



Watershed Technical Workgroup Meeting

December 4, 2025
10:00 AM-11:15 AM

[Visit the meeting webpage for meeting materials and additional information.](#)

Purpose: To keep the group informed of the QAPPs review underway and progress schedule/next steps following the December verification call.

Summary of Actions & Decisions

Decision: The WTWG approved the [October Meeting Minutes](#) and [November Meeting Minutes](#).

Action: Please submit nominations for the open Chair, Vice Chair, and 2 at-large positions to Auston Smith (Smith.Auston@epa.gov) and Caroline Kleis (Kleis.Caroline@epa.gov) by January 2nd, 2026.

Action: Caroline Kleis, WTWG Staffer, will send out calendar invitations for WTWG meetings in 2026. The January meeting will be rescheduled to January 8th, 2026.

Action: Please submit pasture high and hay high acres from 1985-2025 or send an email noting there will be no submissions of these acres to Jess Rigelman (jrigelman@j7llc.com) as soon as possible, but no later than February 2026. Please include the following information:

- Year: 1985-2025
- Geography: County, HUC12, State Whole geography or CBWSOnly.
- LoadSourceGroup: Hay or Pasture or PastureHay
- Acres: (Any area in the state that is not reported will get 0 acres of high since there is no default.)

Action: Caroline Kleis, WTWG Staffer, will follow up via email requesting a vote from WTWG members on the methodology proposed for the allocation of feed space acres in Phase 7. Members will be asked to provide their responses by December 18th. Sarah McDonald, USGS, will provide this same presentation to the AgWG at their December 18th meeting. AgWG and WTWG members are encouraged to coordinate and discuss any feedback, prior to WTWG members submitting their final votes by the 18th.

Post Meeting Decision: The WTWG approved via email the methodology proposed for the allocation of feed space acres in Phase 7

Action: Auston Smith, EPA, will continue to provide updates on the timeline for the delivery of the NRCS data set and potential impacts on the progress schedule as more information becomes available.

Action: Auston Smith, EPA, will update verification call calendar invites with agendas ahead of the December 8-12 verification calls.

Minutes

I. Introductions & Announcements

Lead: Auston Smith, EPA

Auston Smith, EPA, opened the meeting and walked the group through the following announcements:

- Approval of [October Meeting Minutes](#) and [November Meeting Minutes](#)
 - The WTWG approved the October and November meeting minutes.
- Submit Nominations for Chair/Vice Chair and At-Large by January 2nd, 2026
 - Auston reminded the group that we are currently seeking nominations for Chair, Vice Chair, and two at-large members through January 2nd. Auston noted that at the time of this meeting, one nomination had been received for the Chair position. Nominees will be introduced at the January meeting.
- 2026 Calendar Invitations
 - 2026 WTWG calendar invitations will be distributed this month. The WTWG will continue to meet on the first Thursday of the month in 2026. However, Auston noted that the January meeting will be rescheduled to January 8th, 2026, given the holiday.
- NRCS Data Set Update
 - A delay in the NRCS data set is expected. As more information is available about the anticipated timeline of the NRCS data set delivery, the group will be informed of any deadline changes for final BMP submissions and QAPPs.
- Discussion of Mappings (USWG and AgWG) and Ag BMPs on Solar Land Uses (AgWG)
 - The Agriculture Workgroup (AgWG) and Urban Stormwater Workgroup (USWG) will discuss the BMP mappings for their respective sector at their December meetings. The AgWG will also discuss ag BMPs on solar land uses at their December 18th meeting. As is needed, these discussions may continue into January before the updating mappings return to the WTWG for their review and approval.
- Follow-Up on CAST XML Upload - Jess Rigelman, J7 Consulting/CBPO
 - At last month's meeting, there was a question from the workgroup as to when open node would be going away. Jess noted that open node will be going away at the end of this progress season, so next year you will need to use CAST to upload XML. To date, feedback received has been positive, but WTWG members are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the CAST XML upload process, given the transition that will be taking place next year.
- New Planning BMPs going into Phase 6 CAST 23 - Jess Rigelman, J7 Consulting/CBPO
 - Jess mentioned to the group that a CAST deployment happened yesterday. After that deployment, Jess ran a 2025 progress run, which should be available for those involved in progress submissions (with the name "2025 Progress 20251203"). These will continue to be run every Friday and can be done as needed by special request.
 - Jess also noted that Agroforestry BMPs (Alleycropping and Silvopasture) and the Phase 7 Urban Nutrient Management BMPs are now in CAST 23 as planning BMPs.
- 2025 Land Use - Jess Rigelman, J7 Consulting/CBPO

