The FWG was asked by the Water Quality Goal Team to submit 2 or 3 changes for the modeling team to consider for Phase 6.0 of the model (a.k.a. mid-point assessment). Here’s a draft of our submission, derived from conversations at the September FWG meeting.

1. The CB model should **account for true forest and riparian forests** as separate land use layers.  What the model currently refers to as forest is more appropriately called “woody/open.”  The forest land cover is vast, and the difference to water quality and habitat is significant when compared to a non-forested (e.g., “open”) land use. Similar situation with riparian buffers and we can now map where these occur.
2. **Consider separate reporting of loadings from air deposition. This will make it more apparent that natural land cover is getting credit for reducing this source.** Some jurisdictions are counting on each source sector to reduce pollution -- because the model reports an already reduced loading coming off forests (forests having processes nutrients from air deposition) there is no way to further improve upon forest loads—except to plant more forests.
3. **Refine the amount of forest land assumed to be harvested** (or disturbed) in any given year.  Currently, 1% of forests are assumed harvested.

After our September FWG, I shared with Katharine Antos of the WQ Goal Team the following comments derived from the FWG discussion of the mid-point assessment protocols.

1. Conservation of landscapes beneficial to WQ and “cap maintenance” should be more prominent in the TMDL planning process—as big or bigger than implementation.
2. Need to pay more attention to hydrology in the CB model --where does surface water and shallow groundwater have heightened interaction with land use/BMP?  This will be especially important to identify hot spots of denitrification.
3. The CB model should accurately account for a true forest.  What is currently referred to as forest is more appropriately called “woody/open.”
4. CSO areas--   our understanding is that BMP’s other than WWT do not count on CSO land.  This is a disincentive for placing BMPs that reduce storm water flow within the CSO and should be reconsidered.  Similarly, sub watersheds that are upstream of a dam may be priorities for clean drinking water and yet these same areas aren’t priorities for meeting Chesapeake Bay goals.  It is unfortunate if some jurisdictions must choose to place BMPs to meet the regulatory requirements of the TMDL at the expense of clean drinking water.
5. Effective dirt roads—what is density of dirt roads in different parts of the watershed?  How much of the load attributed to forest comes from dirt roads?