



National Association of Wetland Managers

# Communicating the Value of Wetlands

---

NAWM AMERICAN WETLANDS MONTH WEBINAR

MAY 29, 2024

# Our Mission

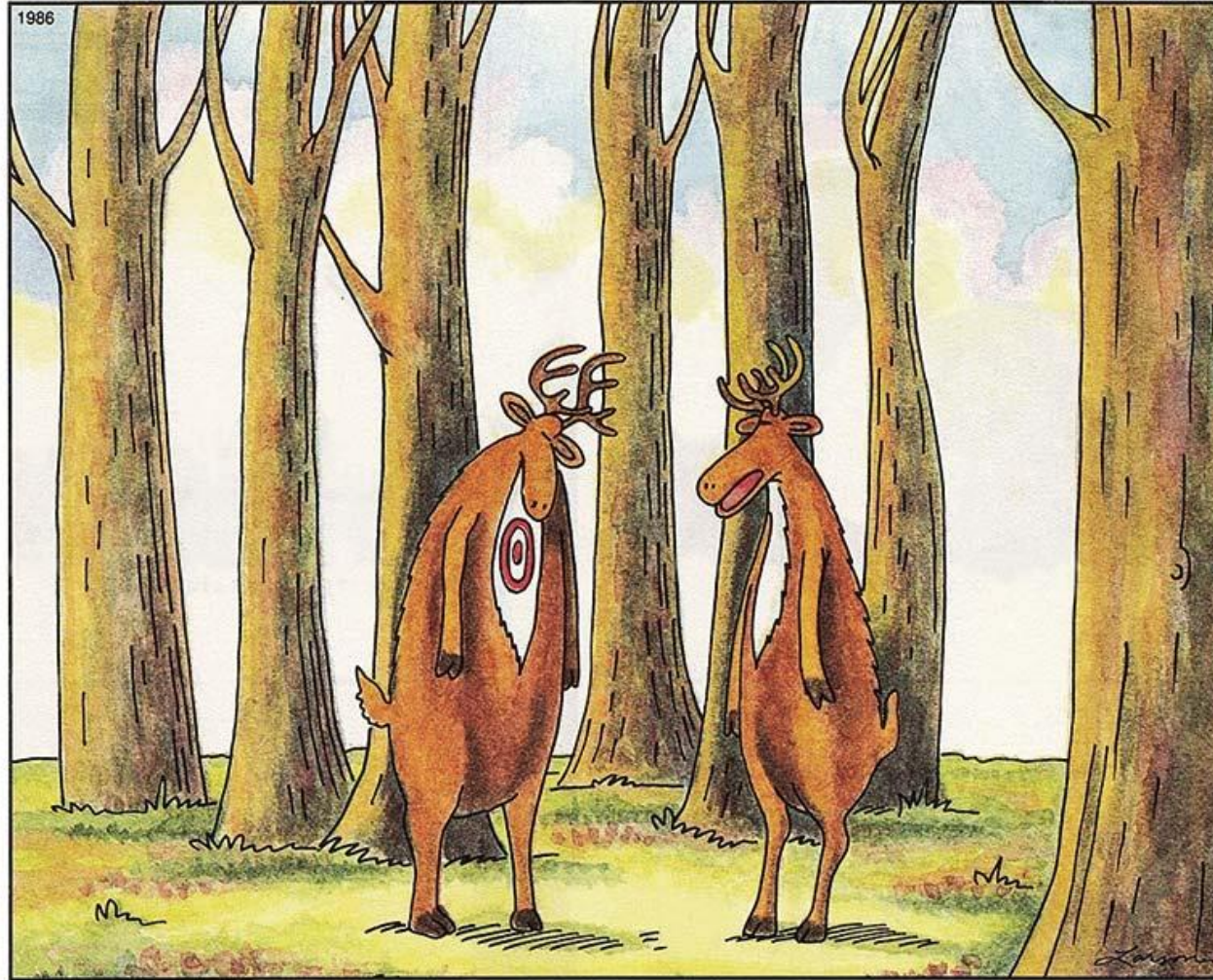
---



The mission of NAWM is to build capacity for state and tribal members and foster collaboration among the wetland community of practice by encouraging the application of sound science to wetland management and policy, promoting the protection and restoration of wetlands and related aquatic resources, and providing training and education for members and the general public.



# Sackett v EPA



“Bummer of a birthmark, Hal.”

