

# Wetland Workgroup Action Plan Item 5.4 Update

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# BIENNIAL STRATEGY REVIEW SYSTEM Chesapeake Bay Program



## Logic and Action Plan: Post Quarterly Progress Meeting

### Wetlands – 2020-2021

[NOTE: make sure to edit **pre-** or **post-** in the text above, to tell the reader whether this logic and action plan is in preparation for your quarterly progress meeting or has been updated based on discussion at the quarterly progress meeting.]

**Long-term Target:** 85,000 acres

**Two-year Target:** 29,548 acres (based on 2017 progress)

<b>Instructions:</b> Before your quarterly progress meeting, provide the status of individual actions in the table below using this color key.
Action has been completed or is moving forward as planned.
Action has encountered minor obstacles.
Action has not been taken or has encountered a serious barrier.

Additional instructions for completing or updating your logic and action plan can be found on [ChesapeakeDecisions](#).

Factor	Current Efforts	Gap	Actions	Metrics	Expected Response and Application	Learn/Adapt
What is impacting our ability to achieve our outcome?	What current efforts are addressing this factor?	What further efforts or information are needed to fully address this factor?	What actions are essential (to help fill this gap) to achieve our outcome?	What will we measure or observe to determine progress in filling identified	How and when do we expect these actions to address the identified gap? How might that affect our work	What did we learn from taking this action? How will this lesson impact our
Communication with decision-makers			<a href="#">increase engagement and address leadership and practitioners.</a>			
	Accumulation of State plans, programs, and initiatives in Virginia that could act as an example	Co-benefits may not be emphasized in conservation and restoration decision-making	<a href="#">5.4 Work with the Communication Workgroup and State partners to develop state-specific factsheets that identify State plans, programs, and initiatives that encourage wetland restoration and implementation of living shorelines.</a>			



Wetlands Workgroup: Action Plan Item 5.4 Update

## ACTIONS – 2020-2021

Action #	Description	Performance Target(s)	Responsible Party (or Parties)	Geographic Location	Expected Timeline
5.4	Work with the Communication Workgroup and State partners to develop state-specific factsheets that identify State plans, programs, and initiatives that encourage wetland restoration and implementation of living shorelines.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) A factsheet for each state in the Watershed that identifies that wetland restoration and living shoreline implementation provide co-benefits that meet multiple state goals.</li> <li>2) Expand factsheet into website or social media site with designated webmasters to design and refresh the site periodically.</li> </ol>	Wetland Workgroup CBP Comm Workgroup	Bay-wide	Summer 2020



Distributed to  
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## How Wetlands & Living Shorelines Support Programs & Policies: Virginia



There are approximately 1 million acres of tidal and non-tidal wetlands in Virginia, impacting everything from wildlife and recreation to climate resilience, water quality and tourism. Wetlands come in various types and are found on government land, residential property, farms and other areas in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and along the Bay and its tributaries. **The following programs and initiatives all benefit from wetland protection, restoration and enhancement in Virginia.**



### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Wetlands are an asset that protect agricultural and private properties and enhance outdoor recreation venues while spurring green jobs.**

**Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program:** A state-federal partnership that provides financial incentives for the restoration or creation of wetlands on agricultural lands to improve water quality, protect environmentally sensitive lands, restore habitat and decrease erosion.

**Virginia Outdoors Plan 2018:** Outdoor recreationists spend more than \$10 billion within the state annually, and most of the popular forms of outdoor recreation are dependent on the health, vitality and productivity of natural resource lands and waters, including wetlands.

**Virginia Scenic Rivers Program:** The Scenic Rivers Program enhances tourism and recreation in the state by promoting rivers and streams with outstanding scenic, recreational, historic, and natural characteristics. The program prioritizes rivers that meet several criteria, including presence of stream corridor vegetation (e.g., wetlands), healthy water quality (which benefits wetlands), and the quality of its fishery (for which wetlands provide habitat).

**Fisheries Management:** By providing habitat for fish and improving the health of marine ecosystems, wetlands help Virginia Marine Resource Commission and Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources meet inland and saltwater fishery management plan goals. The American Sportfishing Association estimates that in Virginia, \$998 million is spent on fishing annually, with 9,785 jobs supported and \$72 million in state and local tax revenue raised.



### PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Wetlands play a critical role in reducing the impact of extreme weather such as coastal storms and flooding.**

**Virginia Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Program:** Wetlands reduce the impacts of coastal storms and flooding on natural and built infrastructure. The Virginia CZM Program supports the use of natural features, such as wetlands, through a range of initiatives, including the promotion of living shorelines, protection of beaches and dunes, and the use of dredged material as a resource for building coastal resilience.

**Safety and Floodplains:** Floodplains, which include wetlands, are vital for mitigating the impacts of coastal storms and flooding. Communities participating in the Community Rating System program can reduce the cost of flood insurance premiums by preserving green spaces including floodplains, living shorelines and wetlands.



