

15 Cumulative Impacts of the Long-Term Plan

The impact analysis did not identify any negative impact of the Long-Term Plan which would lead to increasing impacts over time or space. Impacts that were identified were found to be localized or limited. The exception to this could be in water management. If the BMPs were to be applied with little care or planning, then negative impacts to the County's wetlands could result. However, it is anticipated that the various process controls and oversight mechanisms, as well as guidance imparted through the Wetlands Management Plan and the BMP Manual, will be sufficient to ensure this is not the case. The development of an overarching, comprehensive County-wide marsh management plan through the Screening Committee, under which the Wetlands Management Plan will be subsumed, is also intended to assist in this process.

There are some positive impacts to the implementation of the Long-Term Plan that should be cumulative in nature. For one, implementing an IPM program for mosquito control should help to ensure that the next novel mosquito-borne disease to reach Suffolk County will have less significant impacts than might be the case without such a program in place, as was the case with WNV in 1999 and subsequent years. Secondly, use of progressive water management to manage the County's wetlands should improve habitat qualities in many areas, potentially leading to better estuarine conditions as a result. The linkages between salt marshes and their estuaries are not tight, but there is significant evidence that healthy marshes lead to healthier estuaries. Improvement to the County's estuaries has important implications for maritime industries, especially fisheries and fishing dependent businesses.

Finally, better public outreach to accurately portray the County vector control program and to demonstrate the effectiveness of the program may alleviate the fears that are currently expressed by many about vector control – fears that often arise because of misapprehension of the program in terms of what its aims are and how it achieves those aims. The general public should come to understand that the County does not achieve mosquito control through poorly designed and unsound applications of pesticides to merely prevent some mosquito nuisance effects. Rather, the public will understand the County conducts its business guided by scientific data collection and then largely achieves its ends by applying ecological principles, thus improving County marshes and associated environmental systems.

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