

OKLAHOMA'S WETLAND PROGRAM PLAN: A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO WETLAND MANAGEMENT



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Outline

- ❑ Oklahoma Wetlands Program
- ❑ Wetland Program Plans
 - Structure
 - Development
- ❑ 2013-2018 Wetland Program Plan
 - Actions
 - Project Highlights
- ❑ 2019- 2024 Wetland Program Plan
 - OCC Priorities
 - Partner Outreach

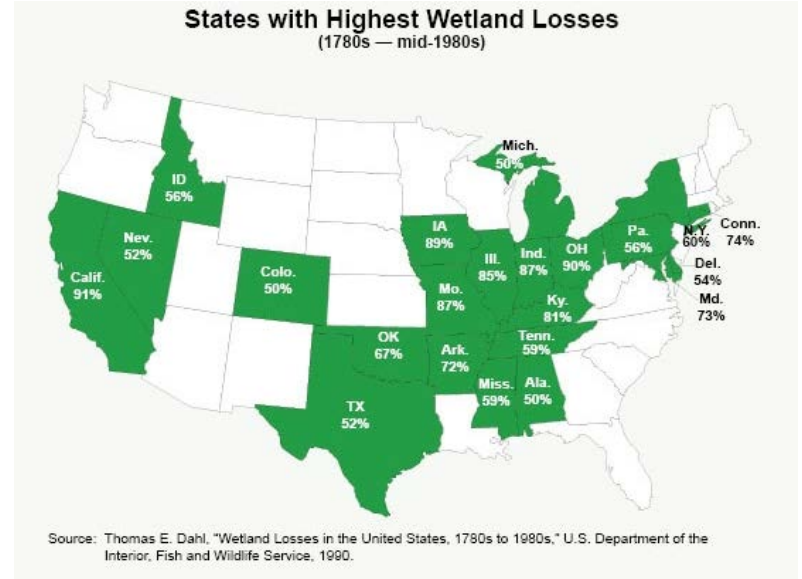


Creation of Wetlands Program

- ❑ 1990 Oklahoma Legislature appointed the Oklahoma Conservation Commission lead agency for the wetlands program.
- ❑ The Wetlands Program is a collaboration between numerous entities that have authority and interest in the management of wetlands
 - Government agencies
 - Tribes
 - Universities
 - Non-governmental organizations

Oklahoma Comprehensive Wetlands Conservation Plan

- ❑ First Wetlands Program strategy document
- ❑ Outlined 12 objectives
- ❑ Program Goal: Conserve, enhance, and restore the quantity, quality and biological diversity of all wetlands in the state.



Wetland Program Plans

❑ Guidance for Wetland Program Plans from USEPA in 2009

- National vs. State/Tribal specific priorities
- Outline goals, objectives and actions
- Wetland Program Development Grant funding

❑ Utilize “Core Elements” framework

- Monitoring and Assessment
- Regulation
- Voluntary Restoration and Protection
- Water Quality Standards

Monitoring and Assessment

- ❑ Monitoring is the systematic observation and recording of current and changing conditions
- ❑ Assessment is the use of data to evaluate and appraise wetlands to support decision making and planning processes



Regulation

- ❑ Wetland regulatory programs are generally built around the Clean Water Act (CWA) §404 and §401.
- ❑ The broad goal of the CWA is to “Restore and maintain the physical, chemical and biological integrity of the Nation’s waters”
- ❑ Sections 404 and 401 help to meet this goal by requiring avoidance, minimization and compensation for impacts of the discharge of dredge or fill into waters of the U.S



