



**National Association of Wetland Managers  
Hot Topics Webinar Series**

**Recommendations for  
Reducing Wetland Loss  
in Coastal Watersheds of  
the United States**

**January 31, 2023**

**3:00pm - 4:30pm EDT**



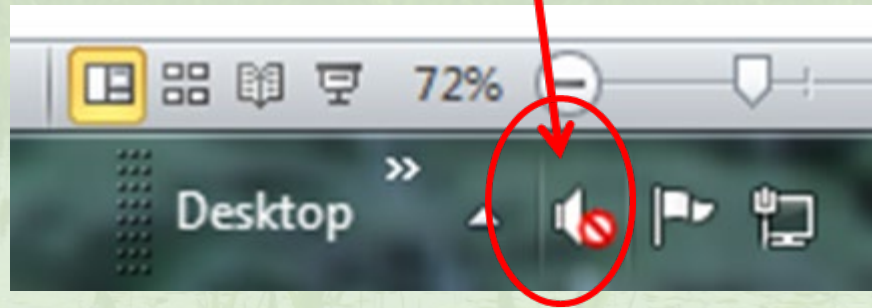
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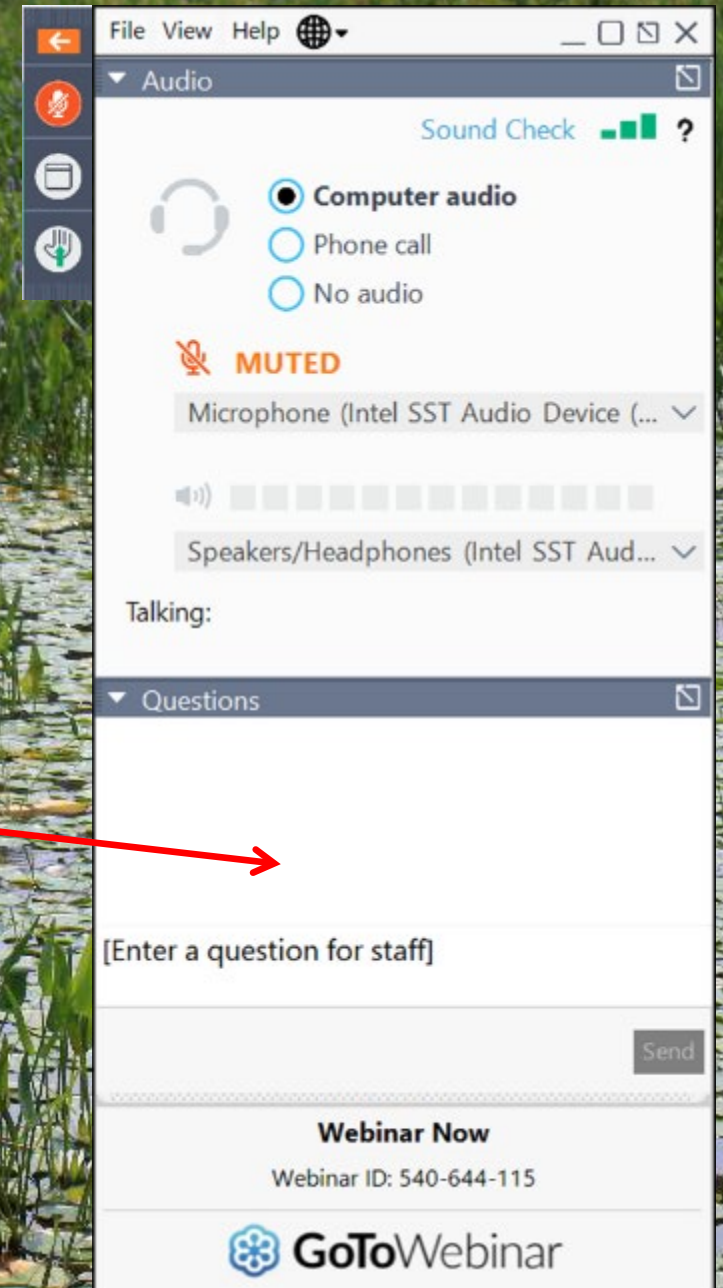


## Questions?

Please submit your questions for the presenters via the question box.