An urban tidal wetland project in Norfolk, Virginia uses coconut fiber logs to control erosion.  
Photo by Kevin Du Bois, DoD Chesapeake Bay Program Coordinator



### INFRASTRUCTURE MAINTAINANCE

**As wetlands reduce the impact of extreme weather events, infrastructure and maintenance needs decrease.**

**Virginia Living Shorelines Act:** Healthy and robust wetlands protect against community infrastructure flooding and erosion. Through the Living Shorelines Act, Virginia is committed to a net resource gain of tidal wetlands, the enhancement of wetland ecosystem services, and improved communication of these needs to the public and decision makers.

**State Water Control Law:** Virginia law to establish and implement policies and programs to protect and enhance the Commonwealth's waters and wetland resources. Includes voluntary and incentive-based programs to achieve a net resource gain in acreage and functions of wetlands to maintain provision of wetland services for water quality, habitat, consumption, recreation and other uses.

**Virginia Coastal Resilience Master Planning Framework:** Virginia experiences one of the highest rates of relative sea level rise in the U.S. The Framework is Virginia's roadmap to making our built environment more resilient to floods, hurricanes, fires, and other extreme weather events. It recognizes the resilience, water quality and habitat benefits of wetlands and calls to "incorporate nature and nature-based infrastructure and flood control whenever possible."



### NATURAL BENEFITS

**Wetlands provide critical wildlife habitat and are a fundamental part of Virginia's integrated ecosystems.**

**Virginia Tidal Wetlands Act:** The intent of the law, enforced by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission, is to balance preservation and use of wetlands in order to protect ecosystem services including the production of wildlife; the protection against floods, tidal storms, and erosion; and provisions for recreational and aesthetic opportunities.

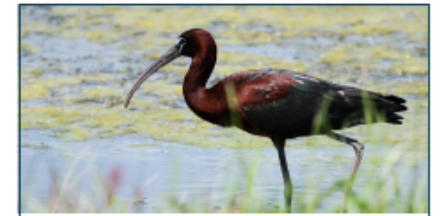
**Virginia Wildlife Action Plan:** The plan recommends conservation strategies that maintain and restore wetland habitats, promote living shoreline erosion protection, control invasive species, and are resilient to climate change.

**ConserveVirginia:** ConserveVirginia is a data-driven guide for land conservation. It has identified almost 7 million acres of lands with the highest conservation value, across seven prioritized categories, so that limited resources can be focused for maximum benefit. Wetlands of highest ecological value are featured in the Natural Habitat and Ecosystem Diversity Category but are also represented in categories pertaining to water quality, floodplains, resilience, and scenic preservation.

**Virginia Natural Heritage Program:** The program focuses on conservation of Virginia's biodiversity through science-based inventory, protection, and stewardship of rare plants and animals, exemplary natural communities, including wetlands, and the ecosystems upon which life depends.

**Virginia's Strategy for Safeguarding Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) from the Effects of Climate Change (2009):** According to the strategy, over 60 percent of Virginia's SGCN are aquatic and another 15 to 20 percent rely upon riparian and wetland habitats, making them critical to survival of these species.

**Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP):** The WIP recognizes the value of living shoreline restoration for water quality improvement, shoreline erosion control and the support of living resources.



Found in Virginia wetlands, the Glossy Ibis is a tier-one Species of Greatest Conservation Need.  
Photo by Steve Dwyer/Chesapeake Bay Program

**Virginia Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act:** The Act aims to protect and improve the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, including and through the protection of tidal and non-tidal wetlands and shorelines.

**Virginia State Wetlands Program Plan (WPP):** The state plan aims to achieve no net loss of existing wetland acreage, achieve net wetland resource gain through restoration, and assist local governments and community groups with development of wetland preservation plans.

**Constitution of Virginia:** Protection and restoration of wetlands support the intent of the Constitution: "...Further, it shall be the Commonwealth's policy to protect its atmosphere, lands, and waters from pollution, impairment, or destruction, for the benefit, enjoyment, and general welfare of the people of the Commonwealth."

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# Local Engagement Workgroup Worksheet

## Objectives -- Desired Action

- **Primary** – Encourage decision makers to prioritize conservation and restoration of tidal and non-tidal wetlands because of the opportunity to provide co-benefits to meet multiple objectives. Co-benefits (Hazard mitigation, flood mitigation, habitat, carbon sequestration, climate resilience)
- **Secondary** – Figuring out (measuring) how effective the fact sheets and our local engagement efforts/social marketing is.



# Local Engagement Workgroup Worksheet

Target Audience (identify local audiences that can take desired actions)

## Primary:

- **Wetlands Boards** (volunteers appointed by elected officials): Wetlands board members are responsible for decisions regarding the use, alteration, or development of tidal-wetlands, and in some cases coastal primary sand dunes and beaches. Some may have limited experience/expertise, so basic education is needed.
- **Virginia Marine Resources Commission:** For localities that do not elect to locally implement the Commonwealth's regulatory review is conducted by appointed VMRC Commissioners.
- **The Virginia Water Protection Permit Program:** Administered by DEQ's Office of Wetlands & Stream Protection
- **State Program Leads** – state programs identified in the fact sheet.

