



Welcome  
State Wetlands Advisory Committee  
Introductions

# AGENDA

## **Delaware Wetlands Advisory Committee September 25, 2013 – 9am to 12pm St. Jones Research Reserve**

9:00 -- Introduce Committee

9:15 -- Welcome from Secretary Collin O'Mara

9:30 -- Committee Structure and Protocol

10:00 -- Environmental Law Institute Report

10:30 -- Delaware Wetlands: Status and Changes report

10:45 -- Break

11:00 -- DNREC Workgroup Overview

- Regulatory and Permitting
- Conservation and Protection
- Restoration
- Outreach and Education
- Science
- Policy

11:30 -- Committee Discussion

Public Input

Adjourn (12:00-12:15)

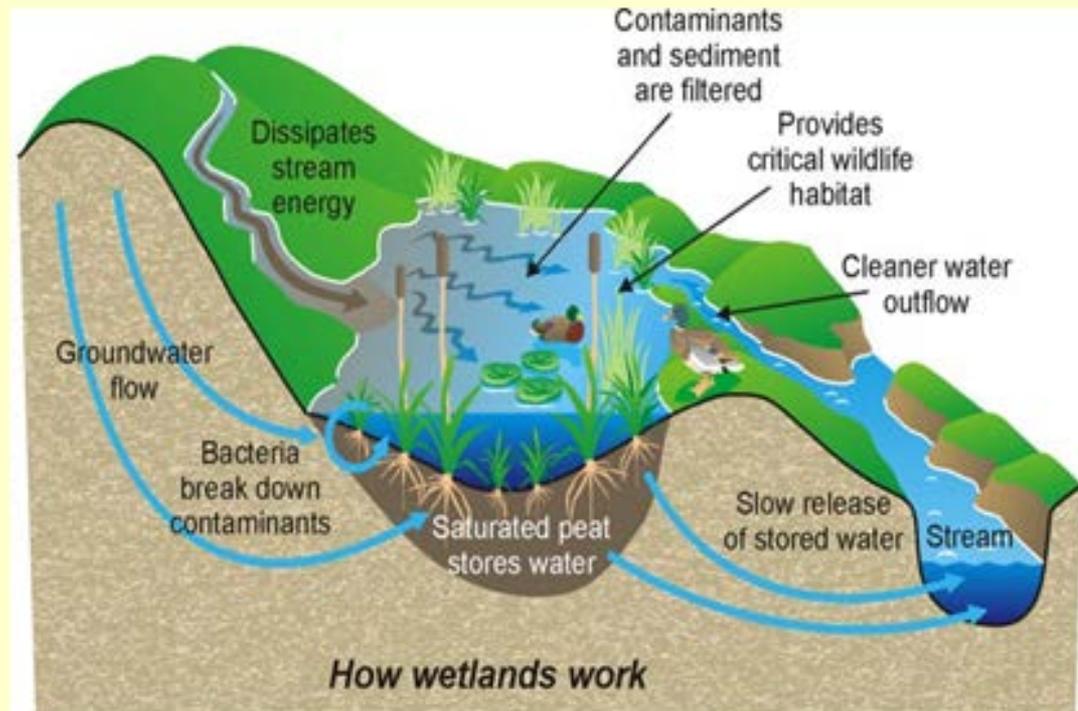
# Introduction



DNREC Cabinet Secretary

Collin P. O'Mara

**Ecosystem services** are “the components of nature, directly enjoyed, consumed or used to yield human well-being”.



# Delaware's Non-Tidal Wetlands

- As much as 25% of Delaware is covered by a variety of wetland types.
- Roughly 70% of wetlands are non-tidal wetlands, those lands between uplands and open waters including freshwater vegetated habitats like marshes, wet meadows, swamps, and wet flatwoods.
- More than 85% of Delaware's non-tidal wetlands are forested.



