



Chesapeake Bay Program

Science. Restoration. Partnership.

Forestry Workgroup Meeting

May 1, 2024

[Meeting Materials](#)

Kesha Braunskill, USFS
Anne Hairston-Strang, MD DNR
Katie Brownson, USFS
Lorenzo Cinalli, USFS
Sophie Waterman, CRC
Craig Highfield, ACB
Dexter Locke, USFS
Jeremy McGill, WV DOF
Frank Rodgers, Cacapon Inst.
Tristen Puffenberger, Cacapon Inst.
Cassie Davis, NY DEC
Lydia Brinkley, USC
Julie Mawhorter, USFS
Ned Brockmeyer, PA DCNR DOF
Orsi Lazar, PA DCNR DOF
Rick Turcotte, USFS
Caitlin Verdu, VA DOF
Terry Lasher, VA DOF

Chris Miller, DE DOF
Taryn Davidson, DE DOF
Catie Soriano, DNREC
Jenna Talbot, DNREC
Robbie Coville, PA DCNR DOF
Kalaia London, PA DCNR DOF
Teddi Stark, PA DCNR BOF
Amanda Garzio-Hadzick, Stroud
Ruth Cassilly, UMD
Catlin Bolton, MWCOG
Alanna Crowley, MD DNR
Erica Carlsson, DC DOEE Trees
Jeremy Hanson, CRC, WQGIT
Emily Heller, EPA
Sarah Brzezinski, EPA
Matt Keefer, PA DCNR DOF
Judy Okay, J&J Consulting
Sophie Waterman, CRC

9:00 Welcome and Introductions- *Kesha Braunskill, USFS, FWG Co-Chair*

9:10 Announcements

- The [Forestry Workgroup New Member Guide](#) is now available on the Forestry Workgroup webpage!
- Tree Canopy Webinars- The USFS Urban and Community Forestry team will be launching a new quarterly webinar series. As a kick-off, Katie and Julie will be doing a Bay Program webinar during Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week on tree canopy data and tools on June 6th (more details forthcoming).
- Next Steering Committee meeting for GIT funding project on Addressing Regional Tree Supply Challenges and Opportunities will be on May 15th (SC members should have a calendar invite).
- Save the date! Chesapeake Riparian Forest Buffer Summit on June 5th at Fox Haven in Frederick (more details forthcoming from the Alliance). Note this will take the place of our June FWG meeting.

9:15 At-Large Members: Nominee Introductions

Nominees for the three available at-large member positions will be given time to introduce (or reintroduce) themselves to the workgroup.

Lydia Brinkley and Craig Highfield introduced themselves as nominees for the Forestry Workgroup. Since we only received 2 nominations for 3 available seats, we will seek to confirm Lydia and Craig as at-large members and maintain one vacant at-large seat (that can be filled at any time if we get another nominee).

Action: Voting members (including other current at-large members) should let Katie know by 5/24 if there are any concerns with these nominations, otherwise we will consider their membership to be confirmed

9:20 [Tree Canopy Outcome: June Strategy Review System \(SRS\) Presentation to the Management Board:](#) *Kesha Braunskill (USFS) and Julie Mawhorter (USFS)*

Kesha and Julie reviewed their draft presentation that provides an update on the Tree Canopy Outcome that will be presented to the Management Board (MB) during the June 13th SRS meeting.

Discussion:

Lydia Brinkley asked why we are including the IRA funding per state. Julie responded that the audience is the MB, who are a part of state leadership, and they tend to be more water quality focused. Showing the amount funded will hopefully make them more aware of how much is flowing through their state forestry agency and supporting forestry work within their states. Lydia noted that it looks like states like New York and Pennsylvania are getting lots of funds, but we need to be clear that not all that money is going toward the Chesapeake watershed. Julie took note and will make it clear in the presentation that they will make the point that not all these funds are Chesapeake-specific. Lydia also noted the MB could potentially have a say in how some of those funds are sent and earmarking some to be specifically for the Chesapeake.

Matt Keefer followed up Lydia's comment with a note about how the demand is out there and that there is more demand than we have cash flow. Yes, there is a lot of money flowing, but there are far more projects applying for grants than there are funds. Matt will follow up with some talking points from the PA perspective. In the chat, Orsi noted that "many communities were not even able to apply for various reasons."

Frank Rodgers noted that these funds follow where the people are, just look at how funds for WV and DC are equal. Urban Forestry BMPs have one of the highest co-benefits scores in recent BMP studies. Frank also noted that he would brag about how the FWG at the Bay program has been addressing DEI issues through the urban forestry lens for almost 25 years, and it is worth pointing out.

Katie Brownson noted an important message to highlight the need for maintenance. We are putting a lot of investments in planting, but long-term funds for tree care are needed. Our planting data from the last few years has seen a drastic increase, and we want to make sure that we are making subsequent investments in maintenance. Julie responded by saying that is something that came out of the roundtable, and Kesha and Julie can better hit home that aspect.

Matt Keefer spoke up on the fact that this type of funding might not be continued over the long term. Reminding the MB that continued funding within our own means is something we need to think about. We need to capitalize on our current momentum. Anne noted that state budget folks are thinking about this, but we need to communicate about money and ensure we will have long-term success and build capacity.

In response to Terry's comment in the chat, Julie noted the specifics of the Land Use/Land Cover data and that the land use data is a little broader than at the municipal scale. It just helps us parse out distinctions in what type of land use is occurring. Terry then responded that they should not be in "like terms".

Cassie further clarified that the land use and land cover data are two separate data sets, with land use breaking down those low vegetative areas into cropland.

In the chat:

Anne Hairston-Strang: There was \$17 million under MD to Chesapeake Bay Trust, and I wanted to make sure people knew there was regional eligibility, not just in MD.

Anne Hairston-Strang: In MD, first round of UCF IRA had \$6.6 million, already over our 4-year total funding of \$4.8 million.

Terry Lasher: I understand why we combined Land Use/Land Cover Change, but they are NOT the same.

Dexter Locke: Yes yes yes. I only use the land cover but then I summarize within parcel polygons to get ownership. I see the need for land use/land cover, but I don't have that need for that product. I LOVE the land cover and land cover change data. so many uses

Action: Julie noted that the Tree Canopy Work Plan is in the near-final draft. Members are welcome to provide comments until May 8th.

Action: Julie will share the 2023 planting numbers spread sheet with workgroup members upon request. These numbers are currently being reviewed by the Indicators team and will be published on Chesapeake Progress when finalized.

9:50 **Forest Buffer Outcome: June Strategy Review System (SRS) Presentation to the Management Board:** *Katie Brownson (USFS)*

Katie reviewed the draft presentation that will provide an update on the Forest Buffer Outcome to the Management Board (MB) as part of the June 13th SRS meeting.

Discussion:

Caitlin Verdu noted the fact the VA has reached its 70% goal is a big deal and would like to see it be highlighted a little more within the presentation. Katie noted that, yes, they have reached 70%, but they