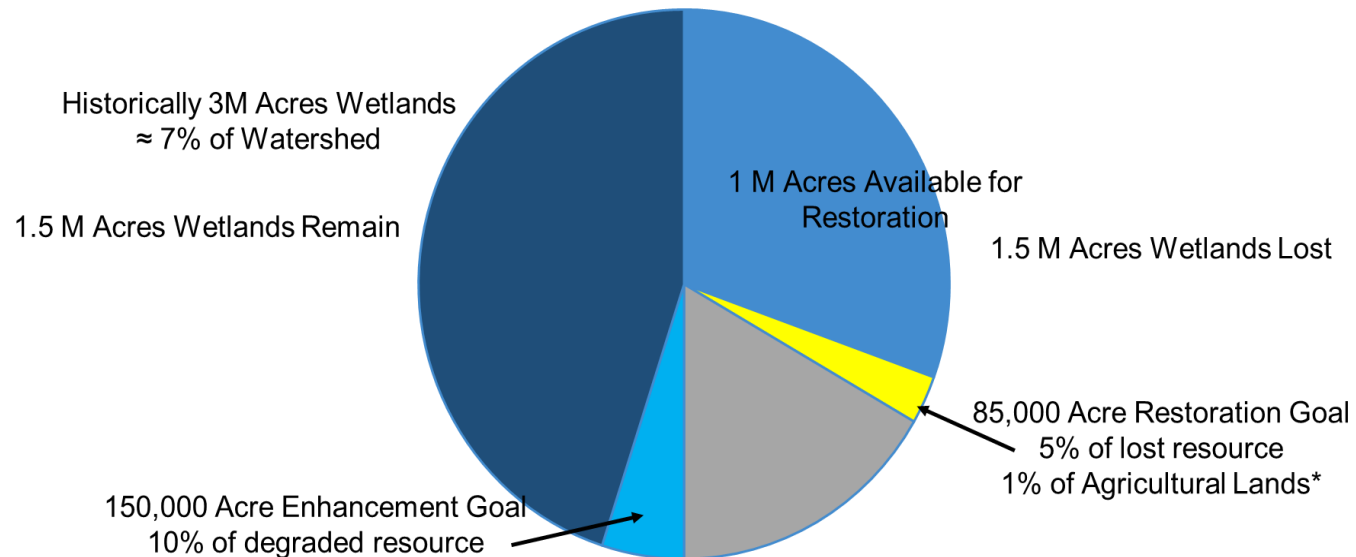




Pamela Mason
Chair Wetlands Workgroup
Management Board
December 14, 2023

Wetlands Context

- Historic Chesapeake Bay losses: over 1.5 million acres of tidal and nontidal wetlands
- Wetland outcome of 85,000 acres of created or restored tidal and nontidal wetland and another 150,000 acres of wetlands would be enhanced in the watershed by 2025.
- Outcome was developed from Watershed Implementation Plans 1.



Wetlands Action Planning Framework

- The Chesapeake Bay Program (Bay Program) Outcome Attainability Team
- Two outcomes off target: wetlands and forest buffers
- Management Board requested the Habitat Goal Implementation Team sponsor a workshop to identify actions for nontidal and tidal wetlands.

Wetlands Action Plans

- 2 day workshop 2022
- Office hours follow-on
- Jurisdictional Plans completed 2022
 - Jurisdictional leads
 - 6 Plans
 - Delaware
 - District of Columbia
 - Maryland
 - New York
 - Pennsylvania
 - Virginia
- Plan implementation update 2023



Delaware

Strategic Planning

- Recently established DE Restoration Work Group (DRWG)
- DRWG will identify capacity needs and partners
- Look to increase projects and efficiencies
- **DRWG meets biannually – making some progress on connecting practitioners and programs/agencies; sharing project information**

