**FWG Meeting**

**April 3, 2013**

**Participants**: Tim Culbreth, Sloane Crawford, Rebecca Hanmer, Sally Claggett, Julie Mawhorter, Eric Sprague, Anna Stuart Burnett, Michael Valenti, Matt Poirot, Tracey Coulter, Derrick McDonald, Judy Okay, Herb Peddicord, Alli Baird, Anne Hairston-Strang, Craig Highfield

**Announcements**

* March 6-7: Forestry Project Review. Go to CBP calendar website to see the posted presentations: <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/calendar/event/19325/>.
* Next FWG meeting will be in Annapolis on May 1st, in conjunction with the Land Use WG. This meeting will be important for modeling forests in the next version of the CBP Model. Will talk about the changes that are coming and managing forest land use categories (true forest vs modeled forests). We will discuss the possibilities in having separate categories for “true” forests (as opposed to forests and other category), urban tree canopy, and riparian forests among other topics of mutual interest.
* What is the FWG expected to do to help come up with loading factors for these land uses? We will co-lead overseeing the science along with the Watershed Technical WG and the Urban Stormwater WG (for tree canopy). We will also seek advice from expert panels that have formed to look at practice efficiencies.
* PA: Mike Lester is leaving PA-BOF to become the Colorado State Forester. Sara Nicholas will be leaving PA-BOF to work with TNC on forestry issues. Agroforestry (silvopasture) workshop/tour will be held June 7 in conjunction with Cornell – Tracey will send FWG details.
* VA: Finally released the natural heritage data explorer website (<http://vanhde.org>) used for project review and conservation managed lands and needs assessment. Alli will send additional details to FWG when available.
* MD: spring plantings are starting up, working with county foresters on Buffer in a Bag program. Tim will be attending upcoming USFS climate change conference in WV talking about potential impact to central Appalachia. Working with Governor’s stream restoration challenge grants to get buffer plantings at schools.
* Forestry for the Bay: Selected to present at AWRA Healthy Waters-Healthy Forests conference this summer on Baltimore County landscape stewardship project.
* New chair of WQ GIT, Russ Baxter, held a conference call with all the WG chairs during which Rebecca presented key issues/projects the FWG is currently working on. This will also be shared with the rest of the WQGIT on April 8. This list will be posted on today’s webpage.

**Chesapeake Forest Restoration Strategy**

Background:

* Got public comments on draft last summer; final strategy released in December 5 signing ceremony with USFS Chief Tom Tidwell, Bay State Foresters, and CBPO Director Nick Dipasquale; limited batch of print copies will be sent to Strategy team members later this spring
* Review of targeted restoration areas mapped in strategy: wildlife/habitat (e.g. green infrastructure, brook trout), mine lands, agroforestry, urban/community forests, contaminated lands (e.g. brownfields) Some overarching next steps - Add GIS layers to online mapping tool (USGS-COAST); develop website/communication plan for reaching targeted groups; implement Strategy through our ongoing CB/forestry grants with partners; reconvene Strategy teams for additional input/collaboration on next steps (April May)
* Want to think of all the ways to move these actions forward (look into funding sources).
* Need to look outside of our normal funding channels.
* We’ll be working more closely with Habitat GIT to expand wildlife priorities to include additional forest dependent species for targeting forest restoration

**Round Robin on Priority Actions (see additional detail in FWG Member Responses posted)**

* VA: For habitat section- Primarily working with VA DGIF who is doing restoration work with brook trout and has a focus on the Shenandoah Valley. Also do a lot of on the ground work and abandoned farmland restoration work. Landowner Incentive Program will be helpful. Strong relationship with the Green Infrastructure Center (would like to have a presentation from the GIC at a future FWG meeting). Undertaking a project with VT on Agroforestry, looking to identify where agroforestry is occurring and targeting areas. Trying to incorporate wildlife into green infrastructure.
* WV: need to convene a WV/ Potomac forest restoration strategy workgroup to really move this forward. Bring in more partners, especially in Grant County on the mine lands opportunities. Would be good to fund a forester to work with UTC efforts in the 3-county Region 9 Council
* NY: Riparian zone planting program “Trees for Tributaries” is being implemented in the state and in the CB watershed. Try to help local conservation organizations that target forest conservation aligned with the state Open Space plan/green infrastructure. Will begin doing LIDAR-based canopy assessment in a couple counties in the Bay watershed (with Cornell)
* PA: Opportunities to connect with PA’s brook trout restoration plan; Derrick has gotten input from the mining agencies on how to connect with their efforts, need to make sure we have the right people participating; Agroforestry: teaming up with NRCS to enhance and promote demonstration areas. Dickinson College has a project. A lot of interest in BMPs for silvopasture. Haven’t touched on alley cropping much. “Have a vibrant urban forestry program in the Bay watershed, Treevitalize is currently expanding their program to communities beyond just the Metro Areas
* MD: buffers should continue to be a big priority. Working with the Chesapeake Bay Trust Fund (flush fees) and doing targeting work with TNC and the UM Appalachian Lab. Planning is a strength in MD. New green infrastructure assessment is coming out. Need to ID specific opportunities in mine lands and contaminated lands, need to work with MDE. For urban, need to develop consistency in monitoring and tracking of tree canopy/bmps for the TMDL. Would like to partner more with arborist associations.
* DE: most development is occurring on ocean front, not in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, which is helpful to our cause. Doing some targeted UTC work in Bay watershed. Delaware has a strong program for ag land conservation which has helped get many forested acres conserved, and there’s a proposal to revitalize a similar program specific to forest conservation.
* Alliance: Idea of using Forest-to-Faucets data to bring water providers and forested communities together. Would like to convene a riparian forest buffer practitioner group and possibly a summit to address challenges and develop new solutions/incentives/policy recommendations, need new ways to incentivize and revitalize cost share programs. Continue work on markets/credits/offset incentives tied to forest practices; Association of PA Watersheds organization could be good partner for mine lands reforestation in PA.

THANK YOU to everyone for your thoughtful input on the pre-work/responses and in the Round Robin Discussion!