

## Announcements

Members welcomed Justin Bowers, the new MD DNR forester working on the 5 million trees program.


Delaware will also be getting a new point of contact as Kesha Braunskill has taken on a position with USFS. She will still be an active participant, just on the federal side now!

There is a Management Board Meeting on July 13<sup>th</sup> where States will be giving reportouts on their Riparian Forest Buffers Action Strategy Implementation from 10:45-11:15. More information can be found in the Management Board [agenda](#).

There is some 2025 news, both in the reaching 2025 realm and the beyond 2025 realm.

For the Reaching 2025 side, there is a draft report that is coming together. It should be released by late July. When it is put out, it will be circulated to the workgroup for review. There will be a section on buffers and wetlands, and members are encouraged to provide feedback.

For the Beyond 2025 side, the steering committee meeting has just met. The contractor ERG will be doing a Bay Program evaluation. There should be an opportunity for the forestry workgroup to provide feedback on questions to the contractor for them to be able to investigate.

Martha Shimkin (Deputy Director for CBPO) and Anna Killius (new Executive Director for the Chesapeake Bay Commission) are the co-chairs for the [Beyond 2025 Steering Committee](#). The committee is in its infancy and just starting to get off the ground. Katie is a member of the steering committee and will continue to keep the FWG informed and request feedback to bring back to the Steering Committee so our forestry outcomes are well represented. 

## Takeaways from the Tree Canopy Funding and Policy Roundtable

The Tree Canopy Funding and Policy Roundtable was a 2021 GIT funding project that is now in its final phases. In the original contract, it was stated that the contractor would present to the workgroup about outcomes from the roundtable. Brandy Espinola of the University of Maryland's Environmental Finance Center (EFC) opened the presentation with a refresher on the Roundtable. It was a two-day meeting that took place over March 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>. About 125 people participated from across the watershed. The goal was to pinpoint funding, policy, and programmatic solution pathways to expand urban trees common in the CBW. The outcomes for both the Roundtable event and the Roundtable project as a whole include:

1. Identify strategies the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership can coalesce around in the near term.
2. Creation of 2-year tree canopy state action plans that the contractor will be developing with each bay state,

A significant portion of the Roundtable was break-out discussions in which participants came up with lots of ideas. The EFC Team has been distilling all the notes that were taken in those breakouts. They were able to outline 34 strategies from the notes. EFC took the 34 strategies to the Roundtable steering committee, and there they were able to narrow down the 34 to 10 through a prioritization exercise. The 10 prioritized strategies will get the most coverage in the report. The 24 other strategies will be covered, just not as thoroughly.

EFC took the strategies created at the roundtable and matched them up to the Management Approaches from our current logic and action plan. While our logic and action plan is currently focused on mostly regional and state-scale work there is a real opportunity for us to create local actions.

Brandy then went through all 10 strategies. You can view them [here](#). These strategies are just the tip of the iceberg. The report that EFC is creating will have more detail about each.

The floor was then opened up to thoughts and takeaways.

Frank Rodgers asked if any ah-ha moments occurred at the roundtable.

Brandy noted that she didn't observe any ah-ha moments but heard a lot of emphasis on maintenance. It didn't matter what conversation we were having. Maintenance always came up.

Krystal noted that she also didn't observe an ah-ha but heard a lot about outreach and engagement. We need more meaningful engagement with communities.

Katie asked if EFC will be getting to the point where they will identify who is best suited to help with these strategies. Brandy noted that EFC is about to start the next portion of the roundtable project, which is the state action plans. As part of those plans' states will be asked to identify "the who" to help achieve their actions.

Robert Corletta noted that a lot of the language around strategy 10 and keeping "ourselves grounded" was an ah-ha moment that he observed.

Robert also asked about what is meant by competing priorities mentioned in Strategy 9. Brandy responded with an example: Tree canopy vs solar fields.

In the chat, Rob Schnabel wrote: Were ties to regulatory requirements discussed? For example, MS4 permits or forest conservation regulations? Were any Policy solutions discussed?

Julie answered the question by noting that it came up, but each state is different, so that those details will be a part of the statewide strategies. That level of detail will not necessarily be in the bay program logic and action plan for the tree canopy outcome.