## Secondary

- **Other Decision-Makers:** those who have a say in conserving or restoring tidal and non-tidal wetland habitats. i.e. land owners, USACE
- **Affiliated organizations:** NGOs and small watershed conservation groups including, but not limited to: the Lafayette Wetlands Partnership, Elizabeth River Project, Lynnhaven River Now, Friends of the Rappahannock, James River Association, Chesapeake Bay Foundation (Virginia office), the Living Shoreline Collaborative, Restore America's Estuaries, etc.
- **Localities:** Municipal governments (parks and rec leaders; whoever manages public lands), etc.
- **Professional Organizations:** Distribution to of the factsheet to professional organizations including, but no limited to: Virginia Association of Wetland Professional, Virginia Master Naturalists, certified Master Gardeners, certified conservation landscapers, etc.



# Feedback?

# Local Engagement Workgroup Worksheet

**Key Messages (For each identified audience, why is this important to them?, how can we help them achieve their objectives...and ours)**

- **Wetlands Boards:** Wetlands help meet multiple outcomes. And, this fact sheet will help you understand and discharge the duties you're responsible for. You need to keep in mind BOTH the public benefits...and detriments (to avoid them). eg. When you put in a bulkhead, you're benefiting a private landowner, but forgetting you're taking away public benefits (habitat, etc). The fact sheet provides information to determine the balance between public and private detriments vs public and private benefits. In addition, in representing the Commonwealth of VA in the decision-making process, the fact sheet will help you understand the other State program goals that are met by local wetland preservation and restoration. Wetland protection and restoration also fulfills the public trust responsibilities entrusted to the Wetlands Board.
- **Virginia Marine Resources Commission:** Should ensure the decisions makers they're delegating their authority to properly follow their regulatory requirements for wetlands decision making.
- **The Virginia Water Protection Permit Program:** Should ensure the decisions makers they're delegating their authority to properly follow their regulatory requirements for wetlands decision making
- **State Program Leads, Affiliated Organizations, Localities, Professional Organizations ?**



## Feedback?

# Local Engagement Workgroup Worksheet

**Translators:** Who can help develop messaging, PPTs, products?

- Communications Office

**Subject Matter Experts** — who has expertise to help translators develop messaging, products? Who can we rely on to advise? CBP staff, GIT/Outcome workgroups?

- Wetlands Workgroup
- CBP Communications Office
- LGAC
- Local Leadership workgroup?

**Trusted Sources :**

- PDCs, Soil and Water Conservation Districts;
- VMRC
- DEQ
- VIMS
- Local wetlands board staff
- Shoreline Erosion Advisory Service (SEAS)
- NGOs (Eliz river project, Friends of ...)

**Strategies for Delivering Messages, Products**  
(conference presentations, association meetings, websites, etc.)

- Through trusted sources mentioned above
- Websites listed above
- CBP workgroups
- Living Shoreline Collaborative
- Living Shoreline Listserve





# Local Engagement Workgroup Worksheet

**Resources/Products:** What documents, websites, funding, or other resources can the CBP help make available that may be of value to local audiences? Who is the lead for developing each?

- **Fact sheets:** A wetlands factsheet, specific to VA, has been developed by the Wetlands Workgroup and Chesapeake Bay Program communications staff. And it has been authorized for use.
- **Websites:**
  - Wetlands Workgroup website
  - Chesapeakebay.net
  - VIMS website
  - VMRC website
  - Websites used by trusted sources and NGOs listed (Feedback)
- **Delivery Methods**
  - Work with PDCs in Virginia; VACO
  - Each state liaison will provide it directly to wetlands board
  - Wetlands board staff, other trusted source.
  - VIMS Annual Wetlands Board Workshops – distribute
  - VIMS website – wetlands page
    - Encourage inclusion in training manuals for wetland boards; include as an appendix
    - Where does VMRC store that information? So liaisons have access to it. URL for sharing

## Delivery Methods – continued...

- On wetlands board web pages/ resources pages
- NGOs? Wetlands Watch, Restore Americas Estuaries and similar groups
- Email Distribution to wetland boards
- To staff of the Water, Permitting, Wetlands & Streams office via email.
- Daily brief by the Comm WG?
- Press release to Media outlets?
- Social science tools that CBP may apply?
- Distribution to DEIJ outlets?

# Feedback?



# Local Engagement Workgroup Worksheet

Effectiveness (what are the measures of success? Who will develop, track, analyze?)

## Survey?

- Survey feedback: Four months after delivering the factsheet to wetland boards, ask wetlands boards members to complete a quick survey about how helpful the resource is in their decision making ( identifying benefits in achieving other program goals while restoring wetlands and living shorelines and what impact it has made on their decision making.)
- Consider doing survey for secondary users.... Anyone who submitted an application...if they were provided information prior to submitted. Might need to find wetlands board who is sending out fact sheet with materials... BEFORE they apply.
- survey the trusted sources - like the Wetlands Boards Staff. The question could be - did the board discuss public benefits before/after?
- NGOs – feedback on use and reception?

## Actions Taken by Intended Audiences?

- Monitoring wetland board actions: Monitor specific actions taken by the Virginia Wetlands Board before and after the dissemination of the factsheets.



# Feedback?