



# **Progress to Date on Using a Watershed Approach to Compensatory Mitigation**

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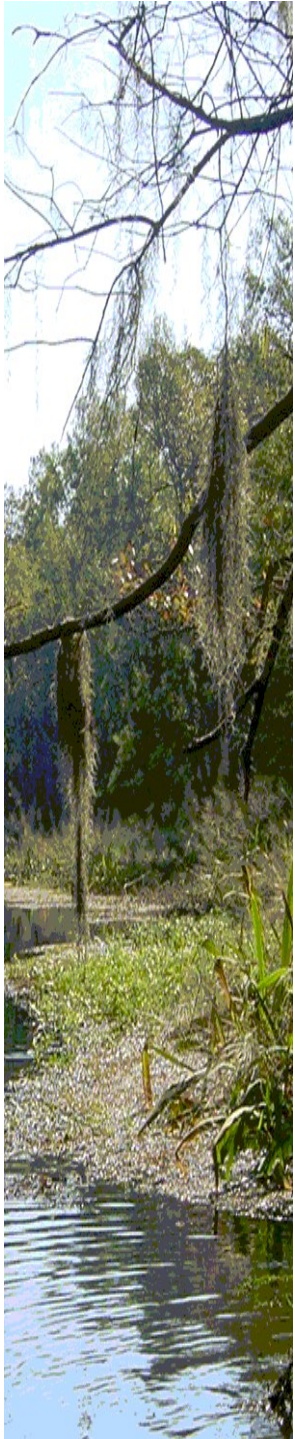
# Why is a Watershed Approach Important for the 404 Program?

NAS finding that “a watershed approach would improve permit decision making”:

## NAS Recommendation:

- Site selection for wetland conservation and mitigation should be conducted on a watershed scale in order to maintain wetland diversity, connectivity, and appropriate proportions of upland and wetland systems needed to enhance the long-term stability of the wetland and riparian systems. Regional watershed evaluation would greatly enhance the protection of wetlands and/or the creation of wetland corridors that mimic natural distributions of wetlands in the landscape.





# **MAP Response to NAS Finding**

MAP Action Item:

Identify criteria for making compensatory mitigation decisions within a watershed context by 2005



# MAP Response to NAS Finding

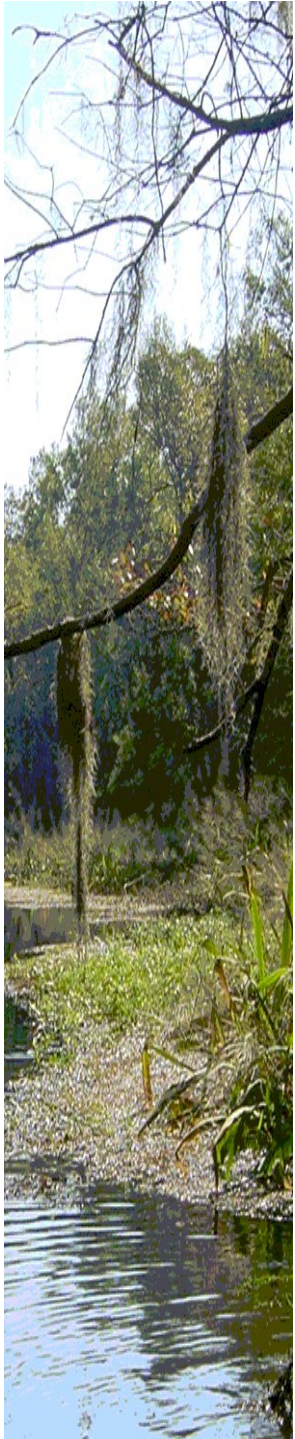
1. MAP Watershed Symposium,  
Washington, DC, May 2004
2. Draft Guidance on Use of a Watershed  
Approach for Compensatory Mitigation  
(currently on hold pending final Mitigation Rule)



# Purpose of the Watershed Symposium

- Clarify what science says about mitigation in a watershed context
- Clarify logical steps when taking a watershed approach to mitigation
- Identify and discuss existing tools/resources used to implement a watershed approach
- Evaluate implementing a watershed approach within the 404 regulatory framework

