



Meeting Minutes

Chesapeake Bay Program Forestry Workgroup (FWG) October face-to-face Meeting

October 7th, 2015, 10:00 AM – 2:45 PM

Chesapeake Bay Program Office (Fish Shack Conf. Room)

410 Severn Avenue, Annapolis, MD 21403

Meeting Participants:

Rebecca Hanmer (Retired Citizens Advisory Committee), *FWG Chair*
Sally Claggett (USFS), *FWG Coordinator*
Julie Mawhorter (USFS), *Mid-Atlantic Urban and Community Forestry Coordinator*
Tuana Phillips (Chesapeake Research Consortium)
Anne Hairston-Strang (MD DNR)
Judy Okay (VA DOF)
Colin Jones (MDA)
Frank Rodgers (Cacapon Institute, WV)
Tracey Coulter (PA Bureau of Forestry)
Herb Peddicord (WV DOF)
Matt Poirot (VA DOF)
Greg Evans (VA DOF)
Craig Highfield (Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay)
Derrick McDonald (PA DEP)
Sloane Crawford (NY DEC)
Mike Galvin (SavATree)
Eric Sprague (Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay)
Marian Honeczy (MD DNR)
Valerie Rupp (Parks and People, Baltimore)
Diane Cameron – (Audubon Naturalist Society)
Shoshana Risbon (supporting Diane Cameron)
Jim Gillis (PA USDA)
Noel Soto (PA USDA)
Renee Reber (CBF, PA)
Matt Keefer (PA Bureau of Forestry)
Ellen Roane (PA DCNR)
Judy Mackey (DCNR policy)
Mike Huneke (FS)
Seung Ah Byun (Brandywine Conservancy)
Patricia Greenberg (Reston)
Vincent Verweij (Arlington, VA)
John Thomas (DC Urban Forestry Administration)
Laura Cannon (Farm Service Agency)

Rob Schnabel (CBF)
Robert Wevodau (Farm Service Agency)
Kris West (Finger Lakes Land Trust)
Lauren Townley (NY DEC)
Lydia Brinkley (Upper Susquehanna Coalition, NY)
Clair Ryan (CBF, PA)
Jessica Baylor (Aberdeen Proving Ground)
Lynn Manges (FSA, DE)
Eunice Padley (NRCS)
Bud Reaves (Anne Arundel County, MD)

Welcome and Introductions

Rebecca Hanmer welcomed everybody and confirmed participants.

Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) Workplan Session

This session was led by Julie Mawhorter.

For a link to the UTC Workplan Draft, please click [here](#).

Tree Canopy Land Use Update:

- The Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) has been working on getting a bay-wide tree canopy land use dataset for inclusion in the first calibration of Phase 6 of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model which started on October 1st. This will be the placeholder tree canopy data until we get high resolution 1 meter data next summer 2016. The Water Quality GIT recently approved including the tree canopy land uses for the October 1 calibration with a number of provisions, including that tree canopy loading rates will be set equal to underlying land use loadings (impervious, pervious, open space) until unique tree canopy loading rates are approved by the partnership.
- The UTC Expert Panel produced a [Technical Memo](#) at the beginning of September to propose some recommended loading rates for tree canopy land uses. This Memo and other relevant documents/presentations on this subject are posted on the [meeting website page](#). A number of questions have been raised by the Urban Stormwater Workgroup and the Water Quality Goal Team, which need to be addressed by the Panel and/or Forestry Workgroup in the upcoming months in order to get full partnership approval of the tree canopy land use loading rates. The Expert Panel will be giving regular updates to the Forestry Workgroup on their work to address issues as they are completing their final Panel Report by early 2016.

Workplan Input:

Julie went over the workplan template. She then reviewed the actions and performance targets under *Management Approach 1: Bolster Funding & Partnerships*, and asked for input.

- Comment: The point of the workplan and the format is to be able to track how successful we are. The trick is to get it worded in such a way so that it is clear.
- The group decided that they will keep the information in the workplan very high-level but that there will also be more detailed state action plans as a type of appendix.

