

# Anchorage Wetlands Management Plan

Update 2012



Municipality of Anchorage Planning Department





## Background:

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- 1972 Clean Water Act
- 1979 Anchorage Coastal Management Plan
  - Provided guidance for marine/coastal waters and related wetlands (tidal)
- 1982 Wetlands Management Plan
  - Focus on freshwater wetlands (not tidal-influenced)
- 1996 Wetlands Management Plan
  - Full revision, updated:
    - Wetland designations
    - Mapping
    - Management strategies

# A WMP Purpose:



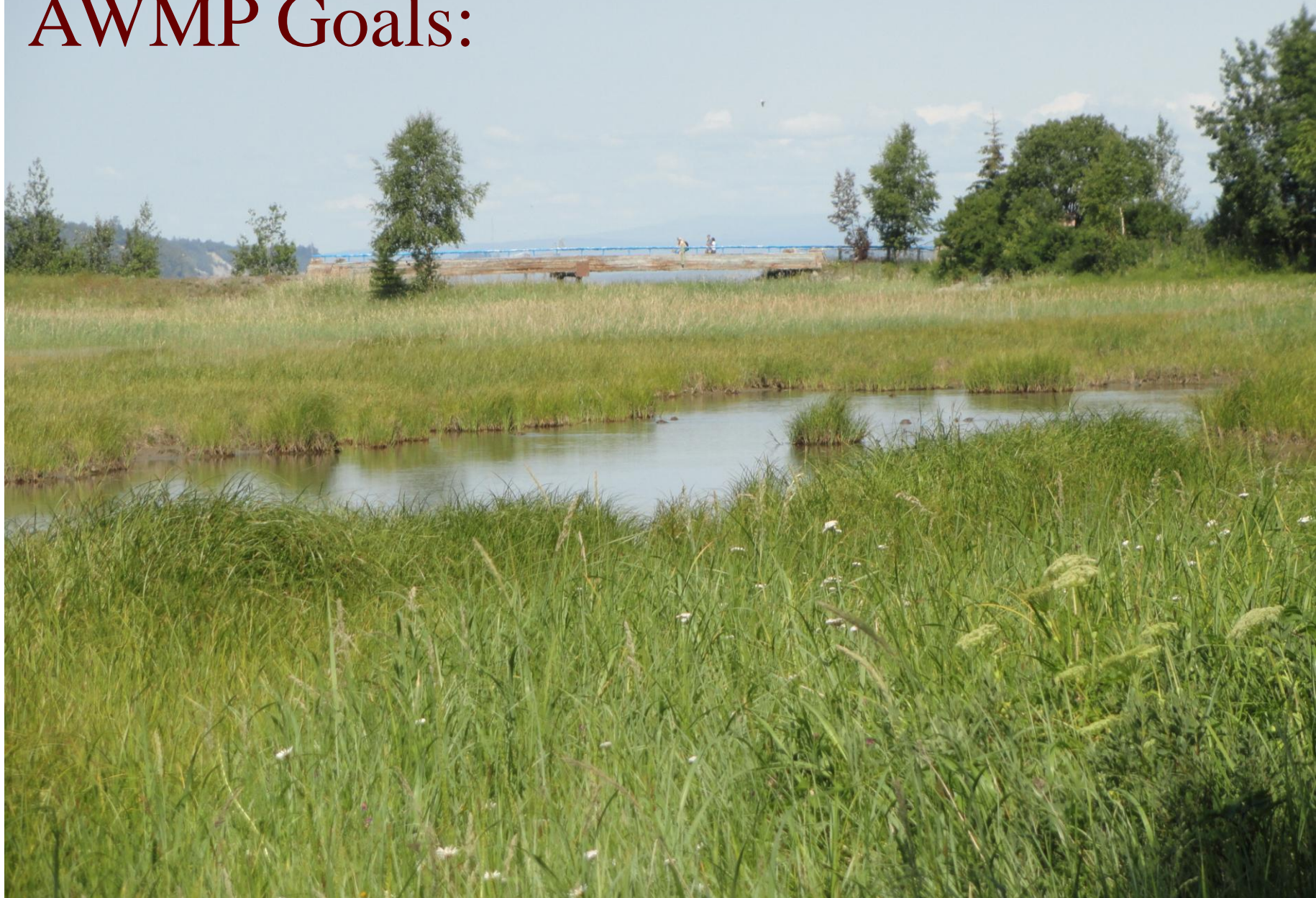


## AWMP Purpose:

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- Provide accurate mapping and assessments of freshwater wetlands within the Municipality;
- Provide a hierarchy of values for wetland units based on function;
- Derive management strategies that balance wetland integrity and function while allowing development that would not cause adverse impacts.

