



Meeting Minutes

Chesapeake Bay Forestry Workgroup (FWG) October Conference Call

October 5th, 2016 9:00 A.M. – 10:30 A.M.

Meeting Participants

Sally Claggett (USFS), *FWG Coordinator*
Katherine Wares (Chesapeake Research Consortium)
Julie Mawhorter (USFS)
Craig Highfield (ACB)
Nick DiPasquale (EPA)
Jenny McGarvey (Alliance for the Bay)
Luke Cole (DC DOEE)
Anne Hairston-Strang (MD DNR)
Lauren Townley (NYS DEC)
Derrick McDonald (PA DEP)
Barbara White (VA DOF)
Matt Poirot (VA DOF)
Tanner Haid (WV Cacapon Institute)
Jim McElfish (Environmental Law Institute)
Jake Reilly (NFWF)

9:00 Welcome and introductions

Sally Claggett welcomed everyone to the call and confirmed participants.

9:15 Forests of the Bay

Craig Highfield gave a presentation on *Forests for the Bay* projects. One focus of Forests for the Bay is outreach and education; Craig reviewed current projects and efforts in this area of focus. On the Forests for the Bay website, *LandServer*, an online database, is available to landowners to map their property to learn how their woodlands provide natural benefits. The *Welcome to Your Woods* program is a guide for woodland owners that explains the benefits of forested areas and the resources available to help them care for their land. There have been 7 workshops in Maryland which have led to publication of a guide. These guides can be found online or hard copies can be obtained from Craig. Craig asked the FWG to think of potential uses they might have for this guide. The *Your Woods and Your Wallet* program is an extension of *Welcome to Your Woods* and provides workshops on the economic incentives and opportunities available to woodland owners. The *Woods in Your Backyard* is another workshop for woodlot owners interested in forest management. The Alliance has been able to host several The Woods in Your Backyard workshops throughout the watershed this year. Family Forest and Farm Legacy Planning is another project. Craig reviewed the winning Chesapeake Forest Champions: Most Effective at Engaging the Public, Anne Marie Clarke; Greatest On-the-Ground Impact, Angela Patterson and Daniel DeWitt; Exemplary Forest Steward, Mike and Laura Jackson; and Lifetime Achievement, Dr. Jim Finley.

Another focus of Forests for the Bay is forest restoration. The *Healthy Streams Farm Stewardship Program* is a whole farm approach to conservation planning and funding support for farmers willing to install riparian forest buffers. In this program, landowner receives a conservation voucher for each acre of riparian forest buffer installed. These vouchers can be used for other conservation projects on the farm.

The Alliance is also working on two NRCS RCPP grants that use a separate pool of Environmental Quality Incentives Program funding to further incentive riparian forest buffers implementation. Farmers that are willing to have riparian forested buffers or have already planted them are eligible for higher ranking for this funding. The first one is called the *Mason Dixon Working Lands Partnership* and partners with Stroud Water Research Center. To date they have completed 2 projects in Pennsylvania and 5 in Maryland; there are still some funds left so 1 or 2 more may be done in Maryland this year. The Comprehensive Watershed Conservation in Dairy and Livestock Landscapes of the Chesapeake Bay and targets specific watersheds in MD, VA and PA.

The Alliance was awarded a USDA Conservation Innovation Grant to accelerate landowner access to mitigation programs and environmental markets. Craig asked the FWG to think of guidance on how to conduct this program with landowners.

More information about the Alliance's work can be found [here](#).

Questions and Comments

- Anne Hairston-Strang asked if the Alliance was reporting buffers planted as part of the Healthy Streams Farm Stewards Program. Craig replied that the landowners are enrolled in CREP so the practices are reported through that.
- Anne Hairston-Strang asked a question about Comprehensive Watershed Conservation in Dairy and Livestock Landscapes of the Chesapeake Bay being built on land server. Craig replied that they want to develop an assessment or plan for the agricultural producers.
- Sally Claggett asked if there is an easement component of the conservation in dairy and livestock landscape program in Virginia. Jenny McGarvey replied that in Virginia there are multiple practices that can get credit and requirements to get credit is to permanently protect as forests and as sustainable timber harvest for the future.
- Jenny McGarvey commented that Alliance hopes to work with local land trusts and is really dependent on partners to communicate their findings.
- Sally Claggett commented that the FWG could help by getting in contact with foresters that could know interested parties
- Anne Hairston-Strang commented that creating a one page fact sheet of these programs could be helpful and could be distributed to foresters and interested landowners.

9:40 Report on Forestry Track at the Chesapeake Watershed Forum

Jenny McGarvey gave a summary of the 2-day Forestry Track. The Chesapeake Watershed Forum happened September 30th – October 2nd at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. The forum was attended by mostly small watershed groups and local governments. This was the 3rd year that a forestry track has been offered. Jenny McGarvey and Craig Highfield worked with Sally Claggett and Julie Mawhorter to coordinate the sessions within the track. The six sessions included: Chesapeake Tree Challenge, Invasive Plant Management Field Tour, Advocating for Private Forests, Poague Run: Example of Watershed Restoration, Tree ID 101, and Tree Canopy Environmental Justice and Community Engagement.