# Changing the Narrative: a new initiative harnessing the power of storytelling

IT'S TIME TO

**DITCH** the **RULE**

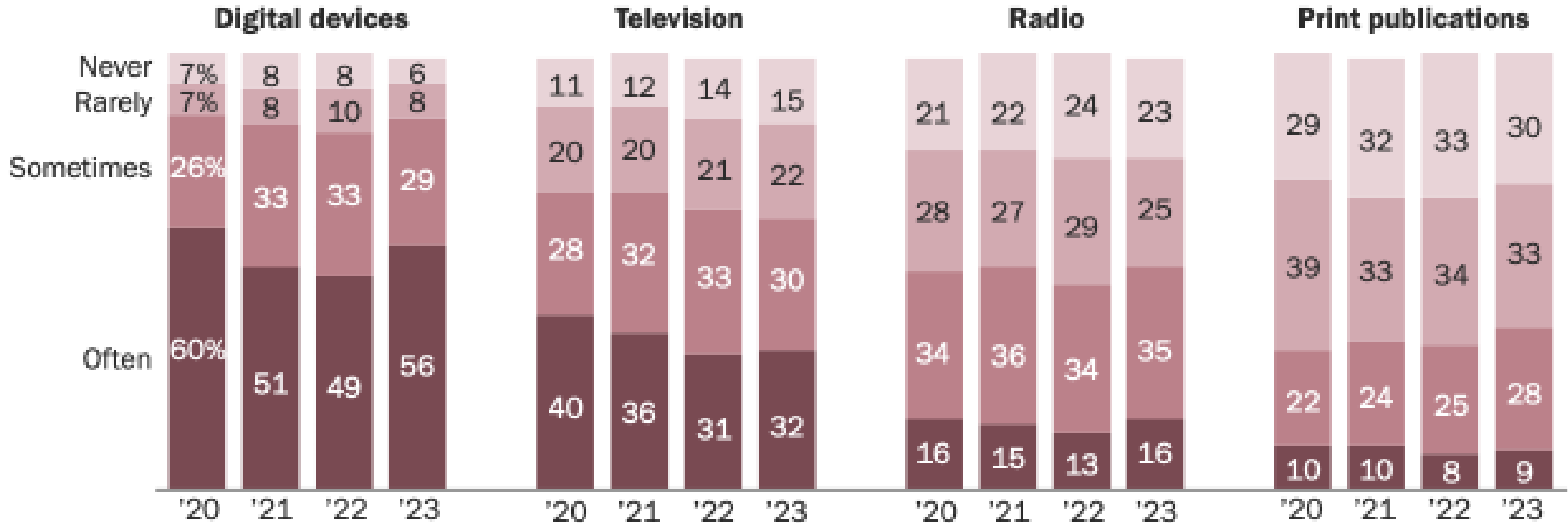
#ditchtherule

[ditchtherule.fb.org](http://ditchtherule.fb.org)



# News consumption across platforms

% of U.S. adults who \_\_\_\_ get news from ...



Note: Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 25-Oct. 1, 2023.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER



# Key Average Human Attention Span Statistics

[HTTPS://WWW.WELLBROOKRECOVERY.COM/POST/AVERAGE-ATTENTION-SPAN](https://www.wellbrookrecovery.com/post/average-attention-span)

---

- The average attention span for an adult is **8 seconds** (Microsoft, 2015)
- In comparison, the **average attention span for a goldfish is 9 seconds** (National Center for Biotechnology Information, 2015)
- In a study of over 2,000 participants, **25% of them couldn't get through a 1-minute video** without losing interest (Wistia, 2016)
- On average, **people only read about 28% of the words on a web page** (Nielsen Norman Group, 2013)
- When it comes to online content, **headlines with numbers** (e.g. "5 Ways to Boost Your Productivity") tend to perform better than those without (Conductor, 2017)
- The average **mobile user checks their phone 150 times a day**, which suggests a frequent shift in attention (Kleiner Perkins, 2013)
- Multitaskers experience a **40% drop in productivity** and take **50% longer to accomplish a single task** (American Psychological Association, 2006)



# Key Average Human Attention Span Statistics

[HTTPS://WWW.WELLBROOKRECOVERY.COM/POST/AVERAGE-ATTENTION-SPAN](https://www.wellbrookrecovery.com/post/average-attention-span)