ELI's summary report: <http://www2.eli.org/research/wetlands.htm>



# Watershed Symposium, May 2004

## Five “Logical Steps” of a watershed-based approach to compensatory mitigation

1. Landscape assessment
2. Historical assessment
3. Assessment of remaining aquatic resources
4. Analysis of priorities and restoration options
5. Determination of where, when, and how much aquatic resources need to be restored



# Recurrent Themes of the Watershed Symposium

- The MAP workgroup should develop guidance on planning and designing mitigation in a watershed context
- The MAP workgroup must define what it means to make mitigation decisions in watershed context
- Three types of tools would be useful in applying a watershed approach to mitigation:
  - Geospatial tools such as GIS models
  - Checklists, rapid assessment tools
  - Site specific tools such as intensive surveys



# draft **Watershed Approach Guidance**

(Drafted by the MAP in 2005, currently on hold)

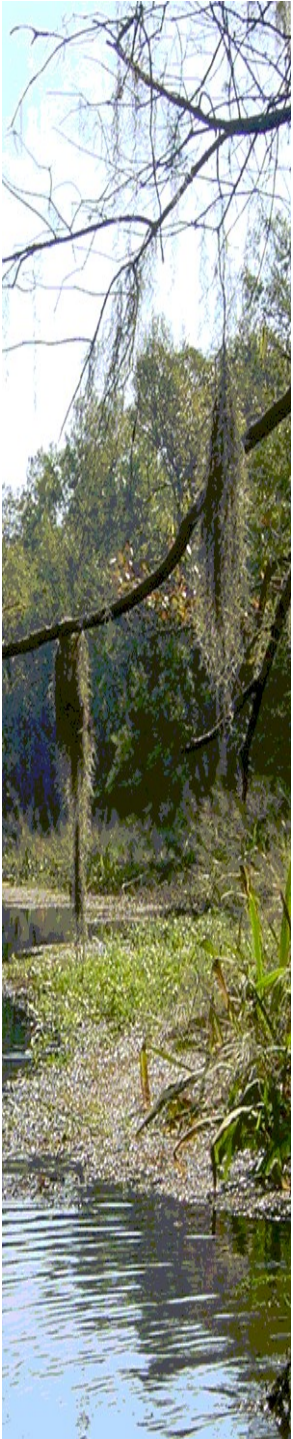
Started with consideration of preference  
for on-site/in-kind

"The committee endorses the watershed  
approach and finds the automatic  
preference for in-kind and on-site  
compensatory mitigation....to be  
inconsistent with that approach."

draft Site/Kind Guidance:

“environmentally preferable”





## **draft Watershed Approach Guidance**

Endorses use of “holistic watershed plan” when available (recognizes that they are not always)

- 1) have been developed in cooperation with appropriate Federal and State agencies;
- 2) consider multiple stakeholder interests and competing land uses; and,
- 3) address issues of habitat, water quality, hydrology, cumulative impacts, and restoration priorities.



## draft **Watershed Approach Guidance**

“... implementing a watershed approach does not mean writing a plan that is expected to guide future permitting decisions. To call for a watershed approach only is to recognize that management of wetland types, functions, and locations requires structured consideration of watershed needs and how wetland types and location serve those needs.”



## **draft Watershed Approach Guidance**

- What should be considered in taking a watershed approach
- Steps for taking a watershed approach
- Programmatic implementation
  - Mitigation Review Teams
  - Standard Operating Procedures
  - Regional General Permits



# **Next Steps for the draft Watershed Approach Guidance**

- **Assess public comments on the proposed Mitigation Rule regarding implementing a watershed approach**
- **Identify if additional MAP guidance is needed:**
  - **Recommending baseline information for applying watershed approach**
  - **Identifying sources of information needed for the watershed approach**
  - **Establishing framework for federal agencies and stakeholders to implement the watershed approach at the local level**
  - **Others?**

Questions?

