

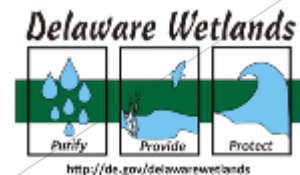
# Common Misconceptions about Wetlands and Regulations

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# Overview

- ▶ Common wetland misconceptions and bad perceptions on the street
- ▶ How to tackle misinformation and fear
- ▶ Helpful tools and angles
- ▶ Changing perceptions



# #1 All Regulated Wetlands are Protected

They don't need my help or more regulations

**Did you know you may have freshwater wetlands on your property?**

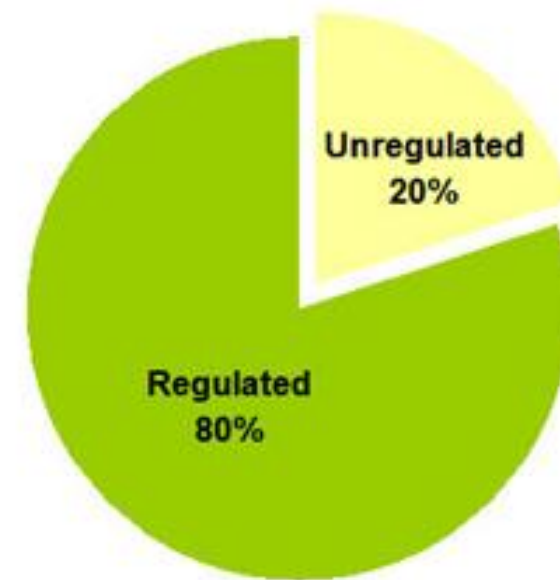
Everyone in Delaware is no more than 1 mile away from a wetland

Visit [de.gov/wetlandtoolbox](http://de.gov/wetlandtoolbox) to:

- Find wetlands on your land
- Learn about the benefits of wetlands
- Take [The Wetland Protection Promise](#) to discover what you can do to help save wetlands & receive a FREE gift

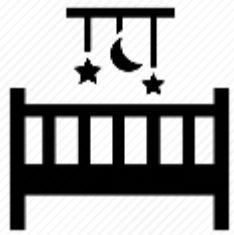


*Delaware's Freshwater Wetlands*



\*Recent changes to WOTUS leaves 15,000 acres of freshwater wetlands unregulated

## #2 Wetlands are gross and smell bad- why should we protect them?



### PROVIDE HABITAT

Delaware's existing wetlands are worth \$154 million in fishing/hunting capabilities



### BRING TOURISM

Delaware's existing wetlands are worth \$535 million in tourism/recreational dollars



