

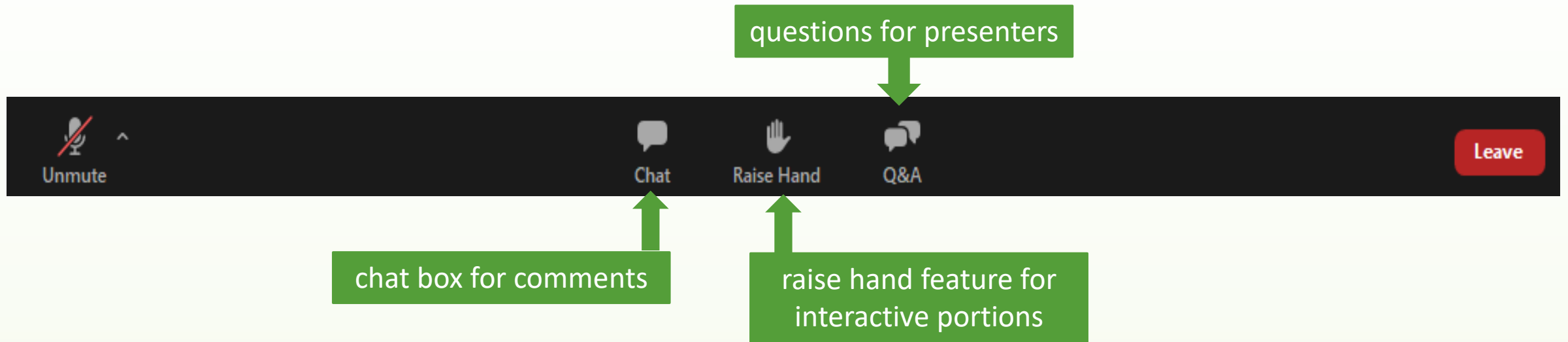


Justice40 and the Wetland Program Development Grants Workshop #3

BENEFITS METHODOLOGY AND METRICS

MAY 9, 2023

Webinar Logistics



To ask a question: Type your question in the Q&A box. We will take questions at the end of the webinar during the interactive discussion.

Technical difficulties: Please send a message to Gabby Vinyard, ERG (Zoom support) or email gabby.vinyard@erg.com.

A recording of the webinar and a PDF version of today's PowerPoint presentation will be posted online following today's session.

Today's Presentation Outline:

- Justice40, Climate Opportunities, and Wetland Program Development Grants
- Review of the Amendments of the Core Elements Framework
- Benefits Discussion

Remaining Wetland Program Development Grants

J40 Stakeholder Workshops Schedule

Communicating Accomplishments: May 23rd

Discuss other potential CEF updates to advance wetland program building efforts and how EPA can support technical transfer and communicate accomplishments.

EPA Summary of Findings and Recommendations: June 6th

EPA will provide an overall summary of findings and recommendations provided by Regional ESTP Coordinators, Tribes, States, and Territories.

Justice40, Climate Opportunities, and Wetland Program Development Grants

Justice40

- In January 2021, President Biden issued [Executive Order 14008 – Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad](#) and announced Justice40 (J40), which mandates that **at least 40%** of the benefits of certain federal programs must flow to disadvantaged communities.
- Six pilots including State Revolving Funds.
- Expanded to include programs funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law that matched the J40 criteria as well as additional programs. Key examples include:
 - **Wetland Program Development Grants (WPDGs)**
 - National Estuary Program
 - Geographic Programs (e.g., Chesapeake Bay, Puget Sound)
 - Gulf Hypoxia Program
 - Section 319 Grant Program

Addressing J40 through Wetland Program Development Grants

All J40 covered programs are required to engage in stakeholder consultations and ensure that community stakeholders are meaningfully involved in determining program benefits.

Covered programs are also required to report benefits directed to disadvantaged communities.

EJ and Climate Actions and Activities were added to the Core Elements Framework.

