Meeting Minutes

Chesapeake Bay Program Forestry Workgroup
February Meeting

February 4th, 2015, 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Chesapeake Bay Foundation Annapolis Office
6 Herndon Avenue, Annapolis, MD 21403

Meeting Summary:

Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) Forestry Workgroup (FWG) members and interested stakeholders met on February 4th for a face-to-face meeting. During this meeting, participants:

- engaged in discussion regarding the Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) and Riparian Forest Buffer (RFB) Management Strategies, which included updates on the latest Management Strategy drafts and jurisdiction actions/workplans.
- discussed the proposed forest land cover layers for the newest phase of the Chesapeake Bay Program Watershed Model.
- heard an overview of the latest Urban Tree Canopy Expert Best Management Practices (BMP) Panel membership and Statement of Work (SOW).

Major Action Items:

- Participants will fill out, if they haven't already, the quick factors influencing surveys by COB Thursday, February 5th.
   - UTC Factors Influencing: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MX99VN8
   - RFB Factors Influencing: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/N8J256C
- Participants will provide critical edits (i.e."fatal flaws") on the latest version of the Draft Urban Tree Canopy Management Strategy to Julie Mawhorter (jmawhorter@fs.fed.us) by noon Friday, February 6th. More substantive input on the Draft Strategy will be welcomed through the public comment period starting in March.
- Sally will organize a conference call sometime in the next two weeks to continue the Riparian Forest Buffer Management Strategy discussion.
- Participants will review the proposed Urban Tree Canopy Expert BMP Panel membership and Statement of Work and send any comments or objections to Sally Claggett (sclaggett@fs.fed.us), with a copy to Jeremy Hanson (jchanson@vt.edu), by COB Wednesday, February 11th.
- Participants will provide ideas for Forest Conservation management approaches to Sally (sclaggett@fs.fed.us) by COB Friday, February 13th.
- The Forestry Workgroup will make a recommendation to the Land Use Workgroup (LUWG) on how the natural land use classes should be differentiated in the newest Phase of the Chesapeake Bay Program's Watershed Model by the next LUWG meeting on February 26th. Participants will provide written comments on the proposed definitions of "forests" and "urban tree canopy" to Sally Claggett (sclaggett@fs.fed.us) by COB Friday, February 13th.
- Jurisdictions will continue to work across agencies and on specific management strategy actions.

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)
Craig Highfield (Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay)
Paul Eriksson (Cumberland, MD)
Christine Ticehurst (PA DCNR)
Ellen Roane (PA DCNR)
Tanner Haid (Cacapon Institute, WV)
Greg Dahle (West Virginia University)
Keith Cline (Fairfax County, VA)
Patricia Greenberg (Reston Association)
Mary Gattis (Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, Local Government Advisory Committee)
Jenny McGarvey (Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay)
Earl Bradley (Citizen, Annapolis)
Tom Ward (NRCS, Greensboro NC)
Valerie Rupp (Parks and People, Baltimore)
Frank Rodgers (Cacapon Institute, WV)
Herb Peddicord (WV DOF)
Miriam Avins (Baltimore Greenspace)
Jeffrey Catts (Washington Parks)
Justin Hynicka (MD DNR)
Kesha Braunskill (DE FS)
Marcia Fox (DE DNREC)
Barbara White (VA DOF)
Matt Poirot (VA DOF)
Jan van Zutphen (Annapolis, MD)
Eric Sprague (Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay)
Lee Epstein (CBF)
Greg Evans (VA DOF)
Marian Honeczy (MD DNR)
Jeremy Hanson (VA Tech)
Charles Murphy (TreeBaltimore)
Karl Graybill (Lancaster, PA)
Marian Norris (NPS)
Nathan Hughes (VA DEQ)
Renee Reber (CBF)
Vikram Krishnamurthy (DE Center for Horticulture)
Vincent Verweij (Arlington, VA)
Whitney Pipkin (Bay Journal)
Judy Okay (VA DOF)
Rich Mason (USFWS)
Beth Roessler (NY DEC, Trees for Tribs)
Eric Dihle (Baltimore, MD)
Derrick McDonald (PA DEP)
Lucia Woo (NASA)
Sarah Richardson (VA DCR)
Marel King (CBF)
Kristen Wolf (PA DEP)
Sloane Crawford (NY DEC)

Welcome and Introductions
Rebecca Hanmer welcomed everybody to the meeting and confirmed participants.

