**Forestry Workgroup**

**CBPO Fish Shack, Annapolis, MD**

**September 5, 2012**

**Minutes**

<http://www.chesapeakebay.net/calendar/event/18697/>

Thanks to Amanda Pruzinskiy who stepped in for Anna Stuart Burnett to staff this meeting!!

**Participants**

Rebecca Hanmer (FWG Chair), Sally Claggett (USFS/FWG Coordinator), Tim Culbreth (MD DNR FS), Craig Highfield (Alliance for the Chesapeake), Peter Claggett (USGS), Chris Peiffer (PA DCNR), Derrick McDonald (PA DEP), Tracey Coulter (PA DCNR), Lou Etgen (Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay), Anne Hairston-Stang (MD DNR FS), Kathy Boomer (TNC), Matt Poirot (VA Dep. of Forestry), Amanda Pruzinsky (CRC/CBPO). Attending by phone: Chuck Barnett (USFS), Frank Rodgers (Cacapon Institute), Gary Speiran (USGS), Sloane Crawford (NY Dep. of Environmental Conservation), and Gary Moore (VA Dep. of Conservation and Recreation).

**Introductions and Actions from Last Meeting Rebecca Hanmer**

* ACTION: August minutes were approved.

**Forest Cover Peter Claggett and Chuck Barnett**

The Forestry Workgroup will be making a recommendation to the Management Board about what source of information to use for Forest Cover, a watershed health indicator, in the Chesapeake Bay annual report. Two experts in determining the extent of forests: Peter Claggett, USGS, and Chuck Barnett of the USFS Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA). Q&A and discussion/decision.

Peter Claggett

* Tracking forest cover and forest trends: Need to be clear what the Chesapeake Bay Program wants to do with the information.
* The Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) provides the clearest definition of a forest, but is the accuracy of the FIA sufficient to track trends and for the management purpose of this indicator? Is it statically significant?
* Satellite imagery doesn’t track as defined by FIA.
* Watershed Model is not good for tracking forest cover or forest change. “Forests” layer includes land uses that are not classified as either agriculture, urban, extractive, or water. It over estimates true forest.
* If FIA is not as precise as is needed for management purposes, the Forestry Workgroup may want to consider designing a sampling framework that examines change using LandStat statellite imagery to identify hot spots of where change is likely to occur. Then, heavily oversample areas that show no change and come up with an alternative statistical measure to FIA looking at tree canopy.

Chuck Barnett

* FIA is the scientific standard for estimating forest cover in the US, but it doesn’t provide localized data.

For more information see the “9-5-12 briefing paper” on the event webpage: <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/calendar/event/18697/>

**Discussion and Questions**

* Does FIA Label the forests as healthy or not?
  + No, but there is a subset of the plots with additional measurements
    - Forest Health Measurement – 1/16 of the plots. No objectives for health per se. It is mainly measuring growth, invasives, etc.
* With FIA, there is a fairly high confidence that change can be measured at the scale of the entire watershed.
* FIA does not sample in urban areas, so they have very little information about urban tree canopy.
  + There has been a push to switch to all land cover, but currently this is not done.
* What do we need and want? Finer tuned, smaller scale change data? (must justify the expense)
  + Need that accuracy for verification of BMPs. May not need the tools that are currently being discussing, but we need to determine what tools we want to use.
* In order to determine the tools that we need, we must answer questions such as: How much do we need to know about the understory? When and where do we need to know about the “true forest”?

Is it important to educate/communicate the difference between “true forest” and “tree canopy”?

* + Both the FIA and Landstat data sets are only showing a 1% change in 20 years. It isn’t telling us very much. Need finer timescale.
* Must begin to define forests and working forests.
  + Multiple canopy layers.
  + UFORE/iTree considers this type of information.
* One of the benefits of FIA is that there is on-the-ground sampling.
* PROPOSAL: With current resources, it is feasible to develop sampling design and for USGS to use a subset of those samples and characterize trends in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. It doesn’t seem feasible to for USGS to characterize all of them.
* ACTION: Sally will write up a detailed proposal about what forest cover/higher-resolution tree canopy data the CBP/FWG would like and what would need to be discussed at an all day workshop on this topic next Spring.
* FIA issue: Are there ways we can help to decrease the standard error of FIA data points?
  + ACTION: Chuck will send Sally more information.

ACTION: For the purposes of the annual reporting of forest cover in the watershed, continue to use FIA data and add a 2009 data point with explanation.

* The more precise we are about what information we need and what we are going to use it for, the easier it will be to decide on or create a tool.

