



Wetlands Workgroup Tidal Meeting - February 2026

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

New Action Items

1. Chesapeake WILD (CWILD) proposals due April 9th, 2026 at NOON
2. Small watershed grants (SWG) open RFP, proposals due April 2 2026 at NOON
3. Reach out if there are any topics you would like to present at upcoming tidal meetings.

Minutes

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| I. Welcome and Roll Call | (1:00 – 1:10) |
| Decisions: | |
| • N/A | |
| Actions: | |
| • N/A | |
| II. Updates and Announcements | (1:10 – 1:30) |
| Decisions: | |
| • N/A | |
| Actions: | |
| • N/A | |
| Notes: | |
| • Chris Guy was announced as one of two coordinators of the Thriving Habitats, Fisheries, and Wildlife Goal Team. | |
| • Chairs introduced, Kevin Schabow and Becky Gwynn | |
| a. Becky Gwynn is deputy director at the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources. | |
| b. Kevin Schabow is the director at the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office in Annapolis. | |
| • Gina Hunt has stepped down as chair of the GIT. | |
| III. Jeff Sullivan Waterbird Vice-chair | (1:30 – 1:50) |
| Decision: | |
| • N/A | |

Actions

- N/A

Discussion

- Jeff Sullivan is a biologist at USGS Eastern Ecological Science Center. His work focuses on avian influenza and everything related to that (the disease, how water birds serve as a vector, transmission risk), and understanding impacts to non-traditional host species. It also focuses on the reproductive success of colonial nesting water birds. In this position, I want to de-silo the ongoing bird work, and get this information at a more holistic level that is useful at a management scale.

IV. Presentation: Actaeon's River Terrace Project

(1:50 – 2:10)

Materials

Decision

- N/A

Actions

- N/A

Discussion

- **Chris Guy:** Thank you for this presentation. Fish and wildlife considers the tidal freshwater marsh to be almost an endangered habitat. It is a problem to restore these marshes that these east coast cities were built on. A lot of the work to protect and restore the marshes has to be done by hand. One of the biggest challenges I see on this project that you guys didn't really talk about was the lack of ability to do aerial spray, right? What is the plan long term to keep the phragmites down? The mechanical and chemical treatment will work for maybe 2-3 years, but the phragmite will not stay down for that long, and whatever seed is in the area will germinate. Maybe you could touch on how we stop that in the future, and I think this is critical to how people in D.C, Maryland, and Virginia are investing in living shorelines so heavily, as this will be the same problem everywhere.
 - a. **Donna An:** We are doing as much as we can in the 3 year grant period we have to eradicate the root system. However because it is tidal, once the Phragmite does not have such a strong hold, things like the substrate are moving, and so we are hoping since we can't go with an excavator, we do the best we can to create the habitat the other species thrive in. Phragmites have a monopoly in the higher consolidated substrate, so once we got that down things started shifting. But that is also why community engagement is so strong in the DOE, because we have to educate and show what can be done.
 - b. **Tess Danielson:** Another thought we had was to cut some of the sheet piles that surround the wetland, there was not enough funding initially to cut it down, but we could eventually cut some section so there's more water flow and then the Phragmite won't be able to withstand the water elevation. We have a 3 year grant, but we want at least 5, so our next step is to use DOE funding to extend this hopefully two years. There is also a bike path that goes right along this site, so having it be accessible to the public that is now visible is going to get a lot more attention, and we can hopefully get some signage involved so people can see what work has been done.
- **Chris Guy:** One more thing I think you could talk about is the mosquito benefit. The mosquitoes hang out in the Phragmites during the day, but when you cut them down you lose the mosquito nuisance.