**TIP:** Close out other non-essential programs on your desktop.





# Webinar Overview

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The Interagency Coastal Wetlands Workgroup (ICWWG) recently released the *Recommendations for Reducing Wetland Loss in Coastal Watersheds of the United States*. This report presents voluntary recommendations that aim to reduce and reverse the loss of wetlands in coastal watersheds and are intended apply to program managers, non-governmental organizations, and government staff involved in coastal wetland and watershed management. This webinar will provide an introduction to and background on the *Recommendations* report and share efforts by agencies and partners to implement specific recommendations. In addition, recommendations that may be best addressed by state, tribal, or local governments will be highlighted.



# AGENDA

<b>3:00pm – 3:15pm</b>	<b>Welcome &amp; Introductions</b>
<b>3:15pm – 4:00pm</b>	<b>Presentation</b>
<b>4:00pm – 4:30pm</b>	<b>Q &amp; A Session</b>
<b>4:30pm</b>	<b>Adjourn</b>

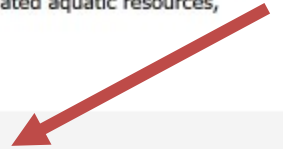


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# Presenters



Amanda Santoni  
Ecologist  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency



Jonathan Phinney  
National Wetlands Inventory Branch Chief  
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service



Marla Stelk  
Executive Director  
National Association of Wetland Managers



Changing over to Presenter's  
Computer...



# *Recommendations for Reducing Wetland Loss in Coastal Watersheds of the United States*

NAWM Hot Topics Webinar: January 2023

Amanda Santoni, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Jonathan Phinney, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

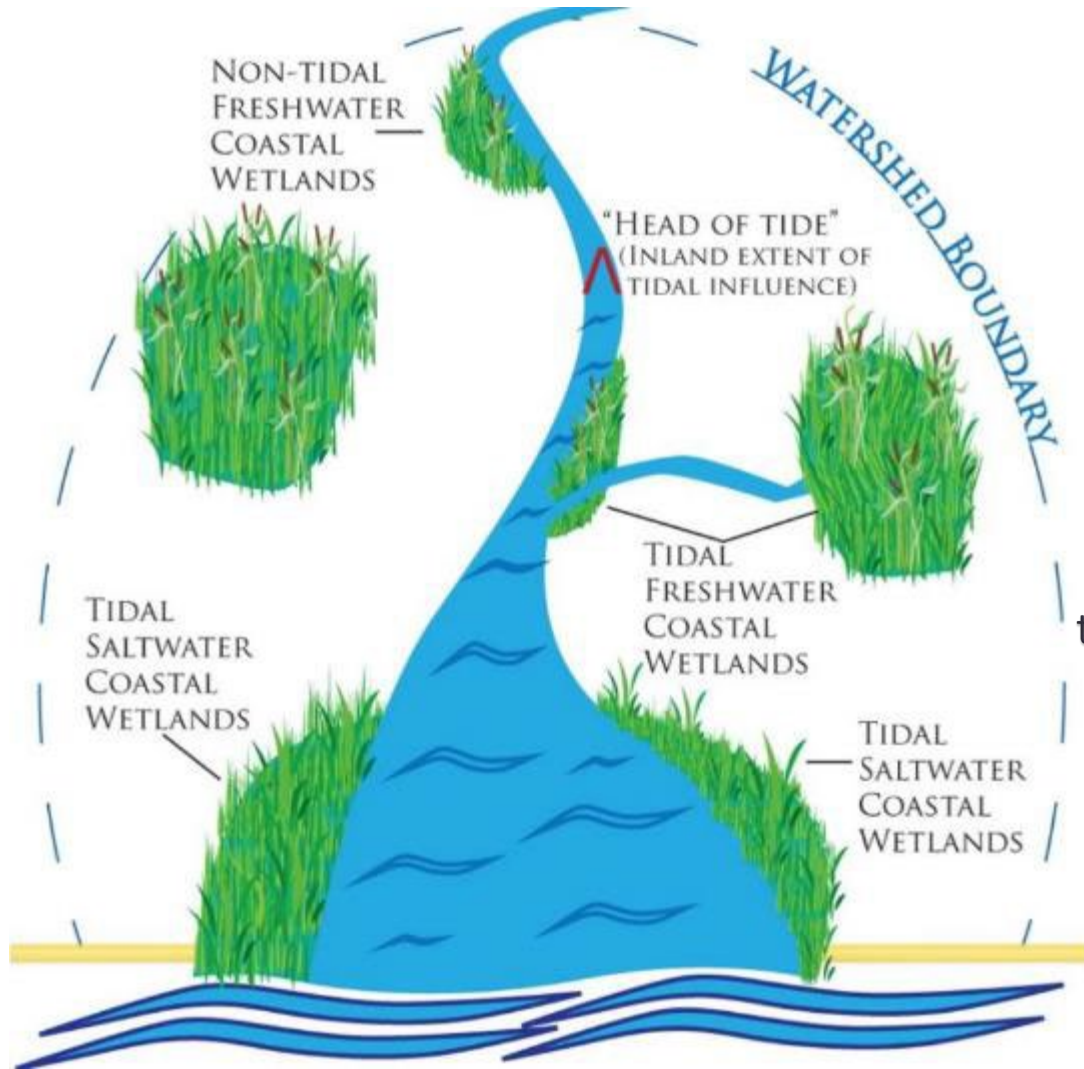
Marla Stelk, National Association of Wetland Managers



