



SUMMARY

Wastewater Treatment Workgroup (WWTWG) Conference Call

Tuesday, November 5th, 2013, 10:00 AM- 12:00 PM

<http://www.chesapeakebay.net/calendar/event/19154>

Welcome & Introductions

- Tanya Spano (Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments; WWTWG Chair) convened the meeting shortly after 10:00AM. She welcomed participants and reviewed the day's [agenda](#).
- Spano asked for comments or corrections to the September minutes ([Attachment A](#)).
 - None were raised; the minutes were accepted.
 - Spano: noted today's discussion may actually change the process following September's discussion of forecasting and backcasting.
- **ACTION:** WWTWG members to provide any comments or corrections for the June minutes to Jeremy Hanson (jhanson@chesapeakebay.net) by September 17th.

Communication of Wastewater Progress

- Ning Zhou (Virginia Tech, CBPO; WWTWG Coordinator): Wastewater accounts for greatest reductions of any sector since 1985, and EPA would like to work with state and local partners to highlight the sector's tremendous progress. He introduced Tom Damm from EPA Region 3.
- Tom Damm (EPA Region 3): Happy to be on the call to offer collaboration on this effort. Excited about efforts and upgrades that are taking place in the wastewater sector around the watershed. We will work closely with the states and partners to tell these success stories with help of EPA communication tools. For example, the Regional Administrator is going to Richmond to highlight WWTP upgrades and green infrastructure efforts next week. We are looking for any information (charts, graphs, stories, etc.) that partners can provide for this effort.
- Spano thanked Damm and asked if WWTWG members had any questions or thoughts.
 - Dave Schepens (DE DNREC): Whenever we release a press release on our wastewater regulations or upgrades, we can share it with EPA.
- Joyce Hudson (EPA): EPA released its model program for on-site systems. Would that be something to highlight in this initiative, or are you looking for more specific wastewater stories?
 - Tom Damm: We may want to highlight some of the broader initiatives like the model program that will help local water quality.
- Spano: We have seen a lot of progress from local governments in the wastewater sector, but it is often lost in communication that implementation is at the local level. It is important to emphasize that the success is local. Last year's STAC workshop and some of the innovation taking place in the watershed is something else to emphasize. Energy efficiency and other environmental improvements to reduce greenhouse gas footprints, etc., which go beyond simple wastewater treatment. WWTPs have had time, funding, and reasonable schedules for implementation and have benefited from this well thought out effort. COG is already updating its wastewater fact sheet and working on other

initiatives. Think this is a great idea from EPA and would love to coordinate on this. I can lay out MWCOG's plans for this effort and the WWTWG can use this as a template in its coordination with Damm and EPA. The states can certainly communicate their own stories directly with EPA as they see fit.

- Chris Pomeroy (VA and MD Associations of Municipal Wastewater Agencies) mentioned that VAMWA and MAMWA are updating their websites and communication tools, and this is something we could maybe leverage.
- Spano: Zhou and I will discuss this offline with Tom to work out a strategy and schedule between the workgroup and EPA. Encourage WWTWG members to speak with their own public affairs folks offline on this effort.

Forecasting/Back casting Septic Systems in MDP and CBP Models

- Spano: There has been some discussion offline on this subject since September. Minutes reflected our thought that this change would only affect Maryland's numbers. Asked Peter to clarify what the impacts of this decision will be for the other jurisdictions.
- Peter Claggett (USGS, CBPO): At September meeting, MDP asked the workgroup if they would accept their projections for 2013 and 2015, which would only affect Maryland. In analyzing the data that Maryland presented and comparing it with CBPO's estimates, the numbers were different. The largest difference seemed to be in annual change going forward. This raised some questions, since we used some of the same data. The main difference was CBP was looking at single detached housing units as active septic systems when outside of sewer service areas. We found that when we go from single detached to overall housing units, we came a lot closer to MDP's estimates. In some counties there are dramatic increases in the numbers of estimated septic systems. These discrepancies are caused from seasonally vacant homes and other factors. If these new results are more accurate, we asked ourselves why not extend these methods to the rest of the watershed? MDP and CBP are both estimating the number of septic units. In some counties there is local data where they have a physical count of the units, e.g. Anne Arundel County, where we can compare the estimates. We are exploring how to refine our methods for April. There is a large discrepancy with Montgomery County's local data, but best guess this may be because they are including some planned sewer areas in their data, which would lower their estimated septics.
 - Stephanie Martens (MDP): That might be the issue. They may still have to go back and make an amendment to change some areas to S1.
 - Claggett: For Maryland we should probably include at least short-term planned sewer areas in our estimates.
 - Martens: We've taken a detailed look at that recently. Impression is that it is only issue in a few counties, where a number of lots have been built recently. Not sure we want to change some of these assumptions across the board, statewide. It is only a problem in a few specific areas.
- Spano: To summarize, we have some possible explanations for discrepancies in the estimates. Do not see Prince George's County numbers, but I understand there are some inconsistencies in the data for PG County.
 - Claggett: Can't speak specifically about that County.
 - Martens: Cannot speak specifically to that either, but we have been doing outreach with all the counties to compile this local data.

