



Forestry Workgroup Meeting

September 7, 2022

[Meeting Materials](#)

Craig Highfield, ACB
Katie Brownson, USFS
Rachel Felter, ACB
Anne Hairston-Strang, MD
DNR
Marian Honeczky MD DNR
Paul Emmart, MDE
Steve Raabe, OpinionWorks
Catlin Verdu, VDOF
Terry Lasher, VDOF

Lara Johnson, VDOF
Rick Turcotte, USFS
Brenda Sieglitz, CBF
Ryan Davis, ACB
Rebecca Hanmer, Chair
Peter Hoagland, NRCS
Cassie Davis, NY DEC
Lydia Brinkley, USC
Julie Mawhorter, USFS
Danielle Gift, USFS
Molly Hassett, NY DEC

Ann Armstrong, TNC
Kesha Braunskill, DFS
Jenna Talbot, DNREC
William Byrum, NRCS
Helen Golimowski, Devereux
Consulting
Dexter Locke, USFS
Sally Claggett, USFS
Judy Okay
Ashley Traut, GBWC

9:00 Sally Claggett Send Off

The September meeting is the last meeting of Coordinator Sally Claggett, as she will be retiring at the end of the month. The workgroup sent Sally off with well wishes and congratulated her on all her amazing work she has contributed to the Bay Program. Anne Hairston-Strang, Craig Highfield, Katie Brownson, Julie Mawhorter, and Rebecca Hanmer all gave their thanks and praise to Sally for all the amazing things she has done in the Chesapeake.

Katie Brownson will be the acting Coordinator for the workgroup and is excited to follow in Sally's footsteps.

9:20 am Reforestation Opportunities and Challenges in New York State- Gregg Sargis and Ann Armstrong, The Nature Conservancy

Gregg Sargis gave a presentation on reforestation in New York. New York has ambitious climate goals, which will require significant increases in reforestation. In order to achieve that reforestation, there will need to be a significant increase in nursery production and tree plantings. Gregg discussed some barriers and bottlenecks related to that expansion, in addition to the opportunities and potential strategies for achieving climate goals and other benefits.

The New York 2019 Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act requires economy-wide greenhouse gas emissions reductions: 40 percent by 2030 and at least 85 percent by 2050. Reforestation has the most on paper potential to meet those goal. Gregg showed a map that identifies 1.7 million acres of former agricultural lands that are not in production that may be suitable for reforestation. NY has three tiers of goals to meet the goal of reducing emissions by 2050:

- Base Goal: Planting 0.4 million acres (184 million trees or 6 million trees per year)
- Medium Goal: Planting 1 million acres (480 million trees or 16 million trees per year)

- High Goal: Planting 1.7 million acres (782 million trees or 27 million trees per year)

NY is far from reaching these goals as they are only producing 580,000 trees. All the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast nurseries are producing 53 million trees. TNC worked with a contractor to look at barriers in the supply chain. These included seed collection, tree production, post-planting monitoring and maintenance, and landowner engagement.

Gregg went into the identified recommendations. He noted that scaling up production takes time and there is a need to create larger, steadier demand pools to generate higher confidence among suppliers. There is also a need to facilitate information sharing across the supply chain to support better planning and forecasting and ensure that seedlings don't go unused.

The biggest takeaway is that we do not just want to plant trees, we also want them to grow.

Gregg talked about the opportunity of existing efforts. Currently most of the existing programming and expertise is in planting riparian forest buffers. There are many different organizations that support riparian forest buffer and could expand into further into upland planting and engagement of new landowners. Landowners may be willing to reforest their lands because of multiple benefits such as wildlife habitat, environmental values, intergenerational legacy.

Discussion

Rick Turcotte brought up that the USFS is doing a lot of research on resilient trees and using science to make native trees more resilient. It has been hard to get people to sign onto planting trees that are modified, there is no big market interest. The USFS has the science part, but not the next step of getting trees planted. There is a unique opportunity to get a list of species that should drive the system. Gregg responded by saying that what landowners want tends to drive markets. The trees that are being made resilient are ones that people tend to think are functionally extinct. It is good to hear that there are more options.

Anne Hairston- Strang talked about how there are some opportunities to increase nursery production. It has been happening on a state-by-state base, but better connections will have to happen. The American Forest Foundation is doing an LSR to build interstate coordination around white oak. Having material for people is important to create demand. People want the cheapest seeds, which aren't always the resilient ones. This is a great time to be investing in resilient trees.