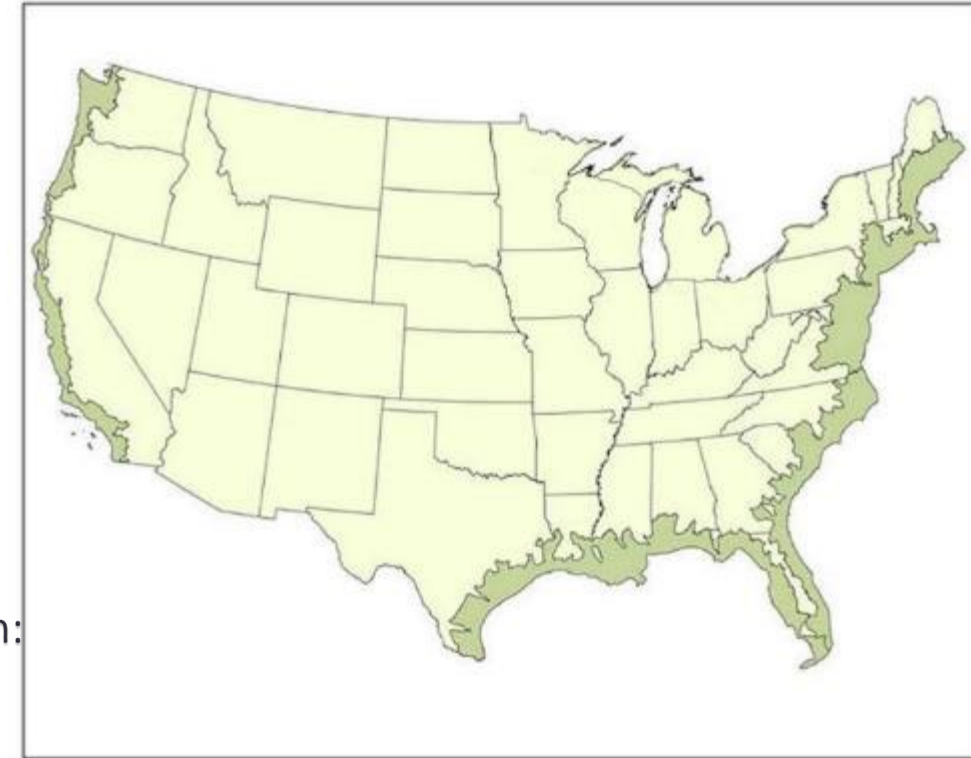
# Background

What is a coastal wetland? Who is the Interagency Coastal Wetland Working Group? What are the needs addressed by the Recommendations document and implementation?

# What is a coastal wetland?



→  
salty and fresh  
tidal and non-tidal in:

