

Chesapeake Bay Program Forestry Workgroup (FWG) Conference Call

August 6th, 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
Herb Peddicord, WV DOF
Craig Highfield, Alliance for the Bay
Sloane Crawford, NY DEC
Jenny McGarvey, Alliance for the Bay
Mike Valenti, DE Forest Service
Eric Sprague, Alliance for the Bay
Tanner Haid, Cacapon Institute
Sara Nicholas, TNC

CBPO Forestry Updates:

Sally shared a couple of Chesapeake Bay Program Office (CBPO) forestry-related updates with the group:

- The Chesapeake Bay Agreement was signed on June 16th in Annapolis. This is the first comprehensive restoration Agreement signed by the headwater states.
 - The Agreement includes a forest buffer outcome and tree canopy outcome. For a link to the Agreement document:
http://www.chesapeakebay.net/documents/FINAL_Ches_Bay_Watershed_Agreement.withsignatures-Hires.pdf
- The 2014 Riparian Buffer Initiative kicked off this spring. On June 19th, the Chesapeake Riparian Forest Buffer Initiative Leadership Summit took place. The Farm Services Agency and EPA have helped to fund the Initiative. With this funding, the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay was hired to coordinate. States will develop Draft Plans by October 31 for review by a Steering Committee.
 - Eric Sprague remarked that USDA federal leadership has been very supportive of these efforts. In addition, state involvement will be critical. FWG state representatives should participate in Task Forces. Representatives from other fields (e.g. agriculture, water quality) should participate as well.
- FSA is providing an extra \$5 million for riparian buffer implementation. It is not known yet how this money will be distributed.
- The Verification Guidance for Forestry BMPs was submitted in May. Changes were made in July in response to comments received. These changes are highlighted in yellow on the document found at the following link:

http://www.chesapeakebay.net/channel_files/21948/fwg_verification_guidance-july_2014_with_highlights.doc

- Expert Panels are currently reviewing and updating practices and nutrient and sediment reduction credits that go into the model.
 - FWG members have been having conversations with other Water Quality GIT Workgroups over specific issues, such as the definition of a narrow buffer. One change that was made was that streams that have both sides forested receive more credit.
 - The full Expert Panel Report will be posted online in the near future.
 - The Urban Tree Canopy Expert Panel has not met for a year.
 - STAC had a workshop in March on urban land use. A group of urban scientists in the audience were supportive of the Expert Panel's work.
 - In the next version of the model, urban tree canopy may become its own land use category. The Panel will need to decide on a loading rate for urban tree canopy by the end of the year.

Management Strategies

The 2014 Bay Agreement brought the need for the Forestry Workgroup to develop Management Strategies for riparian buffers and urban tree canopy. Sally discussed the work needed, draft timeline and some specific efforts to get to the finish.

Each management strategy will have Key Elements components that are outlined in a draft document at the following link:

- http://www.chesapeakebay.net/channel_files/21948/management_strategies_elements_v_7-22-14_final_draft.docx

One component of the management strategy is to identify jurisdictions and agencies participating in the strategy. Bay Program staff are working on compiling a jurisdiction participation document. A draft version of this document can be found at the following link:

- http://www.chesapeakebay.net/channel_files/21948/juris_participation_all_7-23-14_v2.docx

Sally noted states have one more month to correct or fill in information on the Jurisdiction Participation document.

Management Strategy Timeline:

- A draft timeline can be found at the following link:
http://www.chesapeakebay.net/channel_files/21948/timeline_ms_draft_7-15-14.pub
- Management strategy drafts will be completed by December.
- In March, drafts will be open to the public for comments. The public comment period will last 30 days.
- The final drafts will be due in May before the Executive Council meeting.

- Throughout this process, we will also have to complete dashboards that will be displayed on Chesapeake Stat. Dashboard examples can be found at the following link: http://www.chesapeakebay.net/channel_files/21948/ms_dashboard.pdf
- Management Strategies will be updated every 2 years.
- Funding allocation will most likely depend on these management strategies.

Healthy towns/ healthy Bay Project - expanding tree canopy in the Chesapeake:

- There is a proposal to do a 2-day tree canopy summit in October. In addition to the FWG, Maryland and the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay will be involved. There is more to come, but the first day will be focused on background and the second day will be focused on management strategies.

Announcements:

- MD:
 - Steve Koehn left DNR as Director of MD Forest Service to join the US Forest office in Washington, D.C.
- Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay:
 - The Alliance received over 30 nominations for the Forest Champion contest. Winners will be chosen this week.
 - Is working with the Stroud Water Research Center on project proposals in PA.
 - Hired a new staff person (Jenny McArvey) to join the Forest Team.
- The Forest Service is working with other federal agencies (NPS, FWS, and BLM) on a Rivers of the Chesapeake Collaborative Landscape proposal for federal land conservation funding. \$55 million dollars is being proposed to be able to protect certain parcels within 5 focus areas in the watershed.
- PA:
 - Christian Wolf replaced Pat Buckley, who retired earlier this year.
 - DCNR has been meeting with DEP. DCNR plans to meet with other bureaus to talk about DCNR's role as well as involvement within the Goal Implementation Teams.
- WV:
 - The Tributary Team has decided to fund another Riparian Forester position to work with CREP.
 - 10 Communitree projects are scheduled for this upcoming fall.
 - WV is pleased that the Governor Earl Ray Tomblin signed the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement earlier this summer.

The next FWG meeting will be in-person on September 3rd.