---

- The average page visit lasts less than a minute, with users often leaving web pages in just 10-20 seconds (Nielsen Norman Group, 2011)
- Emails have an average attention span of about 11 seconds, with users tending to skim through content (Litmus, 2018)
- The average student's attention span during a lecture is 10-15 minutes before a decline in focus (Bradbury, 2016)
- Social media posts with visual content are 2.3 times more likely to be viewed than those without (HubSpot, 2020)
- Viewers retain 95% of a message when they watch it in a video compared to 10% when reading it in text (Wyzowl, 2021)
- The average consumer attention span while watching a video is 2.7 minutes (Wyzowl, 2021)



# Key Average Human Attention Span Statistics

[HTTPS://WWW.WELLBROOKRECOVERY.COM/POST/AVERAGE-ATTENTION-SPAN](https://www.wellbrookrecovery.com/post/average-attention-span)

---

- The average page visit lasts less than a minute, with users often leaving web pages in just 10-20 seconds (Nielsen Norman Group, 2011)
- Emails have an average attention span of about 11 seconds, with users tending to skim through content (Litmus, 2018)
- The average student's attention span during a lecture is 10-15 minutes before a decline in focus (Bradbury, 2016)
- Social media posts with visual content are 2.3 times more likely to be viewed than those without (HubSpot, 2020)
- Viewers retain 95% of a message when they watch it in a video compared to 10% when reading it in text (Wyzowl, 2021)
- The average consumer attention span while watching a video is 2.7 minutes (Wyzowl, 2021)



# Wetlands: Changing the Narrative (Bottom Up)

A multi-year, multimedia campaign to share stories about the essential role private landowners play in preserving our nation's wetland heritage.

## Short Description

America's wetlands have long been misunderstood, underappreciated, and underexplored. Historically, we have looked at them as wastelands - places to dredge and fill for economic development and agriculture. But today, finally, those attitudes are shifting. Americans are rediscovering why wetlands are so important for their families and communities due to all the amazing benefits they provide including clean water, flood protection, and groundwater retention, to name a few.

In **Wetlands: Changing the Narrative**, we're going to shine a light on the people who are reshaping our relationship with the natural world. Hunters, anglers, ranchers, and small family farmers all depend on healthy wetlands for their way of life. From the most remote bison wallow in the Great Plains to the edges of the Everglades and beyond we'll discover seemingly ordinary people making extraordinary impacts on their local wetlands through a mix of landowner stewardship, science, engineering, and sheer determination. Their stories, insights, and passion will be the conduit through which the wondrous natural history of our wetland heritage is presented to our viewers.



# Wetlands: Changing the Narrative

## Our Approach

The goal of **Wetlands: Changing the Narrative** is to bring diverse and hopeful stories about America's wetlands to American audiences through a range of traditional and new media avenues. “Story packages” will be built from single collections of footage, animation, and interviews and will seed programming aimed at those who get their information via tv, streaming, or social media. For example, a story package centered around the Colorado River might yield a 30-minute documentary, multiple 5-8 minute shorts, and multiple minute-log bursts aimed at TikTok, Instagram, and Reels. Each product will be built from the same bed of content but tailored specifically for the demands of different outlets.

The team would aim to produce 3-5 story packages per year, ensuring that the messaging flows consistently and predictably across the calendar. To kick off the effort, we suggest beginning with a pilot/proof of concept, allowing us time to go through a full production cycle - including debriefing with stakeholders - to identify obstacles and best practices. That pilot project could begin in 2024. The total budget for this effort will be impacted both by the creative approach taken - especially the number of locations - and the scale of the outreach campaign that goes along with it. Depending on these factors and the number of “packages” we commit to tackling at the outset, we estimate the per package rate to be roughly 150k-300k.





# AD COUNCIL RESEARCH INSTITUTE PROPOSAL

**Phase 1:** Research Design and Kickoff – align on areas of exploration for the study, messaging approaches and particular research outcomes from the question protocol. Includes solidification of sample parameters and methodological approach.

- Deliverable: Kickoff Meeting, Strategy Review Sessions, Research Protocol
- Cost: \$25,000

**Phase 2:** Qualitative – an online qualitative board of ~30 people over two days. Individuals will participate in activities and review and comment on words, phrases and narrative statements related to messaging. Includes reports and implications brief for quantitative phase.