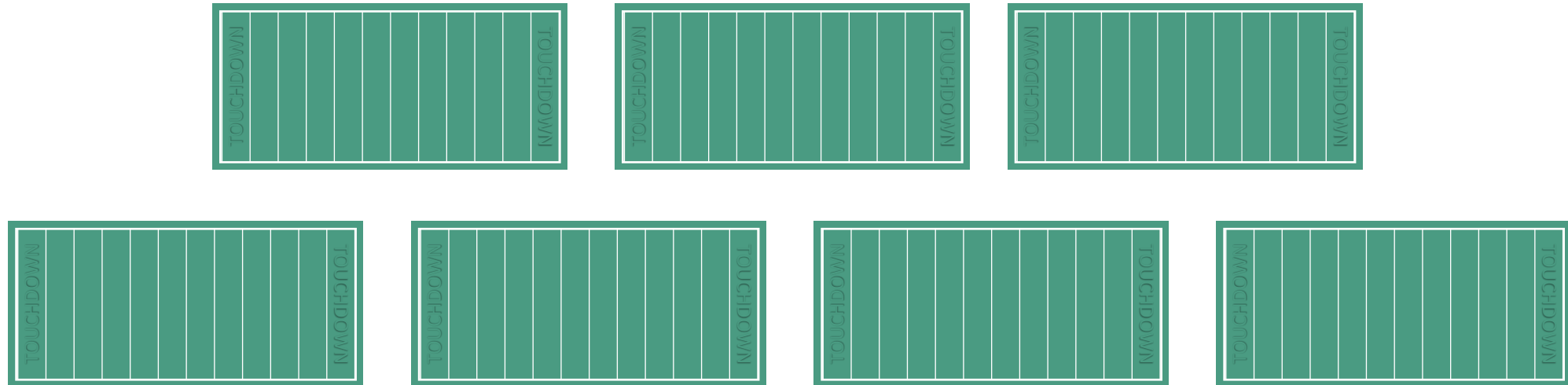


**COASTAL WATERSHEDS**  
of the Atlantic, Pacific, & Gulf

# Coastal Wetland Loss

**80,000 acres**

of wetlands in U.S. coastal watersheds are lost per year.<sup>1</sup>  
That's approximately **seven football fields** every hour.



<sup>1</sup>Dahl, Thomas E. and Stedman, Susan-Marie. *Status and Trends of Wetlands in the Coastal Watersheds of the Conterminous United States 2004 to 2009*. U.S. Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration National Marine Fisheries Service, 2013.

# The Interagency Coastal Wetlands Workgroup (ICWWG)

- The ICWWG was formed to reduce and reverse the trend of coastal wetland loss.
- The workgroup helps to address coastal wetland loss by investigating the underlying causes of wetland loss, recommending policies and programs, disseminating tools and strategies, and creating a better public understanding via education and outreach.




**US Army Corps  
of Engineers®**



Natural Resources Conservation Service



**U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration**

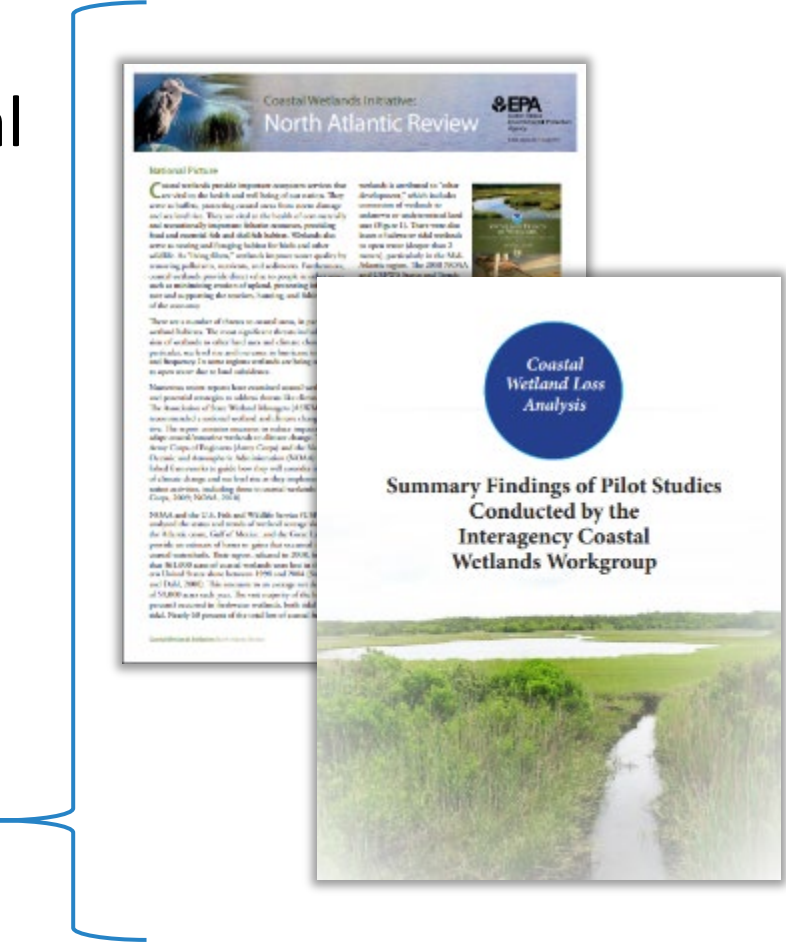


*ICWWG Recommendations for  
Reducing Wetland loss in Coastal  
Watersheds of the U.S.*



# Recommendations

- Released June 2022
- Audience: Program managers, non-governmental organizations, and government staff (federal, state, tribal, local, and regional) involved in coastal wetland and watershed management.
- Purpose: Forge cooperation across stakeholder groups and build capacity to reduce coastal wetland losses nationwide.
- Informed by a series of workshops and pilot studies on coastal wetland loss.



