



## Forestry Workgroup April Meeting

April 9th, 2026

9:00am - 11:00am

[Visit the meeting webpage for meeting materials and additional information.](#)

### Purpose:

- Learn about a recent ICPRB effort to prioritize land for protection
- Share updates about Management Strategy planning for the 2025 Watershed Agreement
- Explore data that could be used to set a baseline for the new forest conservation target

## Minutes

### I. Welcome and Introductions, announcements

Lead: Anne Hairston-Strang (MD Forest Service, FWG Co-Chair)

#### Decisions [required]:

1. Postponement of soliciting nominations for new at-large members until July, when the updated CBP governance will be finalized. Current at-large members will remain in place until then.

#### Actions [required]:

1. Signatories should review their current membership (listed in a dropdown on the right side of our [Forestry Workgroup page](#)) and let Katie and Julia know if there are any updates

#### Discussion Notes [optional]:

- Ken Hyer (USGS), the new Healthy Landscapes co-chair, introduced himself. He has a background in understanding how the landscape and watershed impacts downstream aquatic conditions; whether that be water quality, habitat, or the living resources that depend on all of that. As a chair, he sees his role as a facilitator, as supporters helping to ensure the work is on track and celebrate success. He is very excited to work with the Forestry Workgroup.
- The June Forestry Workgroup meeting will be held in person in Goochland County, VA. The meeting will be in the morning, with an afternoon session visiting a state lands property, a working cattle farm owned by the department of corrections. They have been managing issues on the property such as erosion and stream impairment, and they have a unique project happening that we will be able to see. More details to come.
- The May Forestry meeting is cancelled in lieu of the Healthy Landscapes meeting on May 11th. More details to come.

## **II. Land Prioritization for Drinking Water Protection**

Lead: Renee Thompson and Megan McClaugherty (ICPRB)

### **Decisions [required]:**

1. N/A

### **Actions [required]:**

1. N/A

### **Discussion Notes [optional]:**

- Robbie Coville: I wonder how this work compares in your mind to the forests to faucets tool; this seems like a more localized version to our watershed region. I also wondered if you could elaborate on the methods? I also wonder if there is a scientific basis for Karst having a lower weight in the analysis, or if it was more of a practical decision?
  - Renee Thompson: There are a couple of datasets that we have been asked about that have not yet been overlaid, it would behoove us to do this so we could see how they align. I think that you are right in that we are trying to make our data applicable at a local scale. I could get back to you about the forest to faucets and how they compare, we do use in most cases nationally available data, it is hard to use local data because it could only be available for a small portion of the study area. For the karst, it was a matter of practicality that the karst was drowning out all the other metrics. I would have to go back to our methods, that was a decision made in 2020, which predates both Megan and myself, but as I understand it it was a practical basis for data visualization and understanding.
- Dan Coy: Is this mapping publically available?
  - Renee Thompson: We hope to have the viewer up by September so you can interact with the data. For now, on [the website](#) you can look at the static maps and reports or request the full data set from us.
- Rob Schnabel: I am curious if the report talks about wetlands and wetland issues with the recent court cases kind of undercutting protection for isolated wetlands and not having a surface water connection to streams. I wonder if there is an opportunity for an education component, as most of the Bay states have their own wetland protection laws except for West Virginia, who have had a huge demand from bottling plants to take groundwater. Is wetlands a part of this process, even if it is not close to a stream or floodplain area?
  - Renee Thompson: There is potential to add wetlands to our base opportunity area. I think we inherently captured a little bit of this in the forest floodplain metric which we use as a proxy for buffered areas or areas adjacent to streams and low-lying areas. So it would be interesting to take the wetland underlying land cover and overlay it with that particular floodplain metric. So, we have indirectly but not directly taken wetlands into account. I will bring that back to the team, thank you.

## **III. Update on Management Strategy development**

Lead: Katie Brownson (USFS, FWG Coordinator)

### **Decisions [required]:**

1. N/A

### **Actions [required]:**

1. State partners are asked to draft a snapshot of their signatory programs, which highlights their major programs and FY25 appropriations amount. They have also been asked to draft an appendix of signatory statutory authorities that drive outcome attainment. The Forestry Workgroup will be discussing these partner contributions in the July 1st meeting.

**Discussion Notes [optional]:**

- Katie discussed Updates to Management Strategy Development: The proposed structure for Management Strategies will shift from the previous 10-year model to six-year high-level management strategies supported by three-year detailed work plans. These strategies will be organized into a comprehensive strategic plan, featuring four "goal-level" chapters with "outcome-level" subchapters. The deadline for Management Strategies to be complete is the summer of 2027, with the draft template complete by October 2026. State partners are asked to draft a snapshot of their signatory programs, which highlights their major programs and FY25 appropriations amount. They have also been asked to draft an appendix of signatory statutory authorities that drive outcome attainment. The Forestry Workgroup will be discussing these partner contributions in the July 1st meeting.

