Jamboard "Big Ideas" for Wetlands and Forest Buffers

Wetlands

At the highest level, wetland restoration should be divided into tidal and non-tidal. Traditionally, the CBP has focused more on non-tidal wetlands because that is where the losses were occurring. But now, with climate change and sea level rise, tidal wetlands are both at risk for being lost and are critically important to keep, restore, and enhance to help with climate resiliency. More attention should be paid to strategies to increase tidal wetland acres without losing focus on restoring, enhancing, and protecting non-tidal wetlands. Different strategies need to be employed for each.

Tidal Wetland Big Ideas:

New Programs/partnerships

- Create a Chesapeake Wetland Partnership (modeled after CCP) network of organization and people with a common cause
- Create new Farm Bill programs or revise existing) so that farmland that is becoming less productive/no longer productive due to inundation or saltwater intrusion could be enrolled to create tidal wetlands
- Build consortium of interests around various shoreline interests to build the trust and understanding to effect long-term meaningful shoreline restoration that supports multiple outcomes and benefits. Social science principles are key

New partners

- FEMA
- NEMA, DOT

Targeting

- Use SLR
- Expand VIMS living shoreline pilot GIS program to identify good sites for restoration
- Focus on key geographic areas for restoration (like oysters and tributaries) that we can focus our resources/
- Acreage and extent and spatially explicit as to where to put the tidal wetlands/identify targeted wetlands for preservation and areas for restoration. Know where to go.
- Link effectively with floodplain management and coastal resilience to do large scale projects in tidal areas (perhaps map and identify the opportunity areas where geographically it makes sense and then see funding through new Administration programs

Incentives

- Pay 100% of costs for wetland shoreline stabilization for private property owners using coastal resiliency cost share programs (no cost to the shoreline protect, wetlands created)
- Take advantage of the coastal resilience momentum and figure out how new dollars or resources could support wetland protection and migration. Flood response is key.

- Incentivize the recreational leasing of ag. Wetlands to support payments to the landowner. (hunting, fishing, opportunities are limited and leasing represents an income source)
- Fundable bundles – packaging benefits of all practices together creating a portfolio of potential benefits, their return on investment.

Regulatory

- Mitigation bank opportunities – especially with opportunities related to infrastructure funding.
- Stricter zoning to protect tidal wetlands from coastal development

Other

- Beneficial use as tool to enhance functionality
- Move sediment from behind Conowingo dam to restore tidal wetlands that are becoming inundated

Local coordination among planning, stormwater and permitting agencies of land development. Local inter-agency coordination is key.

Use marsh infrastructure to build resilience to flooding – examples LA

Large performance-based contracts, full service technical assistance, not limited to one jurisdiction and have contracts extend state boundaries.

Nontidal Wetlands

- Apportion goals to each jurisdiction
- Prioritizing geographical locations for restoration
- Creating a coalition to bring together private property owners through out an area to create a network of conserved nontidal wetlands
- Put dollar values on green infrastructure versus gray with a focus on resiliency
- Protecting drinking water sources as a co-benefit for human health
- Ensure climate change resiliency infrastructure projects incorporate non-tidal wetlands restoration and creation
- Preserve soil-moisture storage capacity to reduce need to build structural BMPs as a solution to urban stormwater problems – not just wetland preservation but retention of moisture in headwater areas too.
- Tim Male's ideas for engaging the private sector

Forest Buffers

- Address maintenance and property value concerns
- Targeting where work would be most useful and efficient. Break watershed out and focus efforts in high priority sections
- Targeting with consideration to a broader array of stakeholder concerns (and building potential to work throughout the Bay watershed more holistically).
- Simple messaging on why important

- **Promote Forest buffers (and grass buffers) along 0 and first-order streams (not often on NHD maps used to identify opportunities), given importance of these hydrologic units to habitat and water quality.**
- Identify ways to open bottleneck resulting from having to negotiate individually with multiple landowners
- Launch an organization like Chesapeake Conservancy maybe with grant funding, that could steer, lead, direct, and advocate for this work.
- Go after 30x30 funding to reduce flooding (natural infrastructure)
- Opportunities to boost forest buffers in underserved areas but couple it with job opportunities for people IN those communities to better connect these resources with those nearby benefactors.

Summary of ideas

What new, creative and/or big ideas should we consider for Forest Buffers that could significantly change the rate of trajectory in the short term?

- Developing Workforce Capacity, particularly amongst black and brown communities. Community engagement, understanding the wants and needs of community members
- How best to stack co-benefits. Help us offer good incentives to landowners. The Bay program can act as a bank for carbon credits to achieve scale of the carbon market.
- Economic incentives, learning from oysters. Finding incentives to increase conservation. Enforcing existing regulations such as riparian buffers on riverfront property. Framing conservation efforts in a way that's attractive to farmers
- Bringing FEMA into the program. Incorporating non tidal wetlands programs into their recovery projects. Green trading: knit together private landowners to achieve co benefits. Could the Bay Program become a blue tech incubator? Ensuring that DEIJ is woven into 30 by 30 goals.
- Allay people's fear of risk when installing green vs grey? Is there a way to insure green infrastructure? Could we increase mitigation requirements?
- "Fundable bundables" need to package large scale investments to target private investment. Create a clearinghouse for potential investors.
- Leverage different groups and partnerships for tidal wetlands. Similar to wetland mitigation banks, apply to tidal wetlands. Possible applications of the farm bill. How do we sustain long term viability for farmers who receive up front incentives to conserve land.
- Resilience. Look at large scale tidal wetland restorations using the same strategy as oyster restoration. Make wetland restoration less patchy. Financial incentives for people on the coasts to allow marshes to migrate. Expanding on VIMs living shoreline.
- Effect that federal leadership or champion has in success. Champion issues instead of standing in a regulatory role. How to credit mitigation.