

Wetland Workgroup December Meeting Minutes

December 9th, 2019

CBPO Conference Room 305

Purpose:

- 1) Resume technical presentations to enhance knowledge of the workgroup.
- 2) Provide updates to management strategy and workplan revisions.

Welcome and Introductions (*Pam Mason, Chair*)

Bold – in person; Unbolded – on phone

Pam Mason (VIMS)	Jennifer Greiner (USFWS)	Megan Ossmann (CRC)	Carin Bisland (CBP)
Rich Mason (USFWS)	Greg Noe (USGS)	Neil Ganju (USGS)	Scott Phillips (USGS)
Ken Hyer (USGS)	Emily Farr (NOAA)	Chad Thompson (WV DEP)	Greg Podniesinski (PA DCNR)
Jeff Hartranft (PA DEP)	Bill Jenkins (EPA)	Danielle Algazi (EPA)	Alana Hartman (WV DEP)
Mark Hoffman (CB Commission)	Melissa Yearick (USC)	Amy Jacobs (TNC)	Brittany Haywood (DE DNR)
Mike Mansolino (EPA)	Robert Isdell (VIMS)	Dave Goerman (PA DEP)	Jaclyn Woollard (EPA)

Action Items:

- Workgroup members that are interested in developing the proposal for a STAC workshop will reach out to Pam and Megan
- Management strategy and workplan comments from Management Board members will be accepted through January 3rd. The documents will be finalized and presented to MB on January 16th
- Running list of future meeting topics/presentations:
 - Randy Owen - Upland conversions
 - Jeff Sweeney - Data and modeling
 - Michelle Henicheck - WetCat
 - Danielle Algazi - Wetland Program Development grants
 - Joint meeting with Forestry Workgroup

USGS Presentations on Wetland Research and Science Needs (presentations posted on calendar page)

1) Overview of USGS science directions (*Scott Phillips, USGS*)

2) Understanding the impact of SLR on marshes, coasts, processes, and habitat availability (*Neil Ganju, USGS*)

- Jennifer Greiner: What is Erica's last name?
 - Neil: Erica Lentz developed the coastal response model
 - Jennifer: Interested in linking this research to GIT funded project
- Rich Mason: is there any analysis of marsh vulnerability between marshes that have been ditched and marshes that have not?
 - Neil: UVBR incorporates and accounts for ditches. Responses between sites are often dependent on other factors such as external sediment supply, tide range, eutrophication, etc. It's hard to know what's causing the vulnerability when the ditches are already there – it depends on what is going on in a specific marsh unit – not a one size fits all approach
- Scott P: is there anything you heard today that you want reflected in the final version of the workplan?
 - Rich M: as marshes migrate into forest, we have found that phragmites is first plant to come in before spartina patens, but preventative management can help spartina establish first - it would be helpful to understand those dynamics better
 - Neil - Joel has been studying this and covering these dynamics in his model

3) USGS science directions of floodplain wetlands: new tools and research on the effects on water quality and instream habitat (*Greg Noe, USGS*)

- Carin Bisland: how do we make sure this information is used for decision-making and what we're trying to achieve?
 - Greg: being present at meetings (either locally or virtually) is critical because it is an opportunity to present and listen, and we can tailor our research portfolio based on the science that the WG and CBP needs
 - Scott: working with WG to make sure that key aspects of what you've heard in these presentations is reflected in the two-year workplan. We are also looking for the workgroup to get this info to key stakeholders
- Jeff H: How was the floodplain and channel evaluation tool used to identify wetlands in the floodplain?
 - Greg: the tool doesn't explicitly identify wetlands
 - Jeff: there should be some sort of validation that floodplain wetlands exist within the modeled outcomes, or that the term should not be used in relation to the tool. Using the term "floodplain wetlands" could confuse folks because wetlands have an explicit definition that may not be congruent with the definition from the tool. In other words, using the term "floodplain wetlands" as derived from the tool would introduce a new definition for wetlands and could introduce substantial

confusion. Characterizing the derived floodplain boundaries as wetlands is misrepresentative of what the tool actually does.

