



Enhancing State and Tribal Programs (ESTP) Initiative



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AGENDA

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- EPA's Wetlands Program
- EPA's Enhancing State & Tribal Programs (ESTP)
- Core Elements Framework (CEF)
- Wetlands Program Plans (WPP)
- Wetland Program Development Grants (WPDG)
- Questions





EPA's Wetlands Program

Primary Goal: increase the quantity and quality of US wetlands

1) Permitting program to regulate fill in US wetlands and protect water quality

§ Regulatory CWA 404 program

2) Assistance program to increase capacity of governments to protect their own waters

§ Voluntary ESTP initiative



Enhancing State and Tribal Programs (ESTP) Initiative

Primary Goal:

Assist state and tribes develop their own wetland programs by providing **technical and financial support**.

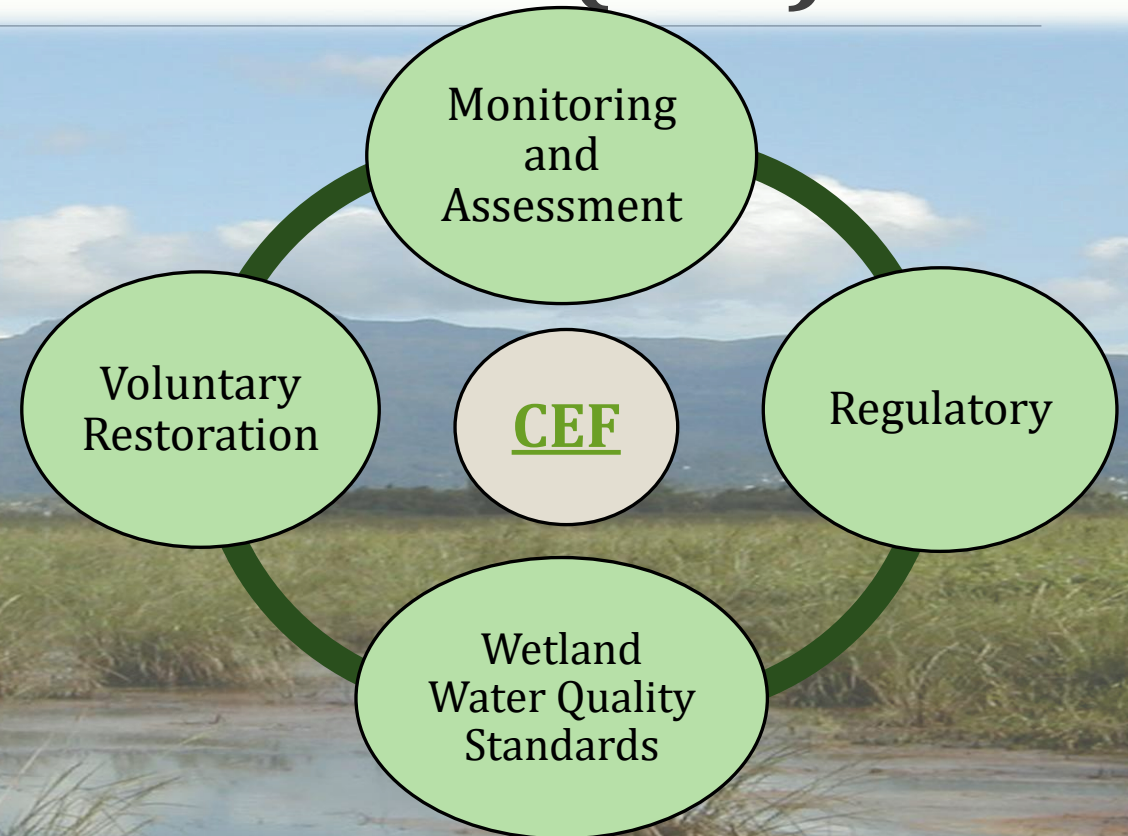
2 central components:

- ✓ Core Elements Framework (CEF)
- ✓ Wetland Program Plans (WPP)



The Core Elements Framework (CEF)

- Framework for States and Tribes to design their own wetland programs
- Provides categorization, definition, clarification, and prioritization of activities





Core Element Framework Examples:

EXAMPLES OF
MONITORING AND
ASSESSMENT





Core Element Framework Examples:

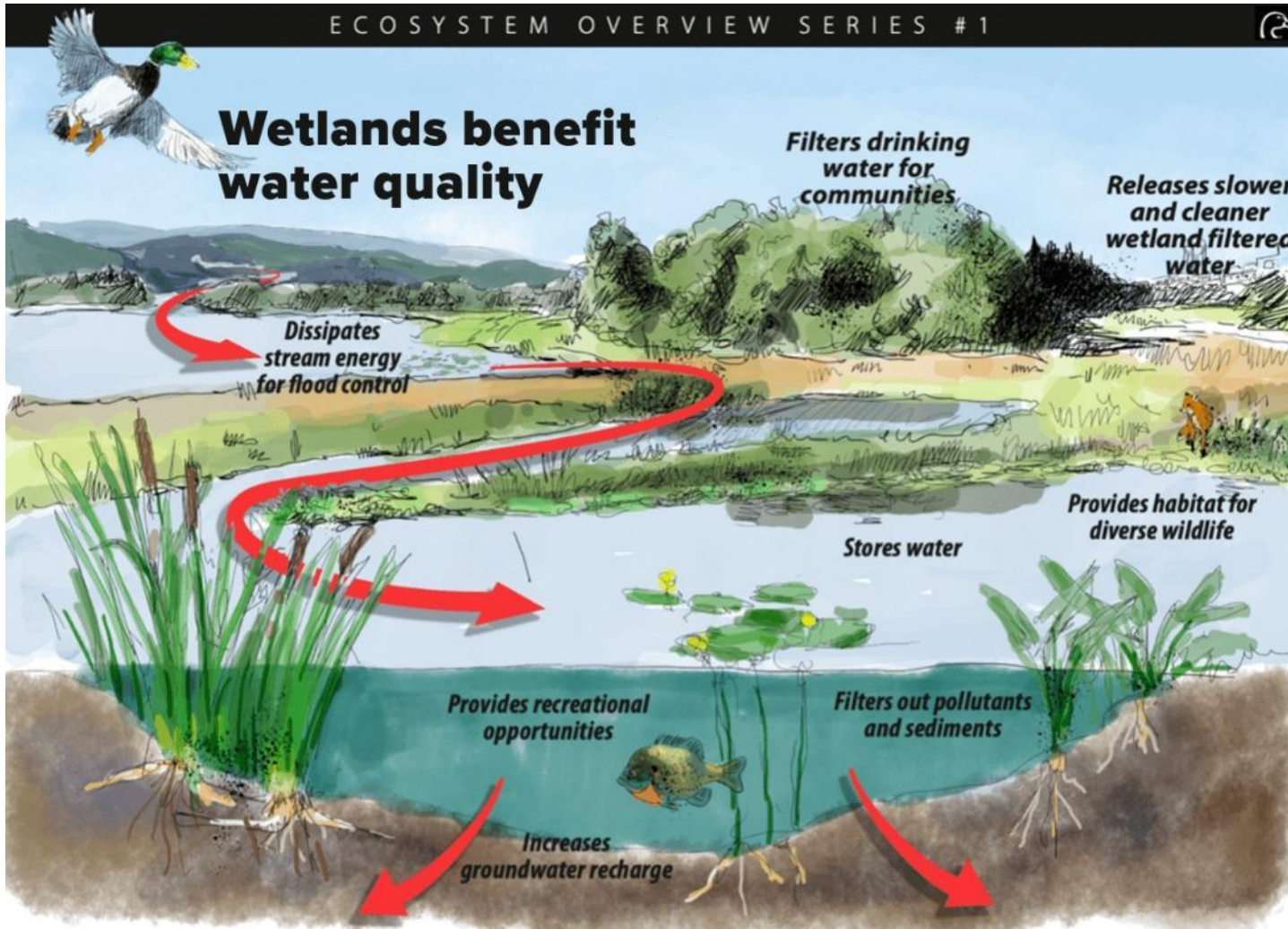
EXAMPLES OF
VOLUNTARY
RESTORATION





Core Element Framework Examples:

EXAMPLES OF
REGULATORY



Core Element Framework Examples:

EXAMPLES OF
REGULATORY



Wetland Program Plans

- 3-6 year plans developed by a State, Territory, or Tribal Nation
- Strategically plan and explain actions toward developing a wetland program
- Actions must reference Core Elements Framework
- [Link to EPA approved WPPs](#)





Wetland Program Plans

- ✓ Approval of WPP:
 - A Narrative Vision
 - Core Element Actions
 - Implementation Schedule
 - Evaluation Method





Wetland Program Development Grants

- ❖ Funding assistance for ESTP
- ❖ CWA § 104 (b)(3)
- ❖ Integration of WPDGs into ESTP:
 - 1) CEF
 - 2) WPP
 - 3) Capacity Building (not implementation)



Project Eligibility

- Only program development or refinement activities are eligible. This includes demonstration projects but does not include implementation. Examples:

Mapping and Monitoring

Identification and
prioritization of management
areas

Wetland Program Plan
development/refinement

Development of
training/outreach
materials

- Implementation projects, or projects designed to carry out a task rather than transfer knowledge, are **not eligible** under this program, such as:

Wetland creation/
construction

Tasks required by a pending
permit (CWA 404, 402, 401)

Purchasing vehicles, land or
conservation easements

Restoration projects that
do not qualify as
demonstration



Wetland Program Development Grants

Regional Competition

States, Territories, Tribes, local governments

Total Award: ~\$14M/yr
Each Region: \$1-\$2M/yr
Each project ~\$100k - \$500k

25% nonfederal match requirement
(unless PPG)

Typical project length is 2-3 years.

Most recent NOFO - Feb 2026
Next NOFO: late 2027



Wrapping it up....



ESTP (Overarching
National Strategy &
Support)



Core Elements
Framework (Monitoring,
Regulation, Restoration,
WQ Standards)



WPDG (Funding)



Wetland Program
Plans (Local voluntary
roadmaps for action)



It's all about wetlands resilience

- How will your program and/or your project
INCREASE THE QUANTITY and QUALITY OF WETLANDS?

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