



Joint Wetlands Workgroup January Meeting

January 20, 2026
1:00 - 3:00 PM

[Visit the meeting webpage for meeting materials and additional information.](#)

New Action Items:

1. Action: A cleaned review draft of the Wetlands Whitepaper will be distributed for red-flag review, with comments requested by February 21, 2026.
 - a. PA requests the previous version be sent to them to compare to the current draft.
2. Action: Consider getting a presentation on the MDE Restoration Mapper at a future wetlands workgroup meeting.
3. Action: Consider a presentation on New York State Freshwater Wetlands Program overhaul for future wetlands meeting.
4. Action: Consider a presentation and future agenda topic for the legislative impacts of the [Wetlands Mowing Report](#).
5. Action for Workgroup Members: Consider applying to [Roots for Resilience](#) (RFP linked and more details below)

Minutes

I. Welcome, Roll Call & Introductions (1:00 – 1:10)

Decisions:

1. N/A

Actions:

1. N/A

II. Updates and Announcements (1:10 – 1:50)

Decisions:

1. N/A

Actions:

1. Action: A cleaned review draft of the Wetlands Whitepaper will be distributed for red-flag review, with comments requested by February 21, 2026.

Discussion Notes:

- Ducks Unlimited
 - NFWF Grant NWI
 - Fish and Wildlife Cooperative Agreement
 - **Notes:**
 - Nancy Schumm announced that, following discussions held approximately 18 months prior, updating outdated National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) maps was identified as a workgroup priority. Many NWI maps in the region date back to the 1980s and pre-date modern mapping technologies such as LiDAR.
 - A partnership led by Ducks Unlimited, with Howard County, Montgomery County, and Carroll County (MD), successfully applied for and received a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) small grant to update NWI mapping in these jurisdictions. All documents have been signed and the project is officially underway.
 - Geographic scope: All wetlands within Carroll, Howard, and Montgomery Counties, Maryland.
 - Additional detail: Montgomery County is contributing matching funds to support higher-resolution mapping (down to 0.01 acres).
- **Requested Action:** Habitat Tracker projects due February 13th.
 - **Notes:**
 - Reminder of recent request from Emily Young, Habitat Data Manager, for jurisdictions to submit habitat tracking information by February 13. Chris Guy clarified that the request was targeted to specific jurisdictional coordinators and not all Wetlands Workgroup members.
- Tidal Wetlands Strategic Plan Update.
 - **Notes:**
 - Robert McAfee (Chesapeake Bay Trust) and Matthew Robinson (EPA) provided a status update on the Tidal Wetlands Strategic Plan, which originated from the Wetlands Workgroup's 2022 Action Plan. The strategic plan is in final editing stages, with near-term plans to distribute it to the full Wetlands Workgroup for review. Supporting appendices on landowner and community engagement and sustainable programming are nearing completion, while the developing capacity appendix remains in progress with an anticipated completion in April 2026.
- Whitepaper Update
 - Final draft will be released after today's meeting.
 - **Requested Action:** provide a red flag review by February 21st.
 - Final whitepaper published on workgroup website early March.

■ **Notes:**

- Pamela Mason provided an update on the Wetlands White Paper documenting how wetland terms and practices are currently used across the region. The paper is intended as a non-regulatory reference to support consistent reporting of wetland practices.
- Action: A cleaned review draft will be distributed for red-flag review, with comments requested by February 21, 2026.
- PA requested a copy of the previous version to compare against the current draft.
- Waterbirds Vice-Chair Update
 - Notes:
 - Chris Guy announced that recruitment is underway for a Water Birds Vice Chair to lead development of the water birds component of the wetlands outcome. Interviews are in progress, with a selection anticipated by the end of January 2026. The Vice Chair will support definition of indicators and alignment with existing monitoring networks.
- Open Discussion

III. New Outcome **(1:50 – 2:00)**
Decisions:

1. N/A

Actions:

1. N/A

Discussion Notes:

Materials: [Revised Chesapeake Watershed Agreement](#)

Wetlands Outcome: Restore, create, enhance and protect wetlands to support people and living resources, including waterbirds and fish, and provide water quality, flood and erosion protection, recreation and other valuable benefits to people.

- Restore or create at least 3,000 acres and enhance 15,000 acres of tidal wetlands by 2040, focusing on habitats that support populations of waterbirds and represent healthy wetlands across the watershed.
- Restore or create at least 3,000 acres and enhance 15,000 acres of nontidal wetlands by 2040, focusing on habitats that support populations of waterbirds and represent healthy wetlands across the watershed.

