

Quarterly Progress Meeting Template

Wetlands Outcome

Step 1: Summarize your outcome.

Outcome:

Continually increase the capacity of wetlands to provide water quality and habitat benefits throughout the watershed. Create or reestablish 85,000 acres of tidal and nontidal wetlands and enhance the function of an additional 150,000 acres of degraded wetlands by 2025. These activities may occur in any land use (including urban) but primarily occur in agricultural or natural landscapes.

Lead and Supporting Goal Implementation Teams (GITs):

Vital Habitats Goal Implementation Team; in partnership with the Water Quality and Healthy Watersheds goal implementation teams.

Participating Partners:

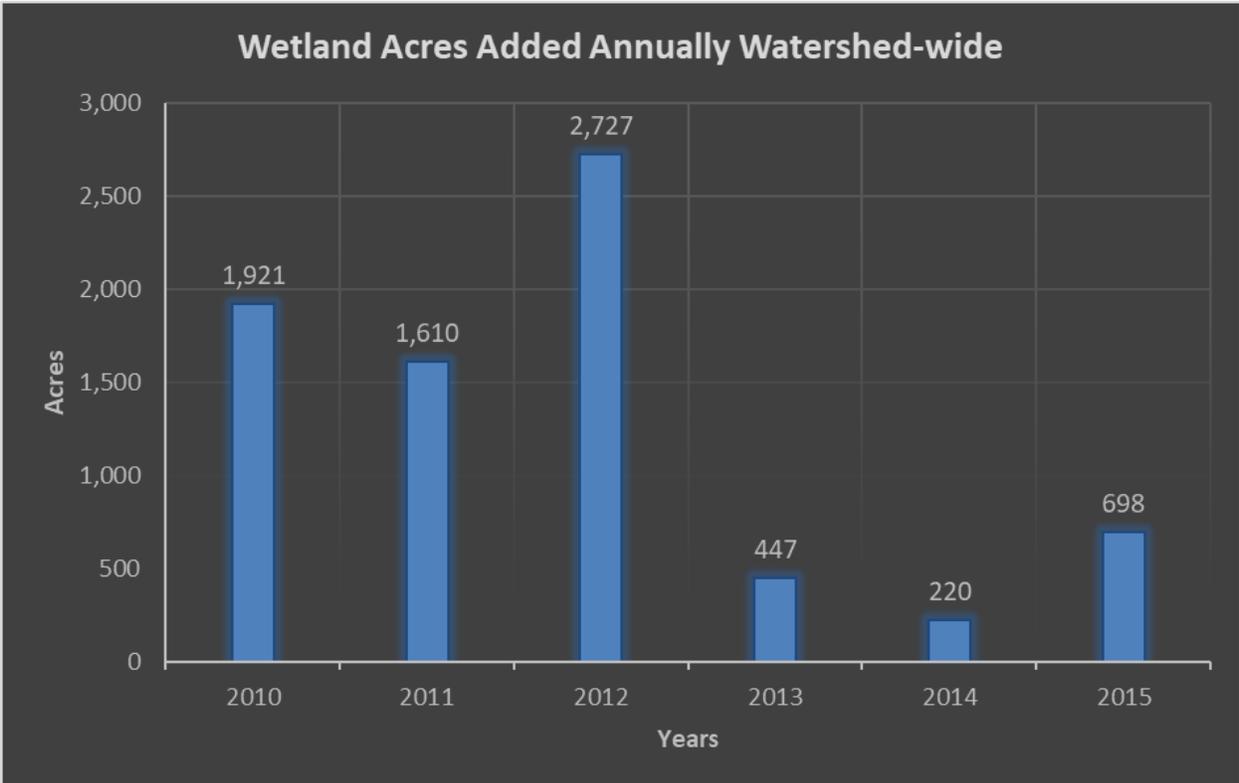
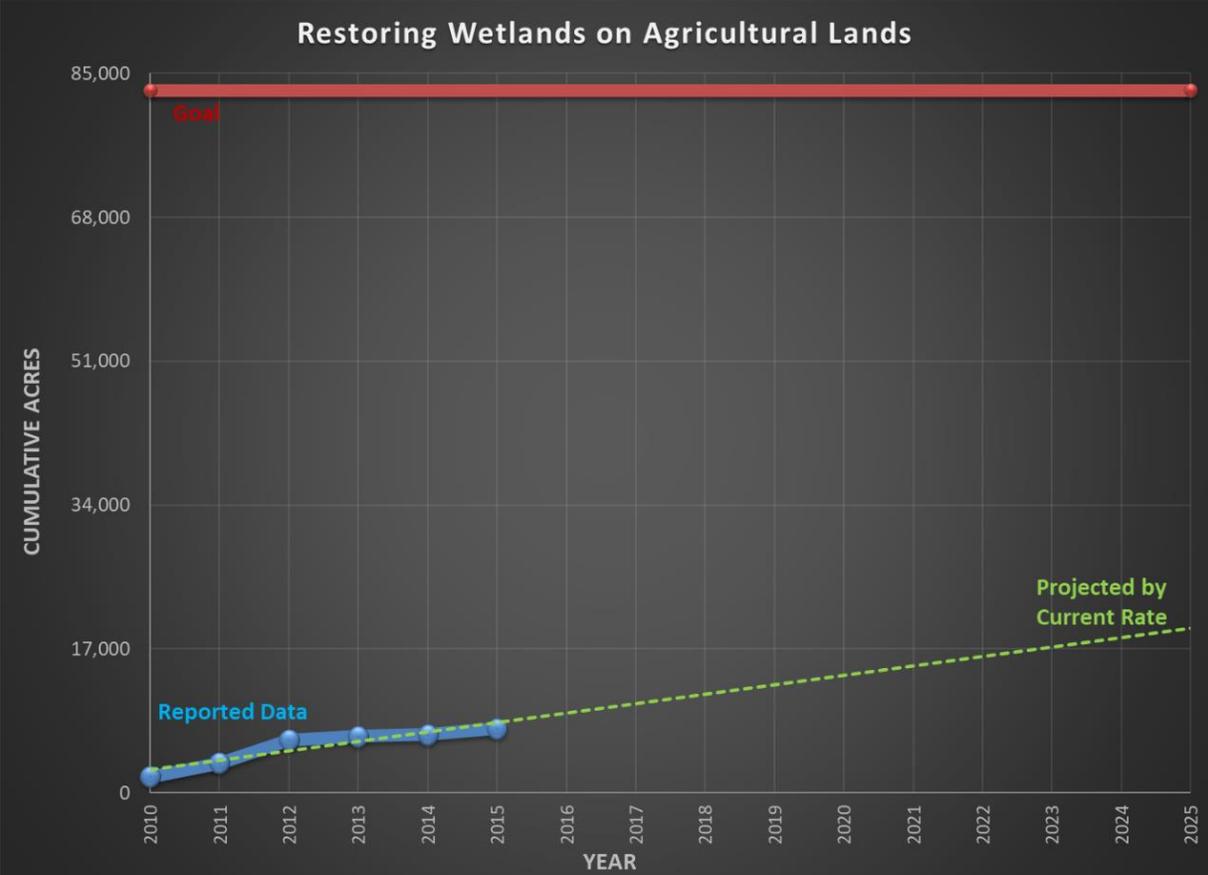
- Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (*State of Delaware*)
 - Contact: Mark Biddle; Alternative Contact: Alison Rogerson, Brittany Haywood
- Maryland Department of the Environment (*State of Maryland*)
 - Contact: Denise Clearwater
- Maryland Department of Natural Resources (*State of Maryland*)
 - Contact: Erin McLaughlin
- Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (*Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*)
 - Contact: Ken Murin
- Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (*Commonwealth of Virginia*)
 - No contact
- Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (*Commonwealth of Virginia*)
 - Contact: Dave Norris
- Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (*Commonwealth of Virginia*)
 - Contact: Michelle Henicheck
- Virginia Governor's Office (*Commonwealth of Virginia*)
 - No Contact
- Virginia Institute of Marine Science (*Commonwealth of Virginia*)
 - Contact: Pan Mason
- West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (*State of West Virginia*)
 - Contact: Alana Hartman
- West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (*State of West Virginia*)
 - Contact: Anne Wakeford, Danielle Elliot
- Department of Energy and Environment (*District of Columbia*)
 - No Contact
- Chesapeake Bay Commission
 - No Contact
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (*U.S. Department of Agriculture*)