- Comment: We want to track the numbers (e.g., number of acres of UTC) as well as track if the programmatic/partnership actions were taken. The purpose is to really use it in an adaptive management approach so that you can refine actions over time and provide accountability.
 - Comment: Some jurisdictions have concern over this. We want to know, what exactly will be asked or looked at the end of the 2 years?
- There was some discussion on prioritizing the actions. For example, assigning high, medium or low priority to each action. This decision will be left to the state leads, since a number of them were not on the call.
- Comment: Most, if not all, jurisdictions have so far reported the “status quo” or current efforts.
- A participant noted the need to address how the UTC and Riparian Forest Buffer workplans overlap.
- Comment: Right now we don’t need all of the answers for how this work will get done, but we need commitment that these are the priority actions that we will work on together. We may resolve later, for instance, to get an intern or grant to develop a listed action (e.g. funding case studies, etc.).

Julie reviewed the actions and performance targets under *Management Approach 2: Strengthen Policy and Ordinances*, and asked for input.

- Comment: We need to expand on some of the performance targets. There are some technical issues, some science issues that need to be worked on in terms of the stormwater action listed.
 - Rebecca Hanmer offered to provide specific language for this.
 - Comment: It would be nice to have all the stormwater-related questions/concerns in one place (this section), even if they overlap with other management approaches.
- Sally noted that on the Riparian Forest Buffer Workplan she found herself debating how specific to be with, for instance, how many meetings to have as a performance target. She asked, do we want to get more quantitative about these targets? Is it sufficient to say: “have 3 meetings to...”?

Julie reviewed the actions and performance targets under *Management Approach 3: Increase Technical Capacity and Knowledge*, and asked for input.

- Comment: We will have to work collectively to have consistent approach for tracking, but then break it out for each state. This is so that we are using an apples to apples approach.
- Comment: The verification guidance for tree planting hints at how we can track this. We ought to build on that work.
- Comment: Regarding item number 4 – “Provide guidance and standards/best practices for tree planting and maintenance to improve long-term survival.” I know we are talking about state and local partners but is there any place else that we should be seeking information from?
 - Comment: The Forest Service Tree Owner’s Manual has great info on planting; it also allows you to put your logo on it and distribute it.
 - Comment: Add a second point to fill in the gaps that might not be covered by existing state/local standards
 - Comment: I propose a second action. I just remember reading a lot on buffer health and survival. You learn a lot about planting when you do the research.

- Comment: Maybe can also include in that the Urban Tree Growth National Working group that looks at citizen monitoring and survival and best practices associated with that.
- Comment: Another long-term idea that is low-hanging fruit is the concept of planting trees in stormwater ponds. It is a great way to green the grey. It is also another way to bring more natives to suburban systems.
 - Comment: we were going for that in the action about integrating with the stormwater sector, but maybe we can make this a separate action to see how trees can enhance existing stormwater BMPs.
 - Comment: There is a three part manual series that was done by the Center for Watershed Protection and Forest Service - the Urban Watershed Forestry manuals looked at integrating trees effectively into site design, etc.
 - Comment: We would need example specifications; something that is the actual engineering tool.
 - Comment: Perhaps we can work with the Chesapeake Stormwater Network to address some of these questions and opportunities.
 - Comment: If we are going to do this, we should look into making the Center for Watershed Protection's work also be more karst-specific.
 - Comment: In regards to engineering specifications, I think there are two levels: one for the specific stormwater pond, where exactly do we plant and what species. Montgomery County came out with something to address this. And two: looking at drainage area and how runoff volume/treatment is affected if planting trees. That would be a more holistic view.

Julie reviewed the actions and performance targets under *Management Approach 4: Expand Community Outreach and Education*, and asked for input.