Update on the Urban Tree Canopy Management Strategy
Julie Mawhorter reviewed the most recent changes to the Draft UTC Management Strategy document. Most of the changes occurred under the Management Approach Section (#5). Julie asked participants and stakeholders to provide critical edits (i.e."fatal flaws") on the draft by noon on February 6th. She also reviewed the timeline for Management Strategy development:

- Feb. 2- Mar. 2 – GITs/workgroups refine draft strategies
- Mar. 2 – GITs/workgroups send revised strategies to the MB for sufficiency review
- March 6 – MB deadline for submitting fatal flaw comments to GITs/workgroups
- Mar. 16 – Post/release management strategies for public input
- Apr. 20 – Public input period closes
- May 4 – GITs/workgroups revise strategies and provide to MB for final review
- June 15 – Final management strategies completed
- Dec. 15 – First Biennial Workplan due

Julie explained that the management strategy is meant to be long-term and broad, to be used as the main direction when crafting specific actions toward achieving the UTC net goal of 2,400 acres by 2025. In addition, she briefly went over some of the results from the factors influencing the ability to meet the UTC goal survey, and asked participants to fill out the UTC and RFB factors influencing surveys by COB February 5th if they haven't completed them already. Julie clarified that the survey is meant to be filled out by practitioners to get a sense of what they think is important.

Other comments and discussion points:
- Comment: federal policies are not addressed on the survey (e.g., credit for conservation in TMDL). In addition, how will federal policies be reflected in the Management Strategy?
- Comment: issue with connecting with stormwater and TMDLs is not fully addressed either. In some areas, that is the driving force for tree canopy.
- Suggestion: put future research under the technical capacity/knowledge category on the Management Strategy, or in its own separate category. This strategy is a really good place to call out for the need for more research.
- Suggestion: add definition of UTC in the beginning of the Management Strategy. Both "urban" and "canopy" are issues.
- Rebecca encouraged those who are going to comment on the management strategies to say what is most vital and make the final product as strategic as possible – not just a list of things that cannot realistically be done.

State Updates – Urban Tree Canopy Actions
States and DC had ten minutes to give an update on preliminary state actions for the Urban Tree Canopy Outcome, followed by Q&A. The preliminary state actions for Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia are described in the Preliminary Draft State Action Plans section within the Draft UTC Management Strategy document. Virginia's preliminary state actions are described in a separate document (starting on page 5).

Comments, questions, and discussion points:
- The state of Delaware is notably working with the Department of Transportation; other state representatives expressed interest in learning from this relationship.
- The Sigma Space Corporation and NASA are developing state-wide tree canopy layers for Pennsylvania and Delaware. Because Delaware already has a state-wide assessment, some participants noted potential duplication of efforts. Sally responded that they are aware of the multiple projects, and that they are slightly different. For instance, the SSC and NASA project is looking at tree canopy in particular for carbon sequestration.
  - A participant noted that a table or some other way to organize the overlapping projects might be useful.
- In MD, the state has to go through the county government in order to provide assistance.
- A participant from Howard County noted that Lawn to Woodland tree saplings do not count as part of stormwater credit. The saplings also cannot be counted for credit because the program is funded by the state (MD DNR).
  - Concerns such as these will be addressed by a Tracking Team that is all going to be created later this year.
- VA has ongoing Green Infrastructure planning and UTC assessments. New proposed activities include a state-level GI plan and complete UTC assessments in (at least) the Chesapeake Bay Watershed part of the state.
- VA Trees for Clean Water Program has funding for the first time, although it is limited. This program works with communities on MS4s and TMDLs.
- VA is starting an urban forestry utilization program which will offer workshops and do outreach to teach people the value of trees.
- VA Tree Stewards groups are grassroots-oriented, and don't take too much work to facilitate. Other ongoing actions: Stewardship Program, Tree City USA awards, and Master Naturalist Program.
- VA has no infrastructure in state to roll up a state-level, standardized criteria for what counts and what doesn't count towards UTC goals. Counties rely on volunteer groups and there is no linkage between what volunteers are doing and what county is counting.
  - An ad hoc committee of citizens and local government representatives are trying to initiate a tracking progress for VA. A lot of the work will be voluntary, but it's not there yet.
  - Julie reminded the group that the Tracking Workgroup will help address these types of issues over the next year.
- Only a few counties in WV are losing tree canopy. Since 2011, there has been a concerted effort on urban tree canopy through a USFS grant – this led to a high-resolution study, which Jefferson County used that to set a goal and develop a plan.
- Because Governor Tomblin signed the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement, the first time WV signed onto the agreement, WV now has a more steady flow of funding.
- Comment: The FWG has been going through this for 12 years. What have we learned? What do we know about what is effective? We have many programs, and all seem to touch different partners. Which are the most important – which are most effective?
- Comment: If data that exists about tree canopy, can you look at it collectively and say these are the types of programs that are most effective? Also add maintenance to that.

