



**On Behalf of the AgWVG Resource Improvement
Technical Review Panel:**

**“CBP RI Definitions and Verification Visual Indicators
Guidance Document”
and “Technical Submission Document”**

**Bob Ensor, Chair
8/7/14**

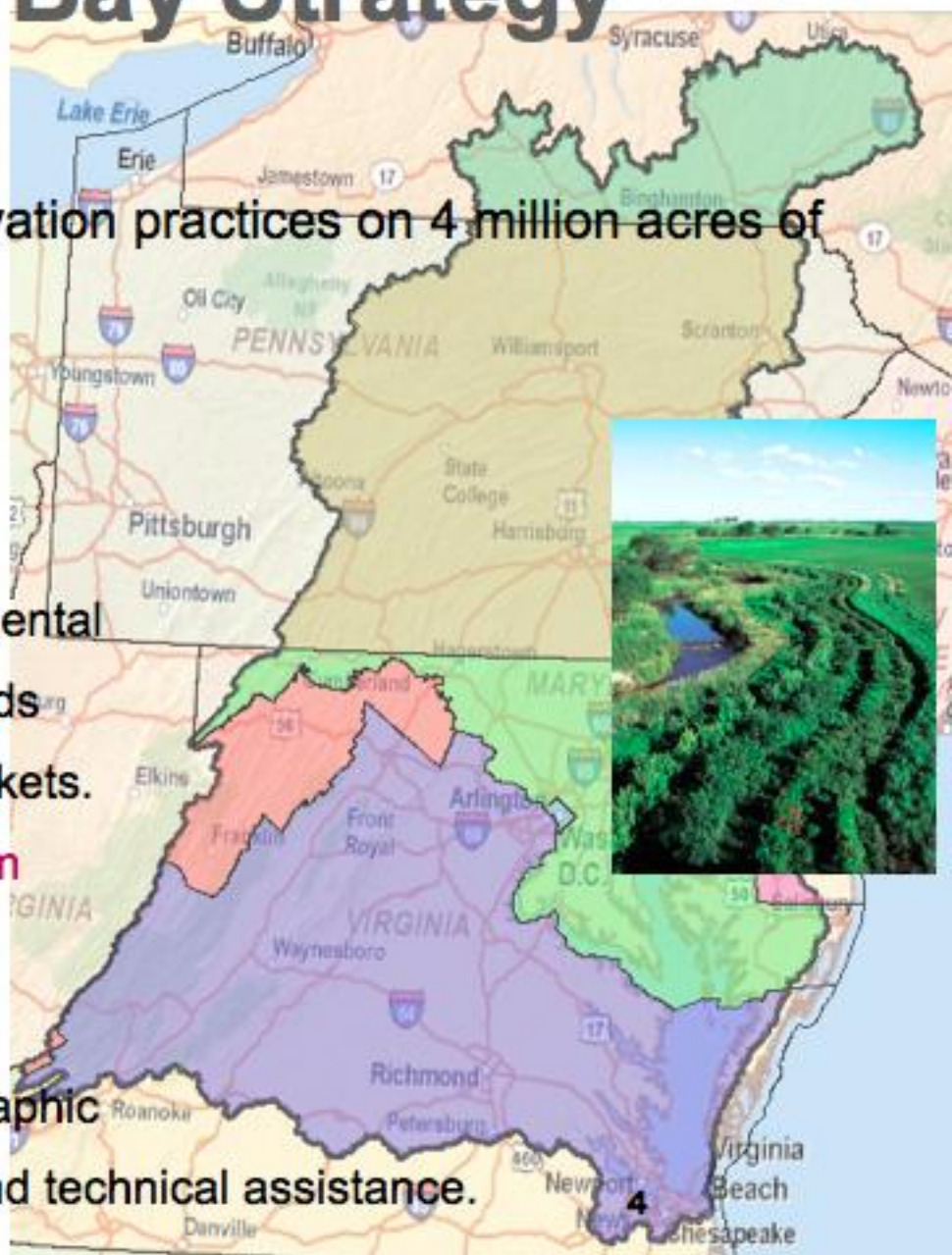
Chesapeake Bay Strategy

USDA 2011 Strategy

Key Goal: implement new conservation practices on 4 million acres of agricultural lands by 2025.

Key Actions:

- Target CBWI funding to priority watersheds and priority practices.
- Lead an interdepartmental Environmental Market Team to develop the standards and protocols for environmental markets.
- **Work to improve the reporting system for all conservation practices.**
- Establish Showcase watersheds to demonstrate results in limited geographic areas through increased outreach and technical assistance.



The RI Verification Process had been in Discussion since 2010

- USDA continued the process to assist states to develop methods to capture and report non-cost shared BMPs through a contract with NACD. (December 2010 to August 2011) States took information gained from this discussion but only MD and VA pursued the initiative.
- MDA created, tested and updated 3 versions of verification manuals for Functional Equivalents 2011-2013 and submitted the last Version to the AgVWG in July of 2013 for approval. In the Fall of 2013 the WQGIT requested the AgVWG complete a Technical Review.
- In December 2013 the Technical Panel was selected.
- The Technical Panel met and had teleconferences and made many significant changes creating a “Jurisdictional Neutral Document” that was presented to the AgVWG in June of 2014. Comments were provided and the Technical Review Panel reviewed and made the appropriate changes from comments (7-10-14).
- The Final Document was presented to AgVWG on 7-24-14. AgVWG approved the document except for 2 RI's which were changed based on comments from VA which were approved by the Panel 7-25-14.
- The last two VI will be approved at AgVWG meeting 8-8-14 and will be presented to WQGIT 8-11-14 pending WTWG Review.