# AWMP Goals:





## Goals:

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- Identify and provide **protection** for wetlands that support important ecological and hydrological functions.
- Ensure that development in wetlands minimizes **water quality** degradation and maintains wetland hydrologic functions.
- Provide a **balance** between protection of higher value sites and the development of lower value areas.
- Provide for **timely and predictable authorization** of development projects in low-value wetlands and to maintain use of the **General Permits**.
- Supplements goals of the **Anchorage Coastal Management Plan**:
  - Protect the basic natural functions served by coastal marshes, freshwater marshes and wetlands.
  - Prevent public liabilities associated with development in these areas.

## 2012 Update:

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- 1996 revision was more substantial
- 2012 only required an update of mapping and current regulations:
- 2012 Changes:
  - Designations
  - Mapping: added new wetlands, omitted sites developed by permit,
  - Wetland Acreage
  - General Permit
  - Management Strategies
  - Chapter 4 –
    - Management Strategies/Enforceable Policies, reformatted for clarity
  - Federal and State updates



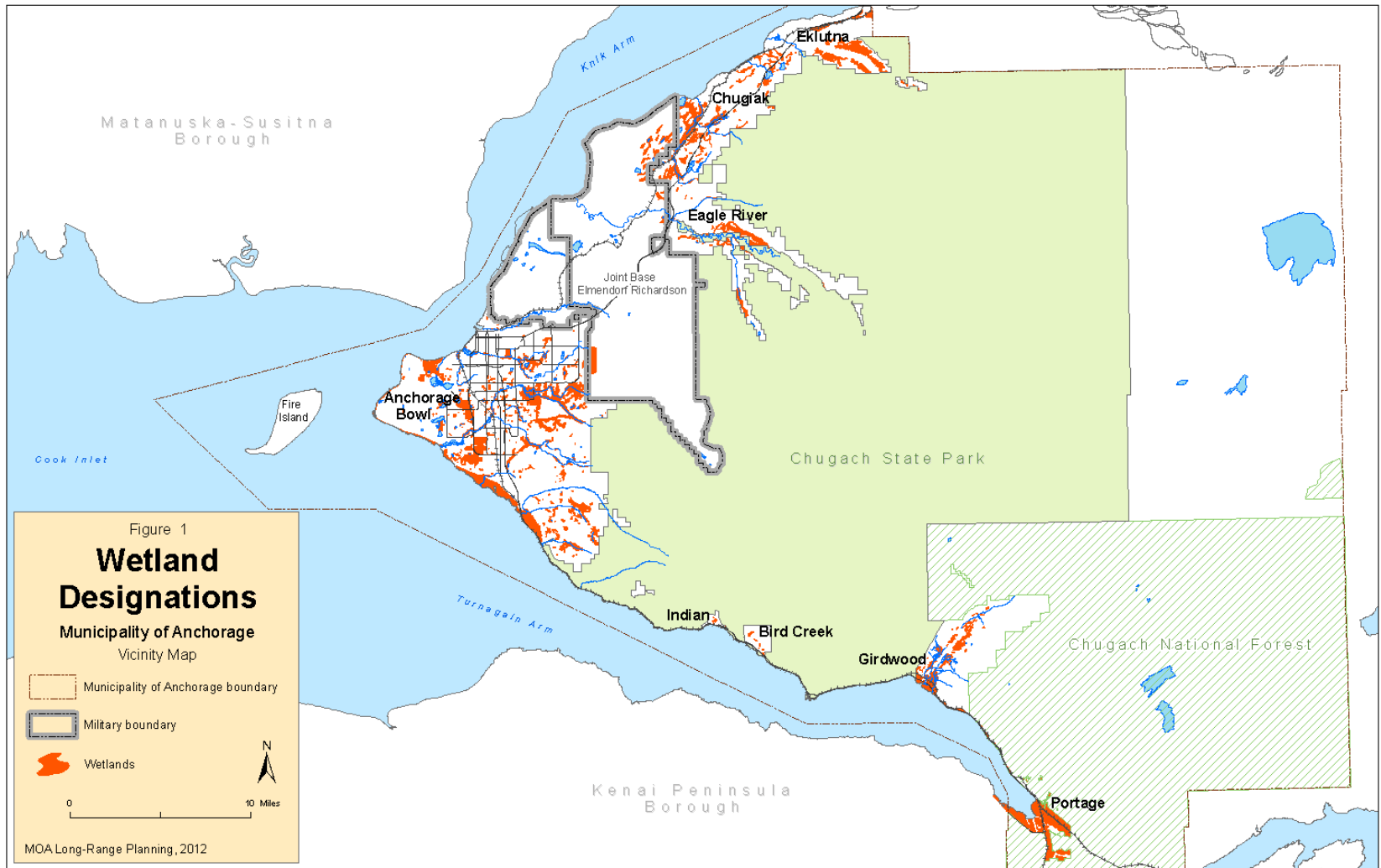


## Wetland Designations:

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- **Anchorage Wetlands Assessment Methodology (AWAM)**
  - Developed in 1990's to assign scores based on functions and values
  - Scores derived designations
- **Designations:**
  - A – highest values and functions,
  - B – areas of higher and lower values; higher value portions to remain intact
  - C – lowest values, generally smaller sites,
- **New “*Classifications*”:**
  - D – Field-verified as wetlands. Need to apply AWAM to designate as A,B, or C.
  - P – “potential wetlands”, hydric soils/aerials indicate wetlands. Requires field investigations to verify boundary and AWAM to determine designation.
  - U – mentioned in GP; newly mapped wetlands assessed with AWMP and now “C”, eligible for GP.