- DE Contacts: Jayme Arthurs, Bobby Gorski
 - MD Contact: Steve Strano
 - VA Contact: Jeff Jones
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
 - Contacts: Chris Spaur, Eddie DuRant
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
 - Contacts: Carol Petrow, Ralph Spagnolo
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 - PA Field Office: Lora Zimmerman
 - CBFO: Rich Mason
- U.S. Geological Survey
 - Contact: Greg Noe
 - Patuxent: Alecia Berlin
- Biohabitats, Inc.
 - Contact: Joe Berg
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
 - Contact: Rebecca LePrell
- Ducks Unlimited
 - Contact: Jake McPherson
- The Nature Conservancy
 - Amy Jacobs
- Troutman Sanders
 - **No Contact**
- Upper Susquehanna Coalition
 - Contact: Melissa Yearick
- Virginia Agribusiness Council
 - **No Contact**

Progress:

Between 2010 and 2015, 7,623 acres of wetlands were created or reestablished on agricultural lands. While this outcome includes a target to restore 85,000 acres of tidal and non-tidal wetlands in the watershed, 83,000 of these restored acres should take place on agricultural lands. The wetlands restored on agricultural lands between 2010 and 2015 mark a nine percent achievement of the 83,000-acre goal.

Wetland restoration or creation (which result in wetland acreage gains) is tracked separately from wetland enhancement or rehabilitation (which result in existing wetland functional gains). Current efforts are underway via the second Wetland Expert panel to further define nontidal wetland rehabilitation, enhancement and creation, for more accurate accounting in the Phase 6 Watershed Model.



Step 2: Explain the logic behind your work toward an Outcome.

See the logic table template under “Projects and Resources” on the [GIT 6 page of Chesapeakebay.net](#) for instructions and format for documenting and explaining how your actions relate back to elements of the [decision framework](#) (see Appendix A) included in your Management Strategies.

Step 3: Craft a compelling narrative.

While the information included in Steps 1 and 2 is meant to explain the work you are doing and support the analysis that is needed to adaptively manage, the presentation you bring to your Quarterly Progress Meeting should be summarized in a compelling narrative. This narrative will allow you to:

- Summarize your Outcome, the progress you have made thus far, and whether we are on track to achieve this Outcome by the identified date.
- Explain the logic behind your work toward an Outcome, indicate the status of your management actions, and denote which actions have or will play the biggest role in making progress.
- Outline your current understanding of your management approach, the challenges you may face, the adaptations you may recommend, and the requests you may have of the Management Board for action, support, or assistance.

We recommend answering the following Adaptive Management-inspired questions in writing **and** using the “And, But, Therefore” story structure to present these points to the Management Board. **Our Discussion and Analysis Presentation Template (.PPT) should be adapted to fit your style and needs.**

What are our assumptions?

(1) What original assumptions did we make in our Management Strategy that we felt were important to our success?

a. What “Factors Influencing Success” were originally identified in your Management Strategy?

- Funding
- Landowner Willingness / Marketing and Outreach
- Inaccurate and Incomplete Reporting
- Understanding of Importance of Restoration among Decision-Makers
- Technical Understanding among Restoration Practitioners
- Climate Change

b. What programmatic gaps that fail to address those factors did you originally identify in your Management Strategy?

- Tracking Wetland Restoration and Enhancement: gaps in accuracy of reported data due to reporting process discrepancies or omissions
- Funding: dedicated funding for restoration and enhancement is not sufficient
- Staffing: current technical personnel capacity does not meet need to engage interested land owners, to develop design plans or to manage projects

- Data: some states lack comprehensive maps of wetland resources
 - Targeting / Prioritization: no tool exists for the entire Chesapeake watershed
- c. **What were the “Management Approaches” you chose to include in your Management Strategy and Two-Year Work Plan in order to address those gaps?**
- Management Approach 1: Improve wetland mapping, and the wetland restoration reporting and tracking process
 - Management Approach 2: Identify barriers to wetland restoration and develop solutions to address them
 - Management Approach 3: Increase our technical understanding of the factors influencing restoration and enhancement success
 - Management Approach 4: Prioritize areas for wetland restoration
 - Management Approach 5: Expand the involvement of local stakeholders

Are we doing what we said we would do?

(2) Are you on track to achieve your Outcome by the identified date?

- a. **What is your target? What does this target represent (e.g., the achievement we believed could be made within a timeframe; the achievement we believed would be necessary for an Outcome’s intent to be satisfied; etc.)?**

The target is to “create or reestablish 85,000 acres of tidal and nontidal wetlands and enhance the function of an additional 150,000 acres of degraded wetlands by 2025. This target is a representation of WIP goals that were developed at the time of outcome development.

- b. **What is your anticipated deadline? What is your anticipated trajectory?**

The anticipated deadline was 2025, with a trajectory of around 5,667 acres per year. This rate is not currently being achieved.

- c. **What actual progress has been made thus far?**

Between 2010 and 2015, 7,623 acres have been created or reestablished which is 9.18% of the goal. Currently, there is no tracking of acres of wetland that have been enhanced so progress towards 150,000 enhanced acres cannot be determined.

- d. **What could explain any existing gap(s) between your actual progress and anticipated trajectory?**

Primary gaps are due to errors in tracking and reporting actual acreage numbers. Many jurisdictions, especially in PA and VA, are not following protocols that result in accurate numbers or categories being reported to the Bay Program. The reported numbers are predicted to be an understatement of practices that are happening across the watershed. Furthermore, despite data existing that prioritize areas for conservation and restoration, a lack of funding for these projects and a lack of enthusiasm for focusing in these areas have caused there to be a disconnect in on-the-ground work happening in high value areas.

(3) Which of your management actions have been the most critical to your progress thus far? Why? Indicate which influencing factors these actions were meant to manage.

Thus far, the most important management actions have been reporting/data collection and efforts to educate the on the ground professionals to ensure they are reporting correctly. Both actions impact how the Wetland Workgroup reflects progress, without accurate reporting there

is no way to accurately assess the status of the watershed. These actions were meant to manage factors related to partner coordination, and scientific and technical understanding.

(4) Which of your management actions will be the most critical to your progress in the future? Why? What barriers must be removed—and how, and by whom—to allow these actions to be taken? Indicate which influencing factors these actions will be meant to manage.

Critical actions moving forward will still include emphasizing reporting accuracy. It is important to ensure that NEIN contacts are known to state contacts and that communication is happening between the two groups to ensure acreage accounting is occurring and accurate. Barriers that could be removed include relying on WWG members to coordinate these efforts, as it has not worked up to this point. We are asking the Management Board to designate this process to be taken over by the Bay Program. Removing the WWG member link will streamline partner coordination and allow acreage numbers to be reported as easily as WQ requirements. Additionally, moving forward it will be important to continue outreach to communicate wetland importance to landowners. Getting landowners on board with wetland conservation and restoration will help identify existing areas to protect and provide willing landowners for creation or restoration.

Are our actions having the expected effect?

(5) What scientific, fiscal, or policy-related developments or lessons learned (if any) have changed your logic or assumptions (e.g., your recommended measure of progress; the factors you believe influence your ability to succeed; or the management actions you recommend taking) about your Outcome?

Over the past few years, the wetland workgroup chairs have learned that CBP work and requirements are a disincentive to be active in the group. Often members are recruited to join, and when we have to spend lots of time working through CBP paperwork, they question their involvement and disengage.

Additionally, targeted financial support to research BMPs is a tool that would be helpful to the group and the Wetland Expert Panels. Much of the information the workgroup is using is based on “best professional judgement”, and solid scientific evidence could improve the actions and decisions of the group.

As a positive, looking back over the workplan the former chairs were pleased to see they had successfully identified previous gaps with workgroup goals. Many of the actions identified previously have been well aimed and have had some progress.

Factors that influence the ability to succeed include getting all the states on board with CBP reporting expectations for efficient accounting; speaking to NRCS offices to make sure they are endorsing wetland restoration and habitat conservation (this is not the case everywhere); and finally recruiting landowners to see wetlands as a positive part of the landscape.

How should we adapt?

(6) What (if anything) would you recommend changing about your management approach at this time? Will these changes lead you to add, edit, or remove content in your Work Plan? Explain.

Due to feedback from the previous workgroup chairs, we are recommending removing acreage accounting from the workgroup responsibilities. This has been a burden on past chairs, and various reporting errors may be solved if accounting happens from within the Bay Program. This will allow removal of several workplan items.

We have discussed an action team approach which may allow members to target specific areas which they are interested in. This structure may help to make wetland workgroup initiatives meaningful and have a defined time frame.

(7) What opportunities exist to collaborate across GITs? Can we target conservation or restoration work to yield co-benefits that would address multiple factors or support multiple actions across Outcomes?

Important collaborations could happen with the Black Duck Action Team (an item already on the workplan) to prioritize high quality waterfowl habitat. Continue collaborations with the CBP web team to enhance outreach materials for use by practitioners. Opportunities for new collaborations may include the fish habitat team, climate resiliency team and urban storm water workgroups.

Many functions of wetlands will yield co-benefits for other outcomes so conservation and restoration are important for holistic ecosystem function. Wetlands provide water quality benefits and water quantity control, while providing habitat for a wide range of animals.

(8) What is needed from the Management Board to continue or accelerate your progress? Multiple requests for action, support or assistance from the Management Board should be prioritized, where possible, and all requests should be “traceable” to the factors influencing progress toward your Outcome. Because a limited number of agencies and organizations are represented in the Management Board’s membership, we recommend naming those agencies and/or organizations that may play a key role in fulfilling your request for action, support, or assistance, in order to guide the Management Board in its work to contact, consult, or coordinate with partners.

We have 2 asks for the Management Board:

1. **Assign** leaders and ensure active participation
2. **Incentivize** prioritization using existing data

