



These slides were included in the 2017 NC Wildlife Action Plan regional workshops as part of the NC Watershed Stewardship Network presentations made by Rick Savage, President of the Carolina Wetlands Association (CarWA), at some of the workshops locations.

Notes in this slide presentation are excerpts from the CarWA website.

Where the NC Wetland Monitoring Program is Today

- It was ended in Sept. 2014
- Program was inconsistent with the goals of the new legislature/administration
- NC wetlands monitoring program was one of the best in the nation
- EPA used NC as a showcase at national conferences



Background Information about why CarWA was formed.

In 2004 the Division of Water Quality (DWQ) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) used an EPA Wetlands Program Development Grant to develop a wetlands monitoring project.

The EPA began the program to encourage states to begin monitoring wetlands similarly to how they monitored lakes, rivers, and streams. Approved EPA Wetland Program Development Grants continued to sustain the wetlands monitoring program in the state, and North Carolina's work started getting national recognition as one of the top states leading the wetland monitoring effort. Data collection included water quality, soil chemistry, hydrology, vegetation samples, amphibians, and macroinvertebrates.

Following these national efforts, the EPA was chartered by Congress to perform a national survey of the nation's waters. The national survey eventually became the National Wetland Condition Assessment (NWCA). The NWCA for North Carolina was completed in 2011, sharing in this important national effort.

Multiple Wetland Program Development grants continued to be approved and helped fund North Carolina's work. Two grants were focused on isolated wetlands, whereas one focused on using the NWCA wetland sampling methodology on wetland mitigation sites. A regional Intensification Grant was also approved, whereby North Carolina coordinated with South Carolina, Alabama, and Georgia to extend the NWCA wetland data by sampling additional wetlands in these states and to perform a regional wetland assessment.

Change is always a given, and while North Carolina's wetland monitoring program was considered one of the best in the nation and the leader in the southeast, a new state legislature and administration decided that the wetlands monitoring program was no longer needed. Unfortunately, the wetlands monitoring program newly acquired grants were returned to the EPA and North Carolina's program was ended in September 2014.

One of the last tasks to be completed from the North Carolina wetland monitoring program was to finish the final report of the Southeast Wetlands Monitoring Intensification Grant, which was completed in August of 2015.



What is next?

NC State Univ. grant from EPA – stop-gap measure

- continue monitoring on subset of wetlands previously sampled (“long-term sites”)

Carolina Wetland Association

- incorporated in June 2015
- Board of Directors elected in June 2015
- Best talent in wetland science and wetland policy in the Carolinas

In March of 2015, the coordinator of the Southeast Wetlands Workgroup sent a link to the Wisconsin Wetlands Association to Rick Savage, previously with DENR’s Division of Water Quality in charge of developing and implementing NC’s Wetland Monitoring Program.

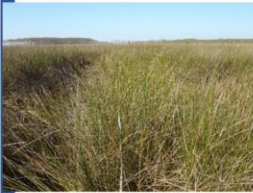
Rick Savage is now the President of the Carolina Wetland Association and he led efforts to create the organization by bringing together a core group of experts who were willing to help form the Association. Many discussions occurred about the purpose of the organization, how it would be funded, and how it would operate. After two months of correspondence and initial planning, the first meeting was held on June 6, 2015, where a board of directors was elected.

After filing the articles of incorporation, the Carolina Wetlands Association (CarWA) was officially incorporated on June 18, 2015



Carolina Wetlands Association

- **Mission:** The Carolina Wetlands Association promotes the understanding, protection, restoration, and enjoyment of North and South Carolina's wetlands and associated ecosystems through science-based programs, education, and advocacy.



Carolina Wetlands Association is a non-partisan, science-based organization advocating for wetlands.

The Carolina Wetlands Association envisions a present and future in which the Carolinas' wetlands are understood, enjoyed and valued as integral parts of our mountain, piedmont, and coastal ecosystems. They should be healthy, plentiful, and support our states' ecological, societal, and economic needs.



Carolina Wetlands Association

- Work is organized into the following program areas:
 - **Outreach:** Promoting widespread understanding of and engagement in wetlands.
 - **Advocacy:** Encouraging policies and programs that promote wetland conservation and protection.
 - **Science:** Encouraging the advancement of wetland science and practices.
 - **Sustainability:** Ensuring a viable organization for the long term to protect and promote wetlands.

We adhere to the following principles to guide our work:

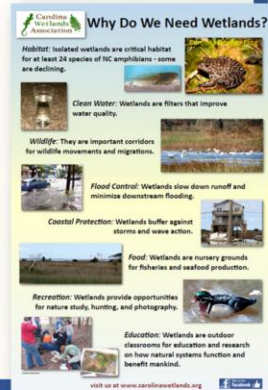
- Achieving successful results and solutions through thoughtful collaborations and partnerships.
- Inspiring others to respect, appreciate, and enjoy wetlands throughout the Carolinas
- Initiating and encouraging activities that engage a broad community in understanding, protecting and preserving our state's wetlands
- Committing to the highest quality work, measurable goals, and work products.



Carolina Wetlands Association

- Forming partnerships with many other organizations such as:
 - NC Conservation League
 - Nature Conservancy
 - Southern Environmental Law Center
 - Wetland Forest Initiative
- Exhibits at various events
- Recognizing Wetland Treasures
- **May is National Wetlands Month**

www.carolinawetlands.org



CarWA has both formal and informal relationships with other organizations. CarWA is affiliated with other organization and other organizations are affiliated with CarWA.

One type of formal relationship is an affiliation which means that organizations combining their resources for complementary activities. Affiliation allows each organization to maintain their autonomy while achieving mutually beneficial efficiencies.

CarWA is affiliated with the following organizations:

NC Conservation Network –

<http://www.nconconservationnetwork.org/affiliates/>

NC Wildlife Federation – <http://www.ncwf.org/about/affiliates/>

SC Conservation Coalition – <http://conservationcoalitions.org/>

Wetlands are wonderful and valuable systems and are important to our well being



What is a wetland?

A wetland is any place where there is shallow water or very soggy soil for part of the year. The soil could be either permanently or seasonally saturated, and over time it takes on the characteristics of a distinct ecosystem. Because of the presence of water, the wetland will develop wet (“hydric”) soils and will provide habitat for wetland plants, which are adapted to the wetter environment.

Why should we care about wetlands? Why do they matter?

Wetlands perform valuable services such as water quality, flood control, critical habitats, erosion protection, protection against rising sea levels, and many others. Wetlands are often described as the “kidneys of the landscape” because of the important natural benefits they provide:

- Wetlands act like a sponge, holding water for a variety of services across the landscape.
- Wetlands protect our communities from flooding.
- Wetlands play a major role in protecting our shorelines.
- Wetlands provide critical fish, wildlife, bird, and amphibian habitat.
- Wetlands clean and filter water for drinking, swimming, boating, and fishing.
- Wetlands help regulate stream flow and recharge our groundwater.
- Wetlands provide beautiful places for education, recreation, and relaxation. In fact, without wetlands, thousands of animals and plants would become extinct, and floods and pollution would be much worse.

Questions?

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To get on our email supporter list, contact Rick Savage