**MILESTONE WORKGROUP CONFERENCE CALL**

**May 28, 2013, 3:00 - 4:00 pm**

**Conference Line:** 866-299-3188, **Code**: 267-985-6222 (DC Line #2)

**AdobeConnect room**: <https://epa.connectsolutions.com/mwg/>

**CBPO On-Site Meeting Room**: 305A

**Calendar Entry:** <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/S=0/calendar/event/19536/>

**PURPOSE:** Arrive at a decision related to 2014-2015 land use projections for recommendation to the Water Quality Goal Implementation Team (WQGIT) at their next conference call (6/10/13).

**DRAFT AGENDA:**

**Welcome/Confirm Call Participants**

Nita Sylvester, EPA

Matt Johnston, UMD

Jeff Sweeney, EPA

Emma Giese, CRC

Aaron Ristow, NY

Ted Tesler, PA

Teresa Koon, WV

Alana Hartman, WV

Greg Sandi, MD

Jim George, MD

Paul Emmart, MD

Helen Stewart, MD

Brittany Sturgis DE

Marcia Fox, DE

Russ Baxter, VA

James Davis-Martin, VA

Peter Claggett, USGS

Karl Berger, MWCOG

Lucinda Power, EPA

Katherine Antos, EPA

1. **Synopsis of Ag Workgroup Proposal and Its Impact on Recent Decisions of the MS Workgroup**

Matt Johnston gave an overview of the AgWG’s recommendation to use 2012 Ag census data as soon as it is available (likely spring 2014), and how that will affect projections and Milestones Issues. Question before the group today is which set of projections would the Milestones workgroup like to use to develop the 2015 milestone commitments and use in the 2015 progress run, which will be one part of judging progress towards 2015 milestones at the end of the milestone period.

NY: When are milestone commitments due?

Antos: Milestones are due January 15th and jurisdictions have the opportunity to update after 2013 progress run is completed (could be as early as February, so the jurisdictions would have until March to update their milestone commitments)

Nita Sylvester: The WQGIT agreed to delay the 2015 land use projection deadline from July 15th to September 3rd in order to allow new datasets to be incorporated.

Jeff Sweeney: note this group’s prior interest in using the best data available.

James Davis-Martin: Previous consensus of this group: judge the Milestone results on the same base land use conditions as the commitments were set. Only (a) of the provided options allows this.

Johnston: (b) or (c) will allow incorporation of future data

Davis-Martin: Agree with incorporating newer and better data, however recommend maintaining consistency between base conditions and milestone judgment

Sweeney: Consider the AgWG’s recommendation to incorporate up-to-date data and this group’s recommendation for consistency

Davis-Martin: Suggest exploring other options to maintain consistency

Antos: Another option for 2015 milestone commitments is to have these done with most up to date data available (using 2015 projections available in September 2013) and when the 2015 projections can be updated in Spring 2014 based on the new 2012 Ag census being available, jurisdictions have the option to re-run and update 2015 milestone commitment targets accordingly. Note that it would be a communication challenge, but that it is consistent with the adaptive management approach.

Davis-Martin: when would milestones be due?

Antos: Milestones due January 2014, but could be updated (30 days) after progress run

Davis-Martin: How much time would it take to develop projections from Ag Census

Johnston: Depends on release of Ag Census

Jim George: Ideal to have a fixed baseline for milestones, communication difficulties could be overcome.

Davis-Martin: Agreed. If possible, would be helpful to update the 2015 milestone commitment targets just once, based on the 2013 progress run and the updated 2015 projections incorporating the Ag census data.

Peter Claggett: Note that even the 2010 data is a projection, new data availability doesn’t happen very often (The data available next spring will be much more up to date)

Davis-Martin: Would previous progress runs be re-run?

Sylvester: We won’t be running any previously signed-off Progress assessments on the current Phase 5.3.2 WSM – other than for informational/research purposes if requested. All progress runs will be rerun (using up-to-date background condition data) with the updated version of the WSM (Phase 6) that is being developed for the 2017 midpoint assessment.

Antos: Initial Milestones are still due January (using September projections). When information is updated (availability of 2013 progress run, 2015 projections), milestone commitments can be updated.

Davis-Martin: Other tools (factsheets) are developed based on Milestones (these would have to be updated as well)

Sylvester: Factsheets developed in the past not necessarily expected for these upcoming Milestones (can be discussed by this group on a future call).

Antos: The agendas for Exec Council are set by partnership (would continue to have partnership input)

Johnston: Option (a) would be the decision made by this group previously, based on Katherine’s suggestion an analysis could be presented to Milestone WG in Spring 2014 to help jurisdictions to determine if they want their milestone commitment targets to be updated.

Ted Tesler (PA): Interested in isolating management decisions, however in terms of developing future milestones use most up to date information available.