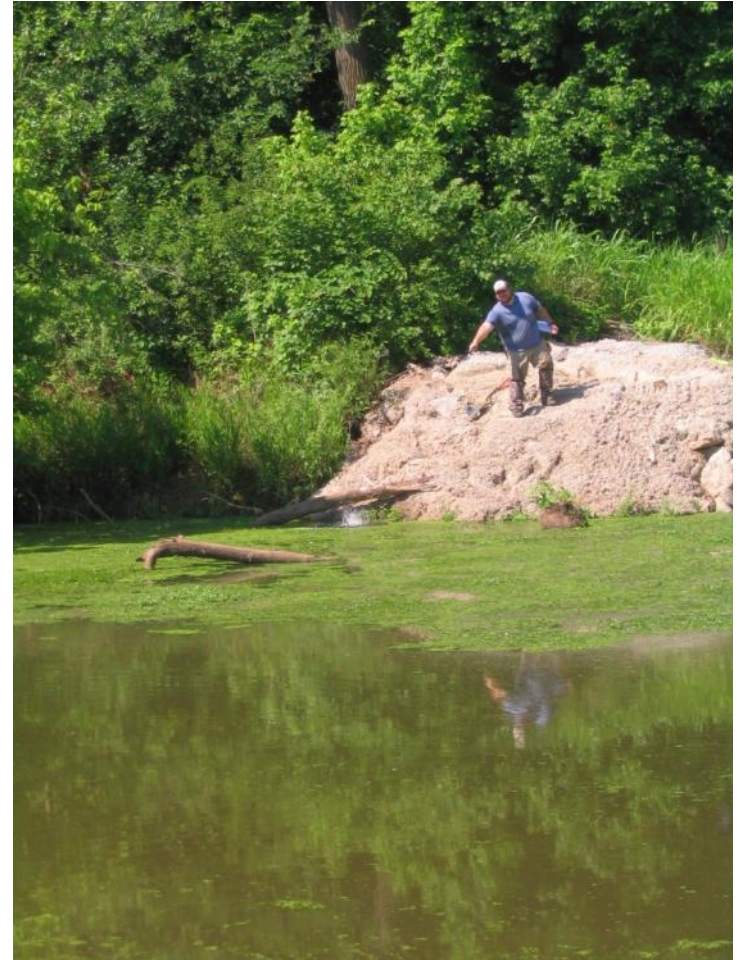
Voluntary Restoration

- ❑ Voluntary restoration and protection refers to all restoration and protection activities that are not legally required such as conservation easements, changes to conservation practices, land trusts or invasive species removal



Water Quality Standards

- ❑ Water quality standards are the foundation of the water quality-based pollution control program mandated by the Clean Water Act (CWA).
- ❑ Standards define the goals for a water body by designating :
 - Highest attainable uses
 - Criteria that reflect scientific information to protect those uses
 - Provisions to protect water bodies from further degradation.



Wetland Program Plan: Development

- ❑ Convened Oklahoma Wetland Technical Workgroup (OWTWG) 2011-2013
 - Reviewed Comprehensive Wetland Strategy Objectives
 - Determined future directions
 - Converted objectives to core elements framework and develop action items
 - Created Oklahoma's first Wetland Program Plan
- ❑ Process was open to all technical partners

Wetland Program Plan: Contributors

☐ State Agencies

- ACOG
- INCOG
- OCC (conservation)
- OCC (corporation)
- ODEQ
- ODOT
- ODWC
- OWRB
- OSEE
- OK Bio Survey

☐ Universities

- OSU
- OU

☐ Federal Agencies

- USFWS
- NRCS
- USEPA
- USACE

☐ NGOs

- Ducks Unlimited
- Nature Conservancy

☐ Tribes

- Delaware
- Iowa
- Pawnee
- Peoria
- Osage

Wetland Program Plan: Adoption

- ❑ Plan presented to Oklahoma Wetlands Work Group (OWWG) for comment.
 - Broader array of stakeholders
 - Industry groups
 - Farm groups
 - NGOs
- ❑ Presented at a variety of stakeholder meetings around the state
- ❑ Submitted to USEPA for adoption

