



WETLANDS ARE INFRASTRUCTURE

They filter water, store floods, support habitat, and connect New Kent to the Chesapeake Bay.

1

FILTER WATER

Wetlands trap sediment and support water quality in local rivers and tributaries.

2

STORE FLOODS

Tidal and nontidal systems hold water and reduce downstream flood impacts.

3

SUPPORT HABITAT

Marshes, streams, and forested wetlands sustain fish, wildlife, and corridors.

4

CONNECT THE BAY

Pamunkey and Chickahominy systems carry local effects into the Bay watershed.

The paper treats wetlands as finite public assets whose local functions may not be replaced by distant credits.

AVOIDANCE BEATS REPLACEMENT.

DIRECT AND INDIRECT DAMAGE

A project can affect wetlands through construction, water demand, runoff, noise, and fragmentation.

PROJECT IMPACT

- Fill and grading
- Groundwater drawdown
- Off-site mitigation
- Long-term change



PROTECTIVE RULE

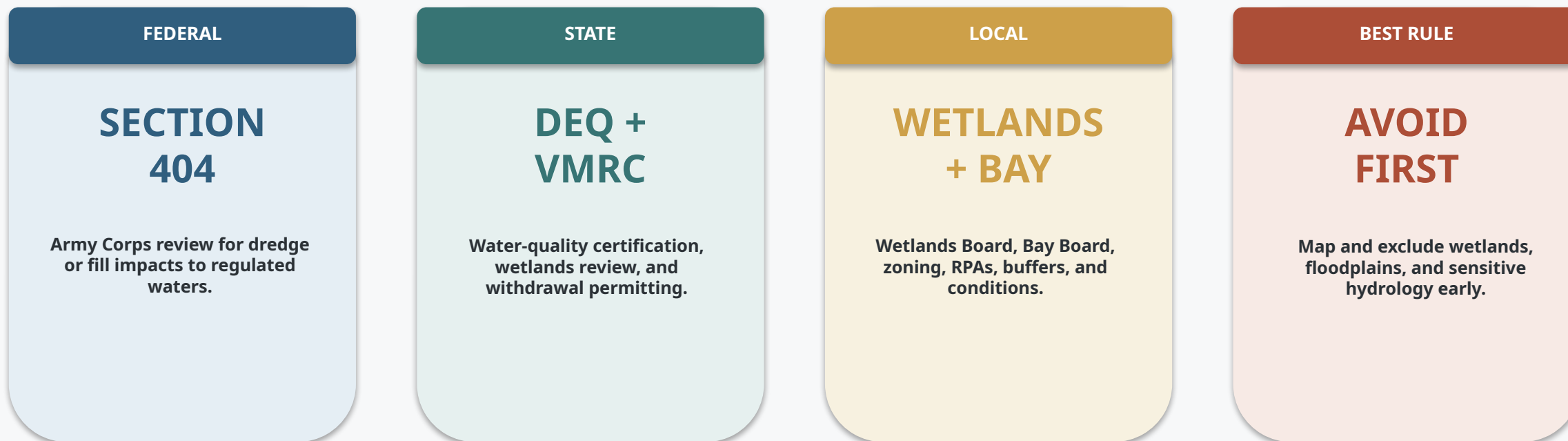
- Avoid wetlands and RPAs
- Restrict cooling withdrawals
- Replace function locally
- Monitor hydrology and plants

Minimization and compensation come after the first question: can the impact be avoided altogether?

DESIGN AROUND THE RESOURCE.

FOUR LAYERS OF PROTECTION

Federal, state, and local tools overlap, but strong local standards can close practical gaps.



Strong local review makes avoidance, public participation, monitoring, and local functional replacement enforceable.

PROTECT FUNCTION, NOT JUST ACREAGE.

THE CITIZEN 4x4

Four requirements can move wetland protection to the front of the application process.

- 01

MAP BEFORE DESIGN

Require independent delineation and hydrologic assessment before public hearings.
- 02

REQUIRE CUP

Use public review and site-specific conditions for every data-center proposal.
- 03

KEEP MITIGATION LOCAL

Prioritize on-site or nearby replacement of acreage and function.
- 04

BOND THE PROMISE

Fund long-term monitoring, restoration, and adaptive management for failures.

Wetland protection is strongest when the ordinance prevents avoidable damage instead of pricing it afterward.

MAP IT. AVOID IT. MONITOR IT.