# Recommendations: Five Key Themes



Increase the Acreage of Wetlands Restored in Coastal Watersheds



Reduce Loss of Coastal Wetlands to Development



Reduce Coastal Wetland Loss Associated with Silviculture in the Southeast



Support the Collection, Enhancement, and Dissemination of Landscape-Scale Monitoring Data



Conduct Targeted Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement

# Theme 1: Increase the Acreage of Wetlands Restored in Coastal Watersheds

- 1.1 Increase the amount of restoration in coastal watersheds.
- 1.2 Enhance the ability to track restored wetland acres and function.
- 1.3 Enhance reclamation and restoration of former sand and gravel mines.

# Theme 2: Reduce Loss of Coastal Wetlands to Development

- 2.1 Improve and increase the use of voluntary programs to protect wetlands from development.
- 2.2 Improve interagency coordination to protect wetlands from development and its indirect effects.
- 2.3 Increase use of a broader array of federal authorities to protect wetlands from impacts of development.
- 2.4 Support local planning to increase the acreage of protected coastal wetlands.
- 2.5 Enhance state and tribal protections for wetlands, including those wetlands that are not otherwise regulated.

# Theme 3: Reduce Coastal Wetland Loss Associated with Silviculture in the Southeast

- 3.1 Increase the understanding of forested wetland loss mechanisms in areas managed for timber production.
- 3.2 Improve interagency coordination and stakeholder engagement in forested wetland conservation.
- 3.3 Develop or improve tools to enhance protection of forested wetlands in timber production.

# Theme 4: Support the Collection, Enhancement, and Dissemination of Landscape-scale Monitoring Data

- 4.1 Continue to support and improve the USFWS NWI Coastal Watersheds Wetlands Status and Trends reports.
- 4.2 Produce new USFWS NWI Comprehensive Change Analyses in areas identified as experiencing high levels of wetland loss.
- 4.3 Update the NWI geospatial dataset within coastal watersheds.
- 4.4 Continue support for and improve the resolution of C-CAP products.
- 4.5 Strengthen coordination between NOAA C-CAP and USFWS NWI.
- 4.6 Support the development of techniques to improve the mapping of forested wetlands.

# Theme 5: Conduct Targeted Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement

- 5.1 Identify and address gaps in public understanding regarding coastal wetland loss.
- 5.2 Identify recommendations that require outreach and stakeholder engagement in order to be effective and implement appropriate outreach plans.



# Implementation Efforts



# Federal Implementation

## Priority areas

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- 1.1 Increase the amount of restoration in coastal watersheds
- 2.3 Increase use of a broader array of federal authorities to protect wetlands
- 2.5 Enhance state and tribal protection for wetlands
- 3.1 Increase the understanding of forested wetland mechanisms in areas managed for timber production
- 4.1 Continue to support and improve FWS NWI Coastal Watersheds Wetlands Status & Trends Reports
- 4.3 Update the NWI geospatial dataset within coastal watersheds
- 5.2 Outreach and stakeholder engagement as required

## 1.1.1- Explore ways to locate more wetland restoration projects (both re-establishment and rehabilitation) in coastal areas



**TIDAL RESTRICTIONS SYNTHESIS REVIEW**  
*An Analysis of U.S. Tidal Restrictions and Opportunities  
for their Avoidance and Removal*



### Tidal Restriction Synthesis Review

Released: Dec 2020

- 1) Identify common types of tidal restrictions and information on their abundance and distribution.
- 2) Identify adverse effects of tidal restrictions and benefits of restoring hydrology.
- 3) Identify policies, practices or tools available that address tidal restriction removal.
- 4) Assess needs for further facilitating tidal restriction avoidance and removal.

