

Chesapeake Bay Program Forestry Workgroup (FWG) Conference Call

September 3rd, 2014

9 AM – 11 AM

Participants:

Rebecca Hanmer, *Chair*
Sally Claggett, USFS, *Coordinator*
Tuana Phillips, CRC, *Staff*
Frank Rodgers, Cacapon Institute
Barbara White, VA DOF
Tracey Coulter, PA DCNR
Craig Highfield, Alliance for the Bay
Tanner Haid, Cacapon Institute
Anne Hairston-Strang, MDNR
Colin Jones, MDA
Rich Mason, USFWS
Julie Mawhorter, USFS
Curtis Tomlin, University of Richmond School of Law
Derrick McDonald, PA DEP
Matt Poirot, VA DOF
Tom Ward, NRCS
Celia Vuocolo, Piedmont Environmental Council
Judy Okay, J&J Consulting

Updates – Tom Ward, NRCS:

- Nation-wide buffer implementation, like we've seen in the Bay region, has not been very successful. We want to improve our rates in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and make the region a case study for the rest of the country. We've already made some progress towards improving our efforts:
 - The FWG developed *Buffering the Bay: A report on the Progress and Challenges of Restoring Riparian Forest Buffers in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed*. This report can be found here:
http://www.chesapeakebay.net/channel_files/21542/cb_forest_buffer_status_paper.pdf
 - High-level individuals met at the Chesapeake Riparian Forest Buffer Initiative Leadership Summit on June 19th as part of the effort to reverse our trend.

Presentation – Forests for the Bay projects:

Craig Highfield (Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay) reviewed the ongoing Forests for the Bay projects. Forests for the Bay is a partnership that relies heavily on its various partners.

More details on this program can be found on the Forests for the Bay website, which serves as a clearinghouse for information pertinent to private forest landowners:

<https://www.forestryforthebay.org/>

For a link to Craig's presentation:

http://www.chesapeakebay.net/channel_files/22018/ffb_fwg_sept.pdf

Presentation highlights:

- Forests for the Bay has recently updated its LandServer tool to include new soil, FIA, and understory data, among other things.
- Real Forestry for Real Estate was created to educate realtors about the importance of owning properties with woods, helping them become versed in various opportunities and incentives for woodland owners, and enhance the marketability of participating realtors.
 - The first course had approximately 60 realtors show up.
 - Out of this program the Welcome to Your Woods publication was developed: http://www.dnr.state.md.us/forests/pdfs/Welcome_to_Woods_v9.pdf
 - In addition, a Maryland Realtors Natural Resources Portal was created and can be found on the Forests for the Bay website.
Questions/Discussion Points:
 - WV will be able to use some the developed material for their work.
 - How do you address the issue of potentially hazardous trees on properties as a concern for new landowners?
Craig: This is a tricky question, but we've gotten it asked only one time.
Tom Ward: You can find tree service companies that will take down trees and give property owners credit for property value.
 - Other related work: VA has developed a Tree Owner's Manual for real estate realtors.
 - Reaching out to those who work with native plants, in addition to foresters, is a good idea.
- Your Woods and Your Wallet:
 - Forests for the Bay partnered up with a local land trust in MD for a workshop in June. Two more workshops are scheduled for next spring.
 - This program is about money – i.e., the financial benefits of owning woods and land stewardship.
 - The program includes a review of Forest Banking (what kind of opportunities exist), the Forest Conservation and Management Program (FCMA), and Conservation Easements.
Questions:
 - Would landowners find out about these kinds of opportunities through the extensive service agents?

Craig: Most people don't know to go to these agents. We are trying to get people to know how to access their local resources. That is what we saw was missing.

- Forests for the Bay has also written up a conservation funding assessment, which includes numbers for tax incentives, county forest conservation acts, and estimations of nutrient trading.
- Preserving the Family Woods:
 - This program provides tools to help guide the transfer to the next generation of landowners.
 - Courses are currently being developed.
 - Part of the program came from Ties to the Land (Your Family Forest Heritage) guide in VA.
 - This will be a 4 hour course on: developing a succession plan, tools of estate planning, conservation programs and easements, peer to peer lessons. MET will talk about conservation easements.
 - Two events scheduled this fall, and two additional events will probably be scheduled. After the course the presentations will be recorded and put on Forests for the Bay website.

Questions/Discussion Points:

- Have you made any connections with church organizations?
Craig: No, we have not.
- How can the FWG help these efforts?
Craig: All foresters are very willing to help, but when approached, most foresters don't know about program, how they are tied to it, or that it is partnership. Spreading the word so that people know the program exists would be helpful.
- Do you get feedback after the course (a year or two later) about what is going on?
Craig: Yes, we will follow up with that by sending surveys to realtors, for instance. We plan to get feedback from the Legacy Planning course participants as well.
- Do you have any idea what regions in PA you will hold the workshops in?
Craig: South mountain area, and probably in northeast area of the watershed as well. But we are currently open to any area.
- When will WV's portion of LandServer be up?
Craig: I don't know when, but I can get an estimate of time and let you know. I recommend that everybody go to the LandServer webpage and see if there is any additional data missing that could be useful.
- Judy: Many lands belong to land trusts, and many people do not live where they own.
Craig: We haven't addressed absentee owners.
Sally: We could target this audience with mailings re existing courses. Another suggestion: put out an article in the AARP newsletter.

Round Robin Announcements:

- The Chesapeake Bay Urban Tree Canopy Summit will take place October 14th and 15th at the Maritime Institute Olympic in Linthicum, MD. The invitation list is being put

together with input from steering committee. More details will be sent out later this week. The first day of the summit will be more of a presentation format, and the second day will be more of an interactive work session towards generating our management strategy for the UTC goal.

- Maryland:
 - The Lawn to Woodlands pilot that started this spring will expand with more plantings next spring.
 - MD is working on a forest buffer assessment to be ready in the next couple of weeks to see how close we are to 70% goal.
 - There are several grants in the works to target buffers in hydrologically active areas. Other grants will be used to plant in abandoned mine lands and create early succession habitat for certain species.
- Virginia:
 - VA has a couple of big meetings coming up. Several partner agencies are meeting together with Russ Baxter next Wednesday with all of the players in VA.
 - On September 18th, VA will have a riparian forest buffer meeting with FSA and NRCS to bolster the riparian buffer initiative in the state.
- Pennsylvania:
 - PA is working with several partners to preserve riparian areas (minimum of 100 feet).
 - PA is working on other pilot projects and has engaged with 117 municipalities – most of which are in the southeastern part of state. PA plans to engage with the central corridor of the state.
- All of the Chesapeake Watershed Bay states have Task Force meetings underway.
- The Chesapeake Watershed Forum will take place in Shepherdstown, WV on September 25th – 26th.
- Event: Forest Stewardship in conjunction with Baltimore Wilderness in Laurel, MD, on Sept 22nd.
- The Field Foresters Smith Island trip sponsored by FWG will take place on Oct. 28th – 30th.
- Market-based Approaches in the Chesapeake workshop is on October 29th and 30th in Beltsville.
- November 18th – 20th Agriculture Forum run by NFWF in Rocky Gap MD. It is not open to everyone, but you can probably get an invitation if you're interested.
- The next FWG face-to-face meeting will be in December. The workgroup will be focused on its 2 management strategies during this 2-day meeting on December 3rd and 4th.