- Jess confirmed the addition of the new 2025 base conditions and noted that the previous version was renamed “2025 WIP”. “2025” represents the new base condition with construction and harvested forest added.
- Request for Acres of Pasture High and Hay High From 1985-2025 for Phase 7 Pre-BMP Land Use - Jess Rigelman, J7 Consulting/CBPO
 - Jess requested that states start submitting pasture high and hay high data for 1985-2025 for the Phase 7 pre-BMP land use. This data will be needed for initial calibration in early 2026. The sooner this data is received, the better. There is no default for this, so if no data is received, there will be a zero. If you won’t be submitting these acres and would like to have zero acres recorded, please still inform Jess that you plan to submit zero. Please submit data with the following information:
 - Year: 1985-2025
 - Geography: County, HUC12, State Whole geography or CBWSOnly.
 - LoadSourceGroup: Hay or Pasture or PastureHay
 - Acres: Any area in the state that is not reported will get 0 acres of high since there is no default
 - Data should be sent as soon as possible, but no later than February.

Decisions:

1. The WTWG approved the [October Meeting Minutes](#) and [November Meeting Minutes](#).

Actions:

1. Please submit nominations for the open Chair, Vice Chair, and 2 at-large positions to Auston Smith (Smith.Auston@epa.gov) and Caroline Kleis (Kleis.Caroline@epa.gov) by January 2nd, 2026.
2. Caroline Kleis, WTWG Staffer, will send out calendar invitations for WTWG meetings in 2026. The January meeting will be rescheduled to January 8th, 2026.
3. Please submit pasture high and hay high acres from 1985-2025 or send an email noting there will be no submissions of these acres to Jess Rigelman (jrigelman@j7llc.com) as soon as possible, but no later than February 2026. Please include the following information:
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Discussion Notes:

Bill Keeling: When we started talking about Phase 7, I asked for us to make sure we “do no harm”. That was sort of like a Hippocratic oath. When we went from Phase 5 to Phase 6, there were lots and lots of changes to BMPs and to NEIEN. It was a good two or more years after that before we could actually make the changes. So, when workgroups start talking about making changes, they need to understand that they may have an idea of how things work, but it may not work that way in reality in terms of making the changes to an application that is trying to collect things systematically. So, just be aware.

Auston Smith: Thank you, Bill. I do appreciate that comment. Certainly valid. Not trying to suggest that new ideas can't be introduced, but it is at the point where we are trying to make final touches on a lot of decisions that have Phase 7 considerations. So, thank you, Bill, for that context.

Bill Keeling (in chat): I have not had time to review the mappings yet.

Jess Rigelman: To follow up on the BMP mapping, I have gotten no comments from anybody. So, what I presented last month still stands. As I said before, I tried to just carry over what we did last time and made no changes other than where we had new land uses. So, I think we're on the same page, Bill.

Alicia Ritzenthaler (in chat): DC had a great experience with the new CAST upload for XMLs!

Joseph Schell (in chat): Delaware used the CAST upload and had no issues as of yet!

Bill Keeling (in chat): Can you send me an email to reply to with the data please?

Fernando Pasquel (in chat): When is the new Bay model (P7) going to be completed and what are the plans to develop allocations for the stormwater MS4 programs?