Capacity Building

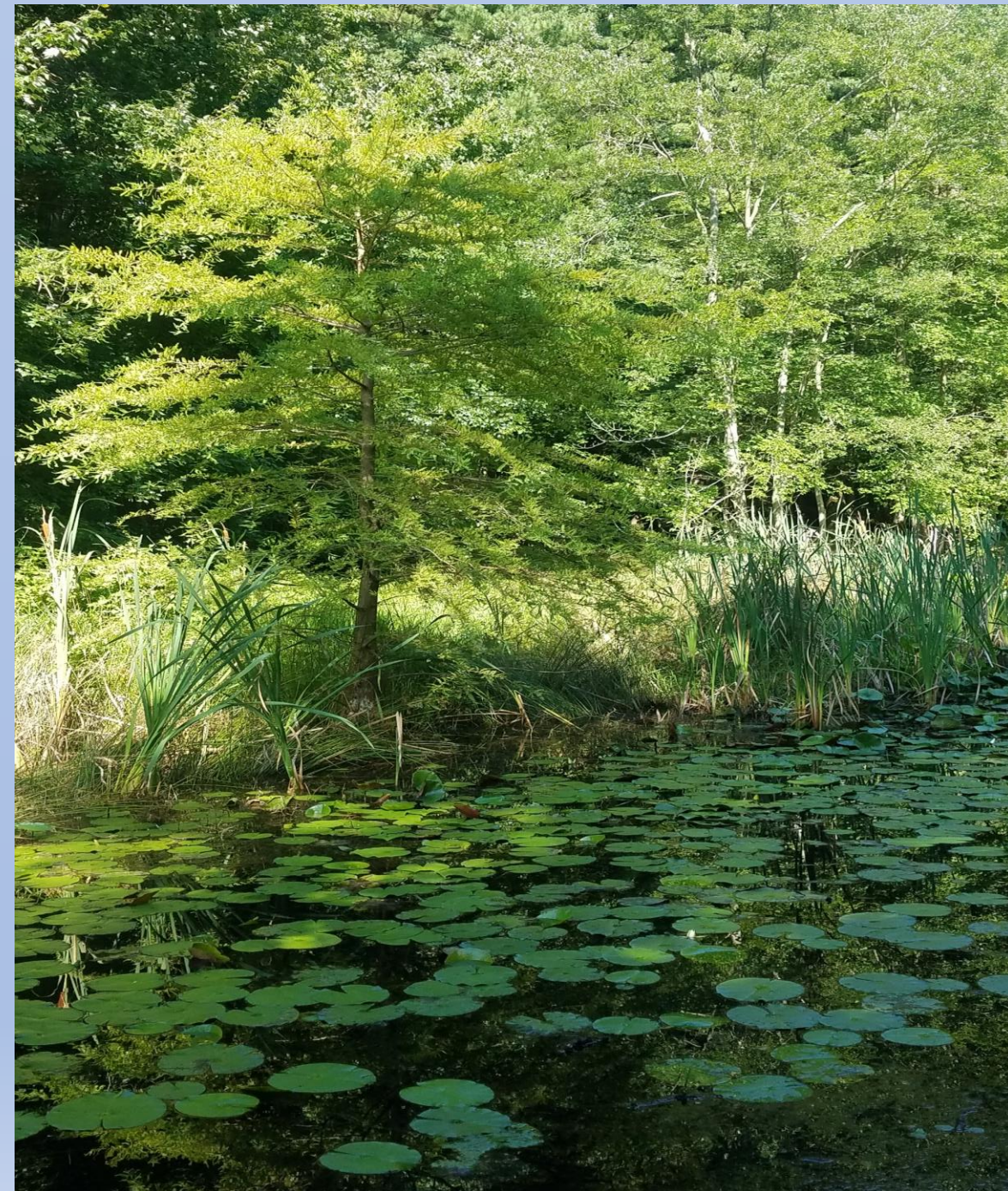
- Significant need for funding to support new staff
- Identify and tap into non-traditional funding sources for projects
- **No real progress – and staff retention/turnover a significant issue**

Outreach

- A current strength - great opportunities for outreach at multiple events statewide – **In the past year, have reached thousands of citizens at the State Fair, Water Festival, Earth Day events, etc.**
- Will be creating new materials that explain cost share and how to deal with competing influences for land – **coordinate with programs that have direct landowner contacts to increase wetland restoration and conservation**

Sustainable Funding

- Leverage funding sources from agencies/groups – **happening within the DRWG**
- Investigate opportunities with flood hazard mitigation funding **N/P**
- Evaluate benefits to acquiring large tracts for restoration – **preliminary discussions with conservation organizations (need additional staff to focus on proactive efforts)**