● Notes:

- Pamela Mason and Chris Guy led discussion on the new Wetlands Outcome, which was formally adopted by the Chesapeake Bay Program Executive Council in December 2025.
- Key points:
 - The revised outcome integrates water birds directly into the wetlands outcome rather than as a separate target.
 - The outcome addresses both tidal and non-tidal wetlands and emphasizes restoration, creation, and enhancement activities.
 - Numeric targets were adjusted during the approval process; final targets are considered achievable and intended to support adaptive management rather than aspirational overreach.
- Pamela Mason emphasized that the revised outcome reflects a balance between ambition and feasibility and thanked workgroup members and Management Board champions who supported adjustments to strengthen the final language.
- Questions were raised regarding how water birds are defined under the outcome. Leadership clarified that:
 - “Water birds” is intentionally broad and not yet prescriptively defined.
 - The intent is to include multiple guilds (e.g., waterfowl, wading birds, marsh birds) rather than a single species such as black duck.
 - Future work will define indicators using existing monitoring networks (e.g., State Wildlife Action Plans, established bird surveys).

IV. Roots for Resilience: Open Solicitations (2:00 – 2:20)

Decisions:

1. N/A

Actions:

1. N/A

Discussion Notes:

Presenters - Sarah Koser (Sarah.Koser@maryland.gov); Morgan Corey (morgan.corey@maryland.gov)

Background and Context: Maryland DNR released a [RFP](#) seeking living shoreline projects on the Lower Eastern Shore that protect significant marsh acreage. This funding comes from the EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant we received to advance natural climate solutions on the shore. **Implemented projects under this Initiative will count towards meeting Maryland's goals for the Wetland Outcome for the Chesapeake Bay Program Watershed Agreement!**

Deadline: April, 6, 2026

- **Notes:**
 - New Roots for Resilience Webpage: mddnr.info/R4R
 - Slides: [Click Here](#)
 - Roots for Resilience Initiative (MD DNR): Sarah Koser and Morgan Corey (Maryland Department of Natural Resources) presented an overview of the newly launched Roots for Resilience: Strong Roots for a Changing Landscape initiative. The initiative is funded through the Atlantic Conservation Coalition under the Climate Pollution Reduction Act and focuses on carbon sequestration, coastal resilience, and wetlands restoration, particularly on Maryland's Lower Eastern Shore.
 - Maryland DNR will implement approximately \$43 million in funding over five years, with commitments including tidal marsh restoration, living shorelines, tidal connectivity projects, coastal resilience management plans for private landowners, and forest carbon initiatives.
 - The initiative will contribute directly to Maryland's wetland outcome reporting under the Chesapeake Bay Program.
 - From Chat:
 - Mapping Tutorial Session: Tuesday, February 3, 2026 (2 pm to 3 pm):
RSVP here:
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpOLSfU4VHQOlNyIAHm0-FFFjB8EaQF7XhkDQMwur3VCg126xmqw/viewform>
 - [TARGETING MAP](#) and [GUIDANCE](#) links here
 - [RFP link here](#):
<https://dnr.maryland.gov/climateresilience/Pages/Roots-for-Resilience-Open-Solicitations.aspx>

V. Partner Updates

(2:20 – 2:50)

Decisions:

1. N/A

Actions:

1. Action: Consider getting a presentation on the MDE Restoration Mapper at a future wetlands workgroup meeting.
2. Action: Consider a presentation on New York State Freshwater Wetlands Program overhaul for future wetlands meeting

Discussion Notes [optional]:

Requested Action: Workgroup members provide updates for the benefit of the workgroup.

- *DC (3mins)*
 - *No DC-specific partner updates were provided during this meeting.*
- *DE (3mins)*
 - *No DE-specific partner updates were provided during this meeting.*
- *MD (3mins)*

- Shared by Denise Clearwater (MDE):
 - Provided comments on the new WOTUS definition and the proposed 401 changes.
 - New tool: A restoration mapper that will allow users to click on a point (showing stream restoration and living shorelines) and see the associated monitoring reports.
 - There will be a presentation on this at the Delaware Wetlands Conference.
 - This mapper is only voluntary.
 - Action: Consider getting a presentation on this mapper at a future wetlands workgroup meeting.
 - Sent in the wetlands acreage for the last federal fiscal year: Did not hear back from NRCS so there may be more but the current number is saying there are 250 new acres of wetlands.
 - VIMS Project – improvements to our shoreline stabilization mapper for some selected counties
 - Will have a benefits calculator – nutrient and sediment reductions from certain designs
 - Wave attenuation model also included.
 - Project to develop management recommendations for our high quality resources. (MD DNR)
 - Closed comment period to our mitigation regulations.
- Shared by Alison Santoro (Chat) (MD DNR):
 - "Maryland officials moved forward this week with expanded restrictions on the sale and possession of invasive plant species under updated regulations that took effect Jan. 15, 2026."

