

FWG Conference Call

June 5, 2013

Participants: Anna Stuart Burnett, Chris Peiffer, Aimee Weldon, Frank Rodgers, Judy Okay, Marcia Fox, Stephanie Eisenbise, Tom Ward, Sally Claggett, Herb Peddicord, Matt Pirot, Donna Murphy, Chris Peiffer, Mike Santucci, Tracey Coulter, Craig Highfield, Anne Hairston-Strang, Eric Sprague, Heather Montgomery

Announcements:

- **No meeting in July; next meeting will be on August 7th**
- MD has new Emerald Ash Borer forester. Will be working on urban inventory
- MD: Eric: helping the Alliance and the Pinchot Institute to get landowners into the EQIP program.
 - Developed a calculator for additional habitat benefits for forest conversions.
 - Working with Potomac Conservancy and Stroud Center to establish a focus on riparian forest buffers including newer, cost-effective means toward establishment. Want to hold a series of workshops on state of the art buffer trainings.
 - Conservation Collaborative Partnership Initiative is just MD this year. (like CREP but with NRCS Farm Bill funds)
 - Tom Ward has done a lot of riparian forest buffer trainings so keep him in mind. Always trying to get more agro-forestry training out there.
- Stephanie (Chesapeake Bay Fdn): new changes in leadership-- Harry Campbell is PA Director of CBF and she is the new watershed restoration manager.
- 40 people registered for the PA silviculture workshop in Mifflin County.
- VA DCR stormwater responsibilities will shift to DEQ, but ag programs will remain with DCR. Gary Moore is staying with DCR. Bill Keeling is dropping reporting responsibilities and moving to DEQ.
- Sally: Working Lands Conservation Strategy-- Two NRCS leads (Tom Morgart and Liz Wexler-Crane) are working with Julie and Sally to coordinate the report and state by state meetings to look at how they interact with federal programs. Hope to have a draft by September.
- Sally: Chesapeake forestry grants are due this month
- Tom Ward: Chesapeake Agro-Forestry workgroup is finding people to take on the agroforestry actions identified in the Forest Restoration Strategy. Next meeting is June 14.
 - Holding June trainings in MD (Easton and Sugarloaf areas) on agroforestry.

Updates on BMP Expert Panels and BMP Verification Protocol

- Water quality benefits of forest riparian buffers
- Seem to be agreeing that the efficiency rates are accurate and insufficient justification to change them at this time. Recommending keeping these efficiencies until the model can account for some of the underlying issues of flow and geology. Hope to have a final draft by July.
 - Anne: In-stream nutrient reduction for stream restoration practices is in the Urban Stream Restoration Panel Report.

Urban Tree Canopy Expert Panel—next meeting is June 19. Should be a draft proposal by end of June

- Forestry workgroup will OK the Expert Panel Reports, then the watershed technical workgroup.
- Forestry BMP Verification: Had to add quite a bit of justification and flesh it out since the FWG last saw it in Feb.
 - **Sally will be taking comments on it until June 17th.** Final draft will go back to the steering committee.
 - Sally added an introduction and some background. Added some to the process and description of protocols.
 - Sally walked through the few changes in protocol.
 - Please take time to look and comment on the document.
 - May have extra work for expanded tree canopy reporting. Need to make sure the state is overseeing the process at the local level.
- Every 10 years need to establish that there has not been a loss and make sure it is scientifically defensible (are we verifying enough without doing too much?)
 - States will focus on top three counties most likely to lose urban buffer every 10 years.
 - Heather in Frederick Co: Forest Resource Ordinance (FRO)/ Forest Conservation Act: serious concern about meeting a no net loss goal.
 - No-net loss encourages conservation
- Please get back to Sally with comment by June 17th

Trees for the TMDL – Potomac: Anne Hairston-Strang

- Each state coordinated activities to support the TMDL
- Really two ways we need to look at trees to help TMDL
 - Plant more trees and focus on buffers (tree plantings and buffer restoration in most grants), landowner outreach, problems with sediment pollution from dirt and gravel roads
 - Keeping healthy forests as part of reasonable assurance that TMDL goals are met
 - Forest management plans, giving landowners advice about maintaining healthy forests

- Health component; better outreach
- Maryland Project
 - Said they would reduce nutrient and sediment loads through BMPs. Give away tree seedling packages (Backyard Buffer or Buffer-in-a-bag). Working on this despite not having a lot of support.
 - Support goals for healthy forests and better restoration
 - Trying to get a long term response plan for the emerald ash borer
- MD Progress
 - Backyard buffers program has been very successful
- Lessons Learned
 - CREP went out of commission from October until May
 - Need things beyond CREP, not all landowners are eligible.
 - Need to demonstrate demo projects for better road, better streams
 - Reasonable assurance (keeping forests in place)
- What is the survival rate in the backyard tree plantings? A lot of variation, from 70% to 0%. Shelters would help but make it too expensive.

Trees for TMDL VA

- Anne explained the grant well and VA is doing a lot of the same things.
- VA got their grant from Region 8 in Atlanta
- VA was given \$32,000, spent almost all of it (except \$300)
 - Moved some money to hold a third road workshop
- Pics about projects the money went towards
- UVA has a training with an instructor from MD with a focus on water quality
- Didn't end up with as many forest stewardship plans as expected
- Easement referrals: Had a lawyer to talk about the legality of it

Absentee Landowner Outreach Project – Potomac Conservancy

- So far, over 2 years, sent 500 landowners receiving outreach materials, and 75 landowners express interest.
- \$700,000 leveraged. Focusing on BMPs not easements

Wrap Up

- WV: we are way behind on this grant and needed an extension. Trying to develop CREP targeting tool, but with CREP being delayed. Sent out 200 letters and got a minimal response. Need to see what the next steps are.
 - Competing with conservation districts who sell seedlings as a fundraiser
- In MD: governors stream restoration challenge, funded by the flush fee.