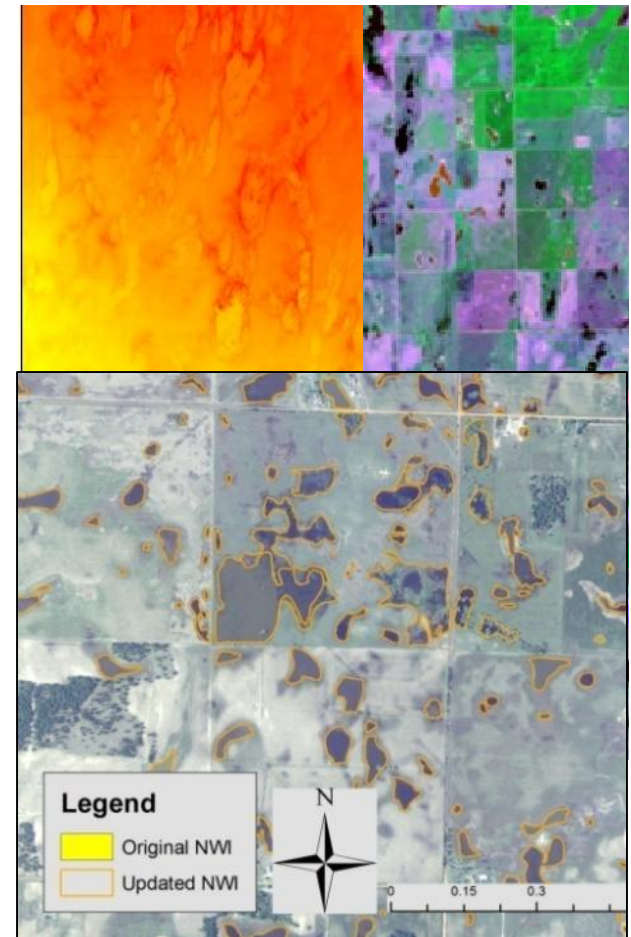
Wetland Program Plan: Actions

- Each core element is divided into actions and activities to support programmatic goals.

Action 1: Complete HGM classification and functional characterization						
Activity	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
1: Complete HGM subclass development and functional characterization for wetlands in the Arkansas Valley, Central Irregular Plains and South Central Plains.	x	x				
2: Create functional profiles for playa wetlands through coordination with the regional wetland management entities (Playa Lakes Joint Venture, Rainwater Basin Joint Venture, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, etc.) and HGM characterization in the field.	x	x				
3: Integrate previously developed HGM subclassifications for Oklahoma Ecoregions into a statewide dichotomous key for HGM wetland classification with field indicators and functional descriptions of each subclass.			x			

WPP: Monitoring and Assessment

- ❑ Action: Develop remote assessment tools
 - Activity: Map the two highest priority wetland areas (2015-2016)
- ❑ Maps Completed
 - Cimarron River
 - North Canadian River
 - Salt Fork of the Arkansas
 - Kingfisher Creek
- ❑ Use: Project planning and tracking wetland status/trends



WPP: Monitoring and Assessment

- ❑ Action: Develop a modular field-based assessment tool
 - Activity: Calibrate potential assessment metrics at surface water depressions (2013-2015)
- ❑ Developed a stressor based assessment method that has been validated at depressional wetlands
- ❑ Use: Assist with evaluating restoration trajectory



WPP: Voluntary Restoration

- ❑ Action: Integrate wetland restoration within watershed approaches
 - Activity: Develop restorable wetland ID method (2013)
- ❑ Completed:
 - North Canadian
 - Cimarron
 - Neosho
- ❑ Ongoing statewide
- ❑ Use: Expedite process for identifying restoration options



WPP: Voluntary Restoration

- ❑ Action: Integrate wetland restoration within watershed approaches
 - Activity: Create a restorable wetland database (2014)
- ❑ Wetland Registry hosted on www.ok.gov/wetlands
 - Populated with searchable potential restoration sites
- ❑ Use: Link those with restoration needs with those with opportunities

The image shows a screenshot of the 'Wetland Registry' web application. The interface is titled 'Wetland Registry' and features a grid of buttons for various functions. The buttons are arranged in a 4x2 grid, with the last row containing a single wide button. The buttons are: 'Add Wetlands', 'Add Streams', 'Search Wetlands (output with landowner info)', 'Search Streams (output with landowner info)', 'Search Wetlands (output with no landowner info)', 'Search Streams (output with no landowner info)', 'Generate Wetland Site Report', 'Generate Stream Site Report', and 'Update Stream and Wetland Excel Tables'. The 'Add Wetlands' button is highlighted with a blue border.

Wetland Registry	
Add Wetlands	Add Streams
Search Wetlands (output with landowner info)	Search Streams (output with landowner info)
Search Wetlands (output with no landowner info)	Search Streams (output with no landowner info)
Generate Wetland Site Report	Generate Stream Site Report
Update Stream and Wetland Excel Tables	

2019-2024 WPP: OCC Priorities

- ❑ Develop state led mitigation efforts for state projects
- ❑ Integrate voluntary and compensatory mitigation into watershed planning
- ❑ Finalize OKRAM assessment protocols and work with partners to integrate into mitigation efforts
- ❑ Continue updating old wetland maps in high priority areas

2019-2024 WPP: Outreach

- ❑ OCC will begin convening meetings of the OWTWG to draft a new WPP beginning this spring.
- ❑ All technical partners are welcome and encouraged to join us.
- ❑ If interested in participating in the Oklahoma Wetland Technical Workgroup contact:
 - Dan Dvoretz
 - Dan.dvoretz@conservation.ok.gov
 - Brooks Tramell
 - Brooks.tramell@conservation.ok.gov

Questions

❑ www.ok.gov/wetlands

❑ Dan.Dvoretz@conservation.ok.gov

