Update to Forestry Verification Guidance

May 2015

To All Verification Partners:

Since producing the Forestry Verification Guidance in Summer 2014, there has been a major Chesapeake Bay Program advancement that will help clarify and simplify verification of urban tree canopy and riparian forest buffers BMP. That advancement is the acquisition of high-resolution land cover analysis data for the watershed that will help to detect changes in tree cover. These data will greatly assist Program partners in verifying whether or not there has been a net gain in forest cover as a result of their management actions.

Several significant changes in guidance result from the land cover analyses and are reflected in the attached document in the following places:

> Page 7, Section IV #4 (agricultural riparian forest buffers)

> Page 12, Section IV #4 (urban tree canopy)

> Page 13, Section VII, #2 (urban forest buffers)

A second change that is addressed here, is to add a step confirming that the current established cost-share practice to conduct 100% site visits and 10% spot-checks of new riparian forest buffers is indeed occurring. This modification can be found on Page 4, Section IV #1. These visits are important to get maintenance directed where it is most needed and there have been varying reports that visits have been cut-back. Lack of maintenance has been shown to result in 40% failure of buffers. The earlier the maintenance is applied, the more cost-effective the practice, and more likely that the practice will provide expected benefits. Other minor changes in the document have been made for clarification.

The Forestry Workgroup will approve this updated Guidance at its next meeting, now scheduled for July 1, 2015. It is provided to you now, for your information.