**Water Quality Goal Team Request Sally Claggett**

Feedback is being solicited from FWG members on the TMDL process, leading up to the mid-point assessment. At this time, the WQ Goal Team is looking for 1) input on subjects that should be included in the midpoint assessment and 2) workgroup’s specific priorities on the current data inputs, decision-support tools (including the CB Model), and programs that support local WIP implementation and accountability.

The Midpoint Assessment Guiding Principles are available at: <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/channel_files/18697/8_13_12_midpoint_assessment_guiding_principles_draft.pdf>

**Discussion and Questions**

* Modeling “forest” vs. “other.” Is it necessary to have the modelers to separate out forest in the model?
  + Forest cover is the gold standard and it is extremely important to know if it is really forest and a healthy forest that will last.
* Better isolate the affect of dirt roads on forest loading.
* Consider proposed credit for low-lying, connected hydrology (e.g., reconnecting previously drained forested wetlands to a water source).
* Push forest conservation issue in the TMDL framework. Consider healthy watersheds.
  + Part of reasonable assurance should be considering: “Are you keeping your low nutrient loading land uses?”
  + Maintenance of existing buffers
* Need to establish de minimis load level
* Establishing realistic timeframes for best management practices
* Refinement of harvesting tracking
* Address combined sewer overflow area issue: BMPs other than WWTP don’t count --No incentive for multiple barrier approach, which could reduce the flow and build up the watershed capability.
* Similar issue: Reconsider areas above dams, currently deemphasized for Bay water quality, but some of these are priority drinking water reservoirs.

**Riparian Actions for 2013 Rebecca Hanmer**

USDA-Forestry teams in each state have submitted their 2013 Actions for meeting the Riparian Forest Buffer outcome in the EO Strategy. A separate briefing paper will be posted on the FWG meeting website.

**Discussion and Questions**

* ACTION: Review the document (2013 USDA Forestry Action Plan 2) and inform Sally Claggett of any changes that are needed.
  + - Need to include the actions that are going to be taken, but also the challenges and the varying success.
* Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) – pine vs. other. Consideration of other options for funding and improving buffers.
* Riparian Forest Buffers –Forestry should not necessarily be the lead for promoting practices to the agriculture community. It hasn’t worked. Often national policies are established that don’t favor implementation in our region. Need to work on communication products about these issues in addition to maintaining actions.
* ACTION: Send Sally Claggett specific examples of how federal policies do not work for Bay goals re forest buffers.
* ACTION: Review 2012 INS and SWG Awards – handed out.

**Targeting effective BMPs in the Potomac**  **Anne Hairston-Strang and Kathy Boomer**

Anne and Kathy presented about their latest targeting approach to identify where riparian buffers (and other BMPs) are most needed. DNR recently received a NFWF grant to do this -- consider location of nutrient sources and flow paths for buffer placement. They discussed goals of the project, management alternatives, effect of local topographic gradients, subsurface effects, Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) remote sensing data, and targeting of potential best management practice sites. The last component of this grant is the Appalachian Lab component where there is going to be two types of monitoring: synoptic scale monitoring and site scale monitoring.

**Discussion and Questions**

* In this study is there any evaluation of the effects of vegetation components, width of the buffer, etc.?
  + Currently no, but it would be a great thing to include in the implementation plan.
  + Presently buffers are not differentiated. This study is a great way to educate the landowners, but we must continue to educate policy makers and modelers.
  + Target the entire area instead of a particular width because if you a targeting a certain width next to the stream you are already discharging a lot of the water that is coming across as a channelized flow, so much of it will be missed.
* Has this been applied and studied in areas were restoration is high to see if people are currently choosing BMP areas that are effective without LIDAR?
  + No, but hopefully this tool can start that conversation. There has been work done on BMP efficiency, but it has been difficult to compare results among sites because studies do not provide a description of the landscape setting. This analysis could provide a basis for making predictions about landscape setting and function and explain the variation that is seen among sites.
* Does this study consider soil type?
  + There was a workshop and including soil type was one of the top recommendations. But it seems that this additional information is not sufficiently changing the design and location of the BMPs. The information that has more weight is where the breech locations are and their dimensions and the volume of water coming from the watershed vs. local hill slope area. Also, one could argue that the land forms that we are seeing are already an integrated product of how ground water and surface water are interacting with the soil.
* Draft report from March STAC report: August 31st, 2012 “Roll of Natural Landscape Features in the Fate and Transport of Nutrients and Sediments.”
  + Will not be finalized until approved by the Steering Committee and STAC, but if anyone would like a copy of the draft contact Sally Claggett.
* USGS will be monitoring BMP efficiencies and should be involved and informed of this study
  + Plan to work with Gary Speiran

**Forest Restoration Strategy Next Steps Sally Claggett**

The Draft Forest Restoration Strategy was released for public comment in July. Plans are to walk the Strategy through the Chesapeake Bay Program hierarchy and make final edits by October. A release event is being discussed.

