



Meeting Minutes

Chesapeake Bay Program Forestry Workgroup (FWG) July Conference Call

July 1st, 2015, 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Meeting Participants:

Sally Claggett (USFS), *FWG Coordinator*
Julie Mawhorter (USFS), Mid-Atlantic Urban and Community Forestry Coordinator
Tuana Phillips (Chesapeake Research Consortium)
Colin Jones (MDA)
Matt Poirot (VA DOF)
Frank Rodgers (Cacapon Institute, WV)
Craig Highfield (Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay)
Justin Hynicka (MD DNR)
Tracey Coulter (PA Bureau of Forestry)
Jenny McGarvey (Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay)
Herb Peddicord (WV DOF)
Jeremy Hanson (VA Tech)
Anne Hairston-Strang (MD DNR)
Judy Okay (VA DOF)
Renee Reber (Chesapeake Bay Foundation – PA)
Tanner Haid (Cacapon Institute, WV)
Nicholai Francis-Lau (MDE)
Kesha Braunskill (DE FS)
Tim Garcia (NRCS, Annapolis)
Barbara White (VA DOF)
Marian Honeczy (MD DNR)
Christine Ticehurst (PA DCNR)
Marcia Fox (DE DNREC)
Earl Bradley (Citizen, Annapolis)
Matt Keefer (PA DCNR)

Welcome and introductions

Sally Claggett welcomed everybody to the call and confirmed participants.

Management Strategies Update

Final management strategies were posted yesterday (6/30) on the chesapeakebay.net website:
<http://www.chesapeakebay.net/managementstrategies>

Review of Workplan Development & Management Strategy updates

The Chesapeake Bay Program has extended the timeline for completing 2 Year Workplans for the Management Strategy so that states can integrate and align these Strategy actions with their next set of 2 Year Milestones for the TMDL. These workplans will get into the details and are expected to include key actions, timeline for actions, expected outcome, partners responsible for each action and estimated resources. Today's conversation primes the pump for getting these workplans done. For more information (including workplan timeline), please see Sally's PowerPoint presentation [at this link](#); for the current workplan template, please go to [this link](#).

Other questions and discussion points:

- We will start hashing this out and will come up with a skeleton draft by September.
- The first official draft is due in November.
- The same management approaches that are listed in the Management Strategies will be inserted into the workplan template. For the Riparian Forest Buffer workplan, we are also going to link to actions from the State Task Force plans.
- The workplan will highlight things that are already going on as well as new things to take on.
- We want things that we can track so that at the end of the two years we can evaluate what we've accomplished.
- ACTION: Julie will have a call with state leads to start talking about the Urban Tree Canopy Outcome workplan. This will happen before the September meeting. Then, at the Sept meeting she will bring it back to the entire FWG to get more input.
 - Question: what about getting initial input from key partners such as the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and Chesapeake Bay Foundation? Answer: Good question. Julie will reach out to these partners and see if they want to contribute, although they can always do it during the September meeting along with the rest of the FWG.
- ACTION: Sally is also planning to start working individually with states and other partners on the Riparian Forest Buffer workplan.
- We have all of July to start thinking about this.

Recent changes to Forestry BMP Verification Guidance Document

Sally reviewed the recent changes made to the Forestry BMP Verification guidance document and sought approval from the members on the call. For more information, please see the letter explaining the guidance document updates at [this link](#); also see the verification document [track changes version](#) or ["clean" version](#).

Other questions and discussion points:

- We thought we were done with this document last summer, but due to some changes at the Bay Program we had to take another look at it again.
- Some of the changes were made for clarification purposes.
- Members expressed some concern over changes made under #4, Section IV.
 - One concern over using high-resolution land-cover is that the analysis won't pick up damage caused by emerald ash borer, for instance, or won't pick up wide stream beds.

