

17 Irretrievable Commitment of Resources in Implementing the Long-Term Plan

Implementation of the Long-Term Plan may require the commitment of certain resources in ways that make them unavailable for other purposes.

For one, implementation of the Long-Term Plan will require financial resources. Although governmental financing is not a zero-sum enterprise, expenditures made to advance vector management may not be available for other public purposes. Therefore, Suffolk County must commit to an allocation of certain financial resources towards vector control. This is mitigated to some degree by partial reimbursements from New York State under Health Threat conditions for certain operational costs, and the potential for cost offsets through grants and other financial support for marsh management projects, especially those that qualify as restoration efforts. Furthermore, capital expenditures, such as the ABDL expansion and the purchase of equipment to support water management, can be bonded, so that the fiscal impact occurs over many fiscal years instead of a single year. Fortunately, most recommendations can be implemented with existing resources. County-wide marsh restoration will likely require grants, cooperative agreements, or other supplemental funding.

Secondly, the implementation of progressive water management in the County's salt marshes is not necessarily reversible, and some of the procedures that are reversible may not be simple to undo. The grid-ditching of the 1920s and 1930s is a good example. In many instances it may prove to be impractical to undo the grid-ditch system, and in others it will be physically impossible to do so entirely. The alterations described in the Wetlands Management Plan do not intend to restore the County's wetlands back to some unknown pristine state. Rather, they are intended to be implemented in an appropriate and site-sensitive fashion. The goal is to promote biodiversity, and restore the marsh to as natural a state as possible. Nonetheless, it is possible that physical changes to particular wetlands settings will also prove to be difficult to significantly modify, or perfectly reverse. For this reason, the County is only employing techniques that have been shown to be successful elsewhere, and is doing so in a judicious manner that allows for a great deal of project oversight and review.

No other aspect of the Long-Term Plan appears to require a commitment of resources that cannot be undone or alleviated.