areas of needed input.
 - ii. Might be necessary to separate Tidal and non-tidal
 1. Greiner: Other MStrats need to pursue the format of organizing geographically such as fish habitat which likely needs mgmt. approaches separated into tidal vs non-tidal because obstacles are different.
 - iii. Factors influencing section

1. Jacobs: TNC working with DU and interviewed stakeholders in 4 states and looking specific obstacles. Summarizing now and hoping to finalize by February and present back to WG to insert into the MStrat.
- iv. Data gaps:
1. Spaur: Status and trends in watershed—areas of historic losses and replace within the watershed, you have the areas identified. Helpful to better characterize magnitude of loss and need for restoration. Could be identified as a data gap to manage the resources better.
 - a. Greiner: Best info for the whole watershed is Dahl's work and used to estimate loss over time. Best info on no net loss is the USACE data. We don't know if we met the no net loss target.
 - b. McLaughlin: focusing on restoration (no net loss) and identify the historic loss areas and use those as target priorities.
 - c. Strano: existing datasets can help us identify those areas, but doesn't necessarily promote restoration
- v. Landowner Willingness
1. TNC/DU input
- vi. Technical understanding among restoration practitioners
1. The Wetlands Expert Panel is working on going through literature and obtain data for specific wetland types
- vii. Current Efforts:
1. Each agencies priorities.
 2. One map showing priority areas-overlap with agency work/focus groups.
 3. Priority areas to work with concerted effort as well as activities/habitat types that would be priorities to support. Work opportunistically as well.
- viii. Gaps
1. Reporting is main gap that has been identified
- ix. Mgmt Approach
1. MD is moving forward with work on public/state lands
 2. PA no
 3. NY has partnered and implemented small wetland complexes throughout state forests for habitat and non-point source nutrient management
 4. **Action:** In the MStrat, make it clear that public land is fed/state/NGO owned.
 5. Strano: is prioritizing areas to just reconnect streams and floodplains.
 - a. Change to Identify, not prioritize.
 6. Spaur: existing, used farm land (prime ag land) could be a negative component when choosing sites.
 7. Zimmerman: largest partners in watershed are NRCS, and they have to work on ag lands.

- a. Strano: we can do forest lands too and there land isn't being taken out of production. MD-wetland restoration in forested areas that have been drained for pine production.
- b. PA: not good crop land, but marginal that has been drained.
- c. Strano: south centric statement---some areas you don't have opportunities except for ag lands.
- d. Greiner: map produced overlaying hydric soils with sparrow loadings and marginal productive ag lands and bird conservation regions 29&30. Would it be helpful for this group? Updated about 5 years ago.
 - i. Jacobs: conversation for next meeting; agreement on trying to narrow down priority areas, what would we want to use? That would be useful to see
 - ii. Spaur: we want site selections guidelines/constraints.
 - iii. Stano: conservation practice standards, we use the term "considerations" when prioritizing.
 - iv. McLaughlin: general categories of types of restoration activities/target species rather than specifications.
- x. MGMT approach:
 - 1. Reporting, prioritization, addressing obstacles.
 - 2. Strano: working with local groups. That would fit into recommendation for prioritizing areas for wetland restoration.
- xi. Assessing Progress
 - 1. Comment about projects not reported through NEIEN—but at the moment enhancement is not credited. Those acres not entered into NEIEN is not tracked/credited towards this outcome.
- Action:** additional comments send to McLaughlin.
- xii. Jacobs: next steps, incorporate comments. Incorporate TNC and DU reports on obstacles. Need to refine prioritization as well. Somewhat final draft is due beginning of March. Goes out for public review in April. Finalized in June.

2. Targeting.

- a. Prioritization: brainstorm on where people are on the topic of prioritization and targeting. More structured discussion next meeting.
- b. Biggest decisions: thinking about the outcome and what drives the outcome.
- c. Habitat (habitat or species) vs water quality. Others: flooding, carbon storage.
- d. Challenging position because the workgroup is part of the Habitat GIT but it is part of Chesapeake Bay Program which is driven by the TMDL/Water quality.
- e. Options
 - i. Focus on habitat prioritization scheme
 - ii. Water quality prioritization scheme
 - iii. Integrate Habitat and WQ
- f. Discussion:
 - i. Zimmerman: PA perspective, priorities are coming from the types of grants that are funding the restoration work (growing greener program which is water

quality based. Or NRCS which are either species based like bog turtle habitat restoration)

- ii. Nicholas: PA, don't see a reason to prioritize to the point where you have large range of benefits to offer the landowner. Not limiting severely what the options would be.
 - iii. Zimmerman: fish habitat creation through natural channel design
 - iv. Spaur: floodplain reconnection can also provide habitat
 - v. Zimmerman: hydrologist, high priority is reconnecting floodplains.
 - vi. Berg: strong bay area driver for that kind of stream and integrated wetland restoration which could be important for other drivers like ag BMPs toward meeting the goal. Bay program TMDL and ms4 permits—ongoing work that shows stream restoration is most cost effective—reconnecting floodplains and that involves changing hydrology.
 - vii. Slattery: water quality money to support projects that can have a habitat benefit/uplift.
 - viii. Jacobs: starting with the types of practices that would be most beneficial, figure out where to be best for WIP implementation and within that, where is the greatest habitat value?
 - 1. Pocomoke: priority by water quality...is it going to be good habitat though? Starting with suite of promising practices, types of wetland restoration—could minimize the risk of just having WQ benefits.
 - 2. Berg: counties and SHA and ms4 regulated communities, in order to get the floodplain reconnection credit, the area has to rep 1% of the drainage area to that point, very large area. Set aside a floodplain footprint. Conservation easements or fencing. Worked into crediting arrangement.
 - 3. Jacobs: proposing taking comments and wrap heads around a more structured discussion for next meeting in March and how to drill this down.
 - a. Think about types of restoration projects to prioritize that benefit both habitat and water quality
 - b. Do we want to demonstrate this approach? Priorities within each state.
 - c. Types of data layers to get at water quality and habitat benefits
3. Workgroup moving forward
- a. Suggestions for improvement?
 - b. Discussion
 - c. Spaur: identify things that go beyond Bay agreement, set stage for future things as we move forward.
 - d. If you have ideas, present to the group to get feedback or if they saw a great presentation. Share with Jacobs or McLaughlin.
 - e. Interested in willing to participate in an in-person meeting once a year to get everyone in the same room?
 - i. Need at least two months to get travel funds.

4. WEP Update (McLaughlin)
 - a. Literature review, have not been able to find specific loading rates for specific types of wetlands. In order to have wetlands counted and identified in the bay model-have to determine the loading rates. Focusing on efficiencies and pull out different efficiencies for diff wetland types.
5. There was RFP put out for funding from EPA to support wetland workgroup
 - a. Reframe the RFP and send out to the group for comment and review. And it will be sent out. \$40-50K

March 12—next meeting.