

# Enhancing State & Tribal Wetland Program (ESTP) Initiative Overview

2011 National Tribal Water Quality  
Conference

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# Why – EPA Drivers

- We won't meet our wetland protection goals without a stronger state and tribal role in wetlands protection.
- We can use our resources more effectively to accelerate and sustain development of state and tribal programs.
- We have an excellent knowledge base on state and tribal program building activities from 15+ years experience.
- Focus on needs of developing (small) programs flagged by WPDG Program Evaluation (done in 2007).



# ESTP Key Components & Status

- 1. *Increased dialogue* between EPA and states/tribes on wetland program development.
- 2. Provide clear articulation of program building goals and activities -*the Core Elements Framework (CEF)* - support States and Tribes development of *Wetland Program Plans (WPPs)*.
- 3. *Align Wetland Program Development Grants (WPDGs)* to reinforce, better support program development.
- 4. Provide targeted *technical assistance* for states and tribes including support for more sustainable financing.
- 5. *Track Progress*.



# Core Elements of a State/Tribal Wetland Program

- Regulation
- Monitoring & Assessment
- Voluntary Restoration & Protection
- Water Quality Standards for Wetlands



# The Core Elements Framework

- Includes an introduction and a chapter for each core element: Monitoring and Assessment, Regulation, Voluntary Restoration and Protection, and Water Quality Standards.
- Each chapter describes
  - Goals and Benefits – national goals and examples of state and tribal goals.
  - Key program-building objectives and actions to fully develop that capability.
  - Additional Resources.
- Example: Monitoring and Assessment



# Example: Monitoring & Assessment

**Objective 1 (for programs in the earliest stages of monitoring and assessment):** Develop a monitoring and assessment strategy consistent with *Elements of a State Water Monitoring and Assessment Program for Wetlands* (EPA, 2006) that states and tribes can use to manage wetlands according to their objectives.

Actions †

Menu of Activities †

a. Identify program decisions and long-term environmental outcome(s) that will benefit from a wetlands monitoring and assessment program

- Document program's long-term environmental goals.
- Identify programs that will ultimately use monitoring data, e.g. track trends, 401 certification, restoration, permitting.
- Collaborate with water quality programs in a state/tribe.
- Identify how wetland data can be used to implement watershed planning.

b. Define wetlands monitoring objectives and strategies federal, state, tribal, and local agencies, universities, regional and national work groups.

- Coordinate with most relevant partners, for example:

# Wetland Program Plans: What Are They?

- Minimum Components
  - Narrative description of overall program goal(s) for time period of plan.
  - Actions/activities (generally consistent with the Core Element Framework) to be undertaken.
  - Implementation schedule for actions/activities (including overall timeline of 3-6 years).



# Wetland Program Plans: Why Do Them?

- WPPs assist S/T with program development by encouraging them to think strategically about what they are going to do over a period of several years to build their wetlands program.
- WPPs facilitate discussion between EPA and S/T and help form a mutual understanding of the direction the S/T wetland program intends to take.
- WPPs allow EPA to be more effective in providing useful technical assistance.
- WPPs allow local governments, universities, and other entities potentially help the S/T build their wetlands programs.

WPP website address:

<http://water.epa.gov/type/wetlands/wpp.cfm>



# ESTP Key Components & Status: Wetland Program Plans

- **32** officially approved WPPs to date.
  - **19** are from states/**13** are from tribes.
  
- **15-18** WPPs under development and funded by WPDGs.
  
- WPP breakdown by Core Element covered:
  - Monitoring & Assessment: **30**
  - Regulation: **25**
  - Voluntary Restoration & Protection: **25**
  - Water Quality Standards for Wetlands: **22**

*(most WPPs cover multiple CEs)*

# Wetland Program Development Grants

- Grant proposals must be generally consistent with the Core Element Framework.
- Two “tracks” for WPDG competition: track 1 for states/tribes proposing to develop a WPP or carry out the actions in an EPA-approved WPP, and a second track for all other applicants (including states/tribes not developing/implementing a WPP).
  - Applicants only compete against applicants within their own track.
  - Most of the available money is for track 1 applicants, though the exact percentage varies from Region-to-Region (WPDG applications are sent to your EPA Region).



# Technical Assistance for Tribes 2009–2011

- Sustainable Finance Workshops – 3 Tribal-only (R9, R10 and this conference) and two others that tribes were in attendance (R5, 8).
- Water Quality Standards for Wetlands – webinar series.
- 401 Water Quality Certification conference call series and Wiki.
- R10 Intertribal Wetlands Working Group.
- Three ESTP workshops – 2 Tribal-only (R9, R10) one mixed state/tribe (R7).
- R8 Capacity-Building Conference.

# Technical Assistance for Tribes in 2012 and Beyond

- Working on developing field and (possibly) classroom-based trainings for tribes in the area of Monitoring & Assessment.
  - Multiple trainings.
  - Tailor based on the types of wetlands in the area a given training is being held.
  - Possibly further tailor based on level of sophistication of tribal attendees' monitoring programs.
  - Build on National Wetland Condition Assessment.
  - Tool for tribes to access various monitoring methods being used around the country.



# ESTP Long-Term

- Stay the course with an increased level of dialog between EPA and states/tribes, Wetland Program Plans, financial assistance.
- Evaluate trends and respond to states/tribal technical assistance needs.
- Develop and utilize improved measure of state/tribal wetland program progress.



# Contacts

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- Wetland Program Development Grants
  - See relevant EPA Regional contact at:

[http://water.epa.gov/grants\\_funding/wetlands/grantguidelines/index.cfm](http://water.epa.gov/grants_funding/wetlands/grantguidelines/index.cfm)

