



# Maryland's Appendix to the Chesapeake Bay Program Wetlands Action Plan

Presentation to the Chesapeake Bay Program  
Wetlands Workgroup  
2/21/23

# Planning

We need to plan for 1) generating demand for wetland projects and  
2) generating supply of fundable wetland projects

- Recognize the benefits of wetlands and integrate wetland restoration and enhancement into other relevant agency or partner plans and commission work
  - Climate Change Commission
  - Green and Blue Infrastructure Commission
  - MDEM Office of Resilience
  - Natural Capital Task Force
- Build on existing planning efforts and models
  - Delmarva Wetlands Team
  - Delmarva Restoration Conservation Network
  - Salt Marsh Sparrow Conservation effort

# Capacity Building

The background of the slide is a photograph of a wetland or marsh. In the foreground, there are tall green reeds and grasses. The middle ground shows a calm body of water reflecting the sky and the surrounding landscape. The background consists of a flat, green landscape under a sky filled with large, white and grey clouds. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

- **Develop State Wetland Team-** site prioritization, permitting, maintenance/monitoring, proposal response
- **Develop CBP Action Team-** work through federal regulatory challenges, coordinate regionally on restoration strategies and projects
- **Example Effort:** Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Chesapeake Bay Trust have partnered on the Community Based Organization Capacity Building Initiative to help historically under-engaged community organizations participate in water quality and resilience project design and proposal development

# Outreach

- Borrow from neighboring states and the partnership (Delaware has excellent outreach materials related to wetlands)
- Include landowner targeting in plans
- Increase awareness of and access to new spatial tools that highlight opportunities for wetland restoration and wetland restoration ecosystem services to the public and restoration professionals
- Align outreach efforts across state and federal agencies- e.g. NRCS soil conservation districts and MDA have frequent contact with farmers that maybe experiencing saltwater intrusion and would like to create wetlands

# Science



- Increase monitoring of carbon and other greenhouse gases associated with wetlands
- Improve metrics of marsh health for more rapid field assessments and more accurate spatial assessment
- Study beneficial use of dredged material for wetland restoration and best management practices for wetland migration
- Improve temporal frequency and spatial accuracy of wetlands mapping
- Better connect wetland science to state policy

# Sustainable Funding

- Expand wetland restoration in the state ecological restoration portfolio
- Identify “win-win” scenarios where beneficial use of dredge material can reduce costs for both dredge disposal and restoration projects
- Take advantage of the Conservation Finance Act to utilize blue carbon and resiliency crediting as a piece of financing wetland restoration, procure ecological outcomes
- Look for opportunities for MDOT and MPA to help meet their climate goals with wetland restoration

# Recommended Actions for the Chesapeake Bay Program

- Establish an action team to address regulatory challenges, help states align large scale wetland restoration efforts, scale innovative conservation financing, and access new federal funding
- Modify Chesapeake Bay Program database to account for wetland gains which do not qualify as BMPs.
- Identify other practices which would sometimes qualify as wetland gains, but which were reported under other BMPs, including riparian forest buffers.
- Pursue additional opportunities for thin-layer placement of dredged material to assist in restoration and enhancement of tidal wetlands.
- Provide guidance on the tidal wetland restoration BMP that clarifies eligibility for tidal marsh restoration beyond shoreline projects. This would encourage all forms of tidal wetland restoration to be considered an approved practice for meeting nutrient and sediment reduction goals, opening up additional funding opportunities.
- Conduct an assessment of the long term impacts of climate change and human development on wetlands. This would help answer the question of what pace of wetland restoration is necessary to maintain wetlands in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.
- Consider crediting the preservation of wetlands as a form of ecosystem crediting which contribute to other Chesapeake Bay Agreement commitments as well as TMDL requirements, beyond nutrient and sediment reductions.

# Ongoing Actions

- Establish State Wetlands Team – break down silos within state government
- Create Wetlands Adaptation Plan
- Integrate co-benefits into grant making
- Apply for BIL funds for priority wetland restoration projects
- Updated maps of Wetland Adaptation Areas and the Marsh Protection Index