## 1.1.1- Explore ways to locate more wetland restoration projects (both re-establishment and rehabilitation) in coastal areas



### In Progress: Tidal Restriction Assessment Protocol for EPA R2 (NY, NJ, PR, USVI)

Adapt existing tidal crossing field evaluation methods to confirm the existence of restrictions, determine their severity, and prioritize them for removal.

## 1.1.3- Fund /incentivize the development of robust watershed management plans/landscape planning documents



### In Progress: Restoration and conservation plan for Albemarle-Pamlico Sound (NC)

EPA, FWS, and the North Carolina Coastal Federation are working to develop an innovative five-year action plan by bringing together regional stakeholders and will involve funding strategies for natural resource conservation activities centering wetlands, water quality, and fishery and wild-life habitats.

# Local Implementation:

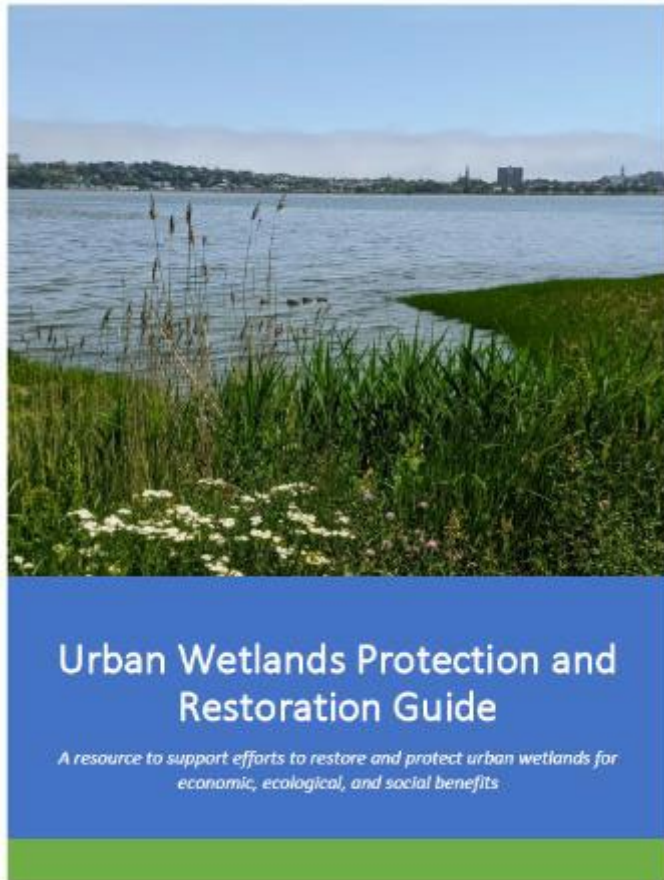
Support local planning to increase the acreage of protected coastal wetlands

## Priority areas

- 2.4.1 Facilitate the development of comprehensive local plans to encourage informed development decisions.
- 2.4.2 Develop local planning best practices for wetland protection.



## 2.4.1- Facilitate the development of comprehensive local plans to encourage informed development decisions.



**In Progress: Coastal Wetlands Project Under Cooperative Agreement WD -84039601**

**Title: Local Planning Best Practices for Coastal Wetland Protection and Restoration**

**Purpose: Provide technical assistance and support to local governments planning to prevent loss/increase acreage of coastal wetlands**



## 2.4.2- Develop local planning best practices for wetland protection.



**In Progress:** Coastal Wetlands Project Under Cooperative Agreement WD -84039601

**Case Studies:** in-depth qualitative case studies of existing local coastal wetland ordinances designed to protect and restore coastal wetlands and aquatic resources in light of projected impacts from climate change.

**Purpose:** to better understand the challenges that local governments and disadvantaged communities face when developing and enacting such policies as well as highlight successes that local governments have had and insights into what factors led to their success.

# Implementation by the USFWS

- 4.1 Continue to support and improve the USFWS NWI Coastal Watersheds Wetlands Status and Trends reports. *(2009-2019 National Report in draft; estimate Coastal Report one year later).*
- 4.2 Produce new USFWS NWI Comprehensive Change Analyses in areas identified as experiencing high levels of wetland loss. *(Procedure is well established. Clients needed)*
- 4.3 Update the NWI geospatial dataset within coastal watersheds. *(Ongoing with nearly all external funding).*
- 4.5 Strengthen coordination between NOAA C-CAP and USFWS NWI. *(Puget Sound and Tampa Bay Projects underway).*
- 4.6 Support the development of techniques to improve the mapping of forested wetlands. *(Longer term project that will require interagency development)*