- Deliverable: Kickoff Meeting, Strategy Meetings, Interview Guides, Analysis, Messaging/Frames Drafts, Report and Implications for Quantitative Phase
- Cost: \$75,000-\$100,000

**Phase 3:** Quantitative – an online survey to 3,000-4,000 individuals to validate findings from the qualitative, test new messaging and to understand trusted messengers for future potential campaign efforts.

- Deliverable: Kickoff Meeting, Strategy Meetings, Questionnaire, Analysis, Messaging/Frames Updated/Optimized Drafts, Report
- Cost: \$115,000-\$155,000

**Phase 4:** Analysis and Report/Toolkit Development – after a full analysis of all data from each phase, the ACRI team will develop a final report and toolkit for distribution.

- Deliverable: Report, Toolkit, Final Messaging/Frames Updated/Optimized
- Cost: \$25,000



# LEGISLATIVE APPROACHES/STRATEGY (Top Down)

Educate Congress about the need for more state and Tribal wetland program funding.

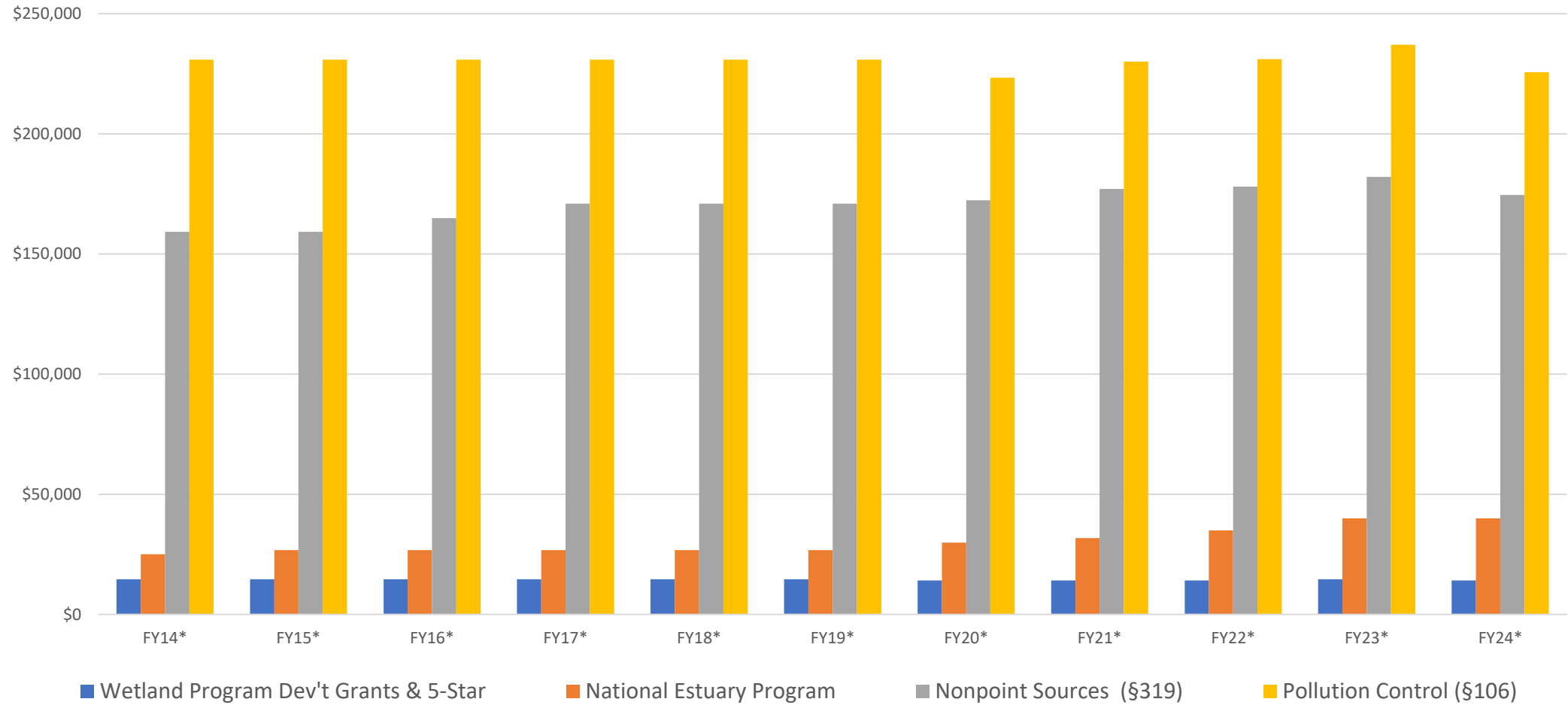
On March 23, 2024, two hours after the budget deadline, Congress finally agreed on a budget for a fiscal year that started six months previously. Overall, EPA's FY24 budget was cut by 9.6% from FY23.