### IMPROVE WATER QUALITY

Delaware's existing wetlands are worth \$474 million in water quality benefits

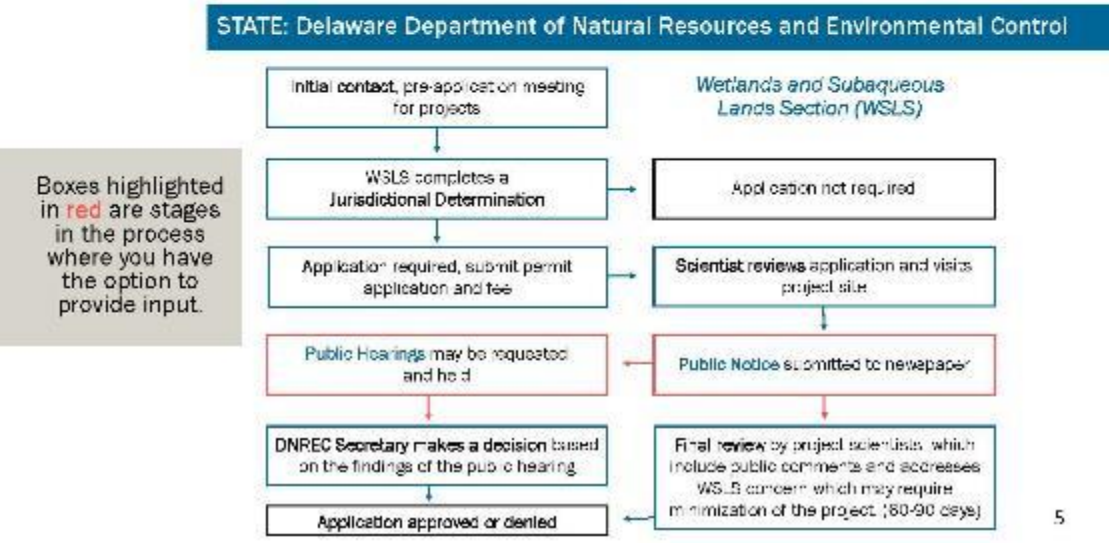
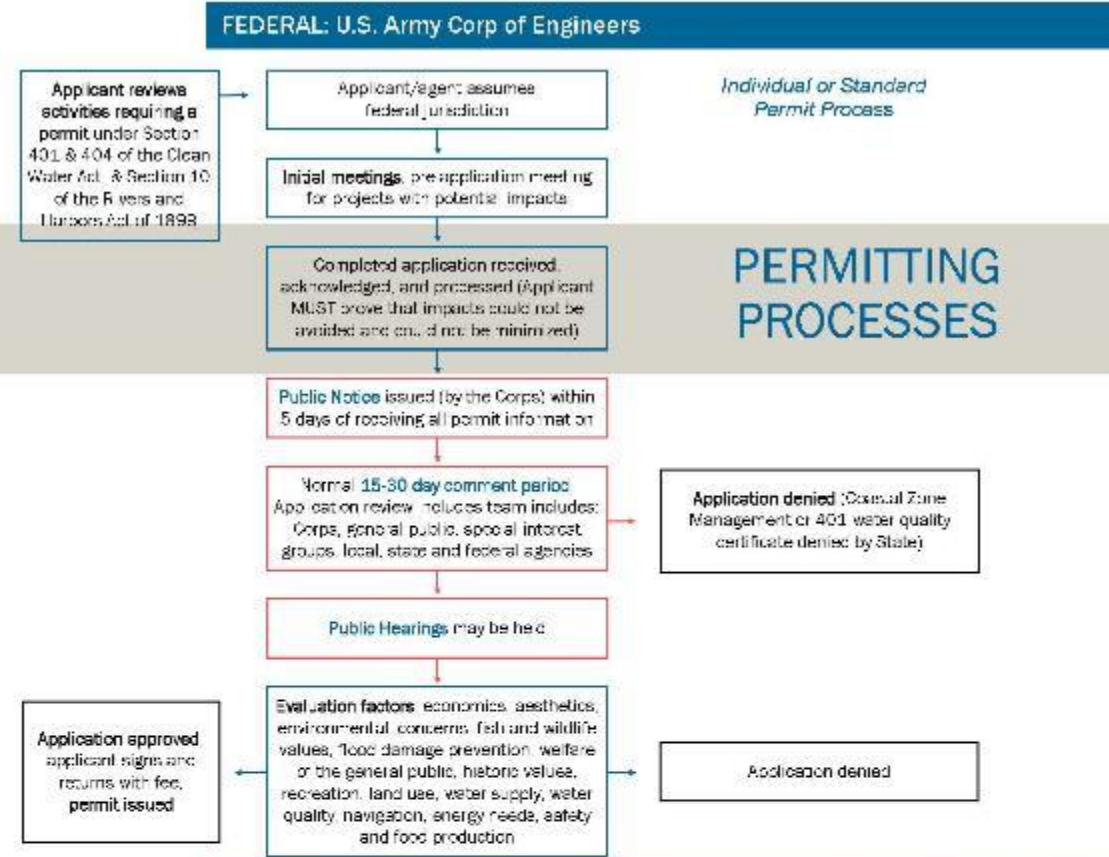


### REDUCE & PREVENT FLOODING

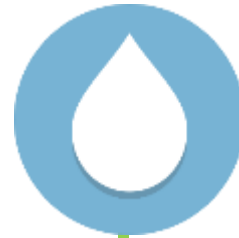
Delaware's existing wetlands are worth \$66 million in flood control benefits

# #3 The Regulatory Process

- ▶ How do I know what's regulated?
- ▶ What do I need a permit for?
- ▶ Who do I call?
- ▶ Do I have to hire a professional?