- Concern was expressed over language saying that the high-resolution land-cover will be used to cross-check what has been reported to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model. Generally a cross-check tool is equal to or better than the original method, and this seems like it's technologically stronger but analysis wise is weaker.
- Comment: The cross-check language is ambiguous. Instead we should clarify that you will not lose credit through this method, but it is an incentive to conserve and get a net gain.
- All land cover change BMPs are being tracked as net gain.
- Comment: The reality is that losses are beyond any jurisdiction's control for reasons such as invasives.
- Comment: In WV, starting next year we are doing i-Tree canopy analyses every 6 years. If the high-resolution data is going to be used as a cross-check every 5 years then I would encourage other states and counties to do their own assessments starting right away. Because otherwise we will have to wait 5 years to see that loss is really happening, and that will be harmful.
- ACTION: FWG members will look at the changes made and offer suggestions on wording by email to Sally (sclaggett@fs.fed.us) by Monday, July 6th.

Round robin updates:

Virginia:

- DOF rolled out their program for the CTPI grant that they received from NRCS to increase buffer plantings and associated forest management activities. A chunk of RCPP money is going into EQIP and will hopefully help produce a few more miles of riparian buffers.
- *Waters for the U.S.* got posted on Monday and will go into effect in 60 days. Forest agencies should keep an eye on that and see how it affects operation. This going to broaden the reach of clean waters included in Clean Water Act.
- VA DOF has a new grant that is going out with private money that the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay was able to acquire. This will be for an urban tree canopy project in the Richmond PBC area which encompasses counties around Richmond. Trees for Clean Water funding and other matched money will also be leveraged for more tree funding.

West Virginia:

- DOF is working on a couple of agreements with DOF, TU and the Potomac Conservancy to do some CREP outreach through last year's Healthy Trees Grant.
- The CREP forester DOF is hiring through CBIG money should be coming in soon.
- WV Project CommuniTree plantings have been wrapped up for the year.
- Trees on a Parks and Rec property were slated for removal so the Cacapon Institute had a meeting with the transition line clearance people and found that there are new rules that came out in 2013. These rules say the right tree right place standard no longer applies. Now no trees of any species are permitted in the right of way, you have to clear the entire right of way.
- Comment from MD: this is not the case in Maryland. You should read the language of the rules and check if that is really the case.

Maryland:

- MD finished Lawn to Woodland plantings which were 100% state-funded seedlings on private property. Over 100 acres on 84 properties across the state were planted. Right now the final mowing contract is being worked out. So far the program received great reviews. This effort was in partnership with the National Arbor Foundation.
- Emerald ash borer has been found in four new counties which includes 2 counties on the eastern shore. The emerald ash borer quarantine policy is changing in August. One new policy DNR is considering is to provide cost shares for landowners undergoing CREP renewal to replant new trees where ash was planted before.
- Currently no timber harvests are allowed in western Maryland because of the spruce tree long-eared bat issue.
- The Forest Conservation Act is also in the process of being updated.

Pennsylvania:

- Clair Ryan has joined the Chesapeake Bay Foundation as the Pennsylvania restoration program coordinator.
- With the new governor the new secretaries have been actively meeting and talking. DEP sponsored a strategic planning session to look at goals in the Chesapeake Bay Agreement, linking to the management strategies and looking at what needs to be done to meet the TMDL and milestones.

Riparian Forest Buffer Initiative Update:

- Currently in a holding period right now due to 5 million dollar award from FSA to states to embellish CREP programs. The decisions have not yet been announced.
- FSA has also awarded about 180,000 dollars in outreach funding. Dates for the proposal have been refined and the specific aspects of the proposal are being laid out. A committee is being set up to finalize the proposal and actions. There will be letters being sent out by mail as well as other means to do outreach to landowners. A Winter 2016 Forum is being planned as well.
- Some of the states have gone ahead and started their CREP amendments. States have identified the lead in each state. These key people will be responsible for making these actions happen that will be a part of the management strategy workplan.

Chesapeake Bay Program:

- The Executive Council meeting will be on July 23rd. It is possible that riparian forest buffers will be on agenda during the executive lunch portion of the meeting.

Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay:

- Information about the Chesapeake Bay Smith Island trip will be made available soon.
- Coming up ACB is organizing the yearly Forest Champion awards.
- ACB has created a *Welcome to Your Woods* report for Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia. It is a great resource for landowners. In Virginia, VA Tech came up with a similar publication.