



August 2022

Development of New Stream Restoration Guidance for Stream Wetland/Complexes

What is this project? The Wetlands and Waterways Protection Program, Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), in coordination with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Wildlife and Heritage Service, is developing a rapid assessment focusing on characteristics of wildlife habitats. The assessment largely uses information commonly collected during wetland delineations.

This project arose from a need to better assess the condition and ecological significance of wetlands in the riparian area adjacent to streams proposed for restoration, particularly for Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) credit. Debate and delays over review and approval for some stream restoration projects has occurred due to resource tradeoffs attributable to direct construction disturbance and/or increased inundation of the floodplain.

What activities will be done on site? In order to develop the assessment, MDE and DNR need information on the range of conditions of streams and associated wetlands in the Piedmont region and lower Eastern Shore. MDE and DNR request permission for DNR staff to conduct additional data collection onsite. This will primarily be a visual assessment similar to a wetland delineation, along with the collection of additional plant survey information.

The data collection may take longer than the accompanying site visit by MDE. Data collection and observation will be limited to the stream and adjacent wetlands on the property.

If you do not want DNR staff to remain on the property and collect data without the MDE staff or your representative present, please inform MDE when MDE and your representative schedule a site visit for your application or pre-application meeting.

How will the information from the site be used? The assessment by DNR staff will not affect the review of your application. The assessment and guidance will be used in the review of stream restoration projects proposed after project completion, likely in the Fall of 2023.

Guidance based on real examples and practices used to minimize tree loss and adverse wetland impacts will also be developed. Guidance will cover all phases of project design and construction.

Is this a new effort? This project expands on previous assessment and guidance documents developed for Maryland's upper (Western shore) Coastal plain, completed in 2021. Information on this assessment is found at https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/water/WetlandsandWaterways/Pages/Stream-Wetland_NewGuidance.aspx

For additional information, please contact your permit reviewer or Ms. Denise Clearwater at denise.clearwater@maryland.gov.