District of Columbia

Strategic Planning

- Wetland Conservation Plan (2020), Sustainable DC 2.0 (2019), DC State Wildlife Action Plan (2015)
- Wetland Program Plan 2021-2025
- Wetland Program Development Grant 2024-2026 (Proposal submitted)
- Current projects will restore/enhance ~40 acres of wetlands

(Anacostia River Corridor, Kingman Lake, Kenilworth Park North Landfill, 36th Place, Fort Dupont, River Terrace)

Capacity Building

- Partnerships with NPS, environmental stakeholders
- Internal cooperation between DOEE Divisions

Outreach

- Federal partners (National Park Service)
- Increased public outreach- presence and resources

Sustainable Funding

- Long-term grants especially needed for maintenance (e.g., *Phragmites* control)



Maryland

State Wetlands Team- Interagency team formed and met quarterly in 2023. Charged with making progress towards the goals of the Wetland Action Plan.

Planning- Wetlands Team has outlined a Wetland Adaptation Strategy for Maryland. Planned completion by the end of 2024. Blue carbon included as a component in Maryland's GHG Reduction Plan, to be released CY 2023.

Capacity Building- Maryland partnered on several proposals to access federal dollars for wetland restoration, preservation, and regional planning

Outreach- Integrate public/landowner outreach into plans and align wetland outreach with other landowner engagement efforts (ongoing)

Sustainable Funding- Maryland DNR partnered with TNC on a Blue Carbon Feasibility Study, to be completed by the end of 2023

Science- Monitor blue carbon; improve wetland mapping; and systematically connect science to policy (ongoing, will be a focus of the Wetland Adaptation Plan)

NY Chesapeake Bay Wetland Action Plan



Strategic Planning

Form NY Chesapeake Bay Wetland Action Team

- Committee meeting was held in March and May 2023
- Address barriers to implementation
- Account for climate change



Outreach

Landowner Engagement

- USC Wetland Team provides technical assistance to landowners
- Highlight co-benefits and ecosystem services
- Developing mailer for Large Landowners with Wetland Restoration Potential



Capacity Building

Explore potential partners

- During the past year, the USC Wetland Team hosted 6 wetland outreach events and engaged in meetings with federal, state and local partners across the watershed to promote wetland restoration.

Increase collaboration between agencies

- USC Wetland Team hosted a wetland education and delineation training
- USC Wetland Team organized a 3-day training for SWCD staff and partners

Sustainable Funding to Support Wetland Restoration

Continue to secure funds to support staffing, planning, design, implementation, and administration of grant funds

- 2022 SRBC Consumptive Use Mitigation Grant program Chenango River Restoration Partnership
- 2023 SRBC Consumptive Use Mitigation Grant program Hilltop Community Farm Stream Corridor and Flood Mitigation Project
- 2022 NFWF Grant Fueling Natural Filter Restoration in the Headwaters of the Upper Susquehanna Watershed
- 2023 NFWF Grant Utilizing the USC's Water Quality Program to Support Chesapeake Bay Watershed Restoration Across State Lines



Bureau of Waterways Engineering and Wetlands

Pennsylvania is Working Toward Achieving Wetland Outcomes

1. Sustainable Funding

Existing funds reduced and must compete with non-wetland projects, working to develop dedicated wetland funding (3–5-year process)