- Comment: move action #4 up so people understand you are going to work with people and others before reading the other actions under this management approach. I would also recommend adding the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) to number action #3 because they prioritized that too.
- Comment: This all sounds really good. I guess a question for the future is just a capacity question. It will be difficult to do all of it in the 2 year time period.
 - Comment: Maybe when we send this to the urban tree canopy state leads we can ask them to give us input on whether this can all be done in 2 years.
- Comment: when talking about underserved communities you are typically working with people with very low income levels. Bluntly, one of the biggest challenges is funding. For instance, Parks and People is able to maintain plantings for 2 years, but if we are talking engagement part of it has to be focused on funding.
- Comment: Maybe we should bring in outside partners who also have this interest. In the next month or so we can do some thinking on this. For instance, we can look at a certain section (Anacostia) and see who can bring energy and possibly some money.
- Comment: At a recent CAC meeting there was a presentation from DC on several things related to number three and how they are using a lot of their money they have on some of those things.

Action item: Julie offered to keep working on the workplan and start phasing out certain elements. She will also share the draft workplan with the urban tree canopy state leads and ask if

they can analyze how much is on states' plates and whether all of the performance targets can be reached in two years.

Riparian Forest Buffer (RFB) Workplan Session

This session was led by Sally Claggett.

For a link to the RFB Workplan Draft, please click [here](#).

Workplan Input:

Sally went over the RFB Workplan draft, which she put together based on the input she got from RFB state leaders. She also went over the goals of the afternoon session: to review the key overarching actions and performance targets that pertain to many if not all states, and to ask for feedback from attendees (which may include, for instance, the addition of new key “stretch” actions). After this session, Sally will further refine the draft with state leads. A final draft will be shared with the Forestry Workgroup before it the Public Input period in late January.

Sally began the discussion by reviewing the actions and performance targets under *Management Approach 1: RFB Leadership*, and asked for input.

- Comment: The Upper Susquehanna Coalition has been having meetings to discuss project ideas. One thing we are looking at is a new package with new tools and incentives. Our voucher programs are complementary with CREP. CREP isn't heavily implemented in NY so we will be using voucher programs as well as CREP. We are looking to meet NRCS' programmatic standards, but in some areas where can't get 35 ft. buffer then we look at other programs to still get buffers in.
- Comment: Maybe the strategy shouldn't be to boost enrollment but to the improve program.
- Comment: “let nature take its course”
 - Alternative practices, such as natural regeneration, already take place. Some states have practices already defined and for other states it would be a trial run.
 - Maryland has accommodated this in bay-wide reporting, but in reality it is difficult to document it. This may be a tracking issue.
- Comment: Let's say you have a grass buffer that turns into forest. It is bumped out of grass buffer but maybe it can roll into the cost-share program or roll that information so that it is not lost to the Bay.
- Comment: Natural regeneration projects are weighed the same as planted buffers in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model.

Sally reviewed the actions and performance targets under *Management Approach 2: RFB Enhancements* and *Management Approach 3: RFB Technical Assistance*, and asked for input.

- Comment: FSA has asked USFS to start thinking about transitional forest practice.
- CP4D is done in Delaware, probably because of their ditches.
- Sally asked, “Is there place for forest stewardship here?”
- Comment: Fencing is an extension of SI6, which then becomes a forest buffer. So more credit should be put there.
 - Comment: We would have to move fence at least 10 feet.
 - This means you would have to move the fence at least 10 feet.
 - MDA Comment: moved back to 35 feet.