Brandy then moved to the last part of the presentation by talking about the meetings with States. EFC met with each jurisdiction in May and helped start their plans. Prior to these meetings, the strategies were shared, and jurisdiction representatives were given a "menu of priority strategies". Each jurisdiction was able to prioritize strategies for what they wanted to focus on in their jurisdiction. During the meetings, EFC helped jurisdictions map out near-term action steps and who needs to be involved in those steps. These meetings are just a starting place, and EFC is still available for help.

Brandy concluded with the next steps:

- Roundtable report
- Final State plans (hope is that these will be finalized within the next two months)
- Two-page project summary
- Outcome webinar (will be shared with the group when a date is set, will be happening sometime this fall)
- Presentation to CBP leadership

You can find the recording of the roundtable [here](#).

For any questions, please email Brandy Espinola [bespinol@umd.edu](mailto:bespinol@umd.edu) and Kristel Sheesley [sheesley@umd.edu](mailto:sheesley@umd.edu)

### **Tree Canopy Work Plan Next Steps**

Julie kicked off this interactive agenda item by reviewing where the tree canopy outcome is in terms of the SRS process. During our Quarterly Progress Meeting the Management Board gave the outcome the OK to take some extra time in creating our new workplan. This extra time given to ensure that we could incorporate the findings from the roundtable into the 2023-2025 workplan.

The strategies are broad, and the workgroup needs to start figuring out how to make them into actions that the partnership can accomplish.

Julie then showed the workgroup our current logic and action plan. She explained how it is laid out with the first section being the “why” and the second section being the “how”.

Julie then shared the Jamboard that had all the 10 roundtable strategies listed out. The workgroup was then invited to put their jurisdiction specific thoughts about each of the strategies. These comments will be used to help with the creation of our 2023-2025 Tree Canopy Logic and Action Table.

The [Jamboard](#) is still open for comments.

### **Round Robin**

#### **Virginia**

- Preparing for Inflation Reduction Act money
- VA had two Sentinel landscapes designated. Both were in the eastern part of the state and the hope is that this new designation will make the state more competitive and eligible for Department of Defense funding to support forest management projects on private land around military installations.
- VA just finished its third quarter numbers for VA Department of Forestry performance year for Buffers, this performance year is VA's best year for buffer establishment since 2016. VA crushed their statewide goal that had been set for their district. So, all 3 of the VA State regions have exceeded their goals.

#### **West Virginia**

Frank Rodgers shared information about a stormwater internship program that is up and running. This is an internship between Berkeley County's Storm Water Service District, the city of Martinsburg's Stormwater Management, and Cacapon Inst. There are 16 interns and they have been doing some urban forestry work. The Forestry Workgroup Coordinator, Katie Brownson, will be coming out to West Virginia to give a talk to the interns on the state of the Chesapeake Forests. The interns will also get a Watershed 101: Storm Water Pollution Management and Trees 101: Introduction to Urban Forestry and Forestry in General.

**Delaware**

As mentioned at the beginning of the meeting Kesha Braunskill has moved onto the USFS. Other than that DE is holding steady.

**Pennsylvania**

Very excited about the IRA funds, PA is also anticipating BIL funding this year. They are going to add three more regional staff, including a workforce development person.

**DC**

In addition to BIL and IRA funds the district is hiring a new Urban Forester with the focus being around tree preservation. If you have any contacts that may be interested steer them towards the DC DOT employment page.

**New York**

USC has been busy planting trees this season. They had a task force meeting and talked about the use of volunteers for tree plantings and local successes. There was a lot of discussion on how big a project can volunteers handle. The conservation districts suggested if a project is larger than 4000 trees, they look for a contractor. There is also an agroforestry pilot project USC is working on.

**GIT Funding**

The Chesapeake Bay Trust will be re advertising our Tree Canopy and Buffer GIT project regarding regional nursery supply, as no one bid on it back in the spring.

We are still awaiting guidance on FY24 GIT funding projects, but in August we will likely be starting the process of thinking about 2024 GIT funding project ideas.

**Other**

Katie Brownson's old position at the Chesapeake Bay Program is getting filled. The new person should be starting in August.