Teresa Koon (WV): concur with PA, option (a)

Marcia Fox (DE): Support Katherine’s suggestion to continue as planned, and then re-evaluate once more data is available

Aaron Ristow (NY): Concur

Claggett: Clarified that NLCD data likely available next April or May, population projections will be mostly collected by September 2013 (incorporating census in the spring)

[After the mtg Peter Claggett provided additional clarification:

New data available for the Sept. 2013 land use update include Census population estimates (2011 and 2012) and population projections for VA, MD, DE, and northern Virginia (Wash COG region) based on the 2010 Census findings.

New data expected to be available for an April 2014 land use update include the 2012 Census of Agriculture, 2011 National Land Cover Dataset, new population projections for PA, Census population estimates (2013), and a variety of County land use datasets.]

Davis Martin: If some states choose to change their milestones, other states do not, how will the milestones be evaluated?

Sylvester: EPA’s evaluation of whether jurisdictions met their 2015 milestone commitments would occur in 2016, and would take into account: 1) 2015 progress run (possibly incorporating new land use projections, based on decision of WQGIT), and 2) programmatic milestones. Jurisdiction’s internal evaluations could take into account other information. EPA’s oversight role with the TMDL is independent of what may be presented at EC mtgs and/or other partnership activities.

Davis-Martin and Jim George: Milestones vs. progress questions

Sylvester: Milestones are not on the agenda for the 2013 EC meeting (partnership decision), but may be on the agenda for 2014

George: EPA assessment memos that use terminology ‘milestone’ shouldn’t be equivalent to progress

Antos: EPA uses progress runs to determine if jurisdictions have met their partnership (milestone) load reduction commitments. The progress runs account for BMP implementation growth by incorporating projected changes in land use from year to year. Since 2009, EPA has stated that it will be considering growth when assessing progress toward meeting the TMDL.

George: Previous understanding: partnership consensus to measure milestones by isolating management actions from growth (pick a baseline for milestone commitments and hold constant, judged on whether commitments were made). Progress runs would reflect both actions and growth (mgt actions would be changed to account for growth)

Sweeney: That was Milestone Workgroup consensus, but AgWG then requested newer data be incorporated into 2015 projections used for progress runs.

George: Use both by setting management action to account for projected growth (compensates for growth during planning process), will be problematic if new data vastly different from projections. However, jurisdictions should not be held accountable for a bad projection

Antos: EPA will continue to use Adaptive Management (incorporating most recent jurisdiction submissions of milestone commitment targets) when assessing whether jurisdictions have met their milestone commitments.

Davis-Martin: How many Milestone drafts will be developed?

Sweeney: There will be options for modification, unless jurisdictions see no need to revise

Davis- Martin: VA agrees

Sweeney: Recommend Milestones Workgroup representatives discuss this with AgWG jurisdictional representatives so there can be a consistent state position before the WQGIT.

George: Note that AgWG not concerned with management decisions. Partnership should still be able to isolate management decisions, and call those ‘milestones’.

Antos: Clarify that all decisions about how to set milestone targets have been through the partnership

George: Choosing the most up to date projections (if different from milestones), still looking for a way to isolate management actions.

Antos: So what you’re saying is that we should run two different versions of 2015 progress, instead of the option I presented earlier to revise milestone commitments?

George: Can Milestones evaluate management actions, and annual progress evaluate management and growth

Sylvester: This group will reconvene to discuss and clarify how jurisdictions will develop 2015 milestones and how EPA will evaluate them.

**Decision on Recommendation(s) to WQGIT**

Recommendation the jurisdictions can live with:

2015 milestone commitments will be developed using most up to-date-data available (using 2015 projections available in September 2013) and when the 2015 projections can be updated in Spring 2014 (based on the new 2012 Ag census being available), jurisdictions have the option to re-run and update 2015 milestone commitment targets accordingly. The 2015 milestone commitments provided to EPA by Jan 15, 2014 should be considered “draft”. If updates are required in spring 2014, those versions should be considered “final” (or “amended”). If a jurisdiction decides updates are not required in the spring, their Jan submission should be considered “final”. Only “final/amended” versions of the 2015 milestone commitments should be communicated as final commitments to the public.

**Open Discussion of additional topics –** N/A

**Summarize follow up actions**

This group will reconvene after the WQGIT meets to further discuss and clarify how jurisdictions will develop 2015 milestones and how EPA will evaluate them.

**BACKGROUND:**

Relevant Decisions/Actions from May 13, 2013 meeting of the WQGIT:

DECISION: WQGIT members decided to delay

ACTION: What 2015 projections to use for annual progress runs vs. milestone commitments will be brought before the USWG, LUWG and WTWG prior to a final decision by the WQGIT. The 2012 Ag census incorporation issue will also be addressed during this time.

The Ag Workgroup is proposing to update the land use projections for future progress runs, including 2015, with 2012 Ag census data as this becomes available. This could impact the recent decisions made by the Milestone workgroup on how to maintain a constant target for the 2014-15 milestone development and assessment. There will be a milestone workgroup call scheduled for May in order to further discuss the impacts of the recommendations from the Ag Workgroup. The WQGIT is planning to make decisions about land use at their June 10th call.