Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership's
BMP Verification Principles

PRELIMINARY DRAFT

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Overview

The Chesapeake Bay Program partnership has agreed to develop a basinwide BMP verification framework which will be comprised of a set of principles, protocols, and an independent panel.

The **principles** will set the verification expectations across all jurisdictions and sectors and, in essence, serving as criteria against which to review sector-specific verification protocols and jurisdiction verification programs for sufficiency in rigor and consistency across source sectors and jurisdictions. The **protocols** will provide the source sector specific approaches for verifying that the practices are properly designed, installed, and maintained to achieve the expected nutrient and sediment reductions, adhering to the agreed to principles. The **panel** of independent panel of national and regional verification experts will provide advice, feedback, and recommendations to the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership as it develops its basinwide BMP verification framework.

The tracking, reporting, verification, and crediting of practices and technologies which yield nutrient and sediment load reductions when installed is of critical importance to the Chesapeake Bay Program partners, supporting efforts for:

- targeting and directing program implementation toward where there are the greatest needs;
- accounting for progress towards milestones;
- quantifying landowner/property manager opportunities for generating tradable credits through state and interstate programs;
- adapting management efforts based on a more complete understanding implementation levels;
- assessing management effectiveness in combination with monitored water quality trends;
- evaluating and quantifying needs for offsetting new pollutant loads/sources; and
- supporting development, calibration, and management application of models and other tools used to support decision making.

Principles

Practices, treatments, and technologies reported for credit through the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership must be:

- properly designed, installed, and maintained to ensure that they are achieving the expected nutrient and sediment reductions reviewed and approved to by the partnership;
- consistent with or functionally equivalent to established practice definitions and/or standards;
- not previously reported; and

- not expired or removed from the landscape.

Verification of practices needs to be scientifically rigorous and defensible in this era of TMDL accountability, based on professionally established and accepted sampling, inspection, and certification protocols.

Verification needs to be carried out consistently across funding source (cost share versus non-cost share), source sector (agriculture, urban, etc.), and jurisdiction (state, local), yet allow for adaptability.

Need to establish a solid, accurate baseline of practice implementation from which periodic confirmations can be performed to account for changes through time.

Verification programs and protocols should build from the existing, well established verification, inspection and maintenance, and mitigation programs and infrastructure already in place and operating.

Recognize there is a difference in the level of rigor required for certifying individual credits from trading through established state and interstate programs and tracking, verifying, and reporting practices through the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership.

Need to strive for the right balance between the requirement for verification and the need to focus limited staff and funding on continued program implementation.

Use the verification process to encourage, even challenge land owners, municipalities, and implementing organizations to elevate their level of performance of practices, treatments, and technologies rather than attempt to define pollutant reduction efficiencies for less than functionally equivalent practices.