# Map Updates



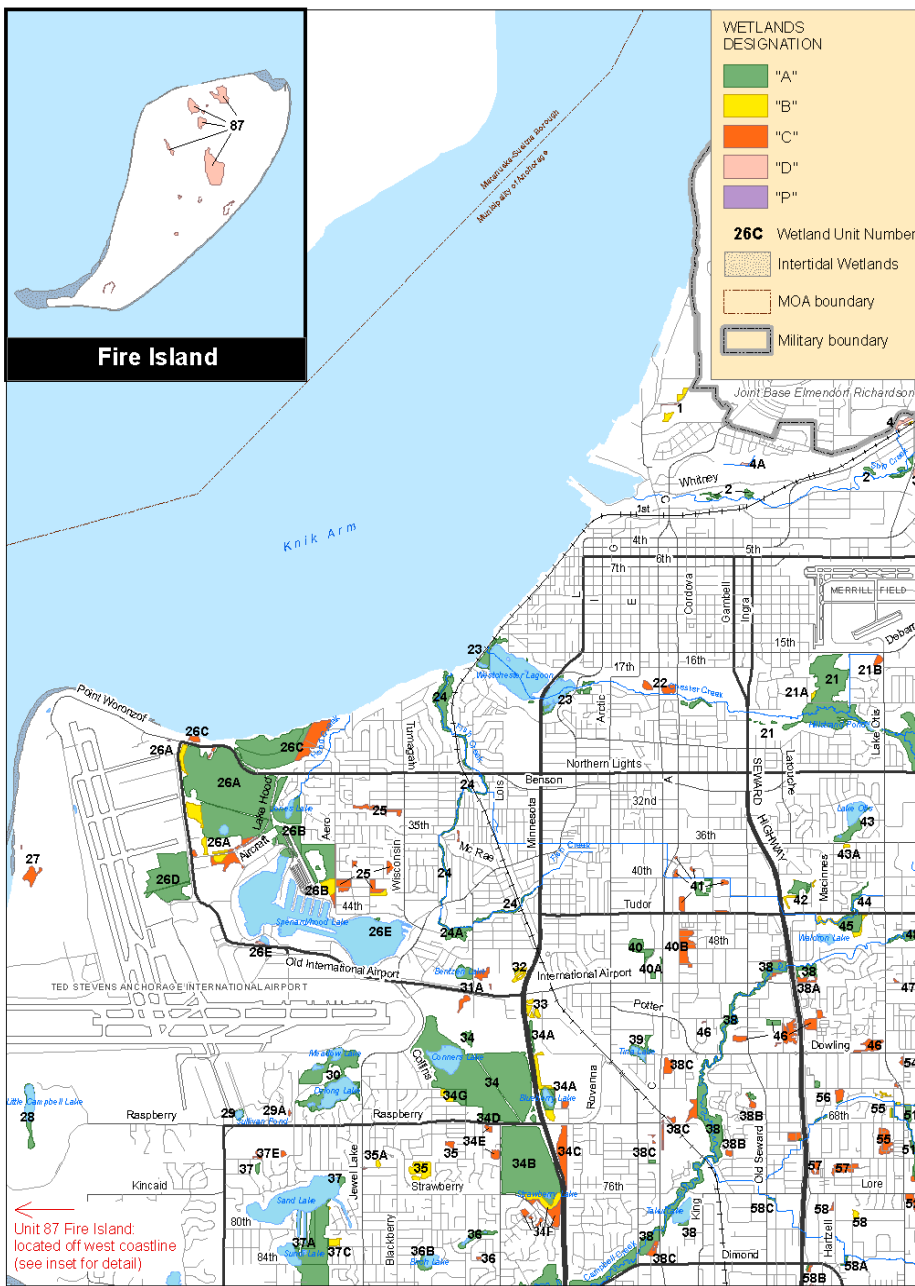


Figure 3

## Wetland Designations Anchorage Bowl - Northwest

- Maps separated by region:  
Anchorage Bowl (4 maps)  
Chugiak/Eagle River  
Indian-Bird  
Girdwood  
Portage

- Designations and Classifications of wetlands color coded.

