

Meeting Notes

Agriculture Workgroup Meeting

April 11, 2013

USFWS

Annapolis, MD

AgWG Notes

- Meeting convened at 9:30
- Welcome and introductions
- Meeting Notes
 - AgWG March meeting summary was reviewed for member approval. DE motioned to approve, second by VA, all yea.
 - **DECISION: Approve March AgWG minutes**

AgWG Notes

- **Urban Stream Restoration Panel Update**
 - Mark Dubin requested workgroup comments on the Urban Stormwater Workgroup's Urban/Non-Urban Stream Restoration panel recommendations based on the review comments by the Watershed Technical Workgroup.
 - No additional comments from AgWG
 - **ACTION: Contact Mark**
(mdubin@chesapeakebay.net) with any questions on this document before May 13th

AgWG Notes

- **BMP Verification Update**

- AgWG Chair provided an update on the status for developing agricultural BMP verification protocol recommendations and tools for the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership, and sub group progress toward definition of transparency
- MD: due to value of consistency, how does the transparency issue apply across sectors?
- Chair: Group is Ag focused, potential for application across sectors
- NGO: How will this group's definition affect the matrix?
- Chair: The transparency components of the matrix will be revisited

AgWG Notes

- **BMP Verification Update**

- Chair clarified that the TetraTech tool currently being developed will reflect the transparency definition approved by the sub-group and the AgWG
- Coordinator: A test of forest buffer protocol was conducted on April 3
- TetraTech: Provided Mark with revised tool, based on feedback from Forestry group. A word document outlining assumptions and calculations will accompany the spreadsheet.
- Coordinator: Tool now reflects categorization of BMPs
- NGO: Would the scoring result in a numeric score or a relative ranking?
- Coordinator clarified that the numeric score would translate into a 'high' 'medium', 'low' score. The document will be provided soon.

AgWG Notes

- **BMP Verification Update**

- NGO: How long will it take to provide this to the states?
- Coordinator: Tool expected to be complete by May
- NY: Voluntary implementation practices eligible to be included in progress runs?
- Coordinator clarified that AgWG and partnership have never recommended that non-cost share be excluded, and the WTWG minutes will reflect this clarification
- EPA: Both c/s and non c/s are eligible, the important issue is proper verification
- MD noted that it is more accurate to define practices as having a different standard, rather than being below standard.

AgWG Notes

- **Poultry Litter Subcommittee update**

- Jim Glancey, PLS Chair, provided an update on the progress of the panel in addressing workgroup comments on state level data for poultry litter nutrient concentrations and litter production volumes.
- Glancey: The panel voted by state, with all in favor adding population calculation to their scope of work, the panel requests concurrence from the workgroup to proceed.
- NGO recommended confirming data with integrators
- MD noted that population is linked to volume, and is therefore part of original charge
- MD will be interested in modifying the model with this data soon
- **DECISION: AgWG members recommended that the Poultry Litter Subcommittee pursue population calculations**

AgWG Notes

- **Nutrient Management Panel update**
 - Chris Brosch, NM Panel Chair, provided an update on the progress of the panel, including an overview of the panel discussions and the draft work plan for developing recommendations for Phase 5 and 6 modeling suites.
 - Panel expecting to have a 5.3.2 recommendation by Fall 2013
 - MD noted importance of verification with panel discussions

AgWG Notes

- **Cover Crops Panel update**

- Jack Meisinger, Panel Chair, provided an update on the progress of the panel, discussions and panel report.
- CC panel report is nearing finalization
- Post-doc hiring is on hold for now, plan B is working with RUSLE 2 on sediment efficiencies

AgWG Notes

- **Conservation Tillage Panel update**
 - On behalf of Wade Thomason, Panel Chair, Mark provided an update on panel progress, discussions and review of the background panel report.
 - Reviewing and editing panel report with TetraTech
 - MD: verification will be an important part of the panel discussion

AgWG Notes

- **USDA 1619 Data Request**

- Mark provided a brief update on the list and its presentation to the USDA-NRCS Chesapeake Bay Board of Directors meeting held on April 2-3, 2013.
- Detailed report will be available at May meeting

AgWG Notes

- **Agricultural Projection Methods**

- Matt presented potential options and examples to develop a short-term agricultural projection method for both crops and livestock, and requested a recommendation of the projection method to be used to support the jurisdictional 2015 Two-Year Milestones goal development.
- Clarification that Ag census data is used for equity across sectors, and that annual production data not available at the county level
- Coordinator noted that this projection is for 2015 Milestone goal development
- Does the weight have to be the same across sectors?
- Johnston: AgWG can decide, or similar analysis could be done (predicting 2007 numbers) to set individual weight for each sector.

AgWG Notes

- **Agricultural Projection Methods**
 - DE noted the weights might be different by region as well
 - Johnston clarified that weights could be calculated by county, because model inputs are by county
 - DE suggested using the annual numbers to check accuracy
 - Johnston: additional data is currently accepted into the model (production data can still be incorporated)
 - The forecast determined by this group will be used to set 2015 milestone goals (which will not be changed even with new data)

AgWG Notes

- **Agricultural Projection Methods**
 - USDA noted the relatively minimal influence of the first 10 years included in the analysis
 - Johnston: smoothing technique will account for minimal influence, but it is better to have more data points
 - Clarified that as soon as Ag census data available (e.g. 2012) it replaces forecast value
 - VA: Recommend incorporating better data as soon as it is available
 - NGO: earliest time annual data could be entered and used?
 - Decision made today will be in place until 2015

AgWG Notes

- Agricultural Projection Methods
 - AgWG can recommend to WQGIT the Milestones not be set in stone
 - MD: request postponing this decision until next week
 - Chair: (alternate proposal) pursue smoothing technique, but would like it redone once 2012 data available
 - VA: incorporate reliable annual data when available
 - NGO: will the decision apply across all sectors?
 - This group can recommend

AgWG Notes

- **DECISION: Jurisdictions will submit one vote each via Google poll by Thursday, April 18th**
- 1) Option 1:
Continue to use the current regression-based forecasting method for future agricultural short-term projections until 2017, at which time the availability of the new CBP Phase 6 models will require a reassessment of short-term projection methods. It is understood that the 2012 Ag Census will be available in 2014 and will be incorporated to produce agricultural forecasts in future years until the 2017 reassessment.
- 2) Option 2:
Replace the current forecasting method with the double exponential smoothing forecasting method for future agricultural short-term projections until 2017, at which time the availability of the new CBP Phase 6 models will require a reassessment of short-term projection methods. It is understood that the 2012 Ag Census will be available in 2014 and will be incorporated to produce agricultural forecasts in future years until the 2017 reassessment.
- 3) Option 3:
Continue to use the current regression-based forecasting method to provide future agricultural forecasts for the years 2013, 2014 and 2015 for the 2015 Milestones, but re-consider using the double exponential smoothing forecasting method to provide future agricultural forecasts for the years 2016 and 2017 for the 2017 Milestones, and potentially for annual progress conditions. It is understood that the 2012 Ag Census will be available in 2014 and will be used to assess the value of the double exponential smoothing forecasting method. This option would require the workgroup to revisit this decision in the 2014-2015 timeframe, as well as for the 2017 reassessment.

AgWG Notes

- Break for lunch

AgWG Notes

- **Building a Better Bay Model: A Workshop for Agricultural Partners**
 - Mark provided updates on the workshop supporting the implementation of AgWG's top two priority lead MPA topics.
 - The workshop will be held May 22-23, 2013 at the Marriott Inn and Conference Center in College Park, MD
 - Breakout sessions will focus on agronomics, livestock and agricultural forecasting
 - Planning group has identified speakers and note-takers for the workshop and breakout discussions
 - Save the Date notices have been sent to potential participants, and registration will be available soon

AgWG Notes

- **Building a Better Bay Model: A Workshop for Agricultural Partners**
 - Coordinator: Breakout sessions will be recorded and compiled, expecting the workshop to result in continuing conversations
 - USDA: Recommend outlining a final report prior to the workshop
 - Coordinator clarified that planning group intends to provide participants with sessions objectives ahead of time, and model overviews will be given during the workshop
 - Recommend providing CBP model information ahead of time for participants to prepare
 - Chair requested the planning group set a date for when materials will be made available to participants
 - **ACTION: At workshop planning meeting tomorrow, group will set a deadline to have materials available to participants**

AgWG Notes

- **Agricultural Modeling Subcommittee**
 - Mark and Matt Johnston presented the organizational structure, objectives and purpose to proceed with establishing an Agricultural Modeling Subcommittee under the oversight of the Agriculture Workgroup, and requested workgroup approval.
 - NY representative needed for the subcommittee
 - NRCS representative recommended
 - **DECISION: Continue with formation of subcommittee as presented**

AgWG Notes

- **CBP Phase II WIP BMP Analysis**

- Jeff Sweeney, EPA NPS Data Manager, presented the recent analysis of BMPs included in the jurisdictional Phase 2 WIPs, highlighting the relative importance of specific BMPs in reaching the partnership's nutrient and sediment reduction goals
- Note that BMPs work in combination, and result in different load reductions together than individually

AgWG Notes

- **Future agenda items**

- Revisit BMP panel prioritization
- Functional equivalence
- Ag land conversion
- Gary Shenk presentation on independent data sets that could be used between now and 2017
- Potentially will hold a future meeting at the USDA Log Lodge in Beltsville, MD

AgWG Notes

- Review meeting notes
- Adjourned at 3:00pm
- Next meeting May 9th, 9:30-3:00
 - <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/calendar/event/19183/>