



## SUMMARY

### Wastewater Treatment Workgroup (WWTWG) Conference Call

Tuesday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014

<http://www.chesapeakebay.net/calendar/event/21137>

#### Welcome and Introductions

- Tanya Spano (Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments; WWTWG Chair) convened the call and reviewed the [agenda](#).
- Spano asked for comments or corrections to the February minutes ([Attachment A](#)).
  - None were raised; the minutes were approved as submitted.
  - **DECISION:** The February conference call minutes were approved as written.

#### Report from STAC on-site systems workshop

- Glynn Rountree (Retired, National Association of Homebuilders) noted he retired from the National Association of Homebuilder on April 1<sup>st</sup>, though he is still wrapping up the workshop report for STAC. He explained the workshop and the report use Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS) terminology.
  - View [his presentation](#) for more information
- Rountree reviewed the major recommendations from the workshop (slide 10):
  1. The Chesapeake Bay Model should be refined to reflect how soils interact with N loadings from OWTS.
  2. The EPA, the Chesapeake Bay Program, and the states should work to educate the public in OWTS and seek public buy-in for demonstration projects like the Cape Cod eco-toilet project.
  3. Federal funding is needed to address OWTS infrastructure needs.
  4. The Chesapeake Bay Program should reach out to the states to see what kind of collaboration they are interested in and help provide the follow-through to make it happen.
  5. Data sharing between the states in a number of areas is critical – funding initial development of those efforts, including the sharing of test data from treatment units, should be considered by EPA along with the possible management and funding of interstate data sharing efforts.
  6. Viable onsite options will save communities money over time, so we recommend that education and outreach efforts about such options be initiated and focused on communities in need of such support to address their wastewater needs.
- Rountree asked for questions or comments on the recommendations.
  - Spano noted there is a proposed list of panelists for an attenuation panel, and that panel will address the first recommendation.
  - Maureen Tooke (EPA) noted that EPA is already working to help educate the public and develop outreach tools (e.g., Septic Smart): [www.epa.gov/septicmart](http://www.epa.gov/septicmart)
    - Tooke: EPA has developed a lot of outreach materials, but help is needed from locals and other partners to get those materials into homebuilders' and homeowners' hands. Feel recommendations #2 and #6 are the same. EPA has been talking about recommendation #5 for several months with the jurisdictions, as will be discussed later on the call.

- Ning Zhou (Virginia Tech, CBPO): We have been planning the second OWTS expert panel on attenuation, as Spano noted. We still need to send initiations to the proposed panelists. Many members will be from the previous panel on OWTS technologies, and we will also invite new members that specialize in soil, hydrology, or related scientific expertise. Hope to have first kick off call by end of May and will hope to wrap up recommendations by end of the 2014, with final report due in February 2015. Ideally we would like to have a panel representative from each state. The recommendations will affect all septic load estimates, so even states that do not plan to report denitrification on-site BMPs should still participate on the panel.
- Rountree: In response to Tooke's comments, NAHB has been thinking about an ideal package that realtors could share with homeowners when they purchase a new home with an onsite system.
- Spano asked for any concerns or other thoughts from workgroup regarding the workshop recommendations
  - Tooke: Personally, do not foresee more federal funding. The issue is not so much the lack of federal funding. Some states do not allow state revolving funds to be used for on-site system projects.
  - Spano: Agree that recommendation #3 is a non-starter as it is currently phrased. Perhaps it could be changed to reflect a broader approach than just federal funding. Want to honor the workshop participants' recommendations, so suggest that the workgroup develops its own recommendations, in addition to the recommendations from the workshop. Request CBPO staff to turn these into workgroup recommendations, for sharing with the WQGIT. The workgroup can choose to adopt these and make them their own.
  - Rountree noted the wording may be a little awkward on slide 10, but that is the wording that was used for voting at the workshop. The recommendations on slide 10 were the top recommendations, but there were many other recommendations that may be of interest and could be pursued without a lot of money.
  - Spano: any concerns with this proposal?
    - Marcia Degen (VA Dept. of Health): Think that is a great idea. Tooke makes a good point about number 3, but it reflects a perception that is out there. There are roadblocks, or maybe just perceived roadblocks, to using revolving loan funds for onsite systems. Maybe it is an issue of how to better leverage or access existing federal funds.
  - Rountree noted that Ty Asfaw will handle OWTS issues at NAHB going forward.
  - Spano thanked Rountree for all his hard work and wished him the best in his retirement.
  - **ACTION:** CBPO staff to develop proposed workgroup actions and recommendations for OWTS, for discussion in June and beyond.

### **Data sharing for on-site system technologies**

- Maureen Tooke (EPA) noted the data sharing discussion stemmed from the model onsite system program released in 2013.
  - Tooke noted that other areas such as Cape Cod are watching the Chesapeake Bay to see what they can learn from onsite system efforts.