- Comment: Is there a different between tracking (routine) vs. some kind of more disciplined assessment approach? Perhaps we can do some sort of program effectiveness assessment.
- Comment: I think that the opportunity we have right now is really around this area of stormwater management. If you can tie this to the MS4 program I think it will have more meaning and create an opportunity for reporting through MS4 reporting. So perhaps focus on something like WIPS and have goal setting be a part of that.
- Comment: In regards to receiving credit in the MS4 Program – we have tried, but not yet really connected with the Urban Stormwater Workgroup.
  - Suggestion: have the UTC BMP Expert Panel include somebody in stormwater program. Also identify research needs in panel and how they might be met.

New Forest Land Cover Layers for Phase 6 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model
Peter Claggett reviewed the defining features of the new forest land covers that will be included in Phase 6 of the Chesapeake Bay Program's Watershed Model. He proposed definitions of "forests" and "urban tree canopy" land covers for the FWG's consideration. He asked the workgroup to consider whether urban tree canopy in developed areas provide the same water quality function as larger patches of forests. For more information, please see Peter's PowerPoint Presentation slides.

Other comments or discussion points:
- Before Peter's presentation, Julie Mawhorter explained that there are two distinguishable efforts involved in collecting tree canopy data: BMP reporting and land use/land cover. Both of these efforts serve as inputs to the Chesapeake Bay Program's Watershed Model, but they are tracked and updated through different processes.
  - The FWG may not want to rely on the Model's data for the UTC Management Strategy – the model is collecting this information to gauge water quality, whereas the Management Strategy is tracking UTC for a more holistic purpose.
  - A definition for the Urban Tree Canopy BMP will be set by the Urban Tree Canopy BMP Expert Panel.
  - Suggestion: Include this distinction in the Management Strategy, and explain how it is all going to be worked out.
- In the Model, BMPs have to be put on a land use.
- Riparian forests are being treated as an overlay.
  - Trees along a stream get a higher efficiency depending on how much agricultural runoff they intercept.
- Something that will have to be discussed at a later time: forests along streams in municipals areas.
- Comment: rural trees will likely be better for water quality, but trees in urban areas have value in stormwater programs.
- Comment: I don't think the proposed definitions do not provide adequate value to smaller forested areas we have in cities that are acting like a sponge. In Baltimore, these areas provide habitat to many species, including over 60 species of birds.
- Peter also requested input on mapping resolution. As of this moment, patches of trees equal to 1 acre or greater will be considered forests.

- E.g., high-resolution analysis versus national (30m) data.
- 10 meters around forests are buffered.
- Comment: in Baltimore, it would be great to get finer data. There are a lot of patches that are less than 1 acre.
- Participants spent some time discussing whether tree canopy performs differently than forests, from a water quality perspective.
  - Comment: I think the UTC BMP Expert Panel should look at this. Also, perhaps a higher value should be given to trees in homeowner lots, etc. because they are more likely to be protected.

Next Steps:
- The FWG will make a recommendation to the Land Use Workgroup (LUWG) on how these classes should be differentiated by the LUWG's next meeting (February 26th).
- By March 30th, the LUWG will develop a list of land uses for Chesapeake Bay Watershed.
- By April 20th, the LUWG will have acquired the land cover data for the land uses. Then it will be sent out to jurisdictions for review.
- In May/June, the data will be made available online. There will be a two-month period to comment, and in July/August the FWG will review the comments and make changes.

Status of Urban Tree Canopy BMP Expert Panel
Jeremy Hanson, VA Tech, reviewed the comments on the proposed UTC Expert Panel Statement of Work (SOW) and Membership and asked members to provide further comments or objections via email by February 11th. Since some of the comments advocated for researchers/academics as additions to the membership, two new people were added to the roster. If, by February 11th, no objections are received, the SOW and membership will be considered approved.

Next Steps:
- Once the Panel is established, there will be plans for a stakeholder forum (for private, state, public stakeholders). This will be an opportunity to interact with panel, after which the panel will be "closed" to stakeholders. This forum will be advertised through the Forestry Workgroup distribution list. It will most likely occur in late March to April.

Update on Riparian Forest Buffer Management Strategy
Sally Claggett provided an update on the Forest Buffer Management Strategy. This update included an overview of various current happenings (e.g., the Riparian Forest Buffer Initiative), progress to date, comments received thus far on the Management Strategy draft, and possible issues to raise. For more information, please view Sally's PowerPoint presentation slides.

Other comments and discussion points:
- How RFB fits in with stormwater and wetlands programs – this could also overlap with urban forest buffers.

