

# Wetlands

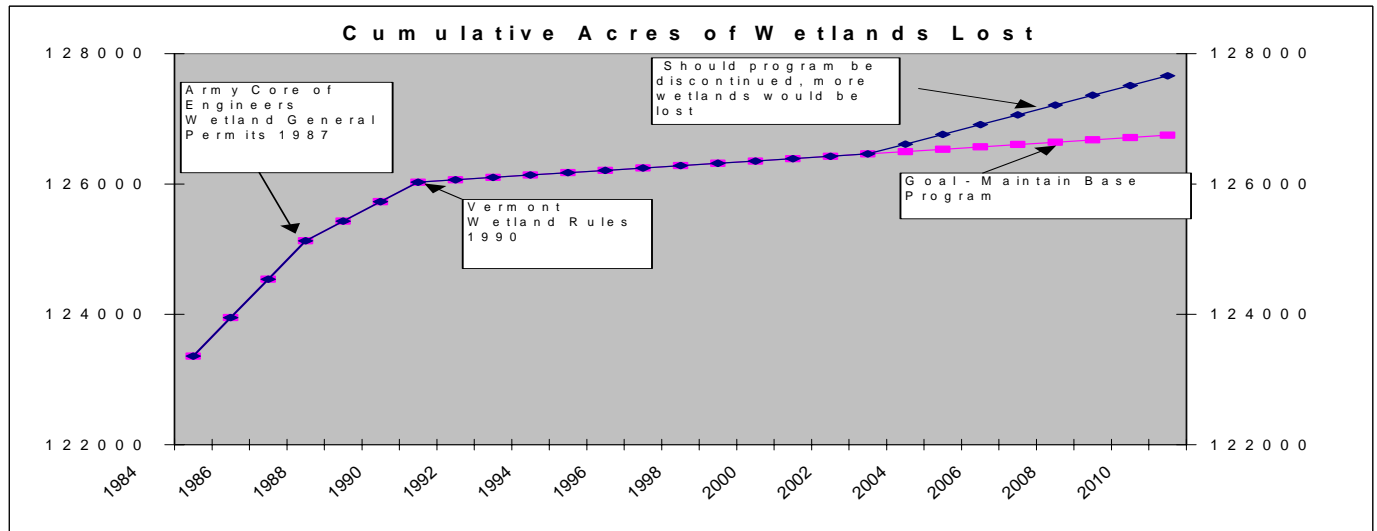
Water Quality Division

November 29, 2004

## Results

Conservation of Vermont's significant wetlands for the functions and values they provide; education of Vermont's citizens with respect to the significance of wetlands; data collection and reporting through monitoring, assessment and inventories on the status and trends of Vermont's significant wetlands

## Key Indicators



## Story Behind Baseline Performance

Vermont was losing an estimated 590 acres of wetlands annually prior to the creation of state and federal wetland protection programs. The rate of loss began to decline when the US Army Corps of Engineers started issuing general permits in 1987. Since 1990, Vermont's Department of Environmental Conservation has administered the Wetland Rules, and the rate of wetland loss has fallen to 8 acres per year in 2003. Should the state program not be continued, this trend would be reversed, with a loss of valuable wetland acreage and function. A new emphasis on wetland restoration will eventually (2005) lead to an overall gain in wetland acreage.

**Strategies/ Performance Measures / Proposed Accomplishments**

A more detailed account of the work plan will be found in the FY 2005 Wetland Program Development Grant Proposal, Date: January 2005. The program plans on combining this proposed workplan and the corresponding annual report into the format of the PPA reports in the future.

**Regulation, Compliance Assistance, and Enforcement**

**Vermont Wetland Rules:**

Continue implementation of the Vermont Wetland Rules, primarily through review and issuance of Conditional Use Determinations, enforcement and compliance.

Performance Measure	"P"=Projected and A"=Actual Values	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Net number of known wetland acres saved.	P				80	30	35	40	40	40	40	40	
	A	103	40	8	48	8	50	7.5	16				
Number of site visits	P								800	815	850	850	850
	A	749	788	912	920	847	872	633*	915				
Number of CUD's issued	P							100	100	105	117	120	
	A	97	101	62	87	103	101	90	82				
Number of Wetland acres lost (net loss)	P								6	6	6	6	
	A	16	15	11	10	14	11	5.5	3.75				
Number of Citizen Complaints	P							110	85	83	77	75	
	A	54	70	20	54	64	57	106	56				
Number of CUD's denied	P									0	0	0	
	A	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	1				
Number of Wetland acres gained	P									0.1	160*	0.1	
	A	1.36	1.03	0	8.17	0.93	0.53	0.09	0.08				

\* Staff reduced to 3 employees for most of this year.

\* Wetland acres gained anticipated from the Pomainville project and others

**Proposed Accomplishments**

2004, 2005, 2006 – Maintain existing Wetland regulatory program

**Grants and Loans**

2005 – No grants and loans anticipated for pass through. We will be applying for Wetland Program G grants through E Grants through EPA.

## **Education and Technical Assistance**

Brochures, fact sheets, consultation with towns, workshops for targeted audiences, teacher training, educational field days for elementary and high school students, and site visits.

### **Proposed Accomplishments**

Targeted audiences: town officials (2005), real estate agents 2006, and lawyers 2007.

## **Monitoring, Assessment, and Direct Services**

Data collection from site visits and projects completed, purple loosestrife control, and mapping projects

### **Proposed Accomplishments**

2005, 2006, 2007 – Maintain existing Wetland Purple Loosestrife Control Program

2005, 2006, 2007 Develop monitoring and assessment program as funding allows

1. The wetlands program will work with the NRCS and other groups to identify and implement wetland restoration projects in Vermont. Focus this year will be the NRCS Pittsfield Farm wetland restoration project (Pomainville). If funding is secured, wetland restoration projects will be focused on the Lake Champlain phosphorus TMDL.
2. The wetlands program will continue to report to EPA on efforts to develop a comprehensive monitoring and assessment program; improve the effectiveness of compensatory mitigation; and refine the protection of vulnerable wetlands and aquatic resources. Note the program may in the future combine the annual reports into the PPA reporting format to reduce redundancy of reporting. In this case, the annual report would report on progress for that year and details on the longer-term status and trends may be reported on a frequency other than annual.
3. The wetlands program will collaborate with the surface water programs efforts to integrate wetland bioassessment into stream, lake and pond assessments.
4. Due to funding needs and priorities, DEC cannot pass-through base funds to the Heritage Program for wetland inventories. The Heritage Program will apply for competitive grants to continue wetland inventory work. If it does not receive funding, the Wetlands Section will develop a strategy for continuing this work, most likely in conjunction with wetland bioassessment as noted above.

## **EPA End of Year Comment and Response**

### **Comment**

There is no mention of the Wetlands Annual Report (one of the products promised to EPA yearly as part of the PPA). A reference to the Wetlands Annual Report in the PPA final report and a date EPA can expect to receive it each year would be helpful.

### **Response**

The annual report has been provided for 2003. We expect to complete these reports generally around the end of February. Data entry and project folders are completed during the month of January each year, and the report is compiled during February.