- Comment: The problem with a 35 ft. buffer is that you can't really implement a 3-zone buffer that will minimize crop interference and still give you 35' with trees.
- Comment: Look at a broader definition of species. And look at successional stages. Like shrubs on the outside.
 - Response: I don't know about the 391 definition but for the Bay Program if you have several species and it covers the 35 ft. minimum I would think you could have mix of shrubs and that would fit our definition.
 - Comment: 391 talks about "Welsh" zone. It can be mix of trees and shrubs.
 - Comment: I have seen this in Virginia; in their RFB State Task Force plan they say they would like to enhance and make more of a monetary incentive for that kind of transitional buffer.
- Question: In regards to the key action on financial assistance, are you talking about financial assistance to agencies or the land owner? Answer: to the land owner.
 - Comment: This is a problem for NRCS because our biggest bottleneck is staff numbers.
- Comment: what about enrollment caps? Virginia is looking to increase our cap. This topic would probably fall under this management strategy. And it would be specific to VA.
- Comment: consider an agroforestry piece. Virginia Tech recently got two grants to do agroforestry work.
- Comment: For Technical Assistance (TA), Virginia is focusing on boots on ground. Is there more TA we are looking for boots in the air for monitoring purposes?
 - Comment: It can be difficult to tell the difference between certain tree species using remote sensing techniques.
 - Maybe we should do a pilot, in collaboration with the Chesapeake Conservancy, which would use high resolution data.
- Comment: under expand partnerships, I think about TA a lot, or "shoes in the office." Data entry kind of people.
- Rebecca asked, "Does everybody have the technology available to do their work?" That way you can eliminate paperwork.
 - We can do a pilot somewhere with new technology.
 - Comment: In Maryland, foresters are using iPads in some regions, not in all.
- Comment: going back to RFB enhancements, only two states broke down the goal to a state-wide goal (Maryland and Delaware). I thought this was really useful.
 - VA has this information in the State Task Force report.
- Comment from phone: there are three goals with different tracking mechanisms: mile, acres (in WIP) and percentage of stream buffer goal. What are we working towards?
 - Response: The miles goal came before the acres goal. As far as percent of watershed that is buffered, we realized that we don't have good data on how many streams are buffered. We are hoping with the new data that we will get a better handle on that. That percentage we have now is what it will take to get to a healthy watershed. I would recommend now at this time not going with percentage for your goal. Go with acres or miles.
 - Maryland uses information on average width, and so with that is you can do acres and miles.
- Sally asked, "Any actions or role for volunteers?"

- Response: One thing CBF is starting to do a lot is maintenance of buffers. Every March we get many volunteers from universities and we are able to do a lot of maintenance work. We have a co-op with FWS services to replant. Also we have a new focus on the aging farmer population. A lot of land is going to change hands soon and so we are doing a lot of outreach.
- Question: What about the idea of lease landowners and absentee landowners?
- Comment: The USFS had a grant for a Woodland Welcome Wagon program. Outreach is done by the Assessment Office when transfer of property ownership happens. Also the Pennsylvania Stewards Program has peer to peer networks already in existence promoting woodland stewardship. Is there a way to engage those woodland steward groups to try to get them to also be on board with RFBs? Peer to peer programs are valuable because it's not a state person talking to you, but an actual peer.
- Response: This sounds like what a lot of what MD is talking about.
- Comment: There are a lot of programs for new farmers; we can tap into them

Sally reviewed the actions and performance targets under *Management Approach 4: Outreach and Increasing New Enrollment*, and asked for input.

- Comment: Maryland is looking at a Land Care program.
 - Comment: I think this goes along with the peer to peer program idea, where you can come together and learn from each other.
- Comment: This is an old way of doing things, but BP Forest Service used to periodically print booklets with case studies in states where things were exceptionally done as a way to promote ideas and get the word out. With today's technology you can do a blog, or an electronic version of a publication like this.
- Comment: I think you missed a special strategy for working with Soil and Water Conservation Districts. SWCDs are not used to working with FSA so we would need to reach out to them directly.
- Question: how many states have foresters who works part for NRCS and part for the FS?
 - Virginia does, but they mostly work in agriculture and not forestry.
- Comment: The Upper Susquehanna Coalition is a coalition of conservation districts. I've noticed that districts are disenfranchised over the process; I think the problem is two folds: districts need to be educated about program requirements and then second there needs to be a NRCS or similar person actually on site. We need to get all of the technical assistance at the table at the same time. All it takes is one bad experience for farmer and word spreads.
- Comment: Regarding the RCPP program, we should think about how screening or ranking programs guide what gets funded.
- Comment: Also, NRCS and others are using funding as a way to address programmatic barriers.
- Comment: The states are really only one with conservation dollars, so CBF and other non-profits will have to find a way to leverage the money.

Sally reviewed the actions and performance targets under *Management Approach 5: Improve Establishment/Maintenance/Verification*, and asked for input.

