

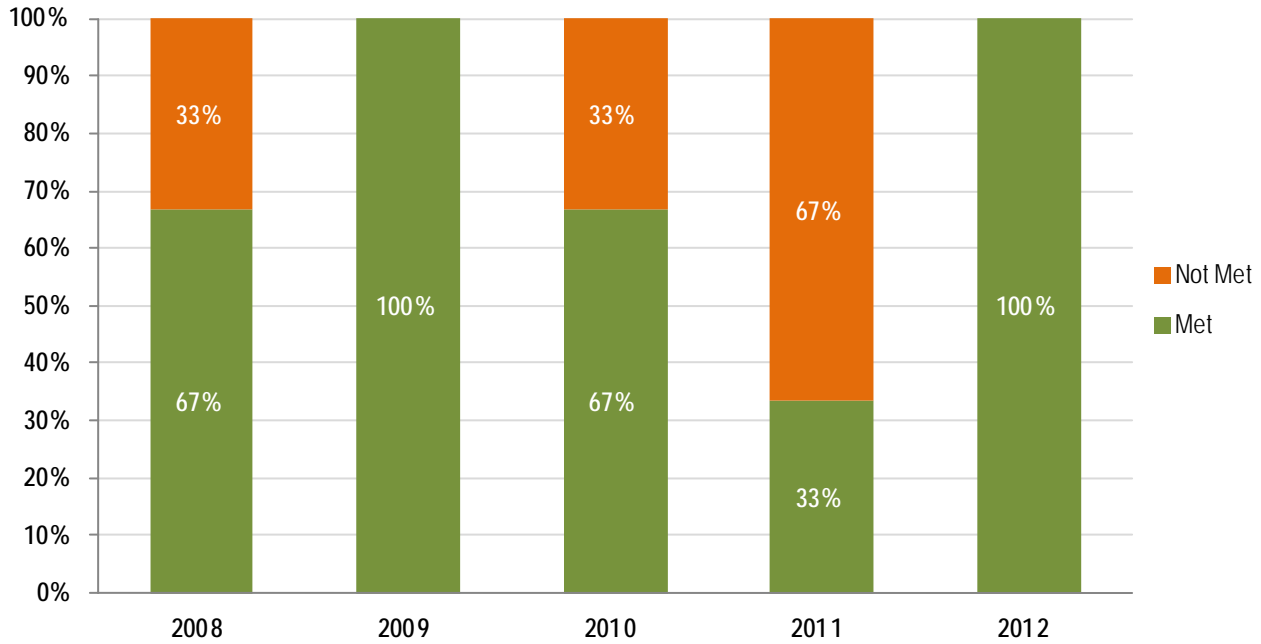
US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



## Subobjective: Wetlands

EPA's Wetlands Program met three-quarters of its commitments in FY 2012. The program has met at least 75% of its goals over the past four years (Figure 59).

Figure 59: Wetlands Subobjective Six-Year Trend



FY 2012 ACS Code	Abbreviated Measure Description	Results and Commitment Status						Appendix Page Number (D-0)/ Figure Number
		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	
<b>Subobjective 2.2.3 Increase Wetlands</b>								
WT-SP21.N11	Net increase wetlands achieved (acres)	96,000 lost	128,000 lost				62,300 lost	D-42
WT-SP22	No net loss of wetlands			No Net Loss	No Net Loss	No Net Loss	No Net Loss	D-43
WT-01	Number wetland acres restored and enhanced (cumulative)	61,856	82,875	103,507	130,000	154,000	180,000	D-43/Fig.60
WT-02a	Number states/tribes increased wetland program capacity in one or more core elements	25	22	22	47	54	44	D-44
WT-02b	Number of core elements developed by states and tribes	11	24	39	27	29	33	D-44
WT-03	Percent CWA 404 permits with greater environ. protection					88%	85%	D-45
WT-04	Number states measuring wetland condition trend	13	14	20	22	29	31	D-45

