

Interagency Coastal Wetlands Workgroup: Statement of Purpose and Goals



Purpose

The Interagency Coastal Wetlands Workgroup (ICWWG) helps to address coastal wetland loss, management, and restoration by bringing together seven federal agencies with programs and authorities that protect and manage coastal wetlands.

Background

Wetlands in coastal watersheds of the U.S. were lost at an average rate of 80,000 acres per year between 2004 and 2009. This is an increase from 59,000 acres per year between 1998 and 2004 as documented by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in two reports on the Status and Trends of Wetlands in the Coastal Watersheds. The ICWWG was formed in 2009 in response to these loss trends.

Coastal wetlands include saltwater and freshwater wetlands located in coastal watersheds, specifically USGS 8-digit watersheds that drain into the Atlantic, Pacific, or Gulf of Mexico.

Goals

The long-term goal of the ICWWG is to **reduce and reverse the trend of wetland loss in coastal watersheds**. The supporting short-term goals are:

- I. **To better understand the underlying causes of wetland loss in coastal watersheds and contributing stressors.**
- II. **To recommend new or revised policies and programs to protect and restore wetlands in coastal watersheds.**
- III. **To identify and disseminate tools, strategies, and information to protect and restore wetlands in coastal watersheds.**
- IV. **To create public understanding of the functions and values of coastal wetlands and the threats they are facing, and to build support for coastal wetland protection and restoration.**



Approach

The ICWWG works by bringing member agencies together to communicate, collaborate, and leverage capabilities to protect and manage coastal wetland resources. The Workgroup is intended to be a “go-to” resource for coastal wetland management issues. Regular monthly meetings, chaired by EPA, are convened to conduct Workgroup business. Additional meetings may be arranged or subgroups convened on a limited or as needed basis. Annual meetings with agencies not involved in the group and with management within agencies will be conducted as appropriate. Additionally, the Workgroup both draws information from, and disseminates information to, tribes, states, local governments, and nongovernmental stakeholders.