- Pam: are you familiar with the York River Wetlands Change Assessment that was done at CCRM?
 - Greg N: Yes, but need more time to review it
- Amy: when we are getting ready to update the MS, it would be helpful to do a review or a call for new information - quick summaries or lessons learned for work that has happened over the past few years that we can incorporate into updates (especially for smaller grant-funded projects)
 - Pam: there are a lot of things that don't show up in the MS, or uses higher-level language, so we miss some work- maybe this fits into the work that STAR does?
 - Scott: the connection is that every two years when you have your updates, we can work with you under STAR to update science needs

Regulatory Wetland Impacts and Compensation (*Pam Mason*)

- Proposal for STAC workshop to talk about perverse incentives issue - TMDL drivers can cause some practices to be numerically preferred to others
 - PA has raised some issues about wetland classification and compensation
 - Might need to tackle some of these issues with a workshop
- Dave G: the issues date back to the 2016 expert panel report, where the decision made to classify wetlands as floodplain or other
 - disagreement with how some of this classification was done
 - WG didn't realize how the expert panel work would be utilized – it was picked up by the Land Use Workgroup (LUWG) which grouped wetlands as either floodplain or other based on FEMA maps and flood zones
 - PA has problems with this because it discounts headwater systems and streams and leads to under-representation
 - Want to see headwater systems included under the floodplain system or a new class of wetlands
- Pam: was co-chair of 2016 panel and was asked to develop a wetland classification scheme with only 3 operational buckets allowed in the model – ended up going with two (floodplain or other). If a space will be created in the model for more classifications, that would be great.
 - Pam: FEMA mapping isn't the best and is outdated, so it is surprising that this is the classification basis. But the panel's input on this was not requested.
 - Carin: FEMA and SSURGO was used, but we might now have something better according to Peter Claggett, and we may be allowed more than two buckets for the next model
 - Pam: we need to address the definition now, and tackle the classification later
- Jeff H: one thing to consider is instead of creating a new bucket for headwater/floodplain wetlands, why not just include them in floodplain?
 - Agreement from Pam and Carin – their ecology and ecosystem services are similar
 - Jeff: trying to advance this concept, but we need to develop something more formally

- Pam: should be as simple as putting together NWI polygons and NHD data to identify overlap
- Pam: this conversation will occur in the WQGIT meeting later today. We will move forward to tackle this issue and make sure wetlands are in a proper class from a GIS perspective
- Pam: People who are interested in developing a STAC workshop proposal to look at these wetland questions and incentives, send your name to me and Megan (ACTION)
- Carin: STAC provides funding and forum for the workshop, but they rely on a steering committee from the workgroup to commit time and development of workshop, as well as report

Progress on Management Strategy and Workplan (*Pam Mason*)

Overview of updates made to both the workplan and management strategy – the larger scale buckets, gaps, and specific actions identified from September and October meetings (see previous meeting minutes for more details).

Megan: These docs are under review of MB until January 3rd, with a few weeks of turn-around time to incorporate comments for the final version

The Way Forward

- RFP for STAC workshop proposal is released December 20th and is due February 10th –calls in January with those interested in being involved (include Jeremy or Jeff Sweeny because they are directly involved with the crediting side)
- Carin: send draft proposal out to whole goal team to garner more attention and support
- Next full WG meeting February
- Jennifer: a finance forum is being planned for early March – they are looking for case studies
- Jennifer – the ACJV salt marsh bird conservation plan has just been released- Megan will send out to WWG
- Pam: looking for input on days of the week that would work for a regular meeting schedule
- Jennifer: the next HGIT meeting will be in May, so it may be a good idea to have a piggy-back WWG meeting, especially since we will hold the meeting in a tidal area