



Minutes
Chesapeake Bay Forestry Workgroup (FWG)

April 4, 2018 10AM – 3:00 PM
Blandy Farm Virginia
Conference Line: 888-844-9904, Code: 6802405#
Adobe Connect:
<https://epawebconferencing.acms.com/fwg>

Meeting Attendees

Rebecca Hanmer, *Chair*
Sally Claggett, USFS, *Coordinator*
Katherine Wares, CRC, *Staff*
Laurel Abowd, CRC
Emily Freeman, CRC
Anne Hairston-Strang, MD DNR
Ed Zimmer, VA NRCS
Matt Poirot, VA DOF
Judy Okay, VA DOF
Laura Johnson, VA DOF
Tracey Coulter, VA DOF
Teddi Stark, PA DCNR
Matt Keefer, PA DCNR
Peter Hoagland, PA NRCS
Luke Cole, DC DOEE
Cassandra Davis, NYS DEC
Frank Rogers, WV DOF
Herb Peddicord, Cacapon Institute
Holly May, ACB
Jenny McGarvey, ACB
Craig Highfield, ACB
Barry Frantz, NRCS
Skip Hyberg, FSA
Kathy Boomer, TNC
Julie Mawhorter, USFS

SRS Introduction

Rebecca and Sally will be presenting Riparian Forest Buffer Outcome progress to the Management Board on May 10th as part of the Strategy Review System (SRS). There are three documents that need to be completed: the Logic Table, the Outcome Summary/Questionnaire, and the PowerPoint Presentation. There will be a practice presentation at the April 24th STAR meeting and a week after that the final documents are due to the Management Board and SRS team.

Questions and Comments

- Rebecca asked the group about generic management issues they've had with riparian forest buffers that could be taken to the Management Board. Management Board on May 10th
 - There is a lag in reporting. It took time to get the framework and programs together and now the work is being done, but a lot of the progress won't be seen until 2019.
 - There is a need for CREP reenrollment numbers from FSA.
 - It was not communicated in the beginning of the process verification needed to be done or else buffers would be taken out of NEIEN after 10 years. The Watershed Technical workgroup decided on the 10 year life span rule unless verification or site inspection. Many states do site inspection every 15 years at re-enrollment time. A buffer does not need to be re-enrolled to be counted in the model if it is verified. There is a difference between land-use and BMPs. Forest Buffers are a BMP, but forests are a land use. When does this change occur and what is the role of high resolution in verifying that buffers are still there? A longer lifetime of buffers in NEIEN and extension of the 10 year rule could be an ask of the Management Board.

State RFB Updates for SRS

Maryland

Restoration, conservation, outreach, and leadership are the major management approaches for Maryland's Stream ReLeaf Program. For Restoration, there are strong CREP incentives and buffers are competitive in grants so CREP has put a lot of RFB on the ground. The goal is to have more consistent funding and program administration, better maintenance support, better messaging that RFB are part of restoring the Bay landscape, and a smaller similar non CREP program that is more flexible and less restrictive for agriculture and non-agriculture lands. For Conservation, there is a strong CREP easement program; 35% of non re enrollments are because they are in the easement program. Local state ordinances like FCA have also worked well. The goal is to have continue easement funding and to like RFBs to sustainable whole farm landscape preservation. For Outreach, there have been good interagency CREP trainings, webinars, and buffer forums. The goal is to have technical assistance for watershed design in whole farm planning. For Leadership, the goal is to develop concentrated flow, to coordinate and find a solution to the farm bill cap, and encourage whole farm conservation in WIPs.

West Virginia

CREP is the main program in West Virginia, but it is not working. The state is going back to the "service forester" concept; there are no longer "CREP foresters". 50% of RFBs are not able to re-enroll which won't change until maintenance and staffing consistency issues are resolved. CP29 is not available in West Virginia. There is an issue with farmers open to the idea of letting trees grow, but not to the idea of planting trees. The state is supposed to do 86,000 ft. of plantings each year; in 2016 there were 45,000 ft. and in 2017 there were 15,000. A CREP addendum just got approved. The \$1million grant for West Virginia might not happen. There is a need to listen to NRCS staff on CREP funding. Also, the \$20million in DC could be used for an environmental assessment for more CREP acres in West Virginia, but it is not being used. Federal leadership straight to local leaders could be more effective.

