



Forestry Workgroup Meeting Conference Call
February 5, 2020
9am-11am

Conference Line: 929-205-6099 **Meeting ID:** 200-260-643
URL: <https://zoom.us/j/200260643>

Attendees:

Nora Jackson, CRC, *Staffer*
Katherine Brownson, USFS
Matt Keefer, PA DCNR
Patti Webb, DE DNREC
Lara Johnson, VA DOF
Anne Hairston-Strang, MD DNR
Matt Poirot, VA DOF
Todd Carnell, WV DOF
Don VanHassent

Frank Rodgers, CI
Joe Winters, MD DNR
William Pownell, WV DOF
Teddi Stark, PA DCNR
Peter Hoagland, PA DCNR
Judy Okay, VA DOF
Julie Mawhorter, USFS

Chesapeake Forest Restoration Strategy

Katie Brownson

Katie provided an overview of work updating the Chesapeake Forest Restoration Strategy from 2012. The Strategy was introduced at the September Forestry Workgroup meeting. Focus of the discussion was on identifying priority actions, shared stewardship, and structural changes including reorganizing and adding sections on restoration of existing forests and climate change. The complete draft should be ready for content review at the end of the month, and shared stewardship agreement to be signed by bay state foresters and the USFS in early summer. The draft strategic actions, which will be the foundation for the stewardship agreement, were presented for review and discussion, they can be viewed [here](#).

Questions and Comments- Draft Strategic Actions

- Does the restoration “supply chain” in the actions referring to tree stock? *In part, yes*
 - Anne commented that a lot of states are looking for larger stock and we should include scaling up programs for locally grown stock. Scaling up programs and restoration is one of the things that affect feasibility. Agreed to add this note to the overarching actions, “Expand the restoration workforce and supply chain to support high-quality and sustainable restoration projects”
- For the action related to aggregating smaller plots of private forestlands to attract private finance:
 - Greg will share the findings from the forest retention project with the group.
 - Are we specifically calling out the bay tracking mechanisms as a way to aggregate and quantify benefits of forest restoration? *Not currently, but it should be included.* Anne

explained that we have all this data and capability, and we should leverage the infrastructure we already have for modeling water quality benefits. Rebecca responded saying that improving our verification and reporting is included in our workplan and should be included in the strategy.

- *We added an action to this effect: “Assess the potential to use existing Chesapeake Bay Program infrastructure and reporting systems to support aggregating restoration projects for private investment”*
- Judy Okay commented that online tools should be included in the strategy, management, sustainability, climate change. Katie said this can be added to the outreach and education section.
 - *We added an action: “Compile available online tools for education and implementation tracking into a centralized repository.”*
- Greg Evans talked about the issues small forest owners are having with roads and bridges strong enough to haul timber and suggested working with the Department of Transportation.
 - *We added an action: “Remove barriers for bringing timber to market where possible, for example, by working with transportation departments to improve road systems.”*
- Is prescribed fire included? *As a strategy, not an action.* Anne says the Nature Conservancy wants to highlight prescribed fire to restore ecology. Since it doesn't fit in the current sections, it could be added under a new heading for enabling conditions for management activities.
 - *We added an action and a sub-action:*
 - *Action:* Improve enabling conditions for conducting forest restoration and management activities on private forestlands.
 - *Sub-action:* Implement any needed processes to facilitate prescribed burns on private lands.
- Peter Hoagland from PA NRCS suggested that other state NRCS staff review the strategy as well since he represents PA specifically.
- Comments to Katie by **Wednesday, February 12.**

2020 Forestry Workgroup's Workplan

Rebecca Hanmer

View the workplan [here](#), it includes big picture work items for 2020, events calendar, and a tentative FWG meeting schedule. There is potential for an in-person meeting in April in Lexington, VA (during the Environment Virginia Symposium). Teddi Stark commented on the buffer team presentation to the PSC, asking for a new bay buffer program. Sec. Grumbles asked for a follow up call and they are hoping to have continuing discussions.

- Greg Evans is looking for volunteers to join the buffer action team and their upcoming work with the PSC.
- Financing Forests February Webinar Mini-Series was completed and you can watch the recordings [here](#).

Round robin updates

- **Maryland-** Working with MDE on temperature TMDL work and trying to wrap up forest action plan draft. CREP trainings on February 20 and 24. Conducting a feasibility study in western MD

looking into expanding access to markets. They also received a grant from the Economic Development Authority to do an economic adjustment strategy after seeing the decline in the forest industry. One topic in the strategy that may be relevant to FWG members is identifying forest market opportunities for MD, our resources, and local and international markets. Another element of the work is to take forestry analysis data and quantify wood resource for potential business interests, working with the Salisbury GIS lab.

- **Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay** is getting ready to plant over 200 acres of trees through a partnership with MD Forest Service, and kicking off a lawn conversion program in PA, setting up 3 forest banks and one nutrient bank in MD. Woodland stewardship network is expanding in PA and MD. Kicking off a pilot for Chesapeake Tree Steward program in March.
- **West Virginia-** Welcome Todd to the FWG! Cacapon Institute is considering a NFWF proposal for some dirt and gravel road improvements to reconnect aquatic species, building on previous culvert assessment work.
- **Pennsylvania-** New tree vitalize program supervisor will be working on urban and community forestry. Western PA Conservancy is looking for a new regional riparian buffer specialist, email Teddi Stark, c-tstark@pa.gov. PA Buffer Summit coming up on March 11-12, lots of great presentations and relevant to folks outside of PA as well.
- **PA NRCS-** National practice standards were updated for NRCS. Nationwide, they began transitioning planning processes into CART (Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool), looking at resource concerns and streamlining conditions. **Action item: Send updated national practices standards.** Anne asked about using CART, wondering if it can be used to identify treatment trains along a flow path, or pair complementary resources? Peter said since it was only released a week ago, and based on nationwide layers, it's not available yet but it should have that capability in the future. There is an opportunity to use CART in the Bay region with specific data layers, looking into how to integrate CART and the new land use/flow path data being developed in the watershed. **Action item: This should be included as a work item for the FWG.**
- **Delaware-** Recently completed training with FSA and NRCS, pulling together all the changes on the CREP program. DE is in a unique situation with a lot of staff retiring, so they are trying to fill a lot of positions in FSA and NRCS.
- **New York-** Looking into new ways to partner and conduct outreach, and have a planting coming up.
- **Virginia-** Will be submitting applications for two sites for sentinel landscapes, sponsored by DoD DOI and USDA. It's like the REPI program but addresses much broader, landscape scale issues like dark skies for air training, and it's being used to reduce the rate of forest conversion. DoD is interested in resilient lands, dark skies, and private incentives, which connect well with the updated FRS and private capital investment. VA DOF recently hired a middle James River Buffer coordinator and a Bay watershed specialist utilizing residual funding from the FSA forest grant, a water quality improvement fund.