# #4 If water gathers after a storm for a few days do I have a wetland?



## HYDROLOGY

Water on the surface for some part of the year



## HYDRIC SOILS

Water-logged soils

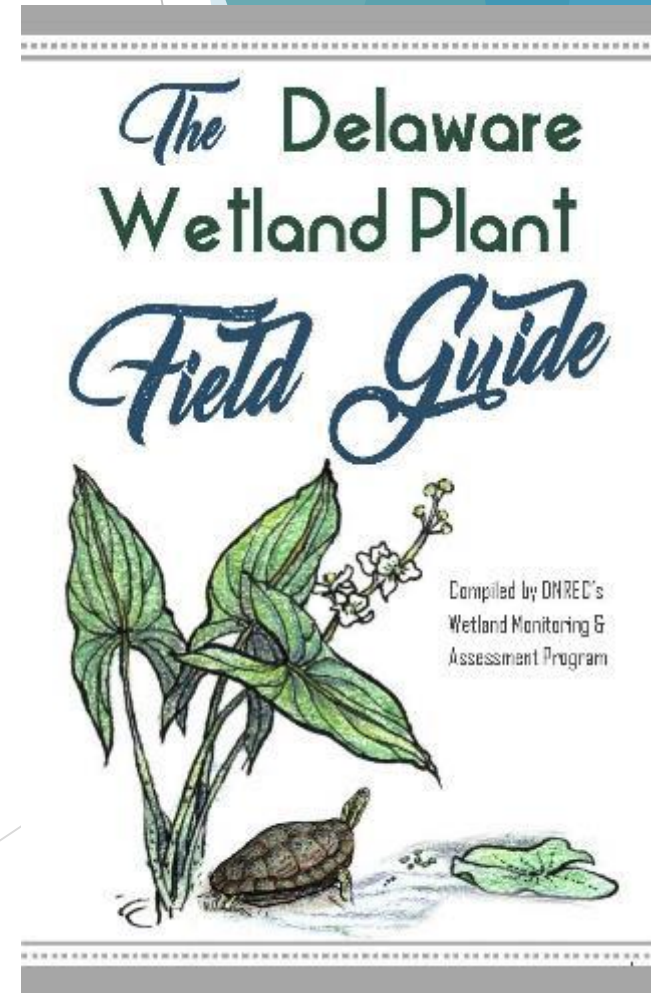
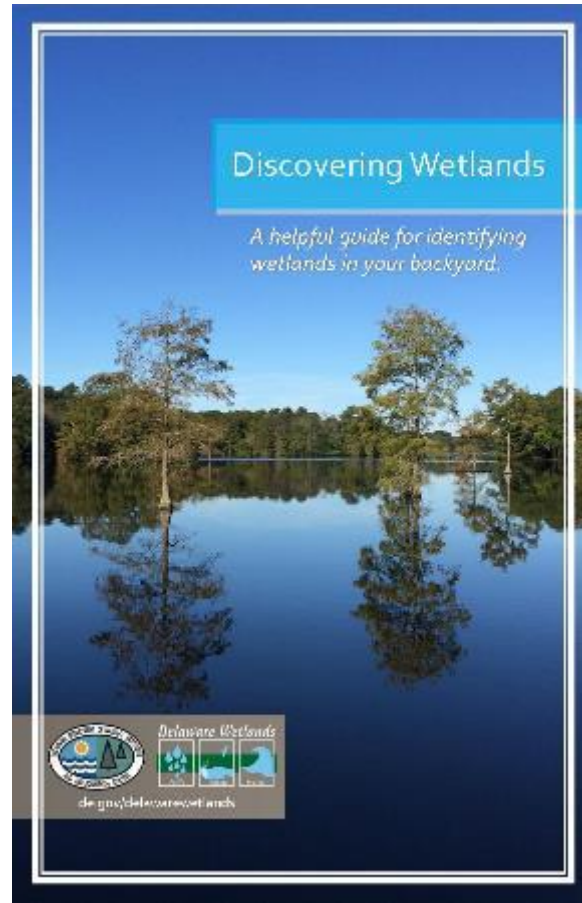


## HYDROPHYTIC PLANTS

Plants that are able to grow in really wet conditions

# #5 I don't know if I have wetlands on my property.

- Get people active
- Provide easy resources
- Empower them to find wetlands



# #6 If I have wetlands on my property I can't do anything.

There are wetlands on this property...

can I still build?

**Avoid**

**Minimize**

**Mitigate**

**Enjoy**





# #7 Buying or selling a property with wetlands is risky and scary.

Focus on realtors and homebuyers



Division of Watershed Stewardship

TOPICS COVERING TODAY:



Delaware's wetland resources & regulations



Flood risk and mapping resources



Beach preservation regulations

- Blog article
- Association of Realtors statewide
- Realtors by county
- Approved for credits
- Push online mapping tools
- Next up: homebuyers