- Jason Dubow (MDP): The revised estimates lower the numbers for Prince George's County, which should be more accurate.
- Claggett: The estimates are really close in Maryland, so the assumptions are very good. So it should not be an issue for the Land Use Workgroup to accept the revised numbers for Maryland. For all the rest of the counties outside Maryland, the differences are sometimes even greater. There is little point in guessing what the number is unless we have something to compare it to, some third party data. At next LUWG meeting we will call for local septic estimates so we can determine what the best approach may be for everywhere outside Maryland. If you think about the difference between SDH and total households, it makes sense to go with single detached households intuitively. However, in some cases the seasonally vacant homes are actually occupied year round, which can make a difference in some areas.
- Matt Johnston (UMD, CBPO): We have talked about how we can make this data better for April. We also have a short term need to send out animal, land use, and septic data for the 2013 Progress Run. We need a decision about what data gets sent out today.
- Spano: We previously understood that this would only affect Maryland. She asked the states other than Maryland to weigh in. Presumably Maryland is in favor of using the revised estimates for their state.
 - Schepens: We are trying to get an accurate total count of septic systems for Delaware, not just estimates. Some of the estimates seem pretty off. Have to defer to Bryan Bloch on this issue.
 - Eric Aschenbach (VA Dept. of Health): We would need time to look at the data more closely.
- Claggett explained the whole land use will be redone in April based on the 2012 Census of Agriculture and the 2010-2011 National Land Cover Dataset. We may also incorporate some of the collected local data to the extent we can. The septic system estimates is essentially part of the land use.
- Schepens: The revised estimates seem dramatically higher. We will work to provide some more accurate numbers to CBPO for Delaware. Unable to make this decision today.
- Johnston explained CBPO projects land uses and septic every year for the progress runs. We send those projections to the states for comment. We heard back from Maryland with some good numbers, which is why Claggett came to the WWTWG on this issue. In April it is no problem to incorporate better septic data.
- Claggett: Would recommend using the revised estimates. If the sewer service areas are accurate, then using the total household numbers makes more sense than the single-detached households which can have greater margins of error. If we are picking something to move forward with right now, I would have more confidence in the revised October estimates.
- Aschenbach noted that he and VDH were not solicited for comment on the septic figures. VDH would have responded with its own data.
 - Johnston: We share this with the progress and milestone contacts in each jurisdiction, i.e. Bill Keeling and James Davis-Martin in Virginia (DEQ).
- Johnston clarified the September, non-revised, estimates will serve as the default and will be used for 2013 Progress in absence of a decision by the workgroup or individual states to use the revised figures. To summarize, there are three options: use the default for all

states, use the default for all except Maryland, which would use the revised estimates, or use the revised estimates for all states.

- Dubow: Maryland prefers to use the revised numbers for itself.
- Aschenbach: We would like to spend more time with the numbers for Virginia, but in absence of more time to review, will go with default numbers.
- Furlan: Pennsylvania will stick with default numbers. Still concerns about the process and assumptions.
- Schepens: Delaware will stick with default numbers.
- George Onyullo (DDOE): DC will stick with default numbers.
- Spano: any objections to MD going forward with the revised numbers.
 - None heard.
 - Aschenbach commented that this potentially mixes apples and oranges, but if Maryland is more comfortable with this data, then that is okay. Schepens agreed.
- Johnston: whenever we share numbers like this there is always opportunity for partners to work and improve our methods. It is a learning experience.
- **DECISION:** The September default septic estimates will be used for all jurisdictions' 2013 progress runs, except Maryland which will use the revised estimates.
- **ACTION:** CBPO staff to distribute the estimates to the workgroup with clarification of the methods, process, and application of the estimates.

Recommendations of the On-Site System Expert Panel

- Vic D'Amato (Tetra Tech) noted he gave a presentation in September where the workgroup discussed and introduced the recommendations from the expert panel. It was pointed out during that meeting that the panel needed to address the current BMP for septic pumpouts. He referred participants back to the September presentation.
 - D'Amato explained the government shutdown hampered the updates to the report. The panel was comfortable with retaining the 5% credit for the septic pumpout BMP, though one panelist dissented from that recommendation. The panel will develop an Appendix to explain the recommendation and will include notes to explain the dissention as well.
- Spano asked for any additional comments from the workgroup
 - D'Amato and CBPO Staff noted that there were no substantive comments received over email since the last meeting.
 - No additional comments were raised by call participants.
- Spano: If the 5% pumpout credit was the only issue, would recommend the workgroup have a provisional endorsement and take a vote over email when report comes out.
 - Schepens, Aschenbach, and Onyullo agreed.
- **DECISION:** The workgroup provisionally endorsed the OWTS panel's recommendations, subject to any final comments on the pumpout resolution.
 - **Post-meeting note:** No additional comments were received after the report was distributed, so the panel's recommendations are accepted for submission to the Watershed Technical Workgroup and subsequently the Water Quality Goal Implementation Team.
- **ACTION:** Once final report is available CBPO staff to share with workgroup and explain the pumpout BMP resolution.