- Wetland Unit or Site # corresponds to Management Strategy Tables.

- Disclaimer: Inaccuracies possible!

- Maps available online or in the Wetlands Atlas (Bowl, Chugiak-Eagle River).

- When in doubt, call MOA or COE to verify.

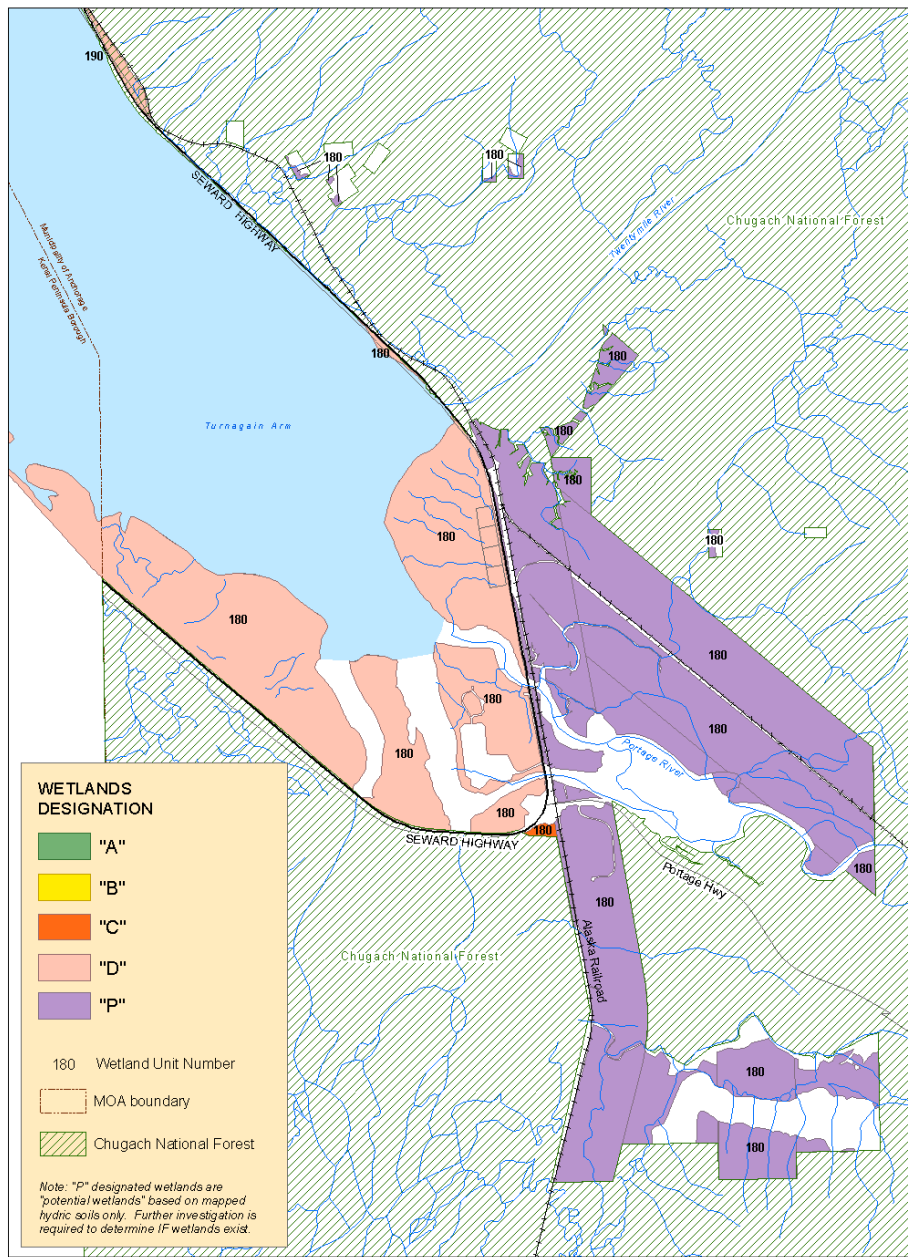
## Wetland Acreage:

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- In the 1950's, estimate of wetlands within the Anchorage Bowl: 18,000 acres....
- Different mapping techniques with each plan resulted in Municipality-wide gross errors:
  - 1982 AWMP: 9408 acres
  - 1996 AWMP: 11,292 acres
  - 2012 AWMP: 20,136 acres

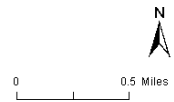
Previous acreage based on *estimates* of wetlands field verified.

Modern GIS techniques improved accuracy.



This information was prepared by the MTA as part of an initial location, identification and delineation of wetlands in the Turnagain Arm area. It is not intended to be used for regulatory purposes, especially on private property without the ability to provide a record of the work. To obtain the most accurate information, it is recommended that individuals consult with the Corps of Engineers or the appropriate regulatory agency for more detailed information or assistance. MTA Long-Range Planning staff are responsible for the data and maps and do not warrant the accuracy of the information. For the most accurate, up-to-date wetland mapping information, contact the MTA Long-Range Planning Section at 907-451-4100.

Figure 9  
**Wetland Designations**  
 Turnagain Arm: Portage



## General Permit:

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- ❑ GP's are issued/authorized by COE, administered by MOA
- ❑ Reauthorized every 5 years, after review by COE
- ❑ 5 Regional GP's administered by MOA
  - 5 categories of activities allowed (residential, roads, commercial, industrial, resource restoration/enhancement)
  - Site restrictions and design criteria, e.g.
    - ❑ Meets MOA Stormwater regulations
    - ❑ Stream setbacks
    - ❑ Construction timing window (nesting birds)
- ❑ COE verifies use of the GP (projects >16,500 s.f.) OR
- ❑ MOA can issue an Opinion of Compliance in certain instances (project is minimal in scope, <16,500 s.f.)

# AWMP Management Strategies

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- Many wetlands within stream setbacks formerly designated “C”, now “A” in Little Campbell Creek watershed
- Preserved wetlands now “A”
  - Preserved by COE permit, Conservation Easement, designated natural resource area/parkland
- Synchronized with GP Site Restrictions and Design Criteria



## Chapter 4 reformatted and clarified:

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- ❑ **Definitions, Designations, Setbacks/Buffers**
- ❑ **Title 21 update**
  - Existing Code used until the Provisionally Adopted Code has final Assembly approval.
- ❑ **Policy**
  - Clarifies preferred sequencing: wetland permitting prior to plat
  - Restates use of platting techniques, i.e. cluster housing, to maintain integral wetland functions.
  - Clarifies agency and MOA Department roles/responsibilities
- ❑ **BMPs (Best Management Practices)**
  - Guidelines for construction in wetlands

## Federal and State Updates:

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- ❑ Alaska Coastal Management Program (?)
- ❑ COE Permit Process
  - Flowchart of process
  - Alaska Regional Supplement to COE Wetland Delineation Manual (2007)
  - Anchorage Debit/Credit Methodology (2011)
  - Nationwide Permit Regulations (updated 2007)
  - General Permits (reauthorized in 2010)
  - Mitigation: per Federal Mitigation Rule (2008)
    - ❑ Provides guidance on use of Wetland Mitigation Banks, In-Lieu-Fee Programs, appropriate compensation (Chapter 6)





## AWMP Review and Adoption Process:

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- ❑ Technical Review Draft – Dec, 2011
- ❑ Public Hearing Draft – Feb, 2012
- ❑ Planning and Zoning Commission (May, 2012)
- ❑ Assembly (July, 2012)
- ❑ Adoption (August, 2012)