# Pictures are powerful

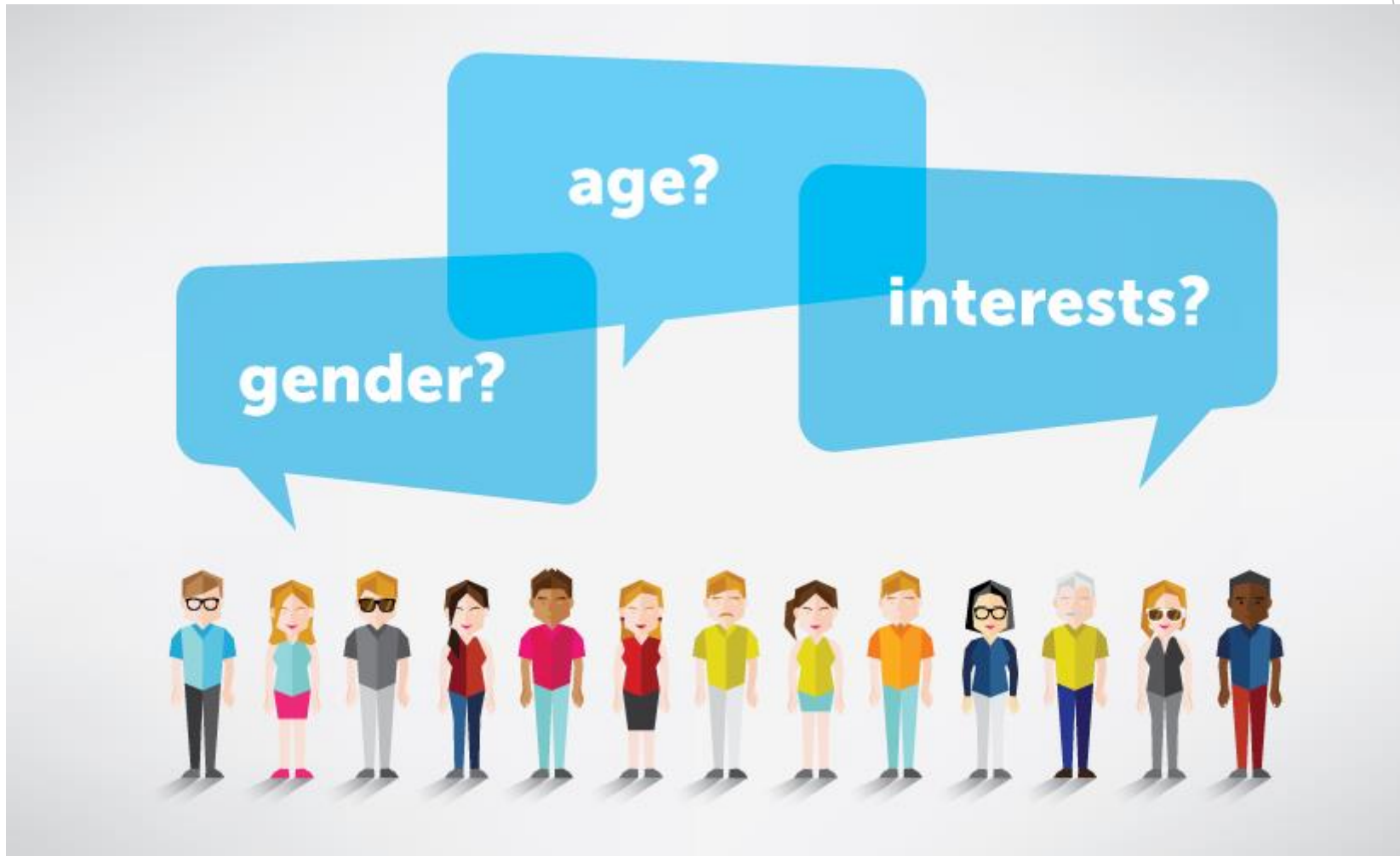


Building on a wetland is a bad idea!



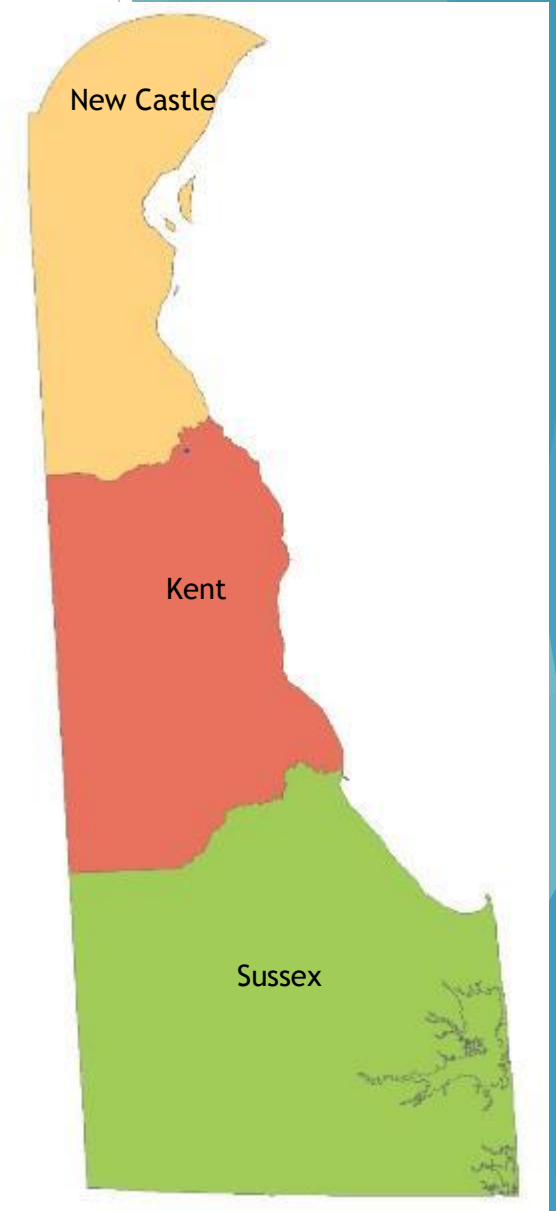
# Building Support for Regulatory Programs

