



FAQs: Tribal Wetland Program Plans (WPPs)

A Fact Sheet for Tribal Wetland Programs

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GEOSPATIAL SERVICES

Q: What are the benefits of developing a WPP?

A: The benefits of developing a WPP include:

- Assists strategic thinking about your community's needs to build your wetland program over several years
- Facilitates discussion and understanding between the EPA and your tribe, which helps the EPA more effectively provide needed technical assistance
- Provides a useful communication tool for sharing your wetland program's goals and accomplishments with the community

Q: Are there minimum components that must be included in a WPP?

A: A WPP needs to include a narrative description of program goals, a description of planned actions that are consistent with the EPA's Core Elements Framework, and an implementation schedule (typically presented in table form).

Q: What is the EPA's Core Elements Framework?

A: Wetland programs are found in many different State and Tribal agencies pursuing a range of goals that differ according to their specific priorities and the wide range of wetland types and functions in their jurisdiction. However, there is generally a common set of program objectives that EPA believes comprise a comprehensive wetland program. In 2009, the EPA summarized these common objectives in the ["Core Elements of Effective State and Tribal Wetlands Programs"](#), also called the Core Elements Framework (CEF). This framework, which was updated in 2023, provides a comprehensive menu of program-building activities for each Core Element from which a tribe can pick and choose to design their own roadmap towards development of a more comprehensive wetland program, depending on their individual program goals and available resources.

Q: What are the four Core Elements?

A: The [four core elements](#) are: 1) Monitoring and Assessment, 2) Regulatory Activities (including 401 certification), 3) Voluntary Restoration and Protection, and 4) Water Quality Standards for Wetlands. While education and outreach are an important component in wetland programs, the EPA believes they should be incorporated into each of the above elements rather than considered a separate element.

Q: Does a WPP have to include all four Core Elements?

A: No, a WPP does NOT have to include all four of the Core Elements.

Q: How long of a time period should a WPP cover?

A: While this is flexible, past experience suggests that a 3-6 year time frame (i.e., implementation schedule) works well.

Q: Will our WPP be scored by the EPA and does it need to get a certain score to be approved?

A: WPPs are NOT scored (e.g., different components receive up to a certain number of points) by the EPA. They are evaluated, and either approved or returned for revisions.

Q: Is a WPP required to apply for a Wetland Program Development Grant (WPDG)?

A: No. However, there are two different “tracks” for WPDG applications: applicants *with* a WPP and applicants *without* a WPP, and the two tracks do not compete with each other. Often, more funding is available for the application track *with* WPPs. Also note that WPDG funding can be used to refine and update a WPP.

Q: How many tribes have EPA-approved WPPs?

A: As of 2023, 44 tribal WPPs have been approved by the EPA. These are publicly available documents and can be found on the EPA’s WPP page (<https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/state-and-tribal-wetland-program-plans>).

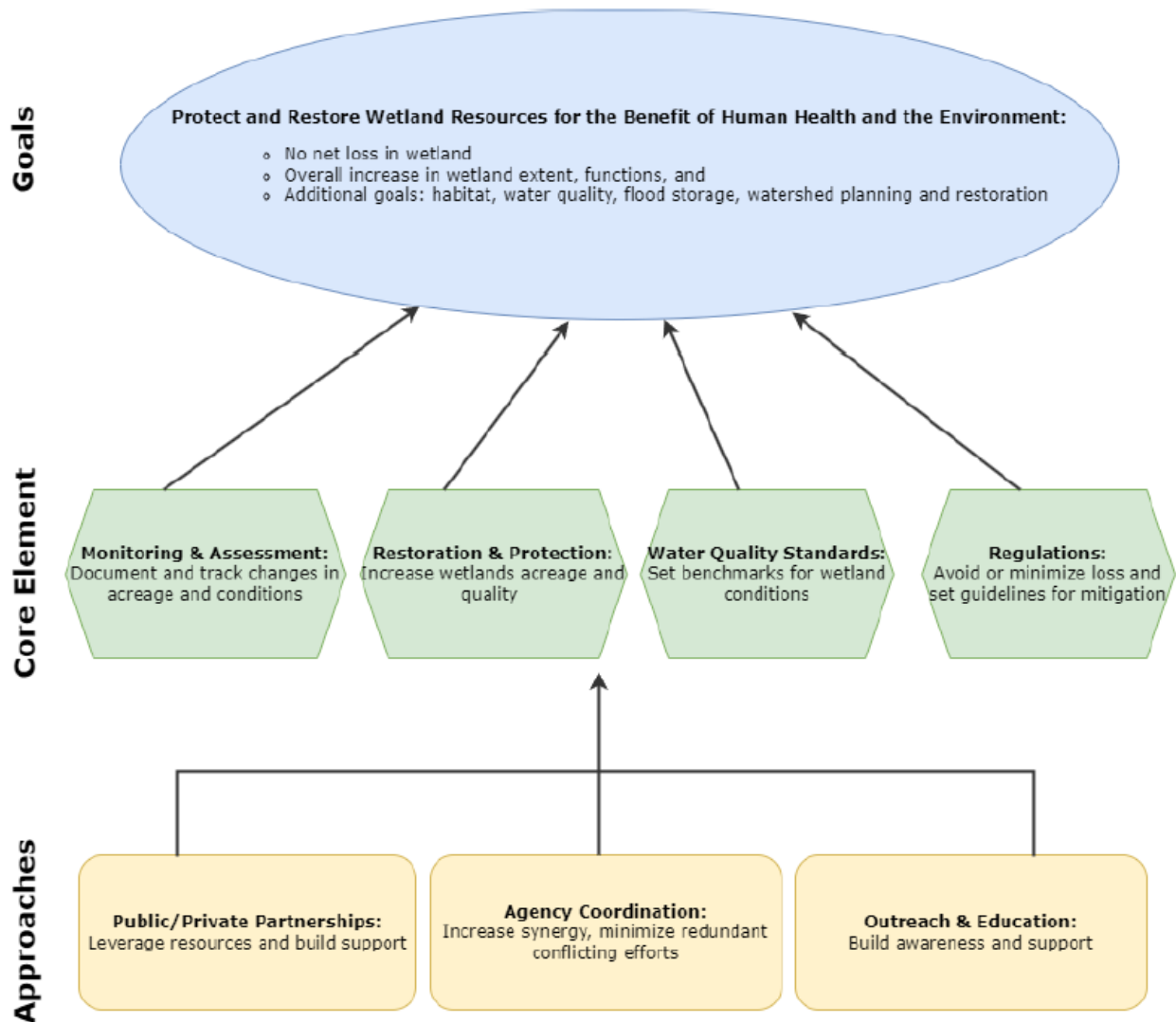


Figure 1. The relationship between wetland program goals, Core Elements, and key approaches (from the EPA’s Core Elements of Effective State and Tribal Wetlands Programs).