- Comment: As stated previously, "boots in the air" applies here too.
- Comment: One idea is to have Case Study examples on a Webinar series.

- Comment: I am confused as to why somebody needs to be educated on this. What is in the Verification protocol is what you are supposed to be doing.
 - Response: Maybe this is not needed in every state, but something to consider that might want to train certain people in.
- Comment: There were some gaps in the Verification protocols. So we may want to make these “stretch actions.”
- Some states have standards to determine if the plantings survived (like number of trees.) Maryland and Virginia can’t use the same standard for something like that. But we want to aim for consistent standards to make sure survival occurred.
- Comment: We want to make sure a certain number of trees are present for the buffer to do what it needs to do.
 - Comment: Keep in mind that protocols are still being revised and coming in.
- Comment: I think the key action is to be introspective; look at your state protocol and make sure what is needed is there.

Sally reviewed the actions and performance targets under *Management Approach 6: Improve Re-enrollment*, and asked for input.

- Comment: Have a second practice that landowner could apply for.
- Comment: Contract maintenance. We haven’t trained our folks to put contract maintenance tips in plans. Would have to adjust infrastructure to have them accommodate that.
- Comment: have to reenroll in CREP before it ends, and at the same time make sure it is established. You need about 9 months, and so start reaching out 2 years beforehand.

Sally reviewed the actions and performance targets under *Management Approach 7: Improve Targeting of RFB*, and asked for input.

- Comment: Fund trials for function-based incentives.
- Comment: Utilize CREP targeting tool – it could be useful to all states. Continue using it.
- Comment: Also include the Chesapeake Conservancy’s new grant to work in the James.
- Comment: It might be good to go back and look at all tools being used and where the focus areas are; find out the efficiencies.
- Comment: Increase MPL soil rental rates – FSA is interested in discussing this.

Sally reviewed the actions and performance targets under *Management Approach 8: Ramp-up conservation of RFB easement programs*, and asked for input.

- Comment: Put in here the idea of improving easement language.
 - Comment: PA DEP has a couple of sample documents of easement language that we have created for anybody who would like to use it. We worked with the PA Land Trust Association to develop these documents.
- Question: is there any need to do something along lines of what Trout Unlimited is doing?
 - Comment: We might want to think about the priorities of the Habitat GIT and factor some of those considerations into the components of the RFB Workplan.
- Comment: Instead of putting an easement on buffer, what about buffers on easements?
 - Response: some of this is documented in the Working Lands Strategy document.
- Comment: There is definitely a role for land trusts. These easements are funded by public dollars, we should use them for public benefit.

Sally reviewed the actions and performance targets under *Management Approach 9: Focus on non-ag RFB*, and asked for input.

- Comment: Regarding land that gets turned over to Home Owners Associations – I don't know what to do to get them to transform it into buffer. If could get some type of tax credit that would be fabulous.
- Comment: PA DEP successfully approached community parks and schools to ask that maintenance folks aren't mowing near streams.
- Comment: Combine reduce mowing with identifying and connecting with major non-ag. land owners.
- Comment: Promote upland afforestation, not reforestation.
- Question: Are there any gaps with nursery production? For instance, not producing enough plant material.
 - Response: We have not ramped this up nearly to level we want it to be.
 - Response: At the Riparian Forest Roundtable event we heard that sometimes it is difficult to find certain species.

Next steps:

- Sally will take another stab at the RFB Workplan and will reach out to state leads to flesh it out some more. She will then send it to the FWG so they see it before it gets sent out to rest of CBP.
- The Workplans will become final in the spring of 2016.
- There will be a Forum on Riparian Forest Buffers in February at the Bishop Claggett Center in Adamstown, MD.
- Next month the FWG will have a conference call focused on forest conservation and mapping high value forest for forest conservation.
- The Healthy Watersheds Forest-TMDL Project has been chosen by the Maintain Healthy Watersheds Goal Team to be funded for Phase II. The results from Phase I were presented at the Rappahannock River Basin Summit last month and the feedback we received was all very positive.