

Chesapeake Bay Program Forestry Workgroup (FWG) Conference Call

February 5th, 2014

9 AM – 10:30 AM

Participants: Rebecca Hanmer, Sally Claggett, Julie Mawhorter, Tuana Phillips, Tracey Coulter, Tim Culbreth, Kyle Hoyd, Lou Etgen, Susan Marquart, Gary Speiran, Anne Hairston-Strang, Stephanie Eisenbise, Marcia Fox

Action Item:

- Forestry Workgroup members and interested parties have a week to review and send comments on the *Recommendations of the Expert Panel to Reassess Removal Rates for Riparian Forest and Grass Buffers Best Management Practices* report.

Announcements:

- Rebecca Hanmer congratulated Sally Claggett and others on the Forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs) Verification Guidance document. The final draft of the document is available at:
 - http://www.chesapeakebay.net/channel_files/21464/fwg_verification_guidance-jan_31_2014.pdf
- Rebecca also congratulated Maryland DNR on their new “Lawn to Woodland” program. For more information:
 - http://www.dnr.maryland.gov/forests/pdfs/50086101_Lawn_to_Woodland_1-10-13.pdf
 - <http://arborday.org/partnerships/maryland/>
- The final draft of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement is available for public comment through March 17th. For a link to the Agreement:
 - http://www.chesapeakebay.net/documents/Draft_Watershed_Agreement_Public_Format_1-28-14_FINAL.pdf
- The Chesapeake Working Lands Conservation Strategy Draft is posted for public comment until February 14th (all comments must be sent to jmawhorter@fs.fed.us). For a link to the draft:
 - <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/documents/ChesapeakeWorkingLandsConservationStrategy.pdf>
- Congratulations to Julie Mawhorter, who will provide federal oversight of the Urban and Community Forestry programs in MD, PA, NJ, WV, DC, and DE..
- The FWG is waiting to hear more about the Farm Bill and what funds will be included in the bill.
- Sally Claggett announced that will be in touch with those who report on forest conservation and urban tree canopy progress annual data. In addition, Sally reminded the

FWG to anticipate the transition in the coming year to the new Bay Agreement i.e., tracking (e.g., report on acres of urban tree canopy expansion) and development of Management Strategies for riparian forest buffers, forest conservation, and urban tree canopy expansion.

- Lou Etgen shared that Governor Martin O'Malley from Maryland has called for an urban tree canopy roundtable.
- Anne Hairston-Strang announced that Maryland DNR has received an urban tree cover layer through work with the University of Maryland.

Recommendations of the Expert Panel to Reassess Removal Rates for Riparian Forest and Grass Buffers Best Management Practices (Draft)

Sally Claggett reviewed the draft document detailing the recommendations of the expert panel to reassess removal rates for riparian forest and grass buffers BMPs. The expert panel was convened with some help from Tetra Tech. Currently, there are about 10 active BMPs getting the same type of review.

- For a link to the document:
 - http://www.chesapeakebay.net/channel_files/21464/draft_riparian_bmp_panel_report_draft_revised_12-15-13.docx
- For a link to the summary document:
 - http://www.chesapeakebay.net/channel_files/21464/summary_of_recommendations--_rfb_expert_panel.docx
- Sally recognized and thanked Expert Panel members, including some on the FWG: Gary Speiran, Judy Okay, Anne Hairston-Strang.
- In Summary:
 - Sally asked the FWG for their approval of the report. Once it is approved by the FWG, the report will be sent to the Agriculture and Watershed Technical Workgroups before it is sent out to the Water Quality Goal Implementation Team for final approval.
 - Overall, the panel concluded that there isn't enough data to comprehensively change what is now in the model for this BMP.
 - The Expert panel recommended an adjustment for an additional 4% nitrogen reduction efficiency for riparian forest buffers that are established on both sides of the stream.
 - Sally noted that Section 4 of the document, *Review of the Available Science*, is particularly important. This section addresses the following "hot topics:"
 - A. Buffer width
 - B. Loading rates and treatment of upslope acreage (spatial relations)
 - C. Hydrologic flow paths
 - D. In-stream processing
 - E. Practice longevity
 - F. Lag time
 - G. Grass interface zone as part of riparian buffer
 - H. Grass buffers.
 - Section 5 includes a chart of recommended credits and rates.

- Questions/Discussion Points:
 - Is reenrollment available for grass buffers?
 - Yes. FSA notifies contract holders when their contracts are about to expire, regardless of whether they have forest or grass buffers.
 - Verification for grass buffers is not the same as verification for forest buffers. Practices are grouped into different categories, such as structural practice (e.g., grass buffer and manure shed), or management of agricultural practices.
 - As stated in the Verification Guidance document, forest buffer verification follows the agriculture protocol under NRCS. In addition, however, the FWG is interested in tracking the width of forest buffers, as well as the net gain. Verification will ensure that forest buffers are well established and that there is no channelized flow cutting through the buffers.
 - Sally noted that all of these things apply to grass buffers, but is uncertain whether they are included in the verification guidance for grass buffers.

Other announcements:

- Sally announced that there is a second expert panel currently examining extended urban tree canopy BMP. A workshop on Thursday, February 13th in Baltimore will address various land use categories, and one session will be specifically dedicated to urban tree canopy efficiency and loading rate. Send Sally an email (sclaggett@fs.fed.us) if you are interested in listening in to the workshop.