

# Chesapeake Bay Watershed

## Accelerating Wetlands Restoration

**T**he Nature Conservancy and Ducks Unlimited spearheaded an effort to identify ways to accelerate wetland restoration in four states of the Chesapeake Bay watershed: Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia. The pragmatic solutions we outlined have the potential to increase on-the-ground efforts and offer cost effective improvements to Bay-wide water quality and habitat. We conducted interviews with more than 70 partners across all four states to help guide the remainder of the project: identifying opportunities to enhance existing programs or develop new models to engage landowners and implement wetland restoration in targeted locations of each state. *(See the next page for information on obtaining the full report.)*

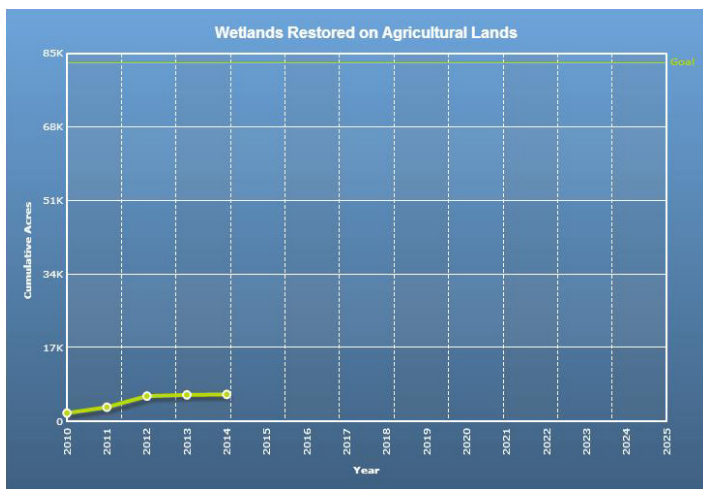


## Restoration Needs

Wetlands are natural water filters as well as quality habitat. Properly located restoration projects provide myriad other services, such as storing floodwaters and mitigating climate change impacts. Restoration is also one of the most cost-effective means to reduce pollution.

Recognizing wetlands' dual roles in providing natural habitat and in reducing nutrient and sediment loads to the Bay, the Chesapeake Bay partnership (comprised of the six watershed states) committed to restore 100,000 acres of wetlands on agricultural lands over the next 11 years. Meanwhile, in response to the 2009 Chesapeake Executive Order, federal agencies have set combined goals of 180,000 acres for wetland restoration and enhancement.

As the graph below shows, however, progress has been uneven, at best. Limited funding and capacity are among the challenges that state- and county-level urban and agricultural land managers, as well as the Chesapeake Bay Program's Habitat Goal Team, have cited in calling out the urgent need for more strategic, effective and coordinated restoration efforts.



## Our Solutions

Our stakeholder interviews revealed five primary obstacles to accelerating wetland restoration in the watershed. We also synthesized stakeholder perspectives to define 15 solutions to overcome these obstacles. While answers varied from state to state (and even within agencies), we found consensus on the primary obstacles and solutions to overcome them. Our findings are summarized in the table below.

Identifying Solutions to Obstacles	
Obstacle	Solutions
1. Limited Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Secure sustained funding for all phases of restoration</li> <li>B. Focus funding to priority areas</li> <li>C. Advocate for increased program funding</li> </ul>
2. Outreach is Limited/ Not Coordinated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Designate a local leader for outreach and coordination</li> <li>B. Host annual cross-training for wetland practitioners</li> <li>C. Develop better marketing strategies</li> </ul>
3. Programmatic or Institutional Obstacles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Increase flexibility of WRE</li> <li>B. Increase flexibility of CREP</li> <li>C. Develop program with local conservation groups to offer private restoration options</li> <li>D. Invest in market research to evaluate the need to change incentive values</li> </ul>
4. Permitting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Reduce regulatory burden for environmentally beneficial projects</li> <li>B. Separate the review process for restoration and development projects</li> <li>C. Develop list of information to support permit applications</li> </ul>
5. Limited Approaches to Restoring Wetlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Implement demonstration projects to model a variety of practices and approaches</li> <li>B. Disseminate alternative restoration designs and information to practitioners, agencies, and funders</li> </ul>

## Learn More

Accelerating wetland restoration across the Chesapeake Bay watershed is critical to achieving clean water and to enhancing habitat for aquatic and wetland plants and animals. Our stakeholder interview report is a first step toward identifying the complexity of obstacles, offering related solutions, and implementing new ideas and processes to reach our restoration goals. *To receive a copy of the full report, email your request to one of the addresses below.*



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