- Should be woven into the Urban Tree Canopy strategy—be in one place— and be referenced by the RFB strategy. It can be referenced in this management strategy, with a link to the UTC strategy.
- Comment: We have to penetrate to the leadership level. USDA stepped up. How do we get equally large commitments from state leadership (Principal Staff Committee level)?
  - Comment: It needs to go even higher than that, to governors, because it is budgetary.
  - One important take-away from this meeting: raise the visibility and importance of this practice. There are various levels of support with our federal partners. But it is not translating down the chain to the County leadership level, so we need to find a way to do this. This is one of FSA's priorities this year.
- Sally is planning to go to Principal's Staff Committee (PSC) this month. She will be asking PSC members to appoint a high-level state agent to lead the effort going forward. Someone who can coordinate across state agencies. Also, could clarify the communication between agencies. Not only elevate but make sure everyone is at the table and talking.
- Comment: the type of information that is needed from states to prescribe management actions is as follows: how many buffers do we need each year? What is the capacity, what is your universe of what is possible, and how many people will be needed for each management category? Or once again we will just be listing the stuff we can do. As the FWG I think we will need to raise this for support.
- Comment: It is important to have a consistent message across the Bay Program: buffers are important – even in suburban areas. Going back to the competing factors (fencing vs. buffers) – I would like more discussion on that. These practices should be complimentary, not competing.
- Comment: Don't ignore buffers in suburban areas (could fall under urban tree canopy).
- Sally will schedule a conference call in two weeks to chat more about this Management Strategy.

State Updates – Riparian Forest Buffer Actions
States and DC had several minutes to give an update on preliminary state actions for the Riparian Forest Buffer Outcome, followed by Q&A.
For more information:
Maryland's preliminary state actions are described in a PowerPoint Presentation.
West Virginia's preliminary state actions are described in a PowerPoint Presentation.
Virginia's preliminary state actions are described in a separate document.

Other comments and discussion points:
- VA is continuing to target, looking at areas where we buffers are needed. VA is working with NRCS and FSA.
- VA's State Forester is aware of these efforts. Governor McAuliffe is focusing more on Chesapeake Bay efforts.
- Currently in DE there is no way of reenrolling because of no funds. DE is looking to match. There is a meeting next week to discuss the path forward.
- A GIS analysis shows that there is not a lot of space to plant trees in DE. Further, interesting research by USGS indicates that buffers aren't really serving a service in

Delaware. Forest buffers may not be the best BMP because of no topography, and old water is coming out of streams (~40 years old), representative of what happened years ago. DE is working with university and USGS to see what BMPs would be most effective.

- The Center for Behavioral and Experimental Agri-Environmental Research is doing the social surveys to find out what it would take to get an individual in the door. DE representatives have talked to the State Forester to try to do some sort of sign-in bonus. Overall, DE is trying to get the CREP situation figured out and bring in more people.
- MD highlighted the strong need to look more at conservation.
- PA is working on their actions, and have thus far identified three main things to be significant: riparian easements, mortality (survival – 100%), and policy.
- NY participates relatively little in riparian forest buffers. NY has the Trees for Tribs program. NY's forest buffer State Task Force run by FSA help put something out to describe a whole host of barriers and challenges and make a workplan.
- Comment: I encourage you all to try to talk to other agencies in your states. Raise this up to other partners besides those in forestry.

Draft Strategies for Forest Conservation (part of Land Conservation Outcome)
Sally discussed how the 695,000 acre high-value forest goal fits into the Land Conservation Outcome in the new Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement. The FWG has a role to develop a management strategy for that goal. Sally proposed several forest conservation management approaches, which are summarized in her PowerPoint presentation, along with other pertinent information.

Other comments and discussion points:
- There is a need to take a new look at what is considered "high value."
- Sally requested members to provide feedback on the proposed management approaches:
  1. Develop high-value forest conservation maps for watershed
  2. Establish a Forest Conservation Action Team
  3. Promote economics of conserved forests
  4. Others?
- Comment: add "source water" in addition to water quality.
- Comment: can we link to TMDL efforts?
- Comment: CAST has a particular tool for forests that nobody has been using.
  - Some participants noted that they had not heard of this tool.
- In collaboration with the Healthy Watersheds GIT and funded by EPA, VA DOF is working on a forestland retention, crediting conservation project that may feed into this strategy.
- In addition, the Land Use Options Evaluation Outcome is looking at completing an evaluation of policy options, incentives and planning tools that can assist local governments or their representatives in continually improving their capacity to reduce the rate of conversion of agricultural lands, forests and wetlands.