**BMP Verification Communications Strategy**

**Updates and Requests for the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership’s Communications Workgroup—September 20, 2012 Meeting**

**Background**

* Public communication of the Partnership’s BMP Verification Program through some formal agreement mechanism has been part of the plans presented to the partnership since January 2012.
* BMP verification will have some level of effect on the vast majority of the over 75,000 farms throughout the Bay watershed implementing conservation practices without cost-share, the hundreds (perhaps thousands) of local municipalities reporting stormwater management practices, the growing number of watershed organizations implementing pollution reduction practices and wanting credit for their efforts, and the list goes on.
* Draft BMP Communications Strategy (attached) was presented to the BMP Verification Committee by Margaret Enloe and Tom Wenz during the Committee’s July 19, 2012 conference call.

**Current Status**

* The BMP Verification Committee has made significant progress over the past six months of its operations:
  + Draft BMP verification principles (attached) are working their way through the partnership review and comment process
  + BMP verification protocols have been drafted by the four source sector—agriculture, stormwater, forestry, wastewater treatment—and two habitat restoration—streams and wetlands—workgroups and reviewed twice to date by the BMP Verification Committee
  + Preliminary approaches to ensuring full accounting of federal cost-shared conservation practices by the six states as well as addressing double counting have been presented to the BMP Verification Committee
  + BMP Verification Review Panel is being convened based on approval of 13 nominees for membership
* A detailed, revised BMP verification schedule through summer 2013 has been drafted (attached) and is on the Water Quality Goal Implementation Team’s September 24 conference call agenda for review and concurrence.

**Requests**

* Work with the BMP Verification Committee to further flesh out and reach agreement on a BMP Verification Communications Strategy including but extending beyond the May/June 2013 formal approval/public communication stage.
* Help think through an extended communications plan playing out over several years as the seven jurisdictions engage their producers, municipalities, and other local partners implementing pollution reduction practices and wanting credit for these actions.