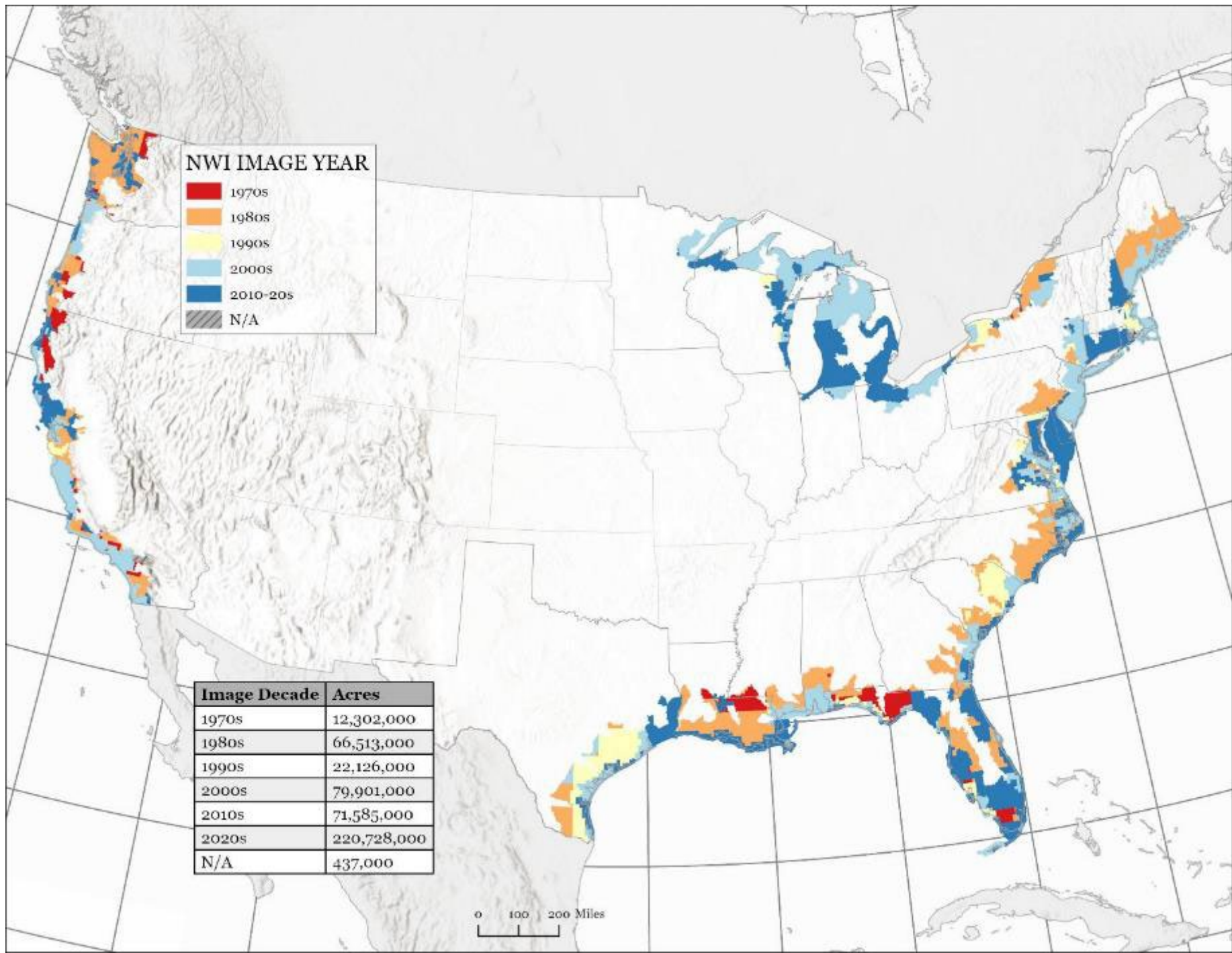
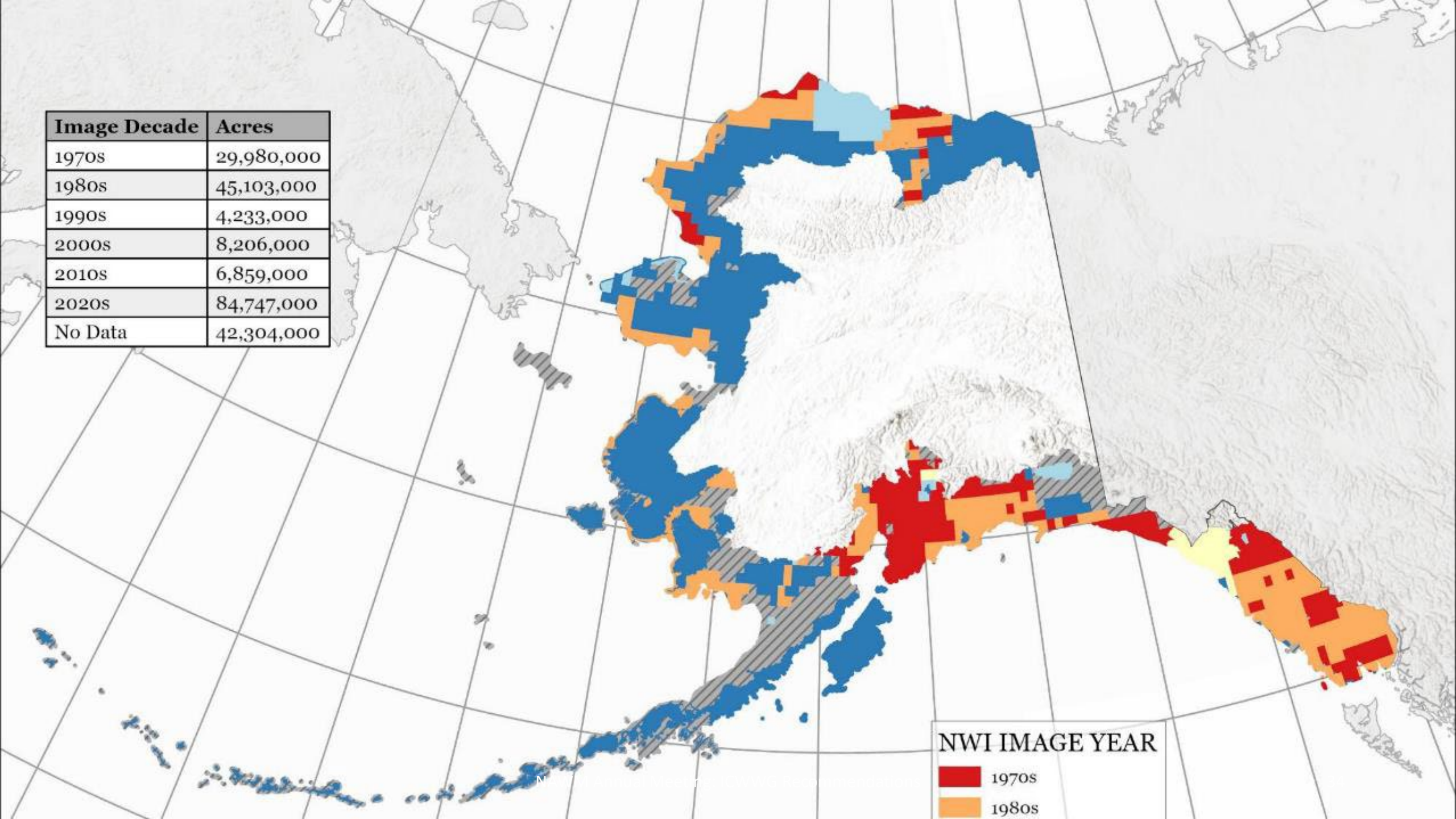


Image Decade	Acres
1970s	29,980,000
1980s	45,103,000
1990s	4,233,000
2000s	8,206,000
2010s	6,859,000
2020s	84,747,000
No Data	42,304,000



NWI IMAGE YEAR

- 1970s
- 1980s



# Relevant Recommendations for NAWM Members

# Relevant Recommendations for NAWM Members

- 2.5 Enhance state and tribal protections for wetlands, including those wetlands that are not otherwise regulated
- 1.2 Enhance ability to track restored wetland acreage and function
  - \*opportunities to follow common definition and classification systems
- 2.4 Support local planning to increase acreage of protected coastal wetlands
  - \*future tools through EPA/NAWM case studies
- 1.1.1 Explore more ways to locate wetland restoration projects in coastal watersheds
- 1.1.3 Support robust watershed management plans
- 2.2.4 Support establishment of migration corridors

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# Thank You

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<https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/inter-agency-coastal-wetlands-workgroup-recommendations-reducing-wetland-loss-coastal>



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# *Questions and Discussion*

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# Thank You!

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