The Chesapeake Tree Challenge was an opportunity for people to brainstorm how to gain support needed to meet the call for planting more trees. Jenny asked the FWG to think about the call for a Chesapeake Tree Challenge for highlighting and recording work being done. Jenny will be looking through participant feedback to determine next steps. The Invasive Plant Management Field Tour led by Phil Pannell was packed with about 50 people. It began with an indoor discussion on techniques for management followed by an outdoor identification of invasive species. Advocating for Private Forests discussed how organizations can support private landowners in forest management. The Poague Run session was a case study example and discussed how to use this successful restoration project as a model for achieving similar efforts. The Tree ID 101 session was led by Bud Reaves with help from Craig and Jenny and was also very packed. The session began indoors with a review of dichotomous keys and web resources before heading outside for a woods walk to practice tree and shrub

identification. The Tree Canopy, Environmental Justice and Community Engagement session featured a small panel moderated by Sarah Anderson. The same panel was also held after the viewing of the documentary, *City of Trees*. The panel discussed developing community engagement strategies that support urban tree plantings and serve as tools for addressing local environmental justice issues. There was also a tree and bird walk offered Saturday morning which was very popular. More information on the sessions offered at the Chesapeake Watershed Forum can be found [here](#).

Questions and Comments

- Sally commented that the panel and movie viewing was a great idea and encouraged great discussions throughout the forum.
- Julie Mawhorter noted that the individuals who worked with the movie are key partners on a tree canopy project involving environmental justice and community engagement efforts in the Anacostia watershed. A presentation on this project could be a good topic at future FWG meeting.
- Anne Hairston-Strang asked if there will be a forestry track next year. Sally answered that there will be and to contact herself and Jenny if anyone has ideas for sessions or topics.

9:55 Information from NFWF

Jake Reilly reviewed the results of a survey conducted by NFWF to understand challenges grantees face with riparian forest buffer implementation. This survey was done at the request of the FWG. The survey was sent to 63 organizations that were grantees for 81 projects, and 29 responses were sent back. Responses were mostly from nonprofits followed by local governments. Most respondents were in Pennsylvania and Virginia; Maryland was under-represented relative to the amount of grantees in the state; and there were no respondents in Delaware and New York. The majority of grants were awarded 2013 and after, meaning most projects are finishing up or are in progress. There were 9 buffer activity questions regarding type of buffer: grass or forest, challenges, resources that could aid efforts, etc. The survey found that about 90% of grantees planned to establish riparian forest buffers and 10% planned to only establish riparian grass buffers and that about 85% of grantees were able to meet their goals and 15% were not. About 30% said they ended up having to implement riparian grass buffers instead of planned riparian forest buffers. Besides NFWF funding, over half of respondents utilized CREP and state-administered program funding, about a third of respondents received EQIP funding, and less received no other funding source. Factors that were found to negatively impact meeting goals were insufficient incentives to induce landowner adoption, complicated program rules, insufficient maintenance on existing buffers, insufficient funding for technical assistance. When asked about tools and resources needed to increase riparian forest buffer implementation, respondents answered funding technical resources, followed by greater flexibility, newer incentives, and funding for landowner outreach. More information on the survey results can be found [here](#).

Questions and Comments

- Sally commented this survey is important for understanding what experience grantees are having and to what extent buffers are forests versus grasses.
- Judy Okay asked about whether these buffers were being reported. Jake responded that most use CREP and state funding and there is reporting through those programs.

10:10 Round Robin

- Anne Hairston-Strang: Recently learned that MD was accepting CREP applications but not processing them due to concern over reaching a national cap for CRP (24 million acres). [The pause in CREP processing was lifted around the time of this FWG meeting]. MD is also dealing with an issue with MD Agricultural Water Quality Cost-Share (MACS); the governor vetoed the bill that approves spending through MACS. Some RFB acres not re-enrolling were lost to the MD-CREP easement program, which is a good thing, and Maryland appears to be losing acres at

a lower rate than surrounding states. Maryland DNR is in the process of interviewing for a Chesapeake Watershed Forester position.

- **ACTION:** Sally will be getting an update from FSA on how states are doing with re-enrollment and will post it online.
- Sally Claggett: At the most recent CBP Executive Council meeting, it was announced that Bay grasses and blue crab populations are increasing and that Bay received a C grade this year. It was also announced that the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture received \$28 million additional dollars to be used toward restoration of agricultural lands. Nick commented that \$12million is from Pennsylvania and the rest is from USDA and EPA. Pennsylvania's proposal "Assessing Multifunctional Riparian Forest Buffer Benefits" was selected for GIT funding of \$50,000. November's FWG meeting will be face-to-face and held at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation office in Annapolis.
- Matt Poirot: Virginia Department of Forestry will interview for two CREP foresters soon.
- Barbara White: Ten grants and \$57,000 were awarded this fall and spring for Virginia's Trees for Clean Water. A summary of these grants is posted on the FWG meeting webpage.
- Jenny McGarvey: Weather updates regarding the Smith Island trip October 11th-13th will be sent to all those registered to attend.

10:30 Adjourned