Technical Review Panel Members

Technical Review Panel Members	Affiliation
Robert Ensor – Panel Chair	District Manager, Howard SCD-MD
Debbie Absher	Director of Ag Programs, SCD-DE
Gary Moore	Ag Incentives Program Manager, DCR-VA
Lamonte Garber	Watershed Restoration Coordinator Stroud Water Research Center, PA
Beth McGee	Sr. WQ Scientist Chesapeake Bay Foundation, MD
Greg Albrecht	NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets-NY
Elmer Weibley	District Manager, Washington County SCD- MD
Charlie Wootton	TMDL Conservation Specialist, Piedmont SWCD- VA
Jeff Hill	Agriculture Program Manager, Lancaster County SCD-PA
NRCS Members In an Advisory Role	
Hosea Latshaw	State Conservation Engineer NRCS-PA
Larry Tennity	State Conservation Engineer NRCS-DE
Ann Baldwin	Environmental Engineer NRCS-MD
Sally Kepfer	State Resource Conservationist, NRCS-DE
Dale Gates	Resource Conservationist NRCS-NY
Other Advisors	
Mark Dubin	University of Maryland
Emma Giese	Chesapeake Research Consortium
Dana York	Green Earth Connection

Resource Improvement Practice Definition

“Resource Improvement BMP’s are practices which provide similar annual environmental benefits for water quality but may not fully meet all the design criteria of existing governmental design standards.

RI BMP’s are usually identified during a visit with the farmer. RI BMP’s are implemented by a farmer and are not cost shared through a federal or state program. RI BMP’s can be the result of a farmer choosing not to completely follow all the details of the design standard from the District or NRCS, but will contain all the critical elements for water quality resource improvement.

Approved CBP RI BMP’s definitions contain descriptions of the practice with Visual Indicators. A Visual Indicator is a means of assessing the presence of key elements that must be present to achieve the water quality benefits of the RI practice and to be reported in Jurisdictional WIPs.

The re-verification interval of an agricultural Resource Improvement BMP may be more frequent than practices meeting state or federal programs to insure proper functioning.”

Final 19 Resource Improvement Practices

RI Code	RI BMP Name	Additional Practice Information
RI-1	Dry Waste Storage Structure	
RI-2	Animal Compost Structure	
RI-3	Alternative Crop/Switchgrass	
RI-4a	Watercourse Access Control-Narrow Grass	10'-34' Exclusion Area, Natural Grass or planted
RI-4b	Watercourse Access Control-Narrow Trees	10'-34' Exclusion Area, Native Trees or planted
RI-5	Watercourse Access Control--Grass	35'+ Width Exclusion Area, Natural Grass or planted
RI-6	Watercourse Exclusion-Trees	35'+ Width Exclusion Area, Native Trees or planted
RI-7	Grass Nutrient Exclusion Area on Watercourse	10'-34' Width Buffer
RI-8	Grass Buffer on Watercourse	35'+ Width Buffer
RI-9	Forest Nutrient Exclusion Area on Watercourse	10'-34' Width Buffer
RI-10	Forest Buffer on Watercourse	35'+ Width Buffer
RI-11	Vegetative Environmental Buffer for Poultry-Grass	Warm Season Grass
RI-12	Vegetative Environmental Buffer for Poultry-Trees	Trees
RI-13	Conversion to Pasture	
RI-14	Conversion to Hayland	
RI-15	Rotational Grazing	
RI-16	Barnyard Clean Water Diversion	
	Concentrated Area Protection	Removed by Technical Panel
RI-17	Water Control Structure	
RI-18	Watering Trough	
	Wetland Development	Removed by Technical Panel

Key Principles of Resource Improvement Practices

- VI's are usually found in the field when working with farmers. RI's must be evaluated against and meet the approved RI definition and Visual Indicators (VI) to be reported.
- The Guidance Document contains example worksheets to document VI's. States may design their own worksheet sheet as long as it has the required elements as required in the Guidance Document.
- All Visual Indicators must either have a Y or NA marked. If a N is marked it may not be reported.

Key Principles of Resource Improvement Practices

- “Re-verification Intervals” have been established for RIs. A RI will have to be re-visited at the approved interval to determine if the RI is still present and functioning to remain in the Database.
- Acceptable Verification Methods for RI’s are found in the AgWVG Verification Guidance Document. All RI must be seen “on the ground” by a Jurisdictionally approved entity for initial reporting and re-verification.

Key Principles of Resource Improvement Practices

- Modifications to Approved VI's- Jurisdictions are allowed to make individual VI's stricter than the approved guidance per state program requirements, regulations, etc. Where "state or local regulations or requirements" are mentioned in VIs, jurisdictions may insert specific state regulations or requirement references. A jurisdiction may not make a VI less restrictive or weaker than the approved CBP VI guidance. If jurisdictions wish to propose less restrictive VI's or additional RI's, they must be first reviewed and approved following the CBP partnership's "BMP Protocol" process.
- VI's will receive the appropriate associated CBP credit- ie. *Nutrient Availability, Landuse Change or Efficiency Reduction*- once a jurisdiction implements the CBP approved RI guidance in their state.

Submission Document

- Review of Submission Document Tables-
Matt Johnston.



Questions?