

Wetlands

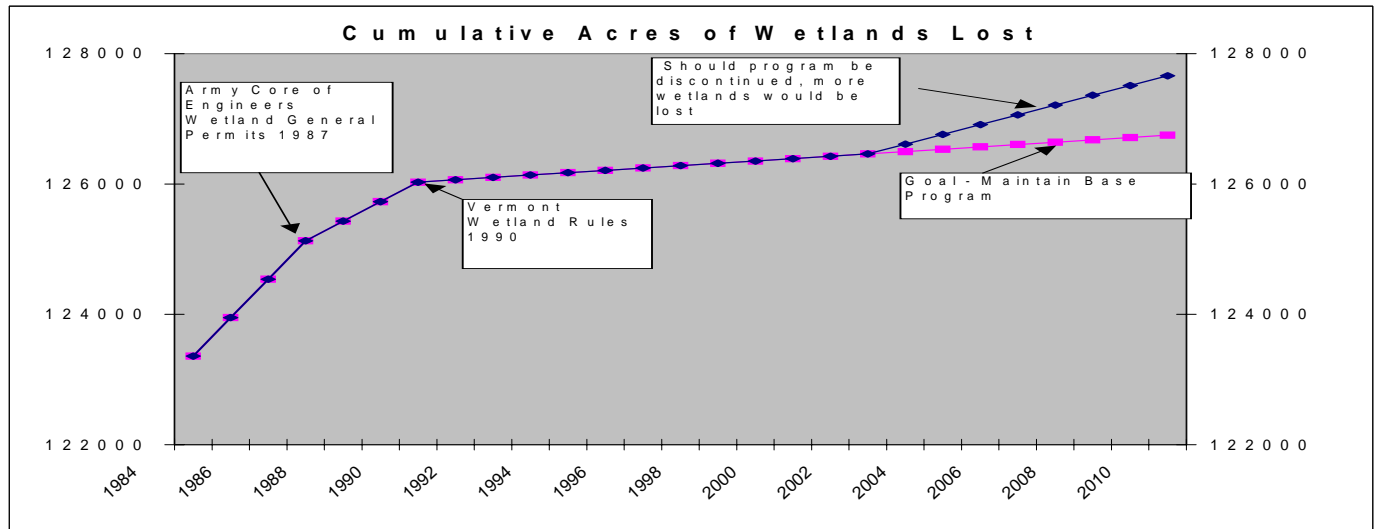
Water Quality Division

December 8, 2005

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 (2006) lead to an overall gain in wetland acreage. The graph will be changed to reflect wetland acres gained.

Strategies/ Performance Measures / Proposed Accomplishments

A more detailed account of the work plan is 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. The Grant proposal was funded in June 05 and a work plan was approved in July for this grant.

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 Values		1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Net number of known wetland acres saved. Note	P				80	30	35	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
	A	103	40	8	48	8	50	7.5	16	note				
Number of site visits	P								800	815	850	850	850	900
	A	749	788	912	920	847	872	633*	915	937				
Number of CUD's issued	P							100	100	105	117	120	100	100
	A	97	101	62	87	103	101	90	82	84				
Number of Wetland acres lost (net loss)	P								6	6	6	6	0	0
	A	16	15	11	10	14	11	5.5	3.75	1.6				
Number of Citizen Complaints	P							110	85	83	77	75	70	60
	A	54	70	20	54	64	57	106	56	80				
Number of CUD's denied	P								0	0	1	1	1	
	A	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0			
Number of Wetland acres gained	P								0.1	160**	160	100	100	
	A	1.36	1.03	0	8.17	0.93	0.53	0.09	0.08	25				

Add acres of Wetland Restored/Created/Enhanced beginning 2006

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

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

Note: We are going to change the way this is tracked.

Proposed Accomplishments

2006, 2007, 2008 – Maintain existing Wetland regulatory program

Grants and Loans

2006 – No grants and loans anticipated for pass through.

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 (2006), real estate agents 2007, and lawyers 2008.

Monitoring, Assessment, and Direct Services

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

Proposed Accomplishments

2006, 2007, 2008 – Maintain existing Wetland Purple Loosestrife Control Program

2006, 2007, 2008 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 Wildlife Management Area). 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. A grant was received to begin implementing this program. However it was received too late in the year to for substantial work in 05. Work will begin at the end of 05 with field work and sampling in 06.
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.