

Wetland Workgroup October Meeting Minutes

October 19, 2021

| | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| Pam Mason (VIMS) | Megan Ossmann (CRC) | Vanessa Van Note (EPA) | Michelle Henicheck (VA DEQ) |
| Greg Noe (USGS) | Breck Sullivan (CRC) | Jennifer Pauer (WV DEP) | Kevin Du Bois (DoD CBP) |
| Bill Jenkins (EPA) | Karina Nunez (VIMS) | Madison Fink (EPA) | Jeremy Hanson (CRC) |
| Alison Santoro (MD DNR) | Chris Spaur (USACE) | Mark Biddle (DE DNREC) | Ben Sagara (VA DWR) |
| Michelle Campbell (DOEE) | Melissa Yearick (USC) | Chris Guy (USFWS) | Kayla Clauson (DE DNREC) |
| Danielle Algazi (EPA) | Rich Mason (FWS) | Leah Franzluebbers (USFWS) | Megan Fitzgerald (EPA) |
| Jake McPherson (DU) | Denise Clearwater (MDE) | Sarah Hilderbrand (MD DNR) | BeKura Shabazz (First Alliance Consulting) |
| Alison Rogerson (DE DNRC) | Rachel Peabody (VMRC) | Greg Podniesinski (PA DEP) | |

Action Items:

- Reach out to Pam and Megan with ideas for future meeting topics.

Extension of Wetland BMP(s) Credit Duration

Vanessa Van Note (EPA)

[Link to report](#)

Questions/comments:

- Kevin D: Does this preclude enhancement from being included as a BMP in the future?
 - Pam M: I would say no, because it was the expert panel process that decided this, not this group. We can still have a conversation in the future, though the Bay Program is likely to not be doing expert panels in the future. But we can use whatever process they will have.
- Denise C: Is there a place for enhancement in recognition of its habitat benefits, in our STAC workshop group?
 - Pam M: If we develop protocol for habitat we might be able to capture it that way
- Mark B: When the expert panel removed wetland enhancement, what was the reasoning?

- Greg N: It was either not enough data or a lot of views that those specific practices do not benefit N, P, and sediment reduction and there was worry about “gaming” the system with credits for those activities.
- Mark B: I think it’s worth the WWG keeping this on the back burner because there might be room for some enhancement practices to be credited.
- Pam M: Enhancement is typically vegetative practices, which might not have anything to do with WQ, or may have a negative effect on WQ.
- Jeremy Hanson: Are we changing the wetland buffers?
 - Pam M: Recommend removing it from the list since it is uncertain
- Note added to report: Wetland Buffer is currently mapped to land retirement in CAST as a land use change BMP without a nutrient reduction efficiency. Until this BMP is reevaluated for its water quality benefits per NRCS CP-30 it will not be considered for credit duration extension as part of this recommendation.
- Workgroup voted to endorse the report and approved the proposed changes to credit duration that were proposed.

Modeling the Effect of Accelerated Sea-level Rise on Tidal Marsh Evolution

Karinna Nunez (VIMS)

[Presentation slides](#)

Questions/comments:

- Kevin D: Back in the day, homeowners that could not get wetland permits to install bulkheads would build the structures landward and get permits to install “retaining walls”. Does your model pick up these hardened structures in the riparian buffer as limiters to landward marsh migration?
 - Karinna: If there is an existing data set then yes it can be easily incorporated into the model. Another project we will be starting soon is to develop a new protocol to develop our tidal marsh inventory using machine learning. That would be a great way to try to capture these features and create a spatial dataset that could be used to model.
- Rachel P: Looking for basic statistics to put in basic writing about the impact of SLR on wetlands - did you find a basic percentage loss of wetlands using the 2017 NOAA curve?
 - Karinna: We validate the model at 2 sites in VA and are trying to expand it to other areas. We got a range between 79 and 81% for these areas.
 - Pam: The point here is that the model is so spatially explicit, and it requires very complex detailed data that it's not it's not a simple, sort of just sloshing the water on the surface and figuring out where the wetlands are going to go. There are other versions of models that have made projections that are a lot simpler.
 - Karinna: We are also doing model comparison based on different research questions.
- Chris S: Brings up dilemma on the regulatory side. How should we be regulating vegetated tidal wetlands that we expect to drown/erode?

- Kevin D: I guess that would depend on the advancement of techniques like thin layer placement of sediment to maintain marsh elevation. You would also want to maintain all the ecosystem services as long as wetlands persist.

Wetland Outcome Attainability Workshops

Megan Ossmann (CRC), Workgroup Staffer

[Presentation slides](#)

Questions/comments:

- Denise: Does the timing of this dovetail with the work we're doing on record keeping and crediting? There's over 100,000 acres of enhancements through nutria eradication that doesn't have a home and I think to not consider that, which was a huge effort, doesn't present an accurate picture of where we are for wetland enhancement.
 - Chris G: I consider three different efforts going on: the BMPs, the evaluation of the NEIEN system to try to get credits back for BMPs that should have been included, and this effort, which is less focused on BMPs and more on progress and the Bay Barometer, etc. I see all these efforts as mutualistic and supportive of each other and how they overlap will become clearer as we move along.
- Kevin D: For the steering committee's consideration, I agree with your approach that you invite people that are decision-makers and can control budgets. For DoD, I think you're going to need to reach higher than the PSC and I'd be happy to work with you to identify the appropriate people to invite.
- Pam M: The Conservation Fund is also a big player in the tidal wetlands world.
- Kevin D: The problem is not lack of opportunity; it is lack of funding. Funding for DoD is a competitive process with a limited pot of money and oftentimes natural resource enhancements fall behind regular requirements to protect and restore endangered species, habitat, or other priority concerns.

Announcements and Updates

- STAC workshop planning team has been meeting monthly and has a working draft agenda for a 2-day workshop. The dates are between March 21st and 25th, 2022. Looking at venues that can be in person but also have the capacity to broadcast for those who want to attend virtually. Four sessions - one will be a deeper dive on the accounting issue and sessions 2, 3, and 4 will be a deeper dive into wetlands projects from a systems perspective.
 - Chris G: Suggest that if you are having trouble finding a facility, USFWS has a newly renovated facility that should be open soon. The community college could also be a backup because they are well set up to do hybrid meetings.
- Next meeting will be a joint meeting with the Climate Resiliency Workgroup on two back-to-back days on December 13th and 14th. The meeting will be focused on tidal shorelines.
- There is a Habitat GIT meeting on the afternoon of November 9th and the morning of November 10th and all workgroup members are invited to attend. The agenda is still being drafted but is

intended to revolve around the workgroups and what they need, so please look at the agenda when it comes out and consider attending.

https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/event/habitat_goal_team_fall_2021_meeting

- The Delaware Wetlands Conference is scheduled February 1st and 2nd and falls on World Wetlands Day. The deadline to submit abstracts for posters and presentations is November 9th. Recorded presentations are being accepted if you can't attend in person.

<https://dnrec.alpha.delaware.gov/watershed-stewardship/wetlands/conference/>