Know your audience



# Survey Methods

- ▶ Sept. 17-Oct. 2, 2017
- ▶ Stratified 200 per 3 counties, weighted for population
- ▶ 600 phone interviews
- ▶ Supervised, live interviews
- ▶ Cell and landlines
- ▶ Understand perceptions and attitudes towards wetlands.



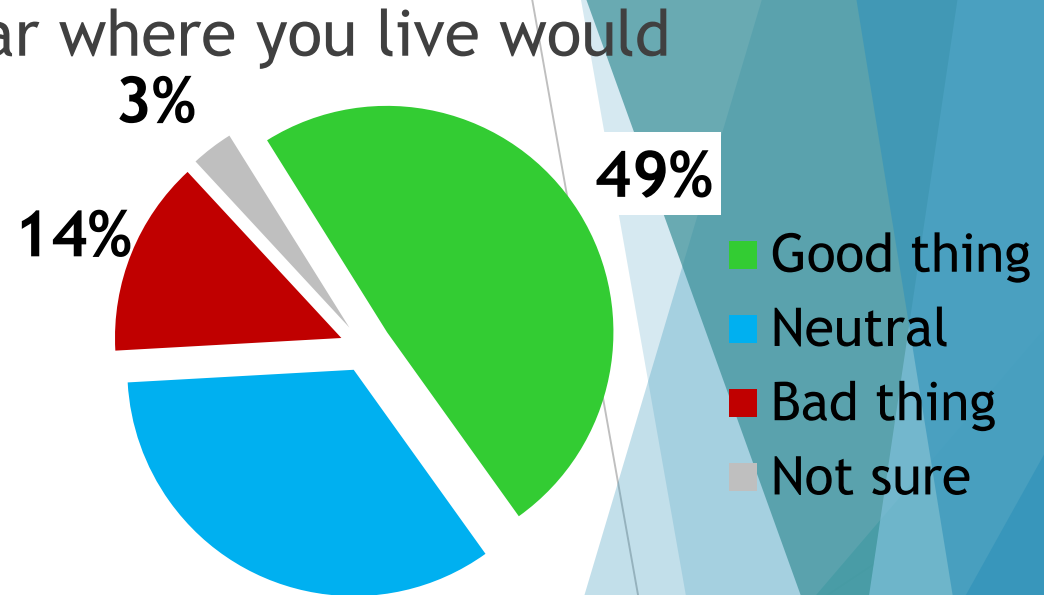
# Impact of Wetland Facts

We asked “Do you think having wetlands near where you live would be good, bad, neutral, not sure?”

Then we read them 5 wetland facts:

Wetlands:

