

Wetlands Reserve Program

NEAP 1st National Planning Meeting, Kansas City, 14-15 March 2011

1. Ultimately, a desirable assessment tool will be able to inform adaptive management activities at the field level and simultaneously enable reporting on wetlands condition and degree to which easements meet national, state, and local program objectives.
2. Participants and NRCS coordinators as well as potential partners favored monitoring teams / collaborations (NRCS + State + non-government agency [e.g., Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever] with multiple stakeholders to monitor easement lands collectively.
3. Participants favored and recommended a multi-tiered assessment approach in which compliance and basic ecological data could be annually collected for all easements and a more detailed approach (e.g., rapid assessment protocol) could be conducted on a subset of easements less frequently.
4. Monitoring approach should ultimately produce concrete data in order to simply and efficiently illustrate environmental/wildlife/program benefits of easements (e.g., “WRP resulted in trapping ‘x’ amount of pesticide and ‘x’ tons of sediment,” “This much habitat = this many ducks in the fall flight.”)
5. NEAP and NRCS should take advantage of broad-scale conservation initiatives. These included Landscape Conservation Cooperatives, North American Bird Conservation Initiative, Joint Ventures under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.
6. No matter how monitoring is conducted, there must be a dedicated WRP monitoring person or TEAM for it to be successful. Data management requires extensive time and must be assigned specifically to personnel.
7. The EPA National Wetland Condition Assessment was suggested as a model for NEAP to use for survey design and coordination (e.g., “Intensification monies” for states to assess their own specific objectives).