- EPM funds for wetlands were cut by 4% (down to \$20.8m)
- §319 was cut by 5% (down to \$174.5m)
- §106 was cut by 5% (down to \$225.6m)
- WPDGs were cut by 4% (down to \$14.1m)
- NEP funding was unaffected



# Making the Case for Increased Wetland Program Funding

10 Years of CWA Funding Comparison Chart



\*enacted in thousands



# APPROACH = MODEL AFTER THE SUCCESS OF THE NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

Each NEP developed a Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan to achieve their restoration and protection goals, and **each program receives an annual federal appropriation through EPA to monitor and facilitate action to implement their CCMPs.** The National Estuary Program is non-regulatory and is designed to promote comprehensive planning for the long-term protection of estuaries through collaborative voluntary efforts of Federal, State, local, non-profit and private interests. **Various federal grant programs also prioritize funding to NEPs, and recent legislation like the Investment and Infrastructure Jobs Act earmark funding to NEPs.**

The Protect and Restore America's Estuaries Act, with **strong bipartisan support** in the House and unanimous approval from the Senate, was signed into law on January 13, 2021. The Act reaffirms support for the work of the National Estuary Program, and nearly doubled the annual funding limit to \$50 million. Under the new law, each NEP is authorized to receive up to \$1 million each year, but actual appropriations have been less.

<https://buzzardsbay.org/government/federal-legislative-update/>





# What Would That Look Like?

Instead of NEP units – use watershed units with a focus on inland freshwater watersheds.

Encourage leveraging of additional funding from a variety of federal, state, local and private sources through such mechanisms as:

- annual membership appeals
- license plate revenues
- fines and penalties
- state appropriations
- intergovernmental agreements

Could still support the four Core Elements and any combination thereof.

Combination of competitive grant funding and formula-based program implementation funding.



# How do we get there?

## 1) DEVELOP A BIPARTISAN WETLANDS CAUCUS

Congressional caucuses can play a crucial “convener” role in advancing policy priorities on a given issue by providing a platform for like-minded lawmakers to coalesce behind policy ideas. If constructed effectively and with bipartisanship top-of-mind, caucuses allow members of Congress to pool resources, share expertise, and coordinate efforts across party lines, increasing the chances of successfully advancing policy goals.

The creation of a Congressional Wetlands Caucus will elevate the profile of wetland issues in the halls of Congress and will establish a firm and ever-growing slate of bipartisan champions. These champions can in turn be leveraged on important priorities such as crafting and passage of authorizing legislation to improve wetland protection programs at the state level, as well as support for increased appropriations to key accounts.

(\$7,500 per month for caucus development)





# How do we get there?

## 2) DEVELOP AUTHORIZING LANGUAGE

Direct advocacy with Congress will be key in explaining our case for increased funding and de-coupling our arguments from the highly politicized atmosphere of Sackett and WOTUS discussions.

For now, working with TRCP and NWF on appropriations report language:

"Categorical Grant: Wetland Program Development Grant – The Committee recognizes the importance of Wetland Program Development Grants in aiding states, Tribes, and local governments in developing efforts to protect, restore, and manage wetlands and aquatic resources to mitigate the impacts of natural disasters such as flooding, enhancing drinking water quality, and benefitting fish and wildlife. The Committee clarifies that this program, authorized under Section 104(b)(3) of the Clean Water Act, can be used to develop new, or refine existing, State or Tribal wetland and aquatic resource programs, as well as for the implementation of these programs."

# How do we get there?

## PARTNERSHIPS

- States
- Tribes
- Local Governments
- Federal Agencies
- Nonprofits
- Universities
- Foundations
- Private Sector



# 2024 Annual State/Tribal/Federal Coordination Meeting

June 17-21, 2024

## National Association of Wetland Managers Annual State/Tribal/Federal Coordination Meeting

*Filling the Gaps & Embracing Change*

National Conservation Training Center  
Shepherdstown, WV



**THANK YOU!**

Marla J. Stelk  
Executive Director

National Association of  
Wetland Managers

207-892-3399  
marla@nawm.org  
www.nawm.org

