

# Reporting of USDA Conservation Practices for Chesapeake Bay

Olivia H. Devereux, DEC, Inc.

December 6, 2012

BMP Verification Review Panel

with Dean Hively, USGS EGSC

# USGS Project Objectives

- To assist the CB states with submitting USDA NRCS and FSA data for annual progress assessment
- To provide the states with the tools they need to efficiently submit the USDA data in future years

## Tools:

1. 1619 agreements to allow data sharing, ideally with uniformity among Chesapeake Bay states
2. Methodology for removing duplicate data that is co-cost shared by states and USDA
3. Methodology for data aggregation to protect farmer privacy

# Outline

## Part I

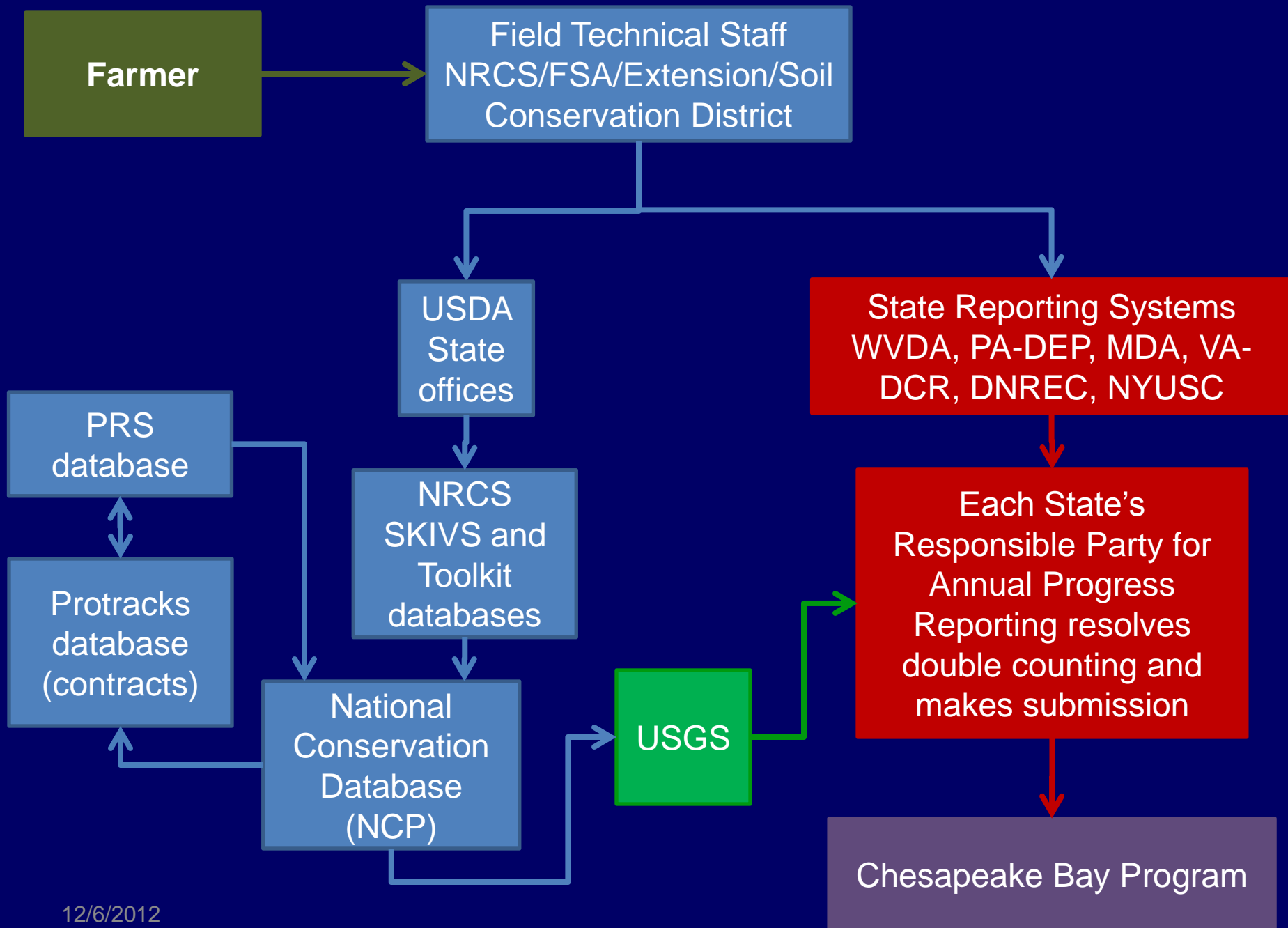
- Data collection flow
- Data processing steps
- State-specific strategies for addressing double counting

## Part II

- Comparison of USDA Cooperator Agreements (Section 1619 MOU)
- Draft of Chesapeake Bay-wide agreement (USGS and States)

## Part III

- Accountability
- Additional data needs



# Data Processing Steps

**Obtain USDA data from Federal  
or State NRCS and FSA officials**

**Address double counting,  
select reportable records**

**Aggregate records to maintain  
1619 privacy requirements**

**Crosswalk USDA practice codes  
to NEIEN practice categories**

**Submit records to  
NEIEN/Scenario Builder**

# PART I

State-specific strategies for  
addressing double counting

# WV—Preventing Double Counting

- FSA CREP will be reported through USGS-sourced Federal data
  - no risk of duplication with state-reported practices
  - exceptions: CP 21 filter strips & CP 22- riparian buffers. These will be reported by the state and removed from FSA data.
- NRCS practices will be reported through USGS-sourced Federal data
  - WV Agricultural Enhancement Program only funds practices that are not funded by NRCS
  - no risk of duplication

# VA—Preventing Double Counting

- Most NRCS and FSA practices will be reported using USGS-sourced Federal data records
- The majority of practices co-cost shared by VA and NRCS include nutrient management and cover crops
  - All VA nutrient management and cover crops will be reported; None from NRCS will be reported
- Other practices that appear to be duplicates will be identified record by record using farm owner/operator and location



# DE—Preventing Double Counting

- NRCS and FSA practices will be reported using USGS-sourced Federal data records
- Data from NRCS and FSA are not co-cost shared by DE
  - No risk of duplication
- Exceptions
  - Cover crop methodology was developed last year. State acres are subtracted from the NRCS acres. State data is more specific so preference is to report state data.
  - NRCS forestry practices should only include tree planting, forest harvesting practices. Other forestry practices, if present, should be compared with DE Dept. of Forestry data.
  - Manure relocation is funded either by NRCS or DE, never both. Submittal will include this practice from both sources.

# PA—Preventing Double Counting

- NRCS and FSA practices will be reported through USGS-sourced Federal data
- PA-DEP does not have a 1619 agreement and cannot identify duplicates other than by practice name
- All practices reported by NRCS and FSA will be removed from all PA data sources

# MD—Preventing Double Counting

- MD's Conservation Tracker database, which records all Federal, State, and Local conservation practices regardless of cost-share funding source, will be used for reporting
  - USGS-sourced NRCS data will only be used as a management tool to assess the data quality and completeness of the Conservation Tracker data and to work with staff on improving reporting

# NY—Preventing Double Counting

- They are likely to use local NY data sources for reporting NRCS and FSA practices
  - USGS-sourced NRCS data will only be used as a management tool to assess the data quality and completeness of data collected from the conservation districts

# Data Privacy and Data Aggregation

- To fulfill Sec. 1619 privacy requirements, practices can be publicly reported for any area with  $\geq 5$  farmers participating in a particular USDA conservation practice
- For 2012, will focus on reporting county totals
- Non-reportable data can be combined and reported at the state level
- States without a 1619 agreement will require data aggregation to occur before they receive USDA data

# PART II

1619 conservation  
cooperator agreements

State	Agency	Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Data covered	Start date	Expire date
MD	MDA	Conservation cooperator with NRCS.	Provide conservation services, monitoring, assessment or eval.	All	10/27/09	none
VA	DCR	Provide technical assistance to NRCS		Lists specific data that may be viewed	12/4/09	none
NY	USC	Conservation cooperator with NRCS.	Provide conservation services, monitoring, assessment or eval.	Not specified	3/3/11	none
WV	WV CA	Tracking for Bay TMDL-NRCS		AWMS and mortality disposal systems	2/21/12	3/1/13
WV	WV DA	Assist with delivery of conservation-related services-NRCS	Monitoring, assessment, or eval. of conservation benefits	Not limited	4/7/12	none
-	USGS	Provide technical assistance to FSA	Provide monitoring, assessment or eval.	CRP and CREP programs	8/2/10	9/30/15
-	USGS 12/6/2012	Provide technical assistance to NRCS	Provide monitoring, assessment or eval.	Farm Bill programs	11/20/10	9/30/15 15

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# Benefits of a basin-wide Cooperator Agreement for each jurisdiction

Jurisdiction	Result of adopting a basinwide 1619	Current Agreement
WV	Consistent data among all WV agencies involved in annual implementation reporting	Yes
PA	Allow data to be shared in unaggregated form, possibly allowing more reporting of practices that are also funded by various state agencies. The unaggregated data allows more careful removing of duplicates	No
NY	Consistent data types from all conservation districts. A unified approach to collecting data, cutting down on staff time involved	Yes
DE	Allow data to be shared in unaggregated form. Leading to increased knowledge about which practices are implemented and where	No
MD	Ability to secure data in a streamlined process, and receive more data elements	Yes
VA	No change	Yes
USGS	No change	Yes

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
USDA SECTION 1619 COOPERATOR  
CERTIFYING USDA AGENCY: FARM SERVICE AGENCY**

**USDA Section 1619 Cooperator**

As a certified USDA Section 1619 Cooperator, *(replace with the name of the Chesapeake Bay state agencies and USGS)* are authorized access to otherwise protected agricultural information. Protected information approved for disclosure under this Memorandum of Understanding shall be strictly limited to only that information necessary for *(replace with the Chesapeake Bay state agencies and USGS)* to provide the technical and financial assistance, in the form of monitoring, assessment, and evaluation, concerning the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), NRCS other contract programs in the Chesapeake Bay, FSA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), and FSA Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) data. Disclosure to *(replace with the Chesapeake Bay state agencies and USGS)* can include receiving the protected information either 1) directly from FSA and NRCS; or 2) directly from another USDA Section 1619 Cooperator; or 3) receiving the protected information directly from the producer or owner as part of the process required to enable a producer or owner to participate in the USDA program.

**Anticipated signatories:**

- Maryland Department of Agriculture
- Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
- West Virginia Department of Agriculture
- West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection
- Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection
- Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control
- New York Upper Susquehanna Coalition

# PART III

# Accountability

- Who will verify?
  - USDA's data, therefore USDA is responsible for verification – protocols are in place through lifespan
  - Aggregating data necessitates losing details like contract expiration date, though this can be used as a filter prior to aggregation
- Practices implemented under “Technical Assistance” only, not cost-shared, will not be reported by USGS.
  - These practices functionally have a different level of QA/QC.
  - Technical assistance is currently not considered by CBP for annual progress reporting

# Recommendations for Additional Data

<b>Data Category</b>	<b>Example</b>	<b>Relation to currently collected data</b>
Land Use	Land use change “from” and “to” (E.g.: Pasture fencing receives a reduction for CBP only when applied to riparian areas. NRCS allows pasture fencing to be cost shared when on any landscape position).	NRCS has a data field for land use ID. It is generally not populated
Animal Type	E.g.: Beef, dairy, poultry	NRCS has a data field for animal type ID. It is generally not populated
Cover Crop	Include variety, plant date, plant method, commodity vs. regular, and if manure was applied. E.g.: early drilled rye-regular.	Cover crop is defined broadly in NRCS data. CBP applies effectiveness values that range from 5% to 45% for nitrogen.

# QUESTIONS?

**OLIVIA H. DEVEREUX  
DEC, INC.  
OLIVIA@DEVEREUXCONSULTING.COM  
301-325-7449**

**Dean Hively  
USGS Eastern Geographic Science Center  
Stationed at USDA-ARS, Beltsville  
whively@usgs.gov  
301-504-9031**