Wetland Restoration and Protection Prioritization

The following prioritization outline was established to identify areas where wetland restoration and protection could have the most significant water quality benefits and are the most practical in terms of key factors. This methodology includes two different categories of criteria, which can be combined or looked at individually. The first category focuses on potential water quality benefits while the second focuses on practicality or ease of restoration or protection. It is possible many areas which rank high in the "Water Quality" category will rank low in the "Practicality" category, but these categories should not be mutually exclusive. Although there may be few areas ranking high in both categories, the division will allow the data to have a greater variety of applications.

Criteria	Description (Rationale)	Details	Priority
Water Quality			
Proximity to a Waterbody	How close is the potential restoration/protection wetland to a stream, river, lake or pond? (Surface water runoff from land near a waterbody is less likely to be infiltrated, so wetlands located in these areas can filter surface water runoff before it reaches the waterbody.)	Intersects Waterbody	Highest Priority
		Within 500 feet	Priority
Headwaters	Does the potential restoration/protection wetland intersect a stream or intermittent stream designated as headwaters (outflow in LLWFA)? (Wetlands in headwater areas protect surface water quality at the source.)	Intersects headwaters area	Priority
Proximity to a Protected Area	How close is the potential restoration/ protection wetland to land which is likely to maintain natural land cover (nature preserves, state forest or game areas, conservation easements, etc.)? (Wetlands in close proximity to areas with natural land cover could have greater water quality benefits because large areas of natural lands (whether wetland or uplands) will provide larger areas for either filtration or infiltration.)	Within a protected area	Highest priority
		Intersects a protected area (partially within or adjacent)	High priority
		Within 100 feet of a protected area	Priority
Surrounding Land Use Intensity	How likely is the surrounding land use to produce runoff that could be delivered to the potential restoration/ protection wetland?. (Wetlands located in areas with increased runoff can filter the water before it reaches a waterbody.)	Dominant land use within 1,000 feet is urban	Highest Priority
		Dominant land use within 1,000 feet is agriculture	Priority
Proximity to Roads	How close is the potential restoration/ protection wetland to the road network? (Roads produce large amounts of runoff which can be filtered by adjacent wetlands.)	Intersects 66 foot road buffer area	Priority
Subwatersheds with High Wetland Loss	Is the potential restoration/protection wetland located within a subwatershed with a high percentage of wetland loss? (Targeting restoration/protection projects in subwatersheds with highest percentages of wetlands loss will help mitigate problems associated with wetland loss such as sedimentation, flooding and nutrient loading. Wetland loss correlates to a decrease in water quality.)	Subwatersheds with highest percentage of wetland loss	Priority

Proximity to Existing Wetland	How close is the potential restoration or protection wetland to an existing wetland? (Restoring wetlands in close proximity to existing wetlands could have greater water quality benefits because conditions may be more suitable for a successful restoration.)	Intersects	Highest priority
		Within 500feet	High priority
		Within 1,000 feet	Priority
Significant Biological Features (protection only)	Does the protection wetland intersect with an area which has a high biorarity index score? (Areas with significant biological features have more potential to be intact, high quality wetlands that are fully performing water quality protection functions.)	High bio-rarity score	Priority
Practicality			
Development Threat	Is the potential restoration/protection wetland in an area that has a high potential for being developed? (Protecting or restoring wetlands in areas that are under development pressure could be difficult because of high land values and perceived negative issues with wetlands in a developed area.)		Highest priority
			Priority
Wetland size	Is the potential restoration/protection wetland larger than 40 acres and contained within one or a couple parcels?		Priority
Current Land Use (restoration only)	Does the current land use within the potential restoration wetland allow for easy restoration? (Wetland restoration on agricultural land can often be accomplished with a simple drain tile break. Wetland restoration in a forested area is more likely to include more intensive engineering (water control structures, berming, regrading, etc.). Wetland restoration in urban areas is often impractical and cost prohibitive.)	Dominant land use is agriculture	Priority
Parcel Fragmentation (restoration only)	How much of the potential restoration wetland is contained within a single parcel? (Restoring wetlands which involve only one landowner are the most practical.)	85% or more of the area is located in one parcel	Priority
Water Availability (restoration only)	Does the potential restoration wetland intersect a stream or intermittent stream designated as headwaters (outflow in LLWFA)? (Impeding upstream drainage should be less likely in headwater areas and restoration could be easier given the input of water.)	Intersects headwaters area	Priority
Location in a Protected Area (restoration only)	Is the potential restoration wetland contained within a protected area? (Wetland restoration on land that is already protected (nature preserves, state forest or game areas, conservation easements, etc.) should be easier because developed land uses are already restricted on the property.)	Within a protected area	Priority