

Agriculture Workgroup (AgWG)

Meeting Agenda

February 15th, 2024

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Meeting Materials

Conference Call Information*

Zoom Link: <https://umces-edu.zoom.us/j/81478635498>

Meeting ID: 814 7863 5498

Passcode: 2024

Phone: +1 301 715 8592 US

Calendar Page: <https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/event/agriculture-workgroup-meeting-february-2024>

Workgroup Areas of Focus

Accounting & Reporting • Implementation • Innovation

Data & Modeling • CBP Assignments

*To enter the webinar, please open the webinar link first. After opening the webinar, either elect to join via computer audio or via phone call. If you select phone, **please ensure you enter the participant ID.**

**Common Acronyms can be found at the end of this agenda.

10:00 **Welcome, introductions, roll-call, review meeting minutes – 5 minutes**

Kathy Brasier, AgWG Chair

- Welcome 2024-25 Vice Chair and [at-large members](#)
- Roll-call of the governance body
- Roll-call of the meeting participants - *Please enter name and affiliation under "Participants" or in "Chat" box*
- **Decision requested:** Approval of [minutes](#) from the January AgWG call.

Accounting & Reporting/Innovation

10:05 **Use of OptIS to Track Adoption of Cover Crops and Conservation Tillage – 30-minute presentation**

Dr. Dave Gustafson, Conservation Technology Information Center (CTIC)

The Conservation Technology Information Center (CTIC) has been collaborating since 2010 with The Nature Conservancy and scientists at Regrow Ag on the development of the Operational Tillage Information System (OptIS), a novel approach for tracking the adoption of cover crops and conservation tillage, based on the use of publicly-available remote sensing data. The latest version of OptIS now makes these data freely available (via the CTIC website) for all lower 48 states of the Continental US (CONUS). In tandem with these efforts, CTIC is pursuing implementation of the Conservation Validation Network (CVN), which will collect anonymized ground-truthing data

meant to improve the accuracy of OpTIS and other similar methods now being developed to track the adoption of such practices.

10:35 Satellite remote sensing applications to support cropland conservation management – 30-minute presentation

Dr. Dean Hively, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)

Dean Hively, USGS, will discuss the use of satellite remote sensing for informing conservation management of field crops. In this era of increasing satellite capability, it is possible to measure fractional cover of both living vegetation (e.g., winter cover crops) and senesced vegetation (e.g., crop residue and tillage intensity), as well as the performance (biomass and nitrogen content) of winter cover crops. Tools can also be developed to identify implementation acres and detect emergence and termination dates on cover crop fields. Satellite-based analyses conducted in cooperation with conservation programs can inform adaptive management of incentive and outreach, to emphasize practices with documented environmental benefit. Dean will present an overview of methods currently used nationally to map cover crops and residue cover, with a focus on tools developed through his research partnership with the Maryland Department of Agriculture.

11:05 Remote Sensing Verification of Conservation Tillage BMPs – 30-minute presentation

Tom Howard, Resolve Hydro; Scott Heidel & Ashley Hullinger, PA DEP

Tom Howard is the Founder and CEO of Resolve Hydro LLC, a company focused on water resources applications of remote sensing. This presentation will include a brief overview of remote sensing applications to water resources, including monitoring submerged aquatic vegetation extent and water quality changes through space and time. The second part of the presentation will introduce a PA-DEP pilot project investigating the accuracy and utility of a remote sensing-based BMP verification methodology for conservation tillage practices.

11:35 Q&A – 20 minutes

Wrap-up

11:55 New Business, Announcements & Updates – 4 minutes

- **Agricultural Modeling Team**
 - Tom Butler, Coordinator of the AMT, will provide a brief update on the group's latest activities.
- **In-Person Meeting Poll**
 - Summary of responses received so far.
 - Please complete the poll if you have not already:
<https://forms.gle/Eevq1zQfNXSS7866>.
- **Agriculture Advisory Committee**
 - Review of [actions & decisions](#) from December 8th, 2023 PSC meeting.
 - "Decision: The partners agreed to establish an action team to develop recommendations on whether to establish an Agricultural Advisory Committee. Final recommendations should be ready for PSC consideration in time for the June PSC meeting. The partners also agreed to the action team [charging document](#)."

- **Beyond 2025 Updates**
 - Clean Water Small Group: The [WQGIT Feb 26th](#) meeting will include a recap from the Clean Water leads on the feedback heard during the [Feb 1 Clean Water Listening Session](#).
 - Climate Small Group [Listening Session](#): Thursday, Feb 22nd from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
 - [Beyond 2025 Symposium](#): Feb 28 – 29th. The purpose of this meeting is to convene the Beyond 2025 Steering Committee to integrate and discuss Small Group recommendations and consider the support and steps needed to inform the Executive Council of a recommended path forward.
- **U.S. Geological Survey fact sheet about Chesapeake agricultural water quality: [Your land, your water—Using research to guide conservation practices on local farms in the Chesapeake Bay watershed \(usgs.gov\)](#).**
 - This fact sheet summarizes some important topics about water-quality conditions and drivers in Chesapeake agricultural settings. USGS used feedback from local farmers, NRCS staff, and SWCDs to make sure that the text and visuals in the document would be relevant to farmers and local resource managers.
- **[Southeast PA Grazing Conference](#) on Thursday & Friday, February 15 & 16. Lancaster County.**
 - Join us at the 31st Annual Southeast PA Grazing Conference, featuring speakers interested in promoting grass and sharing how to capitalize on its myriad advantages.
- **National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Request for Proposals**
 - **Small Watershed Grants (SWG) Program**
 - More information can be found on [NFWF's SWG website](#).
 - Proposals due April 3rd, 2024.
 - **Chesapeake Watershed Investments for Landscape Defense (WILD) Program**
 - More information can be found on [NFWF's WILD website](#)
 - Proposals due April 10th, 2024.
- **Other Announcements?**
 - Send to Jackie Pickford (Pickford.Jacqueline@epa.gov) for inclusion in “Recap” email.

11:59 **Review of Action and Decision Items**

12:00 **Adjourn**

Next Meeting: Thursday, March 21st, 2024: 10AM-12PM, Call-in Zoom

****Common Acronyms**

AgWG- [Agriculture Workgroup](#)
CAST- [Chesapeake Assessment Scenario Tool](#) (user interface for the CBP Watershed Model)
CBP- [Chesapeake Bay Program](#)
CBPO- Chesapeake Bay Program Office
CBW- Chesapeake Bay Watershed
CTIC – Conservation Technology Information Center
CVN – Conservation Validation Network
EPA- [United States] Environmental Protection Agency
FSA – Farm Service Agency
NRCS – Natural Resources Conservation Service
NFWF – National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
OpTIS – Operational Tillage Information System

AMT- [Agricultural Modeling Team](#) (Phase 7)
PSC – [Principals' Advisory Committee](#) (CBP)
PSU- Penn State University
SWCD – Soil and Water Conservation Districts
SWG – Small Watershed Grant Program
WQGIT- [Water Quality Goal Implementation Team](#)
WILD – Watershed Investments for Landscape Defense
UMD- University of Maryland
USDA – United States Department of Agriculture
USGS – United States Geological Survey