**Forestry Workgroup Meeting Minutes**

**December 5, 2012**

**Participants**

Alli Baird, Eric Sprague, Frank Rodgers, Matt Poirot, Rebecca Hanmer, Sara Nicholas, Josh Zimmerman, Chris Peiffer, Craig Highfield, Tracey Coulter, Sloane Crawford, Jason Smith, Tim Culbreth, Anna Stuart Burnett, Sally Claggett, Julie Mawhorter, Lou Etgen, Ann Hairston-Strang, Judy Okay

**Updates**

* Forest Restoration Strategy: Trying to get the Chesapeake Bay logo and support for the Forest Restoration Strategy. Need approval from the PSC. Sally expects them to endorse it today. NASF reception in DC tonight--there is going to be a signing ceremony for state foresters and chief of the Forest Service. Nick DiPasquale, Director of CBP, will also be present to sign the strategy.
* The BMP Verification panel will hear about the draft sector workgroup BMP verification protocols this month. Sally will be presenting for the FWG.

**2013 FWG Work Plan**

* Midpoint Assessment and BMP Efficiency Review: Phase 3 of the TMDL is expected to have a completely revised land use model and revamped model for the entire program by 2017. The highest priority for the Water Quality GIT is trying to get to a finer scale on some of the land uses especially on land use cover on local areas. FWG proposed separating upland forest and riparian/floodplain forest and adjusting loading rates accordingly. Also want a refined forest layer that separates out “mixed open” from true forest. Will work with Land Use Workgroup on these issues, as well as looking at how existing urban tree canopy could be better reflected in the model. We may seek input on these new land use loading rates with the BMP expert panels that have been working on riparian buffers and urban tree planting. Determining recommended loading rates for these new land uses could be a lot of work for the FWG in the next year and beyond.
* One of the Forestry Workgroup lower priority items for the Midpoint Assessment is reviewing the Forest Harvesting data available from states and reviewing the 1% harvest assumption. A work plan for this item is due to the Water Quality GIT by Feb. 4. **ACTION**: Look over Forest Harvest Work Plan Draft and send comments to Julie.
* Virginia has been working on a project with the USFS Southern Region, looking at loading rates for each BMP for forest harvesting through a grant with VA Tech. Matt Poirot will share the proposal with the FWG. Some feedback from FWG members on call that we may want to postpone the proposed BMP expert panel review on Forest Harvest BMPs until new data are available. The forest harvest BMP was fairly recently reviewed in 2007 as part of the MAWP process.
* BMP Verification Protocols: it should be in a more final format by February. FWG will work with the Ag Workgroup. Are there any issues with the draft verification document now? Judy will send in comments.
* Chesapeake Watershed Forestry Program Review tentatively scheduled for March 6-7 2013.
* Forest Restoration Strategy and Buffer Goals: At the April FWG meeting, we will get more specific on strategy actions for 2013-14. Proposed Forest Buffer Summit Meeting is not necessarily a FWG meeting – needs to include the key USDA partners and state leadership that influence CREP implementation
* The Working Lands Conservation Strategy is an Executive Order action focused on permanent protection of farms and forests through conservation easements (USFS/NRCS and partners). We’ll be working to complete this in FY2013 and will need input/review from FWG.
* Forest Mapping Issues/Tools: There are estimates of forest cover using different data sources, looking at loss and changes over time. The FWG will start looking at this again later in the spring. The Land Image Analyst (formerly “RBMapper”) is ready for pilot in 2013.
* **There is no FWG meeting in January**.

**Announcements**

* WV: Frank Rodgers: the FWG is invited to the Potomac Watershed Partnership Information Exchange in December, where they will discuss environmental education including new Mid Atlantic literacy goals from NOAA. Everyone who attends the meeting will receive a Potomac watershed calendar.

* MD: Anne Hairston-Strang: recently put out an RFP to pair service learning with buffer restoration. Committed $6 million towards project. Riparian land owners get seedlings to plant, and MD is spreading the message of needing more trees by streams. Have a video that will be posted on the MD website. MD is expanding the special rivers CBIG Grant, through the Chesapeake Bay Trust fund. MD will be adding two new positions next year.

* Forestry for the Bay: Craig Highfield: Real Forestry for Real Estate. Four courses are set in MD. Our first course will occur on February 7th at Allegany College in Cumberland. Also partnering with Penn State Extension to plan 4 spring woodland owner conferences. Helping VA Extension with their woods and wildlife conference on February 23rd. Collaborating with UMD Extension to develop a train the trainer program for woodland health outreach for central Maryland.

* PA: Tracey Coulter: David Wise is no longer leading the Chesapeake Bay Foundation buffer restoration program in Pennsylvania; will be working at Stroud Water Research Center. Someone will continue in this role at CBF.
* PA: Franklin County is setting a tree planting goal and using a grant to assess landowners and determine the best outreach methods.
* Sally Claggett: we want to collect info regarding forest conservation acres of high value forest and other non-high value forest from the states for 2012. Due Jan 15th. We will send out a spreadsheet so we get data in a consistent format.
* Rebecca Hanmer: EPA has a Watershed Academy with a webinar series. Are there presentations FWG members could share? Rebecca is a part of the CAC (Citizens Advisory Committee). She recommended that CAC would host a discussion on forestry. Chesapeakebay.net has a feature on the low rate of buffer restoration this year. Forest are taken for granted among the water quality group, so we still need to “build the fire.”