- Mark Nelson (Horsley-Witten) clarified that the discussion is focused on data sharing protocols, not reciprocity. Effort has been on developing two protocols: initial state acceptance and field performance verification. Some draft protocols have been developed, along with the draft white paper and summary of state protocols. We are looking at systems that treat the waste prior to discharge to the septic field.
  - View [the presentation](#) for more information.
- Degen: The OWTS BMP expert panel has a category for proprietary units. There was not a universal list of units, so we set it up to follow each state's individual protocol.
- Zhou: There are a couple different steps to this. The states work to document and accept the technology under their own protocol and then implement the technology. The second piece is proposing the system or technology for BMP review and incorporation into the modeling tools. Once both of those steps are carried those systems can be reported to the Bay Program for credit.
  - Spano: At what stage can the workgroup weigh in to ensure the process goes as smoothly as possible?
- Zhou: It could help if data collected through the data-sharing effort is centralized at the Bay Program, but that is separate from putting that data or technology into the Model. Centralizing the data used for the state protocols would not guarantee that it would be credited in the Watershed Model.
- Matt Johnston (UMD, CBPO): I believe it would be more of a streamlined process for proprietary BMPs to get reviewed and approved for incorporation into the Model.
  - Degen: Right now we have a BMP for denitrification systems, and think that each state then goes through its own process to accept or certify certain technologies or systems that can be counted as a denitrification system. Each state has its own quirks in its own protocols which has been the difficulty in this process. If the state wants to get a higher removal rate than the 50 percent, then it has to go through the BMP approval process.
- Spano: We need to be clear that this data-sharing is for more efficient approvals among the states. Do not want to confuse this with CBP BMP approval.
- Degen: There has been a lot of good work by Tooke and Nelson on this and it will provide a lot of good information for manufacturers and others.
- **ACTION:** CBPO staff to share the draft white paper and state summary from Tooke with the workgroup.

### **Biosolids and spray irrigation**

- Matt Johnston (University of Maryland, CBPO) explained how biosolids are simulated in the Watershed Model and Scenario Builder. He recalled the WWTWG had been discussing biosolids and spray irrigation data for the past year or so, and there were questions why certain data elements were needed. He described where biosolids fit into the nutrient input estimates in the Watershed Model.
  - View [his presentation](#) for more information.
- Johnston asked for questions or comments from the WWTWG.
- Karl Berger (MWCOG): The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and Blue Plains held a biosolids “state of the science” workshop, which included researchers and CBPO modelers. The data for what is applied where will have to likely come from

the regulating agencies. The data exists and is collected in various forms. For concentration data, will have to work with CBP. An Annual Phosphorus Loss Estimator (APLE) routine does not yet exist for biosolids.

- Spano: So a one-time effort may be appropriate for the concentration data. She asked Berger to clarify what APLE is.
  - Berger: It is a model. Plan is to use APLE to determine how much of the applied phosphorus ends up eroding as particulate phosphorus versus running off as dissolved phosphorus.
- Spano: so we need to capture the concentrations and what is bio-available...(11:51). The workgroup can maybe explore options for
- Marya Levelev: Manpower question is very important...would like to hear more from AgWG on their sense of collecting and applying the data.
- Johnston: what we are trying to do for the Phase 6 Watershed Model is define the nutrient balance and inputs for each county, e.g. amount of deposition, manure, and biosolids. The Model does not operate at a field scale, but the larger aggregate scale.
  - Spano: that's important to clarify because taking a broader or more generalized approach would be easier for states and the workgroup to undertake. There are technical aspects such as the APLE discussion, and then there is the data issue and the effort needed.
- Berger: the application of biosolids is tracked through permits at the county scale, but was not always collected in digital databases.
- Berger: there could be a different standard for historic data and for data going forward. Biosolids data should be even more accurate than manure.
- Spano: seems there needs to be another discussion.
- Johnston noted the current draft biosolids data template asks for moisture, nutrient concentrations, total pounds, and county where it is applied.
  - Allen Brockenbrough (VA DEQ): The data we have in VA is on dry weight basis with zero moisture.
    - Johnston: we can go in either direction.
- Spano: let's revisit the template and split it between what would be needed for historical data and data going forward.
- Zhou: manpower issue is important and we will continue to discuss. There are resources the states can tap into through TMDL support and their grants from the CBP.
- Johnston: The best step from here is to get contacts and CBPO staff can sit down and discuss the data needs and availability with them directly.
- Johnston: spray irrigation is very similar to biosolids, and similar issue in that it is a piece of the nutrient balance that is currently missing.
- **ACTION:** WWTWG members to provide points of contact for biosolids and spray irrigation data.
- **ACTION:** CBPO staff to frame discussion for next WWTWG call and next steps.

## Updates

- Jeremy Hanson (CRC, CBPO) noted that the Chesapeake Bay basinwide BMP verification framework was in the process of being updated for distribution within the next week.

- **Post-meeting note:** The May 2014 draft of the verification framework was distributed on May 12, 2014.
- **Levelv:** We are getting questions how septic systems are tracked and incorporated in the model. Perhaps Peter Claggett could give a presentation on this.
- **Spano** noted that COG's Board has taken on regional infrastructure as a priority, including transportation, energy and water. If any thoughts or experiences to share, please email her.
  - **Levelv:** Would appreciate specific questions from Spano in an email.

**Adjourned**

**Teleconference participants**

<u>Name</u>		<u>Affiliation</u>
Tanya	Spano (Chair)	Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
Ning	Zhou (Coord.)	Virginia Tech, CBPO
Jeremy	Hanson (Staff)	CRC, CBPO
Eric	Aschenbach	Virginia Dept. of Health
Karl	Berger	MWCOG
Allan	Brockenbrough	Virginia Dept. of Environmental Quality
Greg	Busch	MDE
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Marya	Levelv	MDE
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