<https://thebaynet.com/maryland-tightens-regulations-on-invasive-plants-as-new-rules-take-effect/>
 - Plants on the Maryland Prohibited Invasive Plant List may not be acquired or sold in-state after the regulations effective date.

https://mda.maryland.gov/plants-pests/pages/maryland_invasive_plants_prevention_and_control.aspx
- PA (3mins)
 - Shelby Reisinger will now be an active PA member on the workgroup.
- NY (3mins)
 - Shared by Melissa Yearick:
 - Habitat Tracker Data anticipated to be submitted later this week.
 - Working with land trusts to preserve valuable resources and complete restoration activity to reach goals of 30 by 30 initiative and bay program.
 - New York State Freshwater Wetlands Program went over a major overhaul last January:

<https://dec.ny.gov/nature/waterbodies/wetlands/freshwater-wetlands-program>

- *NY estimates that these changes will protect 1 million acres of wetlands habitat.*
- *Changed how they are identifying protected wetlands.*
- *Used to have a shape file of protected wetlands, but this shape file is sunsetting and making the definitions more ambiguous.*
- *The State is regulating wetlands of “unusual importance” which includes wetlands of 11 different categories.*
- *Action: Consider a presentation on New York State Freshwater Wetlands Program overhaul for future wetlands meeting*
- *VA (3mins)*
 - *Shared by Elise Frazier (DEQ)*
 - *DEQ applied for an EPA grant for the next stage of enhancing the wetlands program and Wetlands Condition Assessment Tool (WetCat), waiting to hear back*
- *WV (3mins)*
 - *No WV-specific partner updates were provided during this meeting.*
- *NGOs (3mins)*
 - *No NGO-specific partner updates were provided during this meeting.*
- *Localities (3mins)*
 - *No Locality-specific partner updates were provided during this meeting.*
- *Private (3mins)*
- *Federal*
 - *DoD - Kevin Dubois*
 - *Does not want the wetlands workgroup to lose sight of the potential legislative implications of the Wetland Mowing Report.*
 - *<https://www.chesapeakebay.net/projects/understanding-and-addressing-the-impacts-of-wetland-mowing>*
 - *USFWS - Chris Guy*
 - *Chesapeake WILD RFP is out. \$8 million grant focused on habitat in the Chesapeake Bay.*
 - *NOAA - Julie Reichert-Nguyen*
 - *Staff are reviewing the most recent round of transformational habitat proposals.*
 - *EPA - Matt Robinson*
 - *EPA CBPO is funded (in the proposed bill) for \$93 million, a \$1 million increase to Small Watershed and INSR grants, and MEB each.*

VI. Wrap-Up and Adjourn

(2:50 – 3:00)

Attendance

1. **Nick Staten** (Chesapeake Research Consortium)
2. **Joe Berg** (Biohabitats)
3. **Tess Danielson** (DOEE & WWG Vice chair- tidal team)
4. **Chris Guy** (USFWS, Habitat GIT Coordinator)
5. **Nancy Schumm** (Wetland Work group Vice Chair, non-tidal wetlands)
6. **Shelby Reisinger** (PA DEP)
7. **Kristen Saacke Blunk** (Headwaters LLC)
8. **Maggie Woodward** (Chesapeake Bay Commission)
9. **Megan Diehl** (Chesapeake Bay Trust)
10. **Erin M. Reilly** (Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, VA)
11. **Alison B. Rogerson** (DE DNREC)
12. **William (Bill) Mann** (Unknown)
13. **Cassandra M Davis** (NY DEC)
14. **Elise Frazier** (Virginia Coastal Zone Management, VA DEQ)
15. **Emily Young** (ICPRB)
16. **Pamela Mason** (Wetlands Workgroup Chair)
17. **Kevin Du Bois** (DoD CBP)
18. **Denise Clearwater** (MDE)
19. **Alison Santoro** (MD DNR)
20. **Matthew Robinson** (EPA CBPO)
21. **Melissa Yearick** (Upper Susquehanna Coalition)
22. **Sarah Koser** (Climate Projects Manager, Office of the Secretary with Maryland DNR)
23. **Robert McAfee** (Chesapeake Bay Trust)
24. **Megan W Lang** (USFWS)
25. **AaronM Blair** (EPA)
26. **Chris Spaur** (USACE)
27. **Jason C. Thomas** (VIMS)
28. **Michelle Henicheck** (VA DEQ)
29. 17575660575 (Unknown)
30. **Su Fanok** (The Nature Conservancy)
31. **Sean Gregory** (VIMS)
32. **Todd Lutte** (EPA)
33. **Morgan Corey** (MD DNR)
34. **Sadie Drescher** (Chesapeake Bay Trust)
35. **Julie Reichert-Nguyen** (NOAA)