* ACTION: Sally will be bringing this to the Management Board to have this document approved.
* ACTION: Jurisdictions should make sure related persons are informed about this document before the Management Board meeting.
* After this is approved there is going to be an event to reflect on the work that is being done in the Chesapeake and highlight the need for commitment in forest riparian buffers.

**Proposed future FWG meeting topics Rebecca Hanmer/All**

Topics for future FWG meetings were proposed.

**October 2012** conference call – Al Todd (Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay) offered to present on Conservation Innovation Grant about Water Quality Trading Project and the Role of Forestry

* + This may lead to a joint meeting with Trading and Offsets Workgroup

**November 2012** meeting – Forest and floodplain wetlands (joint meeting with Habitat Goal Team)

**December 2012** (may be 2 day meeting, and may be the last week of November) – Review of ongoing watershed-wide projects (e.g., Growing Native, Forestry for the Bay, Bay Bank, Potomac Watershed Partnership, NFWF, etc.)

**February 2013** meeting –Forest Restoration Strategy (Urban and mine land)

**March 2013** meeting – Forest Cover Data

**April 2013** conference call – RFB Restoration best new methods

**May 2013** meeting – Trading Meeting (joint meeting with Trading and Offsets Workgroup)

**June 2013** conference call – ?

Other topics:

* Forest Conservation
* Living BMPs (Regenerative BMPs)
* Deer – Groundwater Monitoring (Frank Rogers?) – Next August 2013?

ACTION: Send possible field visit ideas to Sally Claggett

**Announcements All**

* Anne Hairston-Stang (MD DNR FS) – Maryland has received special rivers funding for Chesapeake Bay tree planting. Also, the NFWF Grant and the Governor’s the Stream Restoration Challenge.
* Lou Etgen (Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay) – MD: CIG Grant (to be discussed at October FWG), USFS Northeastern Area Regional Grant for social marketing work on trees in Baltimore City (Constellation Energy is back on board). PA: NFWF Grant for turf to trees. VA: Received funding for urban tree work in Richmond.
* Tracey Coulter (PA DCNR) – Dickinson College Farm received a grant for researching argoforestry practices. Also, possible field visit at 350 acre farm in Chestertown, PA where silvo pasture is being practiced (NFWF grant).
* Derrick McDonald (PA DEP) – Pilot project with Fish and Boat Commission and Land Conservancies has been successful.
* Chris Peiffer (PA DCNR) – Currently working on selecting 3 more county for urban tree canopy assessments. Also, Lancaster County is working on their canopy goal and their water resources plan is out for public comment. Upland buffer idea is being proposed for a grant. Lancaster City canopy analysis and implementation plan is nearing completion and parts of it are being used in DC. Franklin county tree goal (one tree per resident).
* Craig Highfield (Alliance for the Chesapeake) – 3 Workshops in PA with Penn State (Northeast, South Central, and West PA). A couple workshops with Herb Peddicord. In Maryland, Real Forestry for Real Estate (continued education for real estate agents). Announcement for the Chesapeake Forest Champions is out!
* Tim Culbreth (MD DNR FS) – Public comment period for MD Forest Legacy Forestry Assessment of Need has closed. Day of Service for tree planting at the end of September. Port Isobel Island trip in September. Forestry tour of two tree farms in October.
* Sally Claggett (USFS/FWG Coordinator) – BMP Verification Document has been posted to the Forestry Workgroup site. Will be discussed soon. There will also be an expert panel reviewing all Verification documents later this fall. Review of water quality credit for forestry practices--- Expert Panel for Riparian Forest Buffer science and Expert Panel for Urban Forestry took a summer hiatus while some analysis is being worked on. Look for recommendations out this fall. Also this fall/winter another Expert Panel will form on Forest Harvest BMPs.
* Frank Rodgers (for Cacapon Institute and West Virginia) – Department of Highways Dirt and gravel road training. This Fall, i-Tree street inventory for Martinsburg. Currently, helping the city of Martinsburg draft a UTC plan and goal.
* Matt Poirot (VA Dep. of Forestry) – Two landowner workshops set up for November 15th, 2012, to encourage forest buffers in the Shenandoah Valley. Matt will be speaking at the Southern Group of State Foresters Utilization and Marketing Task Force Meeting in October.
* Sloane Crawford (NY Dep. of Environmental Conservation) – Continuing transition for Coordinator for Trees for Tributaries. Should be trees in the ground this Fall.
* Lou Etgen (Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay) – The Alliance offered to take over the Port Isobel/Smith Island Trip.