

Text Sections Extracted from the May 12, 2104
“Strengthening Verification of Best Management Practices Implemented in the
Chesapeake Bay Watershed: A Basinwide Framework”
Relevant to the Partnership’s Watershed Technical Workgroup

Practice Life Spans

The BMP Verification Review Panel recommended that the Partnership establish practice life spans for all Partnership approved BMPs and apply these life spans with within the workgroups’ verification guidance and the jurisdictions’ verification programs and underlying protocols¹. The Panel recommended that the Partnership support continued crediting of a practice after its recorded lifespan as long as the proper level of re-verification occurs confirming the practice is still present and functioning. The Panel recommended the following specific steps be taken in factoring practice life spans into the workgroup’s BMP verification guidance, the Committee’s basinwide framework, and the jurisdictions’ BMP verification programs:

- For the existing Partnership approved BMPs, the **respective source sector workgroup** needs to assign a life span/expiration date for each approved BMP. In doing so, the workgroups need to consider contract/permit life span, engineering design life span, and actual life span.
- For all future BMP expert panels convened by the Partnership, the **workgroups** need to ensure each panel they convene is charged with establishing a recommended life span/expiration date for each of the practices at which time they must be re-verified or be removed from the data submitted for crediting.
- **Workgroups** need to develop specific guidance for how to sunset specific reported practices which have gone beyond their lifespan and have not received the level of required re-verification after the designated lifespan and the jurisdictions need to build systems for carrying this out this process within the larger verification programs.
- The **Watershed Technical Workgroup**² needs to develop specific guidance that ensures the Partnership’s (National Environmental Information Exchange Network, or NEIEN-based, BMP reporting system specifically addresses the issue of practice life span. This includes building in a system for flagging reported practices which are past their established life spans, and confirmation there was follow up re-verification of their continued presence and functionality or removal from the data submitted for crediting.

¹ *Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership BMP Verification Review Panel’s Guidance and Recommendations to the Six Source Sector Workgroups, the CBP BMP Verification Committee, and the Seven Watershed Jurisdictions*. Distributed November 19, 2013.

http://www.chesapeakebay.net/channel_files/21511/cbp_bmp_verif_review_panel_recommendations_11_19_2013.pdf

² The BMP Verification Review Panel’s original recommendation charged the BMP Verification Committee with this responsibility. Given the Watershed Technical Workgroup has responsibility for oversight of the Partnership’s NEIEN-based BMP reporting system, the responsibility was switched from the Committee to the Workgroup.

The Partnership recognizes practice life spans can take the form of contractual or regulatory life spans as well as physical or functional life spans. Within a BMP verification context, the Partnership is focused on the functional life span of a given practice.

The BMP Verification Committee and BMP Verification Panel members agreed that in verifying practices are “still there and functioning” over the course of a practice’s established life span, the jurisdictions can rely on statistically valid sub-sampling of the entire population of practices. Within their BMP verification program documentation, each jurisdiction will need to carefully spell out not only the design of their statistically valid sub-sampling methodologies, but exactly how the jurisdiction will apply the results from the sub-sampling to determine what portion of the entire population of practices are considered “still there” through time. (Pages 121-122)

Historical Data Clean-up

The Partnership’s [Watershed Technical Workgroup](#) is responsible for organizing the Partnership-wide efforts to create more accurate BMP records from 1985 through the present. The clean-up of the jurisdictions’ historical BMP databases is being done in response to both the need for re-calibration of the Partnership’s Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model as part of the 2017 Chesapeake Bay TMDL Mid-point Assessment and to better support the basinwide and baywide efforts underway to explain observed water quality trends in the hundreds of monitoring stations across the watershed and tidal waters. (Page 129)

Historical Data Clean-up Guidance

The seven watershed jurisdictions received the following guidance from the BMP Verification Committee at its [March 13, 2013 meeting](#):