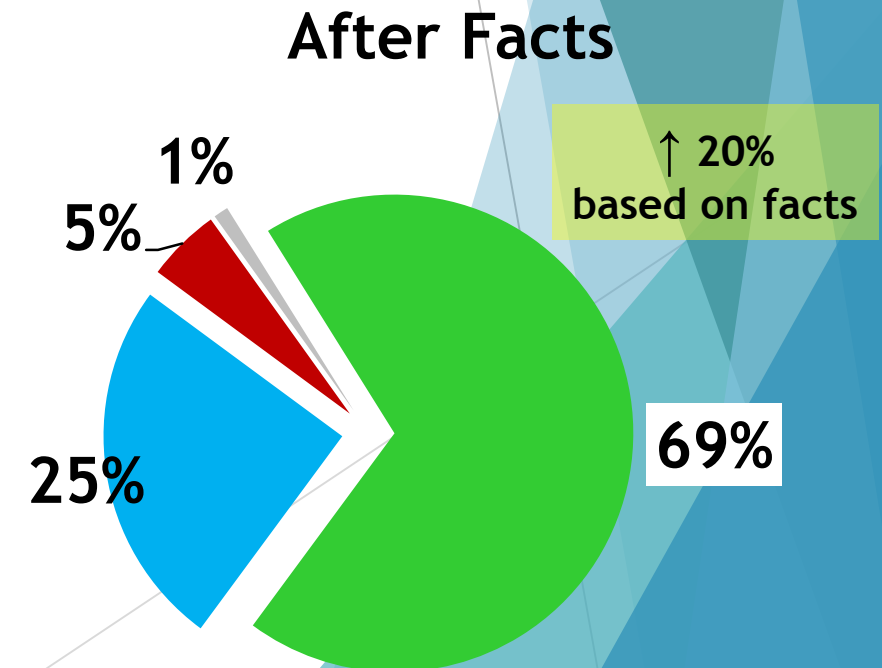
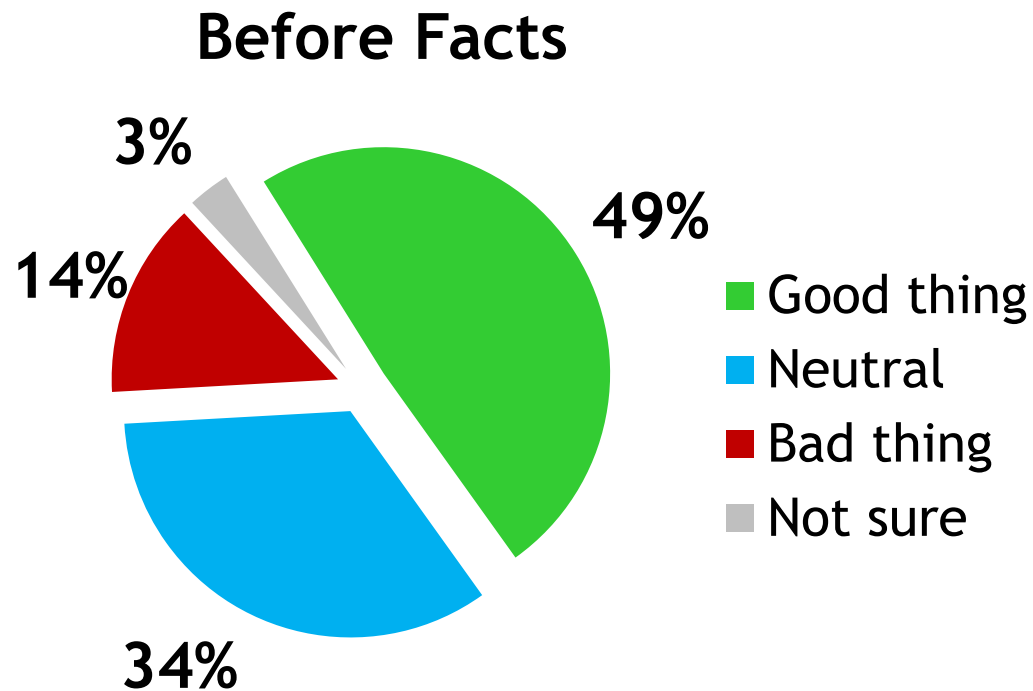
- ▶ create habitat for ducks, fish, turtles etc.
- ▶ soak up floodwater and protect against erosion **34%**
- ▶ can be beautiful with flowering plants and trees
- ▶ are important for filtering stormwater runoff which improves water quality
- ▶ generate income from fishing and tourism