Virginia

There is a good relationship with FSA and NRCS, but consistent funding is an issue; VA DCR cannot match funds. There is a need for consistent technical assistance; there is a lot of turn over due to

temporary positions so Virginia needs permanent technical assistance positions. Buffers are a low priority for agriculture BMPs; educating for farmers could be a possible solution. There is a reporting issue, the state is at 95% BMP implementation. Non-CREP options like VA trees for clean water and HOAs are helpful we're using other programs. Working with LGAC to reach local governments in non-tidal areas and whole farm planning could help.

New York

The goal is to get rid of the back log of planting plans. The ability for Soil Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) to be CREP technical service providers (TSP) would be helpful. NRCS has limited staffing so other people should be allowed to be TSP. Skip Hyberg said Barry, Misty, and states can discuss this further.

Pennsylvania

500 acres/year is the current capacity. In 2017 441 CREP acres were done so it was nearly at capacity. There is miscommunication between FSA on acres, money, and technical assistance. Pennsylvania needs consistent coordination and support from federal agencies to state agency offices and a better and faster process for integrating new CREP partners. NRCS also has capacity issues and a lot of priorities so the whole farm approach is what's best, but you need interested and willing landowners, so good coordination and communication are needed. Pennsylvania FWG have suggested changing the process to state/nonfederal partners doing the work, and then NRCS would verify it. This would speed up the process, but would require a lot of trust between agencies which takes time and would need a permanent position. Pennsylvania has used PENNVEST as a revolving loan for the non CREP options. The state's stormwater group is looking at RFBs on turf for reducing loads. The forestry group has been working with Matt Johnson and Emily Trentacoste to run scenarios. This analysis and data support helps to communicate and demonstrate RFBs as a major load reduction practice/solution in the WIPs. An ask is to keep supporting the work and support of Matt and Emily. The state farm bureau is involved in the WIPs and are starting to have a good communication about RFBs. They are working with bankers and large farm producers to talk about private capitals for bmps. Farmers utilize consultants which could be of assistance.

Delaware

Tax ditches are the major issue in Delaware. The state received the \$1million incentive and amended their CREP agreement, but have not had much luck using the money. They are struggling to match the funds.

Questions and Comments

- FSA believes that buffers should be integrated, but are not the end all be all. They need assistance with showing that re-enrollment is occurring to keep funding for it.
- Kathy Boomer said there is a connection between RFB and riparian wetland buffers. We need to ensure these areas are prioritized and we need a comprehensive consistent framework for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and state datasets.

SRS Wrap Up

List of State Gaps, Needs, and Asks:

1. Funding consistency of programs

2. Non-CREP options
3. More staff capacity
4. More technical assistance positions
5. SWCD to be trained as TSP for CREP
6. Better support for maintenance
7. Better linkages between RFBs and farm preservation
8. More training for whole farm conservation and planning
9. Environmental Assessment for expanded CREP acres
10. Consistent collaboration and support from federal agencies and CREP partners
11. Better understanding of partner priorities and where RFBs fit
12. Continued CBP assistance in WIP planning through scenarios (Emily and Matt)
13. Partnering with organizations like the Farm Bureau and farmer consultants to support RFBs
14. RPAs extended to non-tidal areas
15. Team approach to landowner engagement
16. Better communication and education
17. Faster enrollment process and framework
18. Understanding of lag in RFB results
19. Change in RFB 10 year lifespan

Refined Factors for RFBs:

1. Staff Capacity
 - Technical assistance
 - Education
 - Funding for more staff and resources
2. CREP Eligibility
 - More flexibility
 - Non-CREP awareness
3. Communication and Outreach Messaging
 - Non-CREP
4. Funding and Financial
 - Consistency and more funding
5. Government Agency Engagement
 - Leadership (EPA 319 funding RFB)
 - Consistency

Action: Members should let Sally and Katherine know of anyone who should be invited to the SRS Management Board meeting.

Action: Katherine will send draft documents to the workgroup on April 24th

Round Robin

US Forest Service: The Chesapeake Bay Program was fully funded for FY18. Forest Service Chesapeake Bay funding is down. NRCS has a new administration.

Pennsylvania: The Community Forestry Conference is May 22nd to 24th in Pittsburg. They are trying to include diversity into urban tree canopy work. Chesapeake Bay Foundation has decided on planting

10million trees in Pennsylvania by 2025 with 60% in riparian areas. April 24th is the kick off and 10,000 trees will be planted this spring.

Virginia: Penn State is doing a tour of sites on May 1st, Matt Poirot will send details. They have allocated all the funds for Trees for Clean Water. Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay is working with the UMD finance center and NFWF on financing urban tree canopy projects in order to help meet the urban tree canopy outcome and goals.

West Virginia: The TELE Workshop is August 1 and 2nd