Wetland Workgroup Meeting Minutes
March 19, 2015
1:00-3:00PM
CBPO, Fish Shack

Participants:
Amy Jacobs, TNC Co-Chair WWG
Erin McLaughlin, MDNR Co-Chair WWG
Hannah Martin, CRC Staffer
Denise Clearwater, MDE
Mary Andrews, NOAA
Michelle Carick, TNC
Chris Spaur, USACE
David Byrd, EPA
David Norris, VA Dept of Game and Fish
Melissa Yearick, USC
Lora Zimmerman, FWS
Jill Whitcomb, PA DEP
Jake McPherson, DU
Anne Wakeford, WVDNR
Carol Petrow, EPA
Rebecca Funk, MDNR
Rich Tackas, NOAA
Streve Strano, NRCS
Alana Hartman, WVDEP
Rich Mason, FWS
Mark Bryer, TNC
Peyton Robertson, NOAA

Minutes:

1. **Wetland Management Strategy (McLaughlin)**
    a. Draft out for public comment, please review online
    b. Action: Martin will share link to comment online (or send comments directly to Martin)
2. **Tracking and Reporting Update (Jacobs)**
    a. NEIEN contact responses, figure out why some projects aren't being reported.
    b. Determine flowchart to explain how data are being transferred/passed to NEIEN contact (MD and DE examples provided in presentation). Action: Develop for each state in order to understand the process and identify problems and keep as reference for future if people switch jobs.
        i. Yearick willing to put together flowchart for NY
        ii. Wakeford and Hartman will put together flowchart for WV
        iii. Zimmerman: PA is having sit down meeting on March 31 to discuss and Whitcomb will put together flowchart for PA
3. **Targeting Restoration Discussion and Identification of Criteria (Jacobs)**

Discussion:

a. Spaur: how to measure habitat benefits?
    i. Jacobs: not tasked with specific habitat measures, there is a related black duck outcome (tidal marshes). Water quality is easier to prioritize because it's measurable/quantifiable. Habitat is challenging because it's hard to get agreement on priority species or types of habitat or quantify a goal to work towards.
b. If we start prioritizing within the workgroup, how does that transfer to other agencies that fund wetland restoration?
    i. McLaughlin: state programs have wildlife action plans and targeting schemes, so if we all work toward wetland outcome it would be different pieces of the outcome. Wouldn't change directives in state agency, but its collecting all the information.
c. Strano: might have to target wildlife and water quality separately. WQ will bring wildlife along but it may not be areas specifically targeted for wildlife. Heritage may be focused on areas with species of concern (RTE species). Land protection, already what is in existence rather than using degraded places. NRCS has incorporating SWAPs at least in MD focused on certain types of wetlands.
    i. Great if we could find that for all the other states and use that for habitat type priorities
    ii. Action: Strano will email state reps
d. Action: Send Jacobs the following requests: by April 16 to compile before next meeting
    i. Shapefile or HUCs of focus areas
    ii. Primary program goal
    iii. Secondary program goal
    iv. Any geographic information to support targeting to achieve primary and secondary goals
e. Strano: would be useful for us to know how if we come up with targeting mechanism, how it would influence the money. Use to support getting a grant for technical assistance.

4. Expert Panel and Chesapeake Bay Program Funding Updates (McLaughlin)

a. Supposed to meet last week but meeting was postponed, Quentin Stubbs has been leading the mapping effort.
b. Important to map the wetlands because they are not currently mapped in the Watershed Model. Any changes cannot be captured/represented in GIS.
c. Expert panel settled on four wetland classes that could have supporting evidence in the literature for reductions and efficiencies for N and P for these classes; tidal, floodplain, headwater, depressional (this class may have been rejected by the expert panel members)
d. Preliminary results outlined in Erin's presentation
e. NWI+ bring to next meet, tool to run scripts anywhere that has NWI (Clearwater and Jacobs)

f. Objective is to get the base map and then the EP has to find in the literature assign efficiencies/reductions if we want wetlands included in the models as actual wetland landuse and not lumped with forests.
g. Mason; thought NWI had 20 year report that looked at wetland loss and gross scale but just looked at hydric soils to estimate wetland loss. Report to congress in 1995.
h. CBT RFP received 8 proposals for the 49K$. RFP asked for continuation of NFWF study to poll ID groups working in 4 states on barriers to restoration, polling folks why they participated in different programs to cover areas that were not addressed in NFWF grant. Reviewed proposals and CBT is ready to make an offer to one of the groups. Hope they can do a presentation to do an overview of the project and get input from the WWG members.

5. **Guest Presentation: Chesapeake Bay Habitat Tool—A resource for prioritizing locations for tidal wetland restoration** (Michelle Canick, TNC)
    a. NOAA funded TNC developed.
    b. Brings together spatial data layers of Fish Passage (Data Source: default diadramous scenario from the original TNC Chesapeake Bay Fish Passage Prioritization tool), Oysters (Data Source: CMES), Tidal wetlands (Data Source: NWI), SAV (Data Source: VIMS 2007-2011 coverage), and Benthic (developed new data layers for this tool). Interaction portion within the web map to prioritize activities. Multi-habitat conservation framework
    c. Tidal Wetlands: NWI, tidal vegetated wetland types because wanted consistent layer across state lines and represented tidal regime
    d. Benthic Classification: developed by TNC. Relates benthic organism distribution to salinity, sediments, depth, and DO.
    e. https://Maps.tnc.org/chesapeakehabitat/
    f. Tool Development: mostly done with development of the baywide tool, continuing outreach efforts to get feedback, continuing to clean up things and add legends, add/remove data layers. Website is live and provide feedback.
    g. Tool cannot determine if existing wetland is healthy or degraded
    h. SLR vulnerability: bathtub model, 10M DEM LiDAR data and classified areas based on elevations.
    i. Action: Comments send to Michelle.
    j. Next Steps: done with baywide tool for the most part. By end of the summer downscale to Choptank.
    k. Develop a tool that's cross outcome, multiple habitats. Connect land water and fish in a more deliberate way.
    l. Spaur: great to identify areas with minimal resource tradeoff, regional patterns of accretion rates
    m. Andrews: will provide more information but does not substitute for common sense, need to make informed decisions on site. This tool does not substitute for expert knowledge
    n. Support tool, not a decision tool.

o. Andrews: discussion about adding black duck once it's available. If you think it's helpful to add layers, let us know. Tell us data layers and where you can find it. Needs to be consistent across states.
p. Mason: Social aspect would like to see more integrated into these plans. Social aspect that brings private money to the table.