- Jurisdictions should focus efforts to clean up historical BMPs on those practices in place during the proposed calibration years for the next phase of the Partnership’s Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model. These calibration years have yet to be determined by the Partnership³.
- It will be up to each jurisdiction to determine which BMPs will receive a higher priority in the clean-up process. Some jurisdictions may place emphasis on cleaning up a subset of practices with high implementation levels and/or practices in specific geographic areas.
- As much as possible, jurisdictions should follow the verification guidance developed by the source sector and habitat workgroups in an effort to verify practices in place for any given year (see Section 2).
- Jurisdictions should focus on those geographic areas and BMPs which are currently being ‘cut off’ in the Partnership’s Scenario Builder tool. (Page 129-130)

³ Until a decision is made on the watershed model calibration period, the BMP Verification Committee recommends the six watershed states and the District focus on the key years of data that were provided to them from the Partnership’s Scenario Builder tool’s history. These years include key calibration year from the Partnership’s Phase 5.3.2 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model calibration, including years with an Agricultural Census: 1985, 1987, 1992, 1997, 2002, 2005, and 2009.

Annual Progress Reporting

Use the Partnership's Data Exchange Network to Document Verification Status. As described in Section 2, since early 2000s, the Partnership has been designing, implementing, and now actively using a state node-based data exchange network approach to sharing BMP data building from the National Environmental Information Exchange Network or NEIEN (see Appendix L). The Partnership has developed an agreed to set of Chesapeake NEIEN Node Codes⁴ which describe all the current possible fields within NEIEN. Fields can be added at any time to the Codes list and to the NEIEN system itself—the Partnership's [Watershed Technical Workgroup](#) reviews and approved all additions and changes to the Codes list every year prior to December 1st. The Watershed Technical Workgroup is charged with the responsibility for determining which set of BMP event status codes and BMP funding source codes all seven jurisdictions will be responsible for reporting into the future to ensure full implementation of the basinwide BMP verification framework. The [Chesapeake Bay Program's Grant Guidance](#) will be amended to reflect a reference to the jurisdictional responsibilities for reporting information for the designated codes for all submitted practices.

Annually Review, Update, and Approve the NRCS Standards/CBP Approved BMPs Crosswalk. The Partnership's [Agriculture Workgroup](#) will be responsible for annually reviewing the crosswalk between NRCS standard and Partnership's approved BMPs, factoring in any new or revised NRCS standards and Partnership approved BMPs. Based on any Agriculture Workgroup approved changes to the crosswalk, the Watershed Technical Workgroup will review and approve the necessary changes to Chesapeake NEIEN Node Codes Lists as well as required changes to the rules for how these BMPs will be applied within the Partnership's Scenario Builder tool.

CBPO Review of Annual Implementation Progress Data Submissions. Chesapeake Bay Program Office (CBPO) staff will review the jurisdictions annual NEIEN-based submissions of implementation progress data for documentation of verification as part of their routine evaluations of the quality and completeness of the submitted data. The annual progress data reviews will be conducted following the specific guidelines and protocols agreed to by the Partnership through the [Watershed Technical Workgroup](#). Any submitted implementation progress practice data without the required verification documentation will be returned to the jurisdiction for incorporation of required documentation and resubmission.

Maintain and Approve Updated Documentation on Entire Annual Progress Data Submission/Review Process. The Partnership's Watershed Technical Workgroup will be responsible for reviewing and approving any updates to documentation of the steps, processes, and procedures followed by the Chesapeake Bay Program Office staff in receiving, reviewing, processing, and submitting to the watershed model for crediting of each jurisdiction's annual implementation data submissions. Chesapeake Bay Program Office staff will be responsible for updating and maintaining the documentation of the annual progress data submission and review process. (Pages 158-159)

⁴ For the most recent version of the NEIEN codes list, contact the current staff or coordinator of the Watershed Technical Workgroup: http://www.chesapeakebay.net/groups/group/watershed_technical_workgroup