# Impact of Wetland Facts

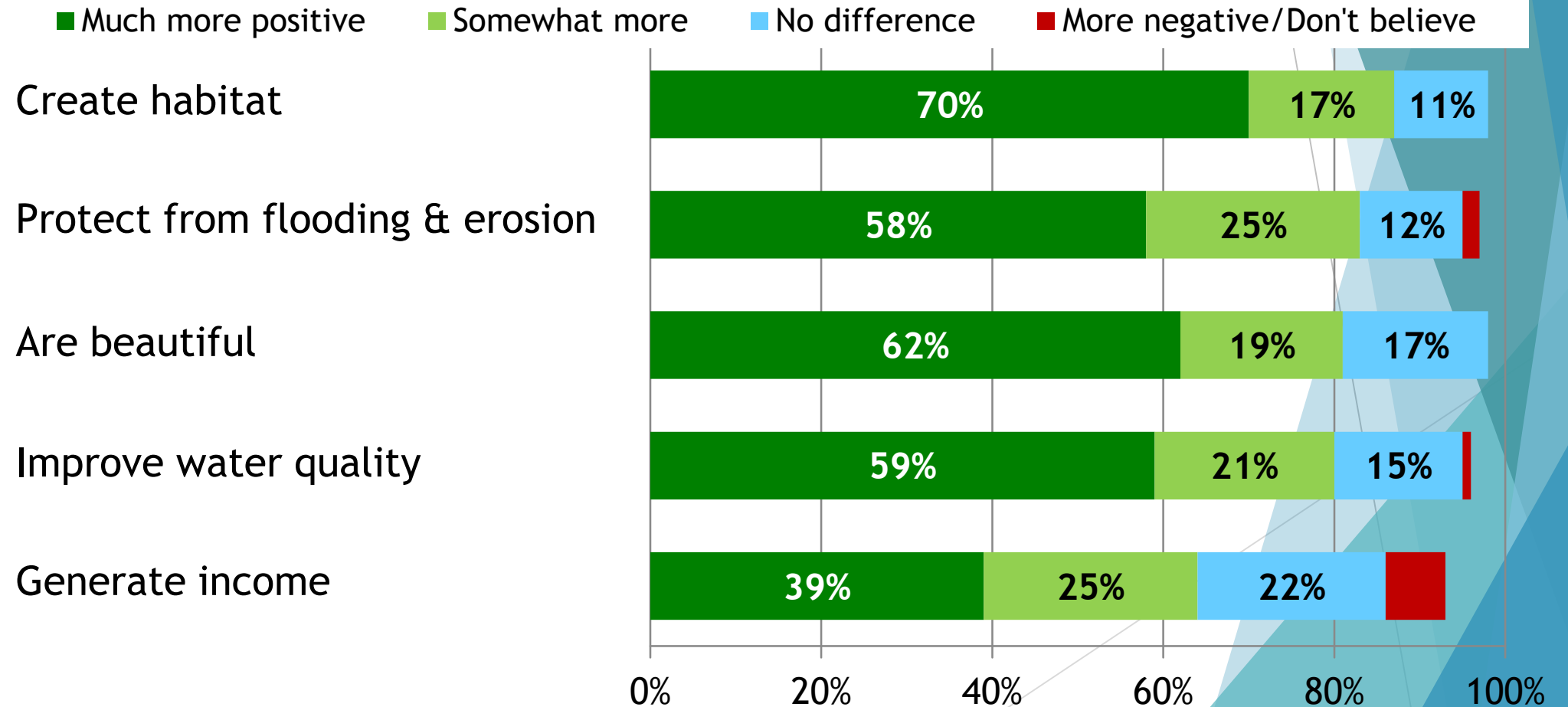
## Changing perceptions:

After hearing the wetland facts we asked again: “Do you think having wetlands near your home would be good, bad, neutral, not sure?”



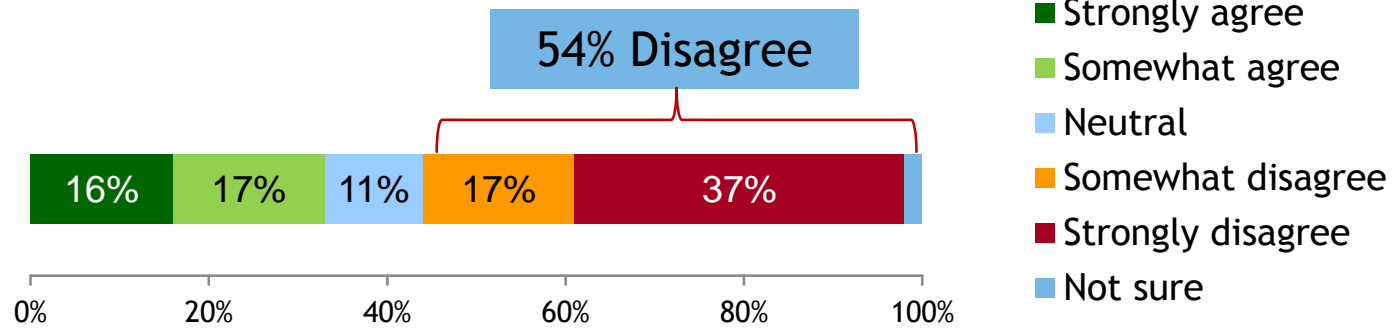
# Impact of Wetland Facts

Which wetlands services have the most impact:

