



Forestry Workgroup Meeting Minutes

October 7, 2020

9am-11am

This meeting will be recorded for internal use to assure the accuracy of meeting notes

Attendees:

Sally Claggett, USFS, *Coordinator*
Nora Jackson, CRC, *Staffer*
Amber Ellis, James River Association
Todd Carnell, WV DOF
Lydia Brinkley, USC
Peter Hoagland, NRCS
Anne Hairston-Strang, MD DNR
Cassie Davis, NY DEC
Jeremy McGill, WV DOF

Jenny McGarvey, Alliance
Julie Mawhorter, USFS
Frank Rodgers, CI
Matt Keefer, PA DCNR
Matt Poirot, VA DOF
Judy Okay, VA DOF
Teddi Stark, PA DCNR
Patti Webb, DE DNREC
Sherry Witt, GDIT

BMP Credit Duration

Sally Claggett, USFS

Sally reviewed current practice and credit life for forestry BMPs, the FWG will be proposing a new time period for practice life using the land use change analysis, and 'backout' which looks at land use and practices to make sure they are aligned. Specific BMPs forest buffers, riparian and urban, because of the upland benefit that comes with this practice. Continue to track it in NEIN so states continue to receive upland benefit and land use change credit. Originally proposed 70-year duration, set at 40 years currently by the Watershed Technical Workgroup. Will return with a proposal for the FWG before submitting it to the verification group for approval.

Questions and Comments

- Anne: What are the implications of changing the practice life? We know credit life has to be verified to stay in the model, but what happens with the practice life?
 - Used for cost/benefit analysis, looking at how long the investment is expected to last.
 - Anne supports 70-year practice life.
- Some practices have gone to 'indefinite', where they regenerate naturally. There will be a short literature review on this topic.
 - Judy: It's only going to get better with seedlings dropping, increased density, and more mature trees, unless there's a natural disaster.
 - Anne: There are potential issues with invasive species and requiring some level of intervention and maintenance when the trees start maturing.
 - Sally: Agree, maintenance or management is separate from practice life. It's something that should be counted for any practice.

- Credit life has immediate repercussions for verification. Current credit length for riparian forest buffers is 10 years, and we are proposing a 15-year period for riparian forest buffers. Urban forest buffers already have a 15-year credit length.
- Rebecca: They made the shift because combination buffers include fences which don't last that long. Plan to discuss this rule with BMP ad hoc group and include the FWG future decision making.
- Rebecca: Can you distinguish urban forests and tree plantings, looking at understory using land use imagery?
 - Understory is not detected with high res imagery, so it's still a ten-year practice.
- Lydia: Credit life expiration serves as a time for a site review, which gets tech out onto the site. Is this the implication at the end of expiration?
 - Yes, and if it isn't verified it comes out of CAST.
- Looking for feedback on practice and credit life for riparian and urban forest buffers.
- Rebecca: The watershed technical workgroup is starting to discuss backout, which looks at land use instead of BMP credit life but there's confusion on how this would work. How to make the transition from credit duration to land use analysis is very important for the FWG, we need to get involved early. Ask Jeff Sweeney to talk to us about backout, upland riparian credit, and net credit. We should have a role in the discussion of backout.
- Sally proposed keeping the 15-year credit life for urban buffers which also provides justification to adjust ag buffer credit life to 15 years.

Upper and Middle James Riparian Consortium

Amber Ellis, James River Association

Amber talked about the collaborative work going on to increase buffers in James River watershed. JRA serves as the convener for the consortium, which is made up of multiple funding sources and partners. They take a holistic approach to buffers and include fencing, streambank stabilization, wildlife habitat and protection, helping to fill the gaps in federal programs, building awareness, prioritizing parcels for restoration and analyzing who are those priority parcels, what types of properties are they, and what programs would work best in those locations. Researching the best methods of planting and maintenance for the specific sites, building capacity for partner organizations. They have developed multiple tools to help view buffer progress, and a streamside program report to help match programs best suited for properties.

Questions and Comments:

- Sally: How successful have you been with on the ground efforts filling the gaps with other programs?
 - Mostly getting folks that don't fit the typical traditional programs. 18 projects already planned for next spring, several going in this fall. If the landowner is more suitable for CREP, we send them there, only a small percentage goes to other programs. This is not competitive, and we don't use incentives, try to use funds more strategically. Another untapped group is golf courses and country clubs. They have a lot of potential acreage for buffers. What programs are out there for those types of properties?
- Jenny: In districts with SL-6 and FR-3 programs, they are almost exclusively working with landowners through that program and not through CREP. Positive feedback on the programs, process is not confusing/convoluted.

- Judy: Are you putting trees into the SL-6 that were installed or just the fencing side of that program?
 - Jenny: Primarily newly installed FR3 and SL6 practices, but that's for the Shenandoah Valley.
- Sally: You are going back to plant trees, even if it's not 35 feet in width?
 - Jenny: It has to be a minimum of 35 ft. If not, they have to move it.
 - Amber: Also require a minimum 35 ft width, oftentimes the fence isn't very old so there isn't much moving.
- Sally: Would like to find out the number of projects narrower than 35 ft.

Focusing on the Next Two Years: Assessing our Efforts, Gaps & Recommended Actions

Input via menti to create a new workplan for the next 2 years. Draft will be sent to workgroup before November meeting.

- Rebecca: Chicken and egg question- does funding cause better TA, networking and implementation, or does better networking attract more funding?
- Follow up to ask for volunteers for actions, help fill out the metrics looking at time, geographic range (doesn't have to be by state), responsible party. Need MB input on timeline for actions. Focus will be getting the actions right and getting point people/thought leaders for actions in their state.

Round Robin

CBP: Virtual signing of shared stewardship MOU on October 8. (share link?)

WV: Executed the contract for a WV Riparian forester, job position was posted to Chesapeake network.

Adjourn