Changes to the WPDG Request for Applications

- New National Priority for climate change with points for projects that address climate change.
- New National Priority for J40 projects in disadvantaged communities with points for projects that address benefits (outcomes) to those disadvantaged communities.
- Suggestion to have a section in the application workplan that will describe:
 - The tasks in your applications that affect J40 communities.
 - The outputs and outcomes in your applications that affect J40 communities.
 - List, map, or describe the disadvantaged communities affected for your state, tribe, territory or local area.

Amendments to the Core Elements Framework

TRIBAL, STATE, AND TERRITORY

WETLANDS PROGRAM CORE ELEMENT FRAMEWORK 2023

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5	SECTION 2: MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT	11
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New in the CEF Introduction: Suggestions on How To Use the CEF

- Includes examples of Wetland Program Goals

EXAMPLE of new text:

Voluntary Restoration and Protection Program:

- Information needs:
 - Determine if adequate protection is occurring for aquatic resources, including wetlands.
 - **Identify critical wetland ecosystems and address/depict** them in habitat conservation plans or other relevant Tribal or State water resource planning documents. Discuss importance of system. For example, how do they help with climate adaptation and mitigation? Do they store flood waters or act as a barrier to storm surges associated with severe weather events? How do they recycle nutrients? Are they filtering pollutants? Do they support green infrastructure initiatives/nature-based solutions and nonpoint source control projects?
- Information uses/linkages with other core elements:
 - Determine adequacy of program – create, develop, or refine the voluntary restoration and protection program, as needed.
 - Use monitoring and assessment data **and local planning documents to determine priority for purchasing and restoring/enhancing aquatic resource habitats.**
 - Use data to develop a plan that can further communicate the important uses and build partnerships to facilitate science-based restoration and protection activities.



Wetland Program Plans: Equity and Climate

KEY SUMMARY POINTS

- Tribes and States should use the Core Element Framework (CEF) as the foundation for developing a comprehensive wetland program and developing a Wetland Program Plan (WPP).
- Tribes and States can use a suite of activities or one activity simultaneously to address a specific or multiple needs. The actions and activities outline how a Tribe or State could plan, develop, and implement a program to meet its goals without being overly prescriptive.
- Tribes and States should articulate in the WPPs their goals and actions to accomplish over time, provide metrics for tracking success, and support for decision-making. For example, WPPs can include critical issues, such as climate adaptation and environmental justice.
- Tribes and States may leverage Wetland Program Development Grants (WPDGs) to develop and fund specific actions and activities covered in the CEF. Note, in order to be considered eligible for a grant, the proposal needs to demonstrate a linkage with the CEF.
- Tribes and States are encouraged to work with their partners and interested parties (or develop new partnerships) to formalize agreements and actions to promote outreach, education, and other activities jointly where they align with their needs. If part of a WPDG proposal, outreach, education, and partnerships should be linked to one or more of the core elements.
- Tribes and States should use and promote their WPP to publicly communicate their needs and planned actions/activities. If a WPP is funded by EPA, EPA posts the WPP on a publicly accessible EPA webpage.



Core Elements Framework: Menu of Actions and Activities

TEXT Before each Core Element Tables:

”...EPA recommends that Tribes and States first identify their program specific monitoring and assessment needs. After the needs are outlined for the program, then program goals can be identified. The program goals can be used to determine which phase to enter. For example, if your goal is to determine the extent and location of wetland resources within a specific area, **Phase 1** actions and activities are the starting point. If implementation is the focus, then start with **Phase 2**. If program refinement or decision-making is the focus, then start with **Phase 3**.

EPA recommends that you design and build your program to address your specific needs, which could result in a blending of some activities from the same phase or of different phases..”