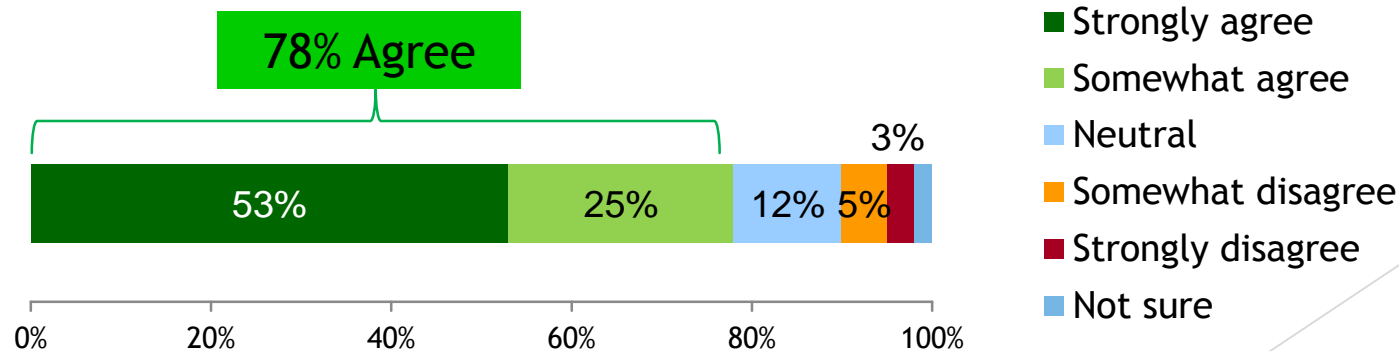


# My Impact vs. My Actions

*My actions contribute to water pollution where I live.*



*I want to do more to help make the natural environment healthier.*

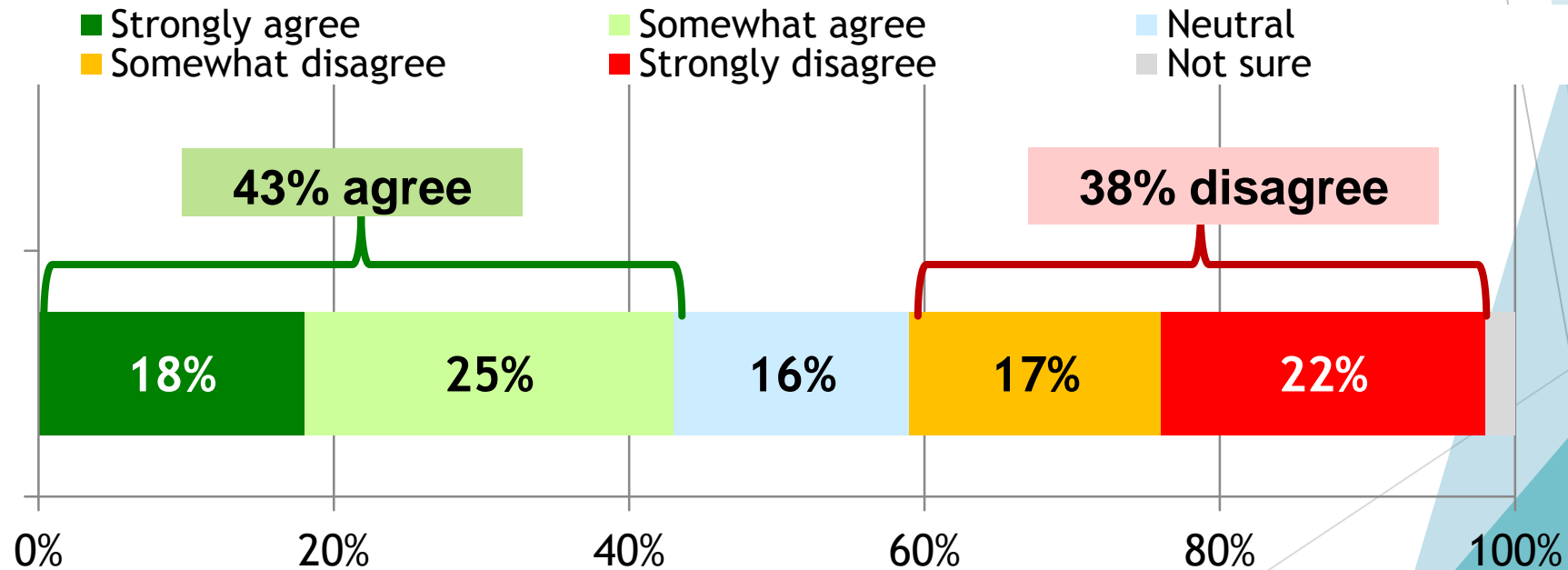




# My Action



*I could see myself attending meetings or speaking out publicly for a clean and healthy environment.*



# In Summary

- ▶ Know your target audience
- ▶ Provide positive facts to change perceptions
- ▶ Target specific sectors with education
- ▶ Pictures are powerful
- ▶ Provide information that reduces uncertainty and frustrations
- ▶ Get people involved
- ▶ Appeal to the services that resonate



# Questions?

## Thank you!

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[de.gov/delawarewetlands](http://de.gov/delawarewetlands)