Proposed Supplemental Indicator for Reporting Point Source Progress

- Spano clarified the agenda, noting that the WWTWG will decide whether to accept the supplemental indicator for use by Maryland. No other jurisdiction currently plans to report for it. The WWTWG will present its decision to the WQGIT, which is slightly different than described in the agenda.
 - Greg Busch (MDE) agreed with Spano's summary.
 - Zhou and Jeremy Hanson (CRC, CBPO) noted that no additional comments had been received. Hanson noted that New York had not weighed in over email, but the other jurisdictions are okay with Maryland reporting for the supplemental indicator, although they do not plan to use it themselves.
 - **ACTION:** CBPO staff to follow up New York offline.
 - **Post-meeting note:** New York concurred with the other jurisdictions.
- **DECISION:** The workgroup accepted the supplemental indicator for use by Maryland. No other jurisdictions currently plan to use the indicator.

Spray Irrigation, Biosolids, and On-Site Systems Data

- Zhou explained that as part of the Midpoint Assessment, we have been talking with states about what data is available that could potentially be used in the Phase 6 watershed model. Matt Johnston reviewed all the feedback from the states ([see the corresponding handout for more details](#)).
 - Johnston: pleased to see that so much of this data exists. The workgroup will need to think about what will be done for states that may not have same data as other jurisdictions. Also need to consider equity when formulating assumptions. Another question, where should the loads be attributed for these applications? Agriculture sector or wastewater, or in some cases urban parks or golf courses?
- Furlan noted in Pennsylvania the application of biosolids is done under a Nutrient Management Plan, at an agronomic rate designed to not result in runoff.
- Johnston explained there are essentially three sources of nutrients in the Watershed Model: manure, biosolids, and inorganic fertilizers.
 - Furlan: So the model assumes that something runs off, even at agronomic rate.
 - Johnston: Correct, it assumes that there is always some portion of the nutrients that run off.
- Spano felt the workgroup will need an introductory explanation for more details about these loads. She recalled that workgroup wants to quantify these loads to determine if it is worth the effort to chase the data.
- Spano: What's the schedule for pursuing this, from CBPO staff perspective?
 - Zhou: will work with Johnston to develop a template, and share with states to see how closely their data matches the template. Will pilot it that way and see how it goes from there.
 - Johnston: The goal is to have it for the 2017 Phase 6 version of the model. If we can work with states to gather some data over the next year, then we can get a better sense of what the data looks like.
- Furlan had some questions about how the model processes the biosolids data.

- Johnston explained that all the rates, processes, and algorithms are reviewed and approved by the partnership, including the Agriculture and Modeling Workgroups.
- Spano: if the WWTWG is being asked to review the data, we will need more information.
 - Johnston offered to give an introduction to Scenario Builder if the workgroup is interested. He noted that right now there are zero lbs of biosolids applied in the watershed outside of Virginia, which is the only state that has reported them to the CBPO.
- Spano called for additional questions or comments from workgroup about process moving forward.
 - None were raised.

Updates

- STAC septic workshop
 - Rountree: If any recommended invitees for the workshop, WWTWG members should share them with Zhou (zhou.ning@epa.gov) and Hanson (jhanson@chesapeakebay.net).
- Other updates
 - Schepens explained Delaware is going through its third public hearing on new regulations for on-site systems this month. The regulations include revision of essentially all the on-site regulations: performance standards, large systems, community systems, etc.
 - Zhou: 2013 progress run data. Based on previous grant guidance were supposed to use system developed by Tetra Tech, but that system is not ready for this year, so we will follow same process as last year. Next year we will use automatic system.
 - Spano asked Zhou to share the 2013 progress schedule with the workgroup.
- Spano thanked participants for their time and discussion.

Adjourned

Next meeting:

Tuesday, December 3rd, 2013

10:00AM – 12:00PM

www.chesapeakebay.net/calendar/event/19155/

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 |
| Brian Ashby | Delaware DNREC |
| Greg Busch | MDE |
| Peter Claggett | USGS, CBPO |
| Denorah Dalmasy | MDE |
| Jason Dubow | MDP |
| Vic D'Amato | Tetra Tech |
| Tom Damm | EPA, Region 3 |
| Ron Furlan | PA DEP |
| Joyce Hudson | EPA |
| Marty Hurd | DDOE |
| Matt Johnston | UMD, CBPO |
| Dharmendra Kumar | Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection |
| Marya Levelev | Maryland Dept. of Environment |
| Stephanie Martens | MDP |
| George Onyullo | District of Columbia, Department of Environment |
| Vikram Patterkine | STAC |
| Chris Pomeroy | VA/MD AMWA |
| Jay Prager | MDE |
| Glynn Rountree | National Association of Home Builders |
| Greg Sandi | Maryland Dept. of Environment |
| Dave Schepens | DE DNREC |
| Brian Trulear | EPA, Region 3 |
| John Weidman | New York Dept. of Environmental Conservation |
| Jeff White | MDE |