Norm Goulet (in chat): Sometime in the 2027-2028 timeframe

II. Allocation of Feed Space Acres for Phase 7

Lead: Sarah McDonald, USGS and Jess Rigelman, J7 Consulting LLC

Sarah McDonald, USGS, informed the WTWG of the methodology that will be used to allocate feed space acres for Phase 7. In particular, Sarah shared what was done in Phase 6 and the proposal for Phase 7.

Actions:

1. Caroline Kleis, WTWG Staffer, will follow up via email requesting a vote from WTWG members on the methodology proposed for the allocation of feed space acres in Phase 7. Members will be asked to provide their responses by December 18th. Sarah McDonald, USGS, will provide this same presentation to the AgWG at their December 18th meeting. AgWG and WTWG members are encouraged to coordinate and discuss any feedback, prior to WTWG members submitting their final votes by the 18th.
 - a. **Post Meeting Decision:** The WTWG approved via email the methodology proposed for the allocation of feed space acres in Phase 7

Discussion Notes:

Norm Goulet (in chat): Could someone remind me what the definition of rural is? For instance, is 1 DU per 10 acres considered rural?

Tyler Trostle (in chat): Sarah could you clarify why LRSEG's are used over HUC12? Thank you.

Jess Rigelman (in chat): Lrsegs are the finest scale of P7 CAST. HUCs will cross county and state boundaries.

Sarah McDonald: What is DU?

Norm Goulet: That would be dwelling unit (i.e. house or building).

Sarah McDonald: I would have to bring in my colleague Michelle to determine what her rural versus not rural designation was. I know her target was to tag residential areas and commercial areas so, by default, we are kind of saying the inverse of that. The inverse of residential/commercial is rural in some capacity. I can get more details on that. I don't know the ins and outs of how she mapped that.

Norm Goulet: Have we ever seen a presentation on that? There is a lot of grey area. For instance, you get into Prince William county, what we consider to be the rural area, and we have Harvey Farms (11 dwelling unit per 10 or 20 acres). I don't remember ever seeing a presentation on that.

Sarah McDonald: Yeah, I don't think there has been one.

Norm Goulet: At the very least, that needs to be teed up for the Land Use Workgroup.

Auston Smith: When is the next Land Use Workgroup meeting, Sarah?

Sarah McDonald: Our next Land Use Workgroup meeting isn't until March. If there is this and other topics that need to be done before then, we can do more of an office hours style spin-up to go through certain topics for Phase 7. We did do that a few months ago as well. So, if that's necessary, we can do that.

Elizabeth Hoffman (in chat): So total feed space acres are unchanged but how does them being separated into impervious and pervious limit BMP application, or does it even affect that?

Jess Rigelman (in chat): Feed space is the same. It is not split into pervious and impervious. That split is just used to determine where the feed acres are subtracted from.

Auston Smith: I know we are running up against the holidays and we wanted to finalize this by December 18th, but not sure what sort of quick office hours for Land Use Workgroup members might be possible.

Sarah McDonald: Probably not December. Norm, do you just want more documentation on what went into that, so you have something to react to?

Norm Goulet: That's a good place to start. In the long run, it probably isn't going to make a lot of difference because in the model we don't really differentiate developed between rural, non-rural, and even ag. It all gets lumped into development. One of these days, we probably need to sit down and think about developing ag developed as a separate category, because it's a bit misleading. It all gets dumped into developed, period. So, I guess in the long run it doesn't really make a difference. But, yeah, some documentation at the very least I think would be good to take a look at and react to, especially now that we're going to be backing things out. I know that the MS4 layer in Virginia isn't great to begin with. Hopefully we are going to make some huge strides on that in the next month. At least in Virginia where the MS4 service area is defined by the local governments and is not a countrywide application, the MS4 layer should take precedence when you're running into this problem of running out of land, because no MS4 is going to include agricultural land in their MS4. I can't speak for other states because every state defines their MS4 layer differently. But, in Virginia, no MS4 jurisdiction is going to include agricultural land.

Auston Smith: Norm, would it be alright if Sarah worked with her colleague to supply something to react to in the next couple of days, and maybe you and others at the Urban Stormwater Workgroup can react to in advance of the 18th? Is that agreeable, depending on what Sarah and her colleague can provide to you?

Peter Claggett (in chat): The nice thing about our rural/urban delineation is that is consistent across jurisdictions. We'll write up the approach to share and we may be able to get it on the 16th agenda.

Norm Goulet: We have an Urban Stormwater Workgroup meeting scheduled for the 16th. We just sent the agenda out yesterday, unfortunately. Sarah, if you can get me the information today, I can take a glimpse at it and see if it needs to go to the whole group. If not, we can refine this when we get into the Phase 7 aspect a little deeper, because it is going to change when we get into the Phase 7 aspect a little deeper.

Peter Claggett (in chat): We can get a definition to you today.

Sarah McDonald: As we all know with modeling, the devil is in the details. For this detail in particular, though, since we aren't taking from the impervious non roads which is considered rural, we're really only using that to say this is a rural land river segment. So, some feed space is

probably here given the layout of the given county. So, let me work with my team. I have a write up version of this presentation as well, but I will try to just get a quick on pager definition of what went into defining rural in combination with that stuff and we can get that circulated around to you by the end of the week.

Auston Smith: Any other questions for Sarah or Jess? We will look for folks' responses via email on this and, Norm, we will be in touch with you today or tomorrow. So, thanks, Peter, for that added detail.

III. Update on Quality Assurance Project Plans Review

Lead: Auston Smith, EPA

Auston Smith, EPA, thanked the group for the efforts to get revised 2025 QAPPs to EPA and noted that initial and second rounds of feedback should have been received. During the December 8-12th verification calls, outstanding topics of concerns on these QAPPs can be discussed by the verification call participants. Due to the NRCS data delay, the progress schedule will also likely be delayed. Typically, the NRCS data set is supplied by November 1st, but it is anticipated that there might be a 2.5 month delay, which could further shift the deadline for QAPP finalization.

Actions:

1. Auston Smith, EPA, will continue to provide updates on the timeline for the delivery of the NRCS data set and potential impacts on the progress schedule as more information becomes available.

IV. Progress Schedule and Verification Meetings Overview

Lead: Auston Smith, EPA

Auston Smith, EPA, gave an overview of the December 8-12 verification meetings. In particular, Auston noted that agendas for the calls will be distributed in the next few days and that, given the delay in NRCS data, the focus of these calls can be geared more towards other BMP data sets and wastewater, and additional follow up can take place as NRCS data is released. Given that this year is a target year, Auston noted that more time will likely be spent by the CBPO on Progress information and communication before public release.

Actions:

1. Auston Smith, EPA, will update verification call calendar invites with agendas ahead of the December 8-12 verification calls.

V. Wrap-Up

Lead: Caroline Kleis, CRC

VI. Adjourn

Next Meeting: January 8th, 2026, from 10:00AM-12:00PM

Attendees:

Auston Smith, EPA
Caroline Kleis, CRC

Sushanth Gupta, MWCOG
Kevin Du Bois, DoD

Samuel Canfield, WVDEP
Norm Goulet, NVRC
Tyler Trostle, PA DEP
Bill Keeling, VA DEQ
Matt Kofroth, LCCD
Josh Glace, Larson Design Group
Scott Heidel, PA DEP
Arianna Johns, VA DEQ
Sabine Miller, MDE
Christina Lyerly, MDE
Helen Smith, Devereux Consulting
Jess Rigelman, J7 LLC/CBPO
Eugenia Hart, Tetra Tech
Bailey Robertory, MD DNR
Megan Thyng, EPA
Dylan Burgevin, MDE
Ashley Hullinger, PA DEP
Dave Montali, Tetra Tech
Joseph Schell, DNREC
Alicia Ritzenthaler, DOEE
Elizabeth Hoffman, MDE
Eric Hughes, EPA
Sarah McDonald, USGS
Fernando Pasquel, Arcadis
Caitlin Bolton, MWCOG
Peter Claggett, USGS