



Forestry Workgroup Meeting Conference Call

April 1, 2020
9am-11am

Conference Line: 929-205-6099 Meeting ID: 200-260-643

URL: <https://zoom.us/j/200260643>

Attendees:

Nora Jackson, CRC, *Staffer*
Sally Claggett, USFS, *Coordinator*
Rebecca Hanmer, *Chair*
Katherine Brownson, USFS
Anne Hairston-Strang, MD DNR
Iris Allen, MD DNR
Amy Hruska, SERC
Judy Okay, VA DOF
Lara Johnson, VA DOF

Ryan Davis, Alliance
Jenny McGarvey, Alliance
Teddi Stark, PA DCNR
Kesha Braunskill, DE DNREC
Cassandra Davis, NY DEC
Lydia Brinkley, USC
Patti Webb, DE DNREC
Frank Rogers, CI

New Bay RFB Buffer Program

Sally Claggett, USFS

Sally reviewed the New Bay Buffer Program presented to the PSC in January, to help accelerate the progress towards buffer goals. The goal is creating a consistent, stable and funded program so the states can build up their capacity towards reaching their goals. It outlines potential state/PSC actions and next steps and covers ongoing work with a financial consultant.

Commented [BK-F1]: I think our finance expert wants us to stop distributing this document, so we might want to pull it off the meeting webpage...

Questions and Comments

- Rebecca commented that since wetlands are also included in this plan, we should be working with floodplain management folks, or look at other options for additional funding sources. Sally said that we have been working with wetlands group, but not floodplain. Suggested working with groups like ACE, NRCS and FEMA.
- In Maryland, they do restrict plantings in floodways, since it's tied to the flood risk of occupied housing and observed flood frequency. PA and VA have similar issues.
- Anne commented that we should be focusing up in the headwaters to prevent flooding, where buffer plantings can have more impact, and cost less. Raising awareness about different BMP options would help move away from the focus on floodplain restrictions.
- Rebecca asked about connecting with the state revolving loan funds, even if we don't use the money directly.
- Would this funding mechanism operate differently than conservation easements?
 - Easements are funded in many different ways, so it is possible, but this is about how to increase new buffer plantings and credits, generating new credits for the TMDL and MS4s. Easements would conserve existing land.
- There is an opportunity in the GIT-funded financial consultant contract to work with other subgroups, and Anne commented including our ongoing work, The Healthy Forests project, looking at financing options, the Chesapeake conservancy crediting/trading work, and trading programs in the various states to look for other areas of opportunity. The consultants are looking for input and information, from a policy/managerial sector, not just foresters.

Action item: Send suggestions of potential candidates for the subgroup to Sally or Nora.

Commented [BK-F2]: Hmm.. was this for other groups that we should look at collaborating with? This could be clearer, but I don't really remember what we were asking for so don't know how to clarify....

2020 GIT Funding Proposals

Discussing potential projects and ideas for the FY20 GIT funding.

- Any GIT funding proposals we put forward should align with our workplan.
- Judy Okay discussed issues with the state nurseries, who sometimes run out of riparian species by January. They need support to provide a variety of species for spring planting projects. Multiple planned projects for this spring have been postponed to the fall due to Covid-19.
- Frank Rogers talked about a program in WV, where the state nursery donates leftover stock and they create “micro-nurseries” with schools. They pot them up, and the school maintains them over the summer, but species are mainly for urban/community planting.
- With two projects from the last round of GIT funding going on, Frank noticed a lot of issues with communication between the different groups collaborating on one project, we need to work on crossing those barriers and ensuring the full potential of a project.
- The issue of tree removal for stream restoration projects is another potential proposal. NRCS engineers and ACE may advise to clear riparian areas and harden shorelines for their projects. As a group, how can we promote natural stream channel design, and bring the focus back to retaining existing trees?
 - Sally suggested visiting completed restoration sites or looking at aerial imagery to see amounts of tree removal. Judy Okay and Frank Rogers agreed to talk with Tom Schueler to draft a concept of this.
 - Anne suggested reaching out to Eric Hines from NRCS in MD, to include in this conversation as well.
 - Webinar with Tom Schueler and David Wood about stream restoration issues following this meeting, link shared.

Proposed Non-TMDL Land Use Classification

Peter Claggett, USGS

Peter reviewed the new land use classifications and schema, addressing issues with the previous classifications and how this will improve the model and be more useful for conservation and restoration decisions. Request feedback on the timber harvest classification in the production category, rather than the Forest category.

Questions and Comments

- We aren’t sure of the implications of classifying timber harvest as production, but Anne said she didn’t see any issues with it except there might be times when it would be difficult to distinguish harvest from natural succession.
 - Peter said, from a mapping perspective, as soon as a cleared parcel undergoes succession and is fully “treed”, it would be reclassified into forest. When that forest is harvested, it will return to the production category. They can also forecast change, to predict harvest cycles. Looking at the areas going in and out of forest they can get a sense of the harvest cycle.
- In reference to the three-year, post-harvest window in which a forest is considered “disturbed” Sally asked if a disturbed forest would automatically revert to “Forest” in 3 years?
 - Peter said it could be built in, since those years aren’t mapped. If they model it for the future, it could be done. So from 2021-2023, we are stuck with 2017 data. For example, if an area was harvested in 2017, do we automatically say it’s back to forest in 2020?

The only way to do that would be to expedite incorporating silviculture into the land change model. Is this a priority for the Forestry Workgroup?

- Anne discussed issues with remote detection of selective cutting, and concerns with the impact on the state TMDL credits. It would be hard to match/detect timber harvest from land cover with what we're reporting, because of selective harvest in hardwoods.
 - Peter explained that what is mapped as timber harvest will not impact the numbers that the states report for the TMDL progress. This classification roles up perfectly into the old classification, by design. This work is more for understanding if we can map this for the future and models after 2025. Sally will continue to work with Peter on this issue.
 - Judy Okay discussed looking into certain causes of natural loss, specifically ash trees and upland flooding from road projects. It would be worth trying to track and look at those losses, especially in unprotected areas. Peter used ghost forests in the tidal marshes as an example, where we might not see the tree death that is happening now until 10 years later, so learning more about the landscape shift can help forecast change.

Round Robin Updates

Maryland- Backyard buffer program was cancelled since the stay-at-home order, and Iris Allen is filling in for Joe Winters who moved onto a new position recently. Contract was awarded for the economic strategy, two virtual biomass roundtables, all in pursuit of keeping markets in Maryland for forest products.

Pennsylvania- Introduced a webinar series using presenters from the cancelled buffer summit, hired a buffer specialist Zach Carnegie, and expecting a new commonwealth position focusing on turf to trees and turf to buffer programs that will be posted in the future. The Alliance received a Landscape Scale Restoration grant from the USFS to implement a woodland stewardship network program in PA, MD, and VA. Ryan commented that they are excited to do some foundation building with the turf to trees and meadow programs, and using the time away from field work to make this situation productive!

Virginia- Jenny McGarvey mentioned that the request for proposals for the 2020 Chesapeake Watershed Forum is open and you can submit them [here](#). Judy Okay, working on the turf to buffers GIT-funded project said they were able to get some plants in the ground but the stay-at home order halted volunteer projects.

Delaware- Recently hired a new outreach and partnership coordinator who will be starting on April 13 and had to postpone plantings and a grant programs until fall.

CBP- SRS will still be taking place for the buffer outcome in August, and we'll continue to meet remotely. All states received funding for a riparian forest buffer position, and NFWF small watershed grants are open, proposals are due April 28.

11:00am Adjourn