Final *Draft* of the Core Element Framework: Menu of Activities

Table 2. Phase 2: Monitoring, Data Collection, and Assessments Considerations

Actions	Menu of Activities
a. Ensure the scientific validity of monitoring and laboratory activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draft and peer review Quality Management Plan and Quality Assurance Project Plan• Develop Field Operations Manual• Select, prioritize, and peer review candidate site assessment indicators• Review Tribal/State environmental justice policies and data collection requirements• Review Tribal/State climate strategies and data needs at the regional and local level• Train staff in monitoring and assessment techniques

Final *Draft* of the Core Element Framework: Menu of Activities

Table 8. Phase 2: Voluntary Restoration and Protection Data Collection, and Assessments Considerations

Actions	Program Building Activities
a. Increase wetland acreage through restoration (reestablishment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop restoration and management plans for reestablished wetlands consistent with restoration guidance. Consider tracking: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Acres of wetlands re-established ○ Restoration sites using techniques that comply with guidance ○ Level of function/condition based on indicators • Provide technical assistance to re-establishment projects as needed
a. Improve natural wetland conditions and functions through restoration (rehabilitation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop restoration and management plans for rehabilitated wetlands consistent with restoration guidance. Consider tracking: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Acres of wetlands rehabilitated ○ Improvement on function/condition indicators ○ Net change in water quality, flood control, or habitat ○ Acres of wetlands rehabilitated, improvement on function/condition indicators, net change in water quality, flood control, habitat access to recreation in underserved communities • Provide technical assistance to restoration projects as needed • Share restoration and protection priorities with partners • Develop restoration and management plans for restored wetlands consistent with restoration guidance. Consider tracking: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Number of restoration agreements ○ Acres of wetlands restored through partnerships ○ Acres of priority wetlands restored through partnerships • Provide technical assistance to partners as needed

Benefits Discussion

WPDG J40 Reporting Metrics for FY23

EPA will be reporting on:

1. The **number of grants** awarded with J40 tasks
2. The **percentage of number of awards** made with J40 tasks
3. The **amount of funding associated** with those J40 tasks
4. The **percentage of funding** associated with J40 tasks/awards

EPA will need to report on the benefits associated with those awards at time of award and potentially when the grants close out in 1-4 years.

Category of Benefits of the WPDGs

- A set of benefits of the WPDGs that all projects can report out on not just J40 projects.
- Based off what other EPA grant programs are using.
- A way for us to consolidate all the Core Elements actions and activities to be able to show our successes and the benefits of the WPDG funding to others at a national level.
- Fairly comprehensive.

Categories of Benefits of the WPDGs

- Improves habitat, addresses water quality challenges, or prevents or reduces nonpoint source pollution.
- Reduces, minimizes, or avoids wetland losses or impacts.
- Expands research, education, information, and/or deepens community engagement.
- Expands the adaptive capacity of communities to be resilient to climate change.

Core Elements Framework with Draft Benefits Category

Table 2. Phase 2: Monitoring, Data Collection, and Assessments Considerations

Actions	Menu of Activities	Benefit
a. Ensure the scientific validity of monitoring and laboratory activities	Draft and peer review Quality Management Plan and Quality Assurance Project Plan	Expands training, research, education, information, and/or deepens community engagement.
	Develop Field Operations Manual	Expands training, research, education, information, and/or deepens community engagement.
	Review Tribal/State climate strategies and data needs at the regional and local level	Expands the adaptive capacity of communities to be resilient to climate change.
	Train staff in monitoring and assessment techniques	Expands training, research, education, information, and/or deepens community engagement.

EPA CEF and WPP Information

- Core Element Framework and WPDGs:

<https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/core-elements-effective-state-and-tribal-wetland-programs>

http://water.epa.gov/grants_funding/wetlands/cefintro.cfm

- Approved Wetland Program Plans:

<https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/state-and-tribal-wetland-program-plans>

- October 2009 WPP memorandum from EPA:

http://water.epa.gov/type/wetlands/upload/wetland_program_plan_memorandum.pdf

- EPA Regional Grants Coordinators and ESTP Contacts:

<https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/wetland-program-development-grants-and-epa-wetlands-grant-coordinators>

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