V. **Presentation:** Chesapeake Bay Trust Tidal Strategic Plan

(2:10 – 2:30)

[Materials](#)

Decision

- N/A

Actions

- N/A

Discussion

- **Pamela Mason:** We are going to send this out to everyone who is on our distribution list at the version it is now, and again when the final appendices are completed. Moving through the spring, as we adapt to infrastructure changes within the Bay Program, we will need to integrate elements of the strategic plan into our management strategy so that going forward we will be able to track these processes. The chairs and vice chairs will work together making the management strategy moving forward.
- **Matthew Robinson:** I was wondering if you could touch on something else a little bit as well. One of my favorite parts of this grant was the Pocomoke River Restoration Project, which is a conceptual design for wetlands in Pocomoke sound. I know a group of us took a trip down there a couple of years ago to tour the site, so I don't know if you could talk a little about that and what the plans are.
 - a. **Robert McAfee:** I will tell you what I know, which is that the design is complete and available to be shared, I think some people may already be shopping around different funding strategies associated with the plan and design.
 - b. **Matthew Robinson:** One of the exciting things about that, Rob, was it is not just saying 'lets build a wetland here,' it is taking a holistic look from the subtidal area up to the high marsh parts there, and takes into account things like encroaching infrastructure or other wetlands, and sea level rise, and more.
- **Chris Guy:** I want to tie this all together here. This plan is actually the end product of 5 years of work from the wetland workgroup. On the tidal side, the paradigm from the 70's/80's was that they were protected because it didn't make sense to build on them anyway, and this idea is what we were working with until we started this effort. There was no strategic tidal plan because it didn't make sense to have one. This is what drove the funding, we said there is no comprehensive strategic plan for tidal wetlands in the watershed and we really needed one. The strategic plan for tidal wetlands was one emphasis, then there was community engagement etc. As folks review this, keep in mind that this is all part of the action plan we say we needed. We are asking that the wetlands workgroup adopt this to help inform the strategic plan. The action plan is 1- pages long with 200 pages of appendices, it would be helpful to go back and review the action plan as you review this document, to see if the wetland workgroup is still on the right path and is this the way to move us forward?

VI. **Presentation:** Chesapeake Stewardship Fund

(2:30 – 3:00)

[Materials](#)

Decision

- N/A

Actions

- N/A

Discussion

- **Kristin Blunk:** There are two upcoming deadlines, you need to reach out to NFWF or a field liaison, to help applicants ensure their proposals are aligned with the criteria NFWF is looking at. The small ownership grant and CWILD are coming up in April.
- **Chris guy:** we also open the workgroup for use, if anyone wants any help from us in creating a proposal.
- **Kristin Blunk:** Kevin asked if DoD could get CWILD grants, and the answer is yes, the federal government is eligible for CWILD.

VII. Adjourn

(3:00)

Next Meeting:

Wetlands Workgroup Non-tidal Meeting - March 2026

Tuesday, March 24, 2026 from 1:00pm - 3:00pm

Attendance

1. Nick Staten, CBPO/CRC
2. Chris Guy, USFWS
3. Nancy Schumm, MD
4. Kevin Du Bois, DoW CBP
5. Matt Robinson, EPA CBPO
6. Kevin Schabow, NOAA
7. Becky Gwynn, VA DWR
8. Jeffery Sullivan, USGS EESC
9. Greg Noe, USGS
10. Katie Stahl, MDNR
11. Karinna Nunez, VIMS
12. Robert McAfee, CB Trust
13. Joe Berg, Biohabitats
14. Sadie Drescher, CB Trust
15. Donna An, Actaeon
16. Heather Hepburn, MDE
17. Aaron Blair, EPA
18. Maggie Woodward, CBC
19. Jana Davis, CB Trust
20. Kristen Saacke Blunk, Headwaters LLC
21. Emily Young, ICPRB
22. Nora Snyder, Actaeon
23. Megan Gaesser, Actaeon
24. Elise Frazier, VA CZM
25. Ben Sagara, VA DWR
26. Erin Reilly, CB NERR
27. Sarah Koser, MDNR
28. Pamela Mason, VIMS
29. Tess Danielson, DOEE

30. Megan Fitzgerald, EPA
31. Elliot Campbell, DNR
32. Julie Reichert-Nguyen, NOAA