# Delaware's Non-Tidal Wetlands

- Greatest losses in recent years have been to non-tidal forested wetlands.
- Many of these non-tidal wetlands losses are headwater tributaries and isolated wetlands such as flooded forests and seasonal ponds.
- In Delaware as many as 30,000 acres of non-tidal wetlands may be considered isolated and unregulated.
- This represents as much as 20% of the state's freshwater wetlands.
- Included are approximately 6,000 acres of unique wetland types such as Delmarva Bays or Coastal Plain Ponds.



# Delaware's Non-Tidal Wetlands

Common stressors include:

- All types of human activities.
- Permitting challenges brought by the workload at the Federal agency level.
- Recent court challenges (SWANCC and Rapanos/Carabell decisions that create uncertainty in Federal jurisdiction.



# Why Wetlands Are Important

- One acre of wetland can store as much as 300,000 gallons of water at a depth of one ft.
- Microorganisms in wetlands soils in combination with vegetation, can remove nutrients and contaminants from water.
- Wetlands contribute to ground water and surface water supplies. In other words...drinking water in Delaware.
- Wetlands provide habitat for many rare plant and animal species, as nesting, feeding and nursery grounds.
- Wetlands store large amounts of carbon.



# Why Wetlands Are Important

Consider this ...

- One acre of forested wetland can store as much as 300,000 gallons of water at a depth of one ft.
- 300,000 gallons of storage equals 40,000 cu.ft. The cost to construct stormwater BMP's for runoff reduction are \$10/cu.ft.
- The acre of forested wetlands preserved equals \$400,000 of avoided costs for stormwater management.





# Committee Overview

## First Meeting Basics

### Committee information on web site

- Meeting notes – not minutes
- Committee membership – no personal contact information shared
- Communicate via e-mail – please do not forward distribution list
- Meeting presentations
- Social media – public input

# Committee Overview

## First Meeting Basics

- Meetings will be audio tape recorded for accuracy of notes.
- All meetings are open to the public and are advertised as such.
- The use of alternates for regular Committee member attendance.
- Change of venue?



# Policy for Alternate Attendance

- Committee members that cannot attend a meeting may send an alternate who is a member of the organization or agency to participate in the meeting and add to the discussion as an alternate, but not participate in a vote.
- Notify us in advance.
- Committee members must be present to vote. A quorum of voting members must be present in order to hold a meeting where votes are cast.

# Why Now?

- Physical attributes for water management.
- There is a body of information from which to build.
- The current technology and science is better.
- Important legal decisions of Federal jurisdiction need to be defined locally for better implementation.
- We have the right partners and stakeholders.
- It's time for an actionable plan.



# Earlier Efforts at Non-Tidal Wetlands Program Strategies

- Governor's Wetlands Action Committee 1973 (Coastal)
- Governor's Wetlands Roundtable Report 1989
- Delaware Wetlands Status and Trends Report '82-'92
- Delaware Wetlands Status and Trends Report '92-2007
- ELI 2010 Delaware Wetlands Assessment
- ELI Internal DNREC Phase I Report

# DNREC Wetland Program Assessment and Evaluation

## ELI Follow-up Project

- The goal of the project was to assess the current DNREC non-tidal wetlands program effort across various functional areas of operation
- Determine how to optimize our public and private resources to benefit the state's goal of wetland resource conservation and protection.



# SB 78

This legislation establishes a Wetlands Advisory Committee to develop comprehensive recommendations for conserving and restoring non-tidal wetlands in Delaware, including evaluating national best practices and standards, evaluating incentive-based programs, and reviewing state and federal wetland permitting processes to identify opportunities to improve efficiency and eliminate redundancy.



# Committee Workgroup Process

- Similar to SB 64 Floodplain and Drainage Standards and Recommendations Process
- Similar to the Sea Level Rise Committee Process
- Not a Regulatory Development Process but a different way for DNREC to build consensus.



# Meeting Schedule

- Monthly Meetings
- Sub-committee / Team meetings as needed
- Material distributed ahead of meeting
- Development of recommendations
- Roughly 6- 12 month process

# Wetland Planning Assessment Process with 6 Functional Areas

