

STATE WETLAND CONSERVATION PLAN PRIORITY ACTION LIST

Introduction

The SWCP Priority Action List is derived directly from the tasks formulated by the Workgroup, and listed for each objective. Similar tasks from throughout the plan were combined to form action items, in order to increase clarity and reduce redundancy when reviewing the tasks as a whole. The action items were then evaluated by MDE staff, according to the criteria of; feasibility, effectiveness, and timeframe. Priority actions were identified as those actions that were deemed to be highly feasible with given or expected resources, which would accomplish concrete changes or improvements in wetland conservation, in a reasonable timeline. This identification of priority actions does not diminish the importance of any remaining actions, but rather provides a narrower focus on which to concentrate limited resources.

Priority Action List

The following priority actions are grouped into the following seven categories for a clearer picture of the types of work that are being called for: cumulative and indirect impacts, wetlands planning, wetlands mitigation, education and outreach, management and program development. Actions are shown below in two subsections. The first subsection shows actions by general category. The second subsection shows actions to be undertaken by various agencies. It is expected that there will be a coordinated process between agencies that have joint responsibility over some of the tasks. Actions represent summaries of tasks listed in Section III: Goals and Objectives.

INVENTORY, CUMULATIVE AND INDIRECT IMPACTS

- Develop a more comprehensive approach to tracking all discernable wetland losses and conversions

WETLANDS RESTORATION and PRESERVATION

- Identify priority areas for restoration and preservation
- Develop management recommendations for Nontidal Wetlands of special State Concern
- Special emphasis in Coastal Bays
- Identify opportunities and conflicts in existing programs that prevent effective wetland restoration and preservation
- Continue to improve restoration and preservation efforts by clarifying strengths and expertise within agencies and programs; and define roles and responsibilities to further increase efficiency and coordination in wetland management efforts.
- Educate stakeholders on various land preservation programs and benefits

WETLANDS MITIGATION

- Prepare report on effectiveness of wetland mitigation program
- Improve and apply techniques for evaluating function of wetland mitigation projects and constructing mitigation projects
- Develop a consistent approach to mitigation banking
- Develop guidance on appropriate alternate types of mitigation

WETLANDS EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

- Coordinate efforts between government agencies and nonprofit organizations to produce and distribute educational materials
- Promote and support watershed planning

WETLAND MANAGEMENT/PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

- Improve coordination and consistency and reduce conflicts between state, federal, and local programs with input from stakeholders.
- Explore and implement approaches for facilitating development in Priority Funding Areas without lessening protection of wetlands
- Acquire additional staff and funding resources for wetland regulatory and compliance programs to improve program effectiveness and efficiency.
- Identify and address inefficiencies and delays in the processing of applications. Improve and update technical resources used in the regulatory programs, including GIS use, teleconferencing, data and application processing to expedite and improve reviews.
- Improve consistency of regulatory decision making and permit processing throughout the State
- Improve accuracy of wetland mapping and delineation
- Streamline the public notice and hearing process without decreasing opportunities for public comment.

Priority Action List by Agency

Agencies will work together to address issues and complete tasks in a coordinated process.

MDE/Corps of Engineers/Local Governments

- Improve coordination and consistency and reduce conflicts between state, federal, and local programs with input from stakeholders.

- Explore and implement approaches for facilitating development in Priority Funding Areas without lessening protection of wetlands

MDE/Corps of Engineers

- Improve and apply techniques for evaluating function of wetland mitigation projects and constructing mitigation projects
- Develop a consistent approach to mitigation banking
- Develop guidance on appropriate alternate types of mitigation
- Identify and address inefficiencies and delays in the processing of applications.
- Improve and update technical resources used in the regulatory programs, including GIS use, teleconferencing, data and application processing to expedite and improve reviews.
- Streamline the public notice and hearing process without decreasing opportunities for public comment.

MDE/Corps of Engineers/MDA

- Improve consistency of regulatory decision making and permit processing throughout the State

MDE/Corps of Engineers/DNR

- Special emphasis in Coastal Bays
- Promote and support watershed planning

MDE/DNR

- Identify priority areas for restoration and preservation
- Develop management recommendations for Nontidal Wetlands of special State Concern

MDE/DNR/MDA

- Coordinate efforts between government agencies and nonprofit organizations to produce and distribute educational materials
- Identify opportunities and conflicts in existing programs that prevent effective wetland restoration and preservation
- Continue to improve restoration and preservation efforts by clarifying strengths and expertise within agencies and programs; and define roles and responsibilities to further increase efficiency and coordination in wetland management efforts.
- Educate stakeholders on various land preservation programs and benefits

MDE

- Prepare report on effectiveness of wetland mitigation program

- Acquire additional staff and funding resources for wetland regulatory and compliance programs to improve program effectiveness and efficiency.
- Develop an economical and effective approach for updating tidal wetland regulatory maps.