2. Strategic Planning

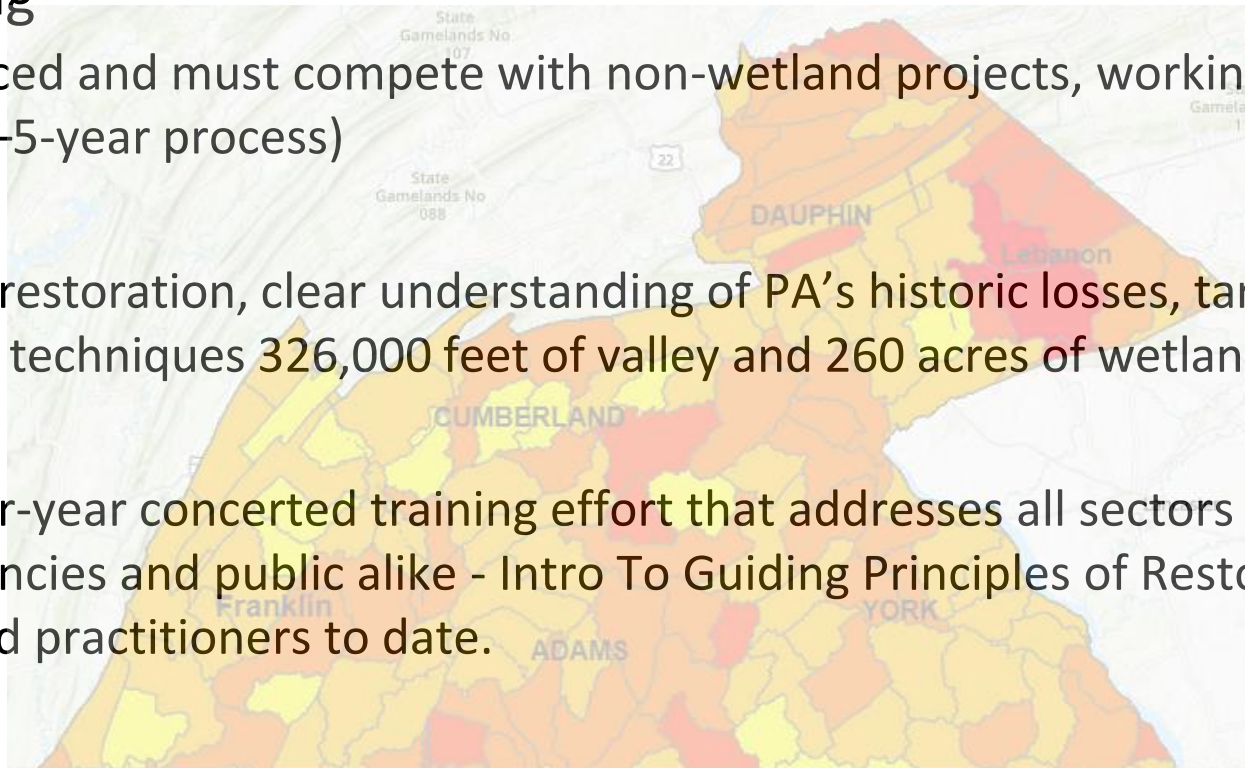
Training on what is restoration, clear understanding of PA's historic losses, targeting legacy sediment removal restoration techniques 326,000 feet of valley and 260 acres of wetlands restoration statewide

3. Capacity Building

In year two of a four-year concerted training effort that addresses all sectors of capacity building, trainings are available to agencies and public alike - Intro To Guiding Principles of Restoration presented to over 800 agency staff and practitioners to date.

4. Outreach

The training developed for DEP's Clean Water Academy forms the core of the Wetlands Program outreach efforts internally and through other agency and non-profit partners.



2023 Virginia Wetlands Action Plan Progress

Wetlands Tracking

- Effective reporting and accounting system
- Define activities that count towards outcome
- Jurisdiction-specific targets for tidal and non-tidal wetlands

Strategic Planning

- Work with existing diverse regional partnerships
- Acknowledge changing environment and focus on at-risk areas
- Seek to restore/enhance habitat for SCGN species
- Implement on both private and public lands with emphasis on private lands
- DWR to lead diverse partnership focused on wetlands outcome

Capacity Building

- Increasing staff focused on wetland restoration
- Low barrier applications for voluntary efforts
- Expand native nursery / other restoration capacity

Outreach

- Landowner interest is critical
- Identify and promote demonstration sites
- Target grant funding focal areas
- Train existing staff and coordinate with SWCDs

Sustainable Funding

- Current funding increases for private and public
- Match is limiting factor
- Need to establish dedicated funding source

Recent Wetlands Efforts

- **Evaluation of the Outcome/Indicator**
- **Wetlands Project Tracker**
- **Wetland Workgroup (WWG) Reorganization**
- **GIT-Funded Projects**
 - Marsh Migration
 - Wetland Condition
 - Mapping in Headwaters
 - Mowing, Wetland Enhancement
- **Capacity Grant with Chesapeake Bay Trust**
- **Best Management Practice Verification Ad-Hoc Action Team**
- **Comprehensive Evaluation of System Response**
- **Black Duck outcome and process will be integrated into the WWG process.**