ATTACHMENT A

Draft Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership's BMP Verification Principles[1]

Revised: June 5, 2012
Subject to Further Revision

The Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) partnership has committed to the development and adoption of a basinwide best management practice (BMP) verification framework for implementation through the seven watershed jurisdictions' BMP verification programs. These jurisdictional BMP verification programs will be reviewed by the BMP Verification Review Panel for adherence to the Partnership's BMP verification principles prior to approval by the CBP Partnership.

The CBP Partnership has defined verification as the process through which agency partners ensure practices, treatments, and technologies resulting in reductions of nitrogen, phosphorus, and/or sediment pollutant loads are implemented and operating correctly. The process for certifying tradable nutrient credits is a separate, distinct process not addressed either by these principles or through the partnership's BMP verification framework.

Working to verify that practices are properly designed, installed, and maintained over time is a critical and integral component of transparent, cost efficient, and pollutant reduction effective program implementation. Verification helps ensure the public of achievement of the expected nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment pollutant load reductions over time. The CBP Partnership will build from existing practice tracking and reporting systems and work towards achieving the following principles.

PRINCIPLE 1: PRACTICE REPORTING

Verification is required for practices, treatments, and technologies reported for nitrogen, phosphorus and/or sediment pollutant load reduction credit through the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) partnership. Verification protocols will ensure that practices are:

- Properly designed, installed, and maintained to ensure that they are achieving the expected nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment pollutant load reductions reviewed and approved to by the CBP Partnership;
- Consistent with or functionally equivalent[2] to established practice definitions and/or standards;
- Not double counted; and
- Currently functional at the time of seeking credit and not removed from the landscape.

[1] The CBP BMP Verification Committee's May 18, 2012 revised draft verification principles as further edited to address the specific comments and overall direction from the CBP Water Quality Goal Implementation Team during their May 21, 2012 conference call.

[2] The CBP BMP Verification Committee intends to provide a clear definition of 'functionally equivalent' in the next version of the draft BMP verification principles.

For verified practices not consistent with, nor fully or partially functionally equivalent to, established practice definitions and/or standards, partners and stakeholders can seek CBP Partnership approval for crediting through the established CBP Partnership's BMP review protocol.

Any practice, treatment, and technology (or partial or full equivalency) approved by the CBP Partnership that is properly tracked, verified, and reported will be incorporated into the CBP Partnership's models and credited in the accounting of progress toward the jurisdictions' milestones and in the interpretation of observed trends in monitoring data.

PRINCIPLE 2: SCIENTIFIC RIGOR

Verification of practices assure effective implementation through scientifically rigorous and defensible, professionally established and accepted sampling, inspection, and certification protocols regardless of funding source (cost share versus non-cost share), source sector (agriculture, urban, etc.), and jurisdiction (state, local). A method and schedule for confirmations to account for implementation progress over time will help ensure scientific rigor. Verification shall allow for varying methods of data collection that balance scientific rigor with cost-effectiveness and the significance of or priority placed upon the practice in achieving pollution reduction. Crediting of practice data will vary based upon the level of scientific rigor of data collection, thus encouraging enhancement of the process as new resources become available.

PRINCIPLE 3: PUBLIC CONFIDENCE

Verification protocols incorporate transparency in both the processes of verification and tracking and reporting of the underlying data. Levels of transparency will vary depending upon source sector, acknowledging existing legal limitations and the need to respect individual confidentiality to ensure access to non-cost shared practice data. Still, to ensure public confidence in the actual occurrence of practice implementation and resultant pollution load reduction, verification protocols must place a priority on transparency.

PRINCIPLE 4: ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

Advancements in Practice Reporting and Scientific Rigor, as described above, are integral to guaranteeing desired long-term outcomes while reducing the uncertainty found in natural systems and human behaviors. Verification protocols will recognize existing funding and allow for reasonable levels of flexibility in the allocation or targeting of those funds. Funding shortfalls and process improvements will be identified and acted upon when feasible.