



## Forestry Workgroup Meeting Minutes

January 7, 2021

9:30am-11:30am

*This meeting will be recorded for internal use to assure the accuracy of meeting notes*

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### Meeting attendees:

Rebecca Hanmer, Chair  
Sally Claggett, USFS, *Coordinator*  
Nora Jackson, CRC, *Staffer*  
Anne Hairston-Strang, MD DNR  
Iris Allen, MD DNR  
Craig Highfield, ACB  
Katie Brownson, USFS  
Taryn Davidson, DE DNREC  
Mark Hockley, PA DCNR  
Mark Hoffman, CBC  
Matt Keefer, PA DCNR  
Ryan Davis, ACB  
Taylor Held, USC  
Gloria Van Duyne, NY DEC

Julie Berlinski, NY DEC  
Todd Carnell, WV DOF  
Frank Rodgers, CI  
Robert Corletta, DDOT  
Jim Woodworth, DC DOEE  
Stephanie Heidbreder, NFWF  
Matt Poirot, VA DOF  
Judy Okay, VA DOF  
Julie Mawhorter, USFS  
Jeremy McGill, WV DOF  
Jenny McGarvey, ACB  
Rachel Felver, ACB  
Marian Honecny, MD DNR

### Tree Canopy Outcome: Quarterly Progress Meeting

*Julie Mawhorter, USFS*

Julie presented a draft of the slides for the Management Board Quarterly Progress [meeting](#) on February 11, assessing performance and progress towards the tree canopy goal over the last two years, lessons learned, challenges. This part of the Strategy Review System (SRS) process helps to refine work moving forward, also summarized in the draft [narrative analysis](#). Link to draft of Local Government Guide modules, developed by the LLWG, send out tree canopy chapter to group for review.

### Action Items:

- Please send any additional input or edits on the Tree Canopy Narrative Analysis to Julie ([julie.mawhorter@usda.gov](mailto:julie.mawhorter@usda.gov)) by COB Tuesday Jan. 19
- If interested, please review the draft Tree Cover module of **A Local Government Guide to the Chesapeake Bay** (aka local officials curriculum) and send suggested edits to Julie by COB Tuesday Jan. 19

- Access at this link: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1--UQPwK\\_EHK0fZ0refGRoBP0BcDh07go/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1--UQPwK_EHK0fZ0refGRoBP0BcDh07go/view?usp=sharing)

### Questions and Comments

- Matt Keefer- Do you have an idea of the breakdown of buffer acres or individual tree canopy acres, a breakdown of the BMPs that equal that overall?
  - Yes, but understanding the numbers is an issue with backout
  - Matt- Thinking about the number of tree canopy trees to equal an acre, compared to planting a buffer. How does Maryland get to such large number comparatively?
  - A lot of it is more afforestation (small trees) than individual street trees or urban plantings.
- Sally- There's a lot more to be done tracking annual progress, do we have a sense of how confident we are in some of these numbers and how much focus to put here?
  - Improvement in reporting since the last time around, ie VA. There is still work to be done depending on the state to pick up more of that activity.
- Anne- When we get better numbers, I would think more than 10% would be buffers, it's trickier in urban areas because the streams are buried or in pipes. Iris is also looking at remote sensing, but it's complicated.
- Matt- It might be helpful to translate the numbers for the MB, like the individual trees to urban forest expansion, and buffers. Maybe add some pictures.
- Marion- MD numbers aren't just buffer or reforestation. There is a large percentage of afforestation acres. Street trees are minor.

### Menti:

1) What has happened to trends in Funding?

Choices	Votes
Increased a lot	1
Increased some	6
Stayed about the same	12
Decreased some	0
Decreased a lot	0

- Slight increases for new programs such as lawn conversion. unable to fill staff vacancies due to Covid budget impacts and hiring freeze
- Limited funding for Chesapeake Bay regional level urban tree canopy work to meet work plan objectives.
  - Jenny- Haven't seen increase in resources or funding to support all the tree canopy goals.
  - Stephanie- Shift in NFWF innovative nutrient and sediment reduction program is funding regional collaboratives for water quality improvement. It has to lead to on the ground implementation and have reductions but shifting in NFWF to more significant support for urban tree canopy practices
- Quick, flexible flat-rate funding streams in PA have been excellent –

- Ryan Davis- tapping into project-based funding, much more efficient and flexible than some other grant programs. Seen increases in participation and implementation, stemming from the increased support.
- Funds from Tree Preservation Law permit removal fees help supplement budget- D.C.
- DDOT has increased its annual funding to DOEE (for primarily private property) from \$300k to \$500k to \$650k!
  - Jim- Since 2009 DOEE funded Riversmart programs from a variety of grants and mechanisms. In the last 3-5 years, DDOT generating money from tree removal on private lands, then those funds go back into canopy restoration on private land.
- WV is much better than 10 years ago!
- In PA we're working to develop a portfolio approach for funding. combo of grants, flexible, on-demand, etc. to meet various needs of partners and agencies.
  - Matt Keefer- Trying to develop a portfolio, consistent annual grant program, if we can have an on-demand pot of funding it's more flexible to use with ready landowners, options to meet needs of all participants. Still working on pilot.
- Matt- Increased urban conservation staffing in Hampton roads/Norfolk and NOVA area for urban tree canopy.
- Gloria- funding has remained steady. Seems like communities were increasing slightly up until Covid.
- Marian- MD saw a slight increase in funding, generated by construction projects from policy. Trouble with not having enough staff, issues with Covid and completed contracts. Clarify that reforestation and afforestation projects in MD are in urban and community areas because most of MD is designated as urban by the census. Our laws require the trees to be planted where the construction is occurring. It's urban, but may not be street trees, which have lower survivability anyways.