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

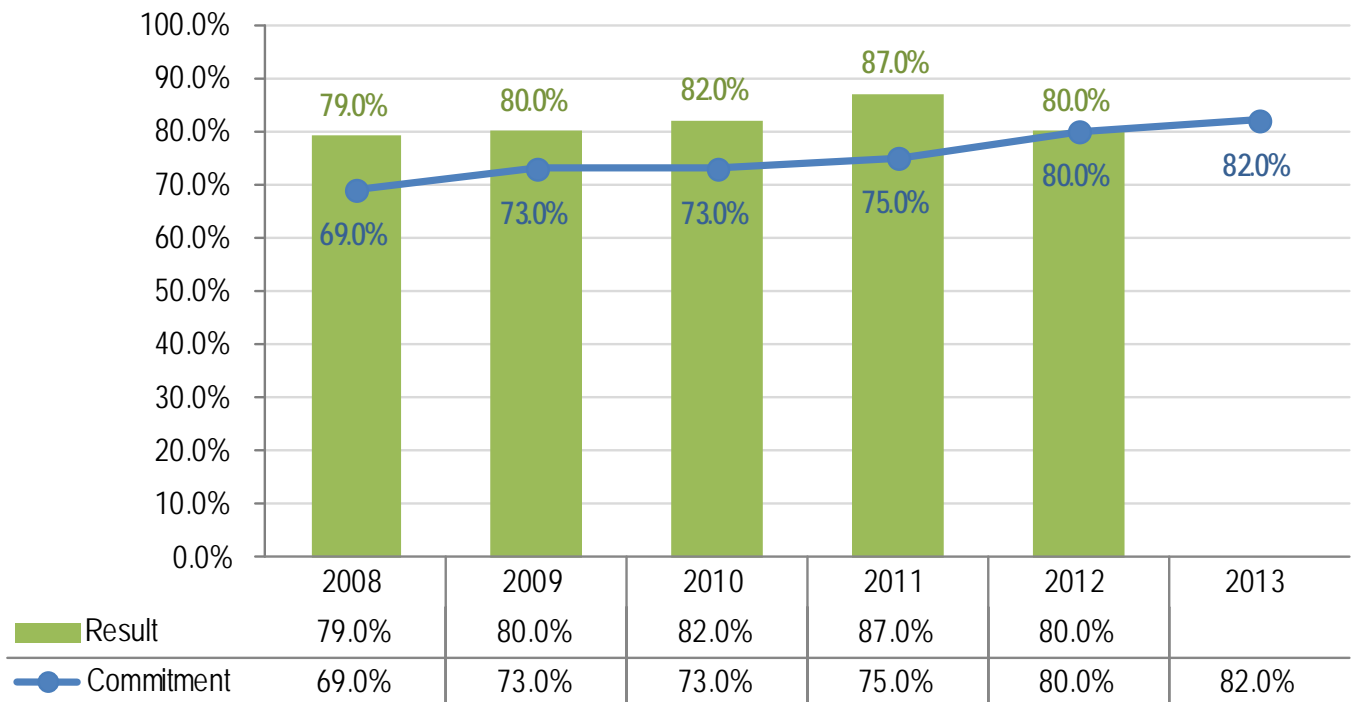
## FY 2012 Performance Highlights and Management Challenges

Wetlands are among our nation’s most critical and productive natural resources. They provide a variety of benefits, such as water quality improvements, flood protection, shoreline erosion control, and ground water exchange. Wetlands are the primary habitat for fish, waterfowl, and other wildlife, providing numerous opportunities for education, recreation, and research. EPA recognizes that the challenges the nation faces in conserving our wetland heritage are daunting and that many partners must work together for this effort to succeed.

**No Net Loss and the Number of Wetland Acres Restored/Enhanced:** In 2012, EPA, in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE), states, and tribes, achieved a “no net loss” of wetlands under the Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 404 regulatory program (SP-22). EPA continues to achieve this commitment through regional involvement and coordination in reviewing 404 permits issued by the COE. With each permit review targeted, EPA 404 permit experts assess whether their involvement resulted in a positive environmental outcome.

EPA continues to exceed expectations in terms of the number of acres of wetlands restored and enhanced, with 180,000 acres restored and enhanced since 2002 (WT-1) (Figure 60). EPA has exceeded its commitment under this measure every year since 2004, due mostly to the combined efforts of local groups to restore wetlands under EPA funding programs. Although it is difficult to determine an accurate number of habitat acres that will be improved and restored—because projects can sometimes take a number of years to design, fund, implement, and complete—EPA has observed a long enough trend to be able to forecast improvements.

**Figure 60: Wetland Acres Restored and Enhanced by Fiscal Year (WT-01)**



EPA and its partners fell short in FY 2012 in achieving a net increase of wetlands on a nationwide basis. According to the latest Status and Trends report, there are 110.1 million acres of wetlands in the conterminous United States, and 62,300 wetland acres were lost over five years. The report, which represents the most up-to-date, comprehensive assessment of wetland habitats in the United States, documents substantial losses in forested and coastal wetlands. The rate of gains from reestablishment of wetlands increased by 17 percent from the previous study period (1998–2004), but the wetland loss rate increased 140 percent during the same time period. Although the losses of wetlands exceeded the gains, the net change was not statistically significant.

The reasons for the overall decline in wetland area were complex and potentially reflected economic conditions, land use trends, changing wetland regulation and enforcement measures, conservation initiatives, the impacts of the 2005 hurricane season, and climatic changes. Wetland gains were due to agricultural conservation programs, wetland reestablishment and creation involving partners, land retirement programs, and the creation of freshwater ponds.

**State and Tribal Wetlands Program Capacity:** As of FY 2012, 44 states and 29 tribes have built capacities in the core program elements of wetlands monitoring, regulation, voluntary restoration and protection, and wetland water quality standards (WT-2a/b).<sup>18</sup>

**Number of States Measuring Trends in Condition:** The number of states where the trend in wetland condition has been measured, as defined through biological metrics and assessments, increased from 29 states in FY 2011 to 31 states in FY 2012 (WT-4). This measure currently counts states that are “on track” to assess trends in wetland condition for at least 20% of their state by the end of FY 2012. Trends assessment involves establishing a baseline, then reassessing the same areas to evaluate trends. The increase among states in building wetlands monitoring programs is due to continued active participation by approximately 40 states on the National Wetlands Monitoring and Assessment Work Group, and involvement of EPA regions in the Regional Wetlands Monitoring Work Groups and National Wetland Condition Assessment.

---

<sup>18</sup>This measure was changed in 2010 to gauge the number of states and tribes that have built the core elements of their programs (WT-2a) and have reached the point of managing fully functional wetland programs. The new measure tracks closely with EPA's Core Elements Framework for State and Tribal Wetlands Program, which provides a more objective basis for measurement.