**IV. Exploring Data for Establishing the Forest Conservation Target Baseline**

Leads: Sophie Waterman (USGS), Cotton Randall (USFS), Katie Brownson (USFS)

**Decisions [required]:**

2. N/A

**Actions [required]:**

2. N/A

**Discussion Notes [optional]:**

- Rob Schnabel: Great presentation Sophie! Question; Some land protection programs will not necessarily protect existing forest on them. I'm thinking MD's MALPF Agriculture Preservation Program. Is there data available listing forest acres on these types of protected lands where forest acres can be lost? Vulnerable forest acres on protected lands?
  - o Sophie Waterman: That is a great question! I'll look into it, an analysis like this could probably be done. But at the moment I don't have those numbers. Thanks!
- Katie Brownson: I think it is worth thinking about if and how we can track management and stewardship activities at the watershed scale. I think looking at data sources that are national or cover our entire region will probably be the way to go. It seems like there could be opportunities to leverage some of this forest stewardship program data to get some indicator of how much sustainable forestry management is happening across the watershed if we think that would be a helpful addition to our suite of indicators and metrics that we would be tracking as we look at our forest conservation target.
- Anne Hairston- Strang: Federal lands have protection related to land ownership purpose, but particularly Dept. of Defense lands may have mission changes. Other potential protections relate to local zoning, like water protection zones. So I think we should definitely be looking into this type of thing. And it was interesting to see the tool for rolling up the forest landowner support activities, that should be helpful.
- Katie Brownson: One thing Cotton and I could explore would be to see what kind of summary data we could put together at the watershed scale, and bring it back to see if that is the kind of thing we want to include in our management strategy or not.
  - o Cotton Randall: Katie, we could certainly screen out by watershed and come up with total acres in the watershed boundary that have activity forest stewardship plans as

well as acres that are sustainably managed. We could generate that easily for the baseline.

- Anne Hairston-Strang: One other thing that we see driving whether we keep our forests or not is market focus. I wouldn't call that a protected lands filter, but I would suggest we consider that as a companion piece of information to remind people that it is an important part of encouraging forests on some of the areas that may not be protected from development
- Katie Brownson: Another NRCS data source that has state level data [here](#).
- Eric Oliver of Green Forests Work introduced a new project locator map that is designed to identify and facilitate forest restoration on former mine lands. Currently funded by a NIFWF scaling grant, the tool highlights reforestation opportunities in areas that were previously reclaimed as grasslands or shrublands but remain un-forested. Pennsylvania's data is complete and accessible via the Green Forest Work website, allowing users to view completed projects from 2009–2024 and explore new potential sites within specific regions like the Susquehanna Bay watershed. The tool layers spatial data like land ownership, state forest boundaries, and focal geographies.
- Katie Brownson: In the last few minutes here, we can revisit whether we want to try to integrate the mineland restoration data or not. It would not be necessarily easy, but if we think there are enough acres not being tracked through the program that we want to track, it could be worth exploring further to see what we can pull out of the Green Forests Work data for the watershed. Another question we should think about is that last October, we added “and managing” to our target language. We are going to need to grapple with if we track management, where that falls- if it will go under the acreage goal or if we want that to be separate.
- Anne Hairston-Strang: Solar is the other call out I would be looking for us to have some data on.
  - o Katie Brownson: I believe solar is getting captured, but I can verify that.
  - o Peter Claggett: It should be, because we are mapping solar, but I agree that in terms of forest loss in VA over the next 15 years, that is probably the biggest threat.

## V. Adjourn

**Next Meeting:** Healthy Landscapes Meeting, May 11th, 10am-3pm.

### Attendees:

Chris Miller, DDA	Eric Oliver, GFW	Christopher Peters, NRCS PS	Sophie Waterman, USGS
Cotton Randall, FS	John Schwartz, DCNR PA	Charles Copeland	Anne Gilbert, DNR
Sean Alexander, DEC	Patricia Nylander, DOF	Laura Upham, DDA	Julie Mawhorter, FS
Rachel Owrutsky, DNREC	Richard Turcotte, FS	Emily Heller, EPA CBPO	Rob Schnabel, CBF
Laura Johnson, DOF	Renee Thompson ICPRB	Jarred Kinlein, WVDOF	Lydia Brinkley

Jeremy McGill	Dan Coy	Robert Corletta, DDOT	Alexis Dickerson
Matthew Keefer	Robbie Coville	Joseph Schell, DNREC	John Wolf, USGS
Megan McClaugherty, ICPRB	Jeremy McGill	Heidi Bonnaffon, MWCOG	Everald McDonald
Bethany Derasks, NRCS DE	Collin Shephard, FS	Katie Ayers, EPA	Peter Claggett, USGS
Ken Hyer, USGS	Cass Klingman, DEC	Craig Highfield	Alanna Crowley, DNR
Anne Hairston-Strang, DNR	Nancy Sonti, MD, FS	Katie Brownson, FS	Julia Fucci, CRC