## 2) What has happened to trends in staffing?

Choices	Votes
Increased a lot	0
Increased some	6
Stayed the same	10
Decreased some	3
Decreased a lot	0

- staff lost through attrition in NY
- VDOF has recently been able to add some Urban conservationist positions to support urban forestry
- With increased responsibilities we were given additional staff- D.C.
- DDOT UFD staffing has increased a lot in 10 years, and a little bit in the past 5 years (Jim - DOEE)
- We're gaining capacity, but it's far from enough- PA
- in PA, we added a leadership position (Jason Swartz our lead), but we haven't been able to fill Shea's vacancy. Hopefully in the next year or so. Field service forester support has remained fairly stable, except some issues when we have vacancies
- DE is a small agency and there are only 2 positions for Urban Forestry.

- WV DOF has two Urban Foresters and Cacapon Institute has three people working on tree canopy.
- WV greatest "staff" increase is in the volunteer base.
- vacancies not a long-term loss for now

3) What has happened to trends in policy?

Choices	Votes
Become much stronger	0
Become somewhat stronger	3
Stayed about the same	12
Become somewhat weaker	0
Become much weaker	0

- Maryland has had a strong policy for years.
- DDOT UFD - Tree Preservation Law has strengthened; expanding size class of protected trees and fees required for removal
- special trees has included more trees (smaller diameter) and new designation of heritage trees 100" are protected; fees increased
- In PA, regulatory climate is very challenging at a statewide level. However, local interest is growing, evidenced by county level WIPs and commitment to trees
- WV: Local planning offices are allowing more planting in ROW and stormwater ponds.
- new canopy data set will validate existing programs and help guide any course corrections needed to get us over the finish line for 40%

4) What lessons have you learned over the past 2 years?

- Stable funding through state programs is needed
- we need to continue to help others (such as engineers) understand that trees are part of the solution
- Can connect tree planting to other natural BMPs in a focused state program proving multiple benefits
- WV: Local elected officials can make a dramatic swing in the emphasis on tree canopy and green infrastructure (good or bad).
- Progress can't happen unless there is ample capacity
- in DC, need to work harder to get trees where they are most needed; heat/exposure/equity requires more effort!
- There has been more interest in urban tree protection in stream restoration
- Private funding for this virtuous practice is out there
- DDOT UFD - canopy increases are difficult and slow going even with aggressive planting strategies
- using iTree and other tools to better tell our story on the value and benefits of trees
- Frank- DoD benefits of trees factsheet, since that agency carries a lot of weight. [Available on the Tree canopy network website.](#)
  - Matt- Being able to show the benefits of trees is important, graphics from iTree make a big impact.
- Judy- Recently getting calls about local govts removing trees along streams in urban areas, for improvement projects. Important to remember it's not just government, citizens are looking for what to believe in- keep tools and materials available. Connecticut has great materials

- Stephanie- NFWF thinking has evolved, tree planting and buffer work is the most cost-effective method, looking at a more holistic picture, what other practices are getting the job done at a lower cost.

5) What other scientific fiscal and policy related developments will influence your work over the next two years?

- What Judy said, regarding using forest health impacts to better connect and communicate with people
  - Matt- When trees die, people notice. Better utilize forest health expertise and data for communication.
- An emphasis on co-benefits of trees for mental health, air quality, economic benefit, etc. (in addition to W. Quality) will grow interest and action.
- Communication assessment/Strategy
  - As important as the fiscal instrument is here, equally important that connecting with people about this accessible practice. Communication is so key, especially with local govts/ Other communications in general, Rachel and staff working on communications assessment.
  - Rachel- Hoping to have a contractor look at tree canopy and forest buffers materials, a gap analysis across the jurisdictions; what are people already trying to communicate and put together some successes and best practices.
- Keep an eye out for pending research to help make a case for nutrient reduction and increases when lost in stream restoration projects coming out soon.
- DEIJ strategy by CBP
- DDOT - climate resilience, heat vulnerability and EJ
- Connect tree canopy with other community benefits and economic opportunities, including workforce development to expand the community of tree care.
- potential job and small business development if we can generate demand for lawn conversion practices. landscape contractors might be poised to expand
- DDOT - outreach to underserved communities needs continual optimization
- FEMA and flooding issues.
- Accelerating tree planting for MS4 credits/stormwater treatment, potentially through revolving loan funds in MD.

6) Based on what we learned and what's on the horizon, how should our work change in the next two years?

- Anne- Ensure the local govt fact sheets also have a climate resiliency lens, mention heat mapping. Not just including the numbers, but actions and community resiliency benefits. NIACC has done some work already, good starting place, take the framework and say what does it look like in each jurisdiction. other past GIT funding work through other tracks becomes relevant to our work, like MWMC, presentation by a consultant in VA about outreach for walkable watersheds, tying in different types of practices including tree canopy, green streets, connecting it to safe travel to schools and parks. Track down what other work has been done. Think about economic opportunity when we think about equity, so tying it to urban tree utilization as well as tree canopy, some emphasis on the career ladder.

- Expand partnerships with transportation, conservation (walkability, small parks, etc) and other envi partners (Natural Filters)
- Yes, more emphasis on the economic benefits of trees--for jobs in planting, property value increase, energy savings, and main street business benefit.
- Connect to community-based efforts or watershed collaborations to better link trees to meeting specific community goals (including Judy's wildlife). E.g., Greater Baltimore Wilderness Coalition, Baltimore Green Space)
- Keep climate change in focus
- Our programs need to become more efficient, cost effective, targeted, resilient and sustainable. continued effort on species diversity, resiliency to climate change; more effort on maintenance and long-term establishment...
- DDOT - new ways of leveraging existing data to build upon newfound recognition of restorative value of nature and translating that into stewardship.
- Develop resources that workforce development could use to include tree planting and care in their jobs and expand sources for needed maintenance.
- Include an ask for explicit funding for maintenance/care as part of funding tree planting.
- Judy- Think more about urban habitat, it's usually ignored when habitat is lost from tree removal. Talking about walkability and small parks are all places to create urban habitat, not just for wildlife but for birdwatching, etc.
- Paul- MDE, for MS4 phase 1 permits, new permits coming out in tentative determination stage (public comment) once finalized, they will be accompanied by a new accountability guidance to help permittees with what kinds of practices to use to get Bay Program credit, and what practices are valuable for compliance to their restoration areas. Forestry is receiving more credit than it did before, expect it to become more popular and see further implementation. Forestry is relatively competitive, so in a time of tighter budgets it may feature more prominently. Guidance and permits coming out soon. Please see the MDE Phase I stormwater page: [mde.maryland.gov/programs/Water/StormwaterManagementProgram/Pages/storm\\_gen\\_perm\\_it.aspx](https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Water/StormwaterManagementProgram/Pages/storm_gen_perm_it.aspx) The 2020 Accounting Guidance posted on that page in 4 places: under each Large PI permit's notice for TD for that permit. So under "Notice of Tentative Determination to Issue Stormwater Permit to Anne Arundel County (October 23, 2020)" you open that pulldown link and it's under "MS4 Guidance Includes:" EPA has reviewed it, and it's scheduled to be used once it's finalized after pubic comment. Here is the link to the MS4 Guidance alone - Please see page 63 for riparian forest buffer credit example: <https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/water/StormwaterManagementProgram/Documents/2020%20MS4%20Accounting%20Guidance.pdf>

## 7) How can the management board help?

- Be Tree advocates/Leaders
- Encourage and support local leaders to prioritize conservation planning and tree planting projects. Awards? Cost-shares?
- Julie's initial ideas are good
- Include funding for maintenance/care when funding tree planting programs.
- Ask them or suggest to them what tree leadership looks like

- In PA, there's so much emphasis on Ag. Ask MB members from other jurisdictions with more-urban landscapes provide advice on what works. This is tricky, bc typically we say, we're not like MD. But i think we can learn some lessons
- Leaders can be influencers and use their social media platforms to emphasize valuing trees, caring for trees, and planting trees.
- Anne- What's really going to make a difference is not just putting trees in the ground, it's helping the average person know how to care for a tree. How do you institutionalize the other tree parts? Better take advantage of socio-economic networks that are out there. More integration, what resources do other sectors need to better tap the value of trees?

## **Education Resource Guide**

Maya Claggett (volunteer intern in summer/fall 2020) shared a draft of the Trees and Schools Resource Guide.. [Draft is posted for stakeholder input](#) through March 1, will be sent out through the education workgroup. Send all comments/suggestions to Julie (julie.mawhorter@usda.gov)

Also reviewed updates and additions to the Chesapeake Tree Canopy Network [website](#).

- Frank- Presenting work at the MAEOE conference on trees in schoolyards, opportunity to give the information directly to education providers (February)

## **Round Robin**

**CBP-** USFS is moving out of Annapolis office end of January, Sally will be sending around a list of publications that cannot be kept, respond with anything you are interested in and your mailing address. Forest Restoration Strategy is now available, ten copies will be sent to each state.

**PA-** Virtual Buffer summit on March 10 and 11, registration and RFP will be circulated soon. Kelsey Miller is the lead on the lawn conversion program, and welcoming Derrick McDonald to the watershed forestry team.

**MD-** Planning for normal programs, lawn to woodland and health forests healthy waters, and some CREP. MDA has started a new conservation buffer program.

## **Adjourn**