Terry noted that in VA they do not have the space to produce seedlings at state nurseries. There needs to be a commitment by states to grow seedlings. Fortunately, VA has put money towards state nurseries and is reopening one. This will expand capacity.

Brenda posed some questions to the group to think about: does introducing this genetically improved species into the forest have limits? Are there pilot sites that have been studied with results that can be shared? What is the best way to re-introduce these resilient native trees?

Anne Armstrong then asked the group if there are any obstacles to taking practices from buffers and applying it to the Uplands. Most agreed that is not that much different, it is just important that you are

meeting the wishes of the landowner. Terry noted that in VA they have seen good success with mimicking succession, and it can be really useful in establishing forest. Lydia Brinkley noted that it is important to have technical knowledge. She is worried that a big push for upland forests will take away from buffers. We need more people on both upland and riparian areas.

9:45 am Public Outreach and Communications Gaps and Best Practices for Tree Planting and Maintenance - Steve Raabe, OpinionWorks

Steve Raabe gave an overview of recently completed research identifying the needs and gaps that forestry professionals throughout the watershed are facing as they seek to engage the public in tree planting and maintenance. This presentation focused on the best practices and recommendations that emerged from the research. Steve opened with some background on the project, including the methods:

- Survey of Forestry Professionals,
- Formative Interviews
- Focus Groups among Practitioners

As Steve moved into the findings he noted that the lens of the project is on Outreach & Engagement. The technical side of tree planting, like what species to plant or monitoring tree health were discussed, but the focus and the findings are focused on how to successfully engage the public. Steve then noted four issues of context that have important implications for being able to successfully engage with the public:

1. Focus on Tree Equity = New Audiences
 - Thinking about nontraditional audiences to engage with to plant trees. How can you convince them of the importance of trees?
2. Difficulty Hiring and Retaining Staff
 - Staff is crucial not only for tree planting but also outreach and engagement.
3. Strained Tree Supply
 - A well-known issue within the Mid-Atlantic of not enough trees to meet goals.
4. Lack of Resources for Tree Maintenance
 - Maintenance is not adequately funded, nor does it get enough attention

There are 8 ingredients for success in outreach and engagement. Steve ran through 5 in the interest of time. All 8 will be in the final report which should be coming out shortly.

- #1: Relationship-Based Outreach, Grounded in the Community
- #3: Committing to Identifying and Cultivating New Audiences
- #4: A Collaborative, Spark-Plug Leader
- #6: Authentic Neighbor-to-Neighbor Recommendation
- #7: Sustained, Mutually Reinforcing Outreach

The key gaps that were identified by the project were:

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| 1. Technical assistance and training | 3. Lack of <i>systematic</i> networking and collaboration |
| 2. Understanding the motivations of new audiences | 6. Access to basic outreach tools, in keeping with best communications practices |

Steve ended his presentation by presenting the Broad Recommendations:

1. Bay wide Support for a Focused Public Engagement Strategy
2. A Web Portal to Aggregate Public Outreach Tools and Best Practices Information
3. Systematic Coordination of Networking and Frequent Training

10:05 am Discussion on the Next Steps of the Public Outreach and Communications Gaps and Best Practices for Tree Planting and Maintenance Recommendations

Sally opened the conversation that we have been striving to make communication tools available to people to actually use them. Getting tools out to people is the most doable part of the recommendations. Sally hopes that the other portions come down the line of things to get done. Anne asked about cost of implementing some of these recommendations. The tree cost is pretty easy to find but understanding how much outreach costs is a little bit more confusing. Steve noted that talking with technical assistance providers to gage how much is a start. You can scale costs for public outreach. But putting together some basic information on it should not be a big lift.

Brenda spoke up about how 10 Million Trees have content for partners to use that allows them to put their own logo on and share with people to get them engaged with planting trees in PA. There is a partner portal and a resource library. It is PA specific but can still be very useful. Katie spoke up to say that if you have ideas on how to share this information out contact Katie. If there are any specific items that you think should be focused on by the workgroup or leadership also reach out to Katie.

Judy Okay noted that having resources that shows off all the different types of buffers could be a really good tool.

In the chat Terry put some comments about ["My Tree Counts"](#): I wanted to mention a web based application that the VDOF has created called "My Tree Counts". The program attempts to capture the "tree give away" or small group tree planting projects. The planters, take a picture, upload some details and get the planting verified. It then gets placed on an interactive webpage and in the background, the data is captured in a spreadsheet that we use to report to VA BMP Warehouse. This upcoming year we will have a tree bounty program, a tree replacement program and a tag with a USB linking people to the website. Should increase reporting of projects that our staff is not directly involved with. Here is a [link](#) to the VDOF trees in communities page.

Action: If you have any feedback on the findings or recommendations that were presented, please send them to Steve Raabe (steve@opinionworks.com) and Rachel Felver (rfelver@chesapeakebay.net). If you have any feedback on how to use or disseminate the report and its findings, to send those ideas Katie (Katherine.Brownson@usda.gov)

10:30 am GIT Funding: Table 1s - Sally Claggett, USFS & Julie Mawhorter, USFS

Sally showed the Table 1 for the Forest Buffer outcome. The project is focused on science and action for local and state governments to accelerate RFB restoration. The hope is that a tool would be created to look at the multiple benefits of buffers, as there is a lot of information out there, but it is not in one place or highlighted that often. This project would attempt to rectify this situation by researching, analyzing and presenting compelling information on RFBs and their many benefits in a way that is readily consumable.

Julie showed the final Table 1 for the Tree Canopy outcome. The project aims to:

- Assess current capacity of regional public and private tree nurseries to meet current and future tree planting needs, accounting for needs of under resourced, low canopy communities
- Identify key needs and strategies for meeting future demand through a coordinated, proactive approach, including strategies to generate equitable workforce development pathways
- Provide a set of recommended actions for Chesapeake Bay Program partners aimed at bolstering the supply of climate resilient trees for urban and rural contexts

To view both the tables use this [link](#).

Discussion: Anne noted that Terry's comment in the chat about tracking trees is very relevant to the RFB project as it can be a tool to use to get people to care about trees and their multiple benefits. Rebecca requested that Virginia write up something that explains what they are doing with the tool to help get the word out.

In regard to the tree canopy Table 1, Anne noted that we should make sure that the procurement models are part of the specific RFP. Anne also noted that we should get into the nitty gritty and look into things like sources of funding. Julie noted that GIT funding projects are not a lot of money so we may just be able to get the pulse of what is happening and address key needs.

10:40 am Round Robin

Rebecca opened the Round Robin with a welcome back to Katie. Katie has been on maternity leave and has just gotten back into the swing of things. Katie noted that if she missed anything while she was gone, that you think needs her attention and want to bring it back up to the top of her stack, feel free to email her (Katherine.Brownson@usda.gov).

Maryland

Maryland has expanded their tree seedling supply. MD is up about half a million in their tree supply, they have 2.7 million trees, which is significantly more than previous years. The new 5 million trees employees have started and are starting to ramp up outreach. MD is currently interviewing for the Chesapeake Watershed Forester position. The Forest Markets and Trees Commission is working on a statewide report that should be out in October.

Virginia

VDOF has a working draft of a VDOF specific forest buffer plan. As a part of that, VDOF is getting ready to launch a digital cost share cheat sheet that'll let foresters figure out the cost share opportunities available for the folks that they're working with. There are some exciting watershed prioritization tools that are being checked a couple of areas across the State, and then perhaps expanding them to the whole state. VDOF has sent a draft RFP to hire a facilitator to kickstart the State Buffer Action Plan. The committee for the state plan has been picked out, they are ready to go and will get started in October.

Delaware

DE is having a tree planting on Saturday September 17th that is still in need of volunteers. The event will be planting two thousand trees to commemorate Harriett Tubman's 200th birthday and international Underground Railroad Month. The event will be held at Blackbird State Forest.

New York

The Upper Susquehanna Coalition(USC) is starting their [Watershed Wednesday](#) series, each session is a half hour on Wednesdays from the middle of September until the end November. All tree stock will be coming in within the next couple of weeks. The USC is looking at planting 90 acres of buffer this fall. Plantings will be happening every Saturday until Christmas.

Pennsylvania

PA's 10 Million Tree's program just delivered trees to Bradford County with seasonal staff and managers unloading the trucks.

Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay (ACB)

Craig Highfield spoke up to note that they are getting ready for their fall plantings. ACB has 120 acres to plant this fall. Ryan Davis is sponsoring the first ever 24-hour tree planting event, where people will be planting trees for 24 straight hours.

Other Announcements:

We will be having a retirement party for Sally at the end of September at Sandy Point State Park. More information will be shared with the workgroup.