

MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

WETLANDS

GOAL: Vital Habitats

OUTCOME

Continually increase the capacity of wetlands to provide water quality and habitat benefits throughout the watershed. Create or re-establish 85,000 acres of tidal and non-tidal 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.

CURRENT EFFORTS

- NRCS Wetland Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP) - voluntary financial assistance program to encourage exchange for retiring marginal ag land.
- Farm Service Agency Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)
- USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program
- North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA) grants — matching grants to organizations and individuals to carry out wetlands conservation projects
- NOAA & TNC developed a Habitat Prioritization Tool for coastal areas
- Army Corps, Nature Conservancy and Ducks Unlimited wetland and aquatic habitat restoration projects.
- USGS studies on effects of climate change on coastal wetlands.
- MD Dept. of Environment expedited reviews of restoration projects and guidance on living shoreline projects.
- Watershed Resources Registry — a GIS-based watershed planning tool for aquatic resources in MD.

GAPS

- Tracking Wetland Restoration and Enhancement: There is a need to streamline wetland restoration and enhancement tracking and improve reporting overall, as well as the accuracy of the data reported. Trainings for state NEIEN contacts and restoration practitioners would be useful.
- Funding: Dedicated funding for restoration and enhancement project implementation is not sufficient to meet the Wetland Outcome goals.
- Staffing: Need for more coordinated outreach and technical personnel to engage landowners and increase staff capacity to develop design plans for restoration projects
- Data: Some states lack a comprehensive map of wetland resources in their state.
- Targeting/Prioritization Tools: no overall wetland restoration/enhancement targeting and prioritization tool for the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

MANAGEMENT APPROACHES

- Reporting: Work with NEIEN contacts to develop a flow chart of how wetland restoration projects are reported from all organizations.
- Prioritization: Identify outcomes and criteria to prioritize areas in each state for restoration; focus efforts on projects that benefit species requiring high quality wetland habitats and incorporate water quality benefits where possible; identify areas where wetlands can be restored without taking ag land out of production; and identify opportunities for large acreage gains.
- Identify and develop solutions to barriers to accelerate wetland restoration.
- Increase technical understanding of factors that influence project success: Identify tools, models and other science needs for improving wetland restoration
- Local engagement: Include representatives from local governments, county conservation districts, watershed associations and other nonprofit organizations on the CBP Wetlands workgroup. Track progress and seek continual feedback from local stakeholders.
- Include underserved and under-represented communities on the Habitat Goal Implementation Team.



For the full management strategy, visit: www.chesapeakebay.net/managementstrategies