

Chesapeake Bay Program Forestry Workgroup (FWG) Conference Call

January 8th, 2014

9 AM – 11 AM

Participants: Rebecca Hanmer, Sally Claggett, Julie Mawhorter, Tuana Phillips, Anne Hairston-Strang, Tim Culbreth, Eric Sprague, Derrick McDonald, Stephanie Eisenbise, Kyle Hoyd, Marcia Fox, Sloane Crawford, Matt Poirot, Gary Speiran, Tanner Haid, Tom Ward, Tracey Coulter, Chris Peiffer, Judy Okay, Frank Rodgers.

Summary of Action Items:

- FWG members have until January 15th to provide comments on the latest version of the BMP Verification Guidance. All comments must be sent to Sally Claggett (sclaggett@fs.fed.us). For a link to the Verification Guidance:
 - http://www.chesapeakebay.net/channel_files/21278/fwg_bmp_verification_guidance_.pdf
- Sally Claggett will reach out to New York (Sloane Crawford) to discuss verification guidance for forest harvesting.
- Anne Hairston-Strang will develop guidance language for natural regeneration, which will be included as Part 6 under the Agricultural Riparian Forest Buffer section of the BMP Verification Guidance.

Announcements

- Sally Claggett (U.S. FS) announced that the newest draft of the forest buffer status paper, *Buffering the Bay: Progress and Challenges in Restoring Riparian Forest Buffers across the Chesapeake Bay Watershed*, is available online at:
 - http://www.chesapeakebay.net/channel_files/21278/rfb_status_paper_12-2013_draft.pdf
- Matt Poirot (VA Department of Forestry) shared with us that Virginia's Department of Forestry will soon welcome a new State Forester. He or she will be appointed by the new governor, who will be inaugurated on Saturday, January 11th.
- The Chesapeake Working Lands Conservation Strategy Draft is posted for public comment until February 14th (all comments should be sent to jmawhorter@fs.fed.us). For a link to the draft:
 - <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/documents/ChesapeakeWorkingLandsConservationStrategy.pdf>

FWG Outlook for 2014

- Sally went over the Forestry Workgroup's Draft Workplan for 2014, available at:

- http://www.chesapeakebay.net/channel_files/21278/fwg_draft_2014_workplan.pdf
- A few things to note:
 - The New Bay Watershed Agreement will (hopefully) be signed by the Executive Council in May/June this year.
 - The FWG should anticipate working on the development of Management Strategies in the near future.
 - Urban tree canopy will now be tracked by number of acres.
 - In 2014, Rich Sims (NRCS) and Nick DiPasquale (EPA) will oversee a Riparian Forest Buffer Leadership Summit and follow-up task force. Sally will have more information soon.
- Other discussion points:
 - At some point during this year, the FWG should return to the topic of verification and have a discussion on States' protocols for verification.

Verification Panel Report

- Rebecca Hanmer reviewed the BMP Verification Review Panel's findings and recommendations. Please refer to the PowerPoint Presentation available at:
 - http://www.chesapeakebay.net/channel_files/21278/attachment_b_cbp_bmp_verif_panel_recommendations_briefing_2.pdf
 - Note: slides 11 and 12 address the Panel's expectations for Workgroups.
- The BMP Verification Panel also provided feedback specific to the Forestry Workgroup. This feedback is available at:
 - http://www.chesapeakebay.net/channel_files/21278/feedback_to_fwg_from_panel.pdf

Forestry BMP Verification Guidance

- Sally went over the latest version of the BMP Verification Guidance, which acknowledges the comments made by the Verification Panel in December 2013. This Guidance document is available at:
 - http://www.chesapeakebay.net/channel_files/21278/fwg_bmp_verification_guidance.pdf
- Sally asked the FWG members to provide additional comments on this latest version by Wednesday, January 15th. She highlighted a few topics that were altered in response to the Verification Panel and need particular attention from the FWG. These topics include:
 - Contract Expiration/Re-enrollment, under Part 3 of the Agricultural Riparian Forest Buffer subheading. The wording of this section should clearly state that BMPs must be checked after they have expired or be taken off NEIEN.
 - Verify Maintenance of New Plantings, under Part 2 of the Agricultural Riparian Forest Buffer subheading. Specifically, should states aim to be 70% confident

that water quality impacts are being avoided in the most likely places? 80% confident? What is considered robust, and how much inspection is needed to assure that practices are in place?

- Forest Harvesting:
 - One concern, under Part 3, is that 10 years may be too long of a time for State forestry agencies to determine the average rate of implementation.
 - A description of the certification program can be included in this section.
- Other suggested edits:
 - FWG members agreed that adding a Part 6 on Natural Regeneration Guidance is a good idea. Anne Hairston-Strang volunteered to write this up.
 - Under the Agricultural Tree Planting subheading, clarify that reporting is in acres.
 - Under the Expanded Tree Canopy BMP Verification Principles subheading, section A.: include that an assessment is triggered if there is no net gain in overall tree cover. How do States address this issue if it is an “act of God?”
- Other discussion points:
 - The EPA (through the Chesapeake Bay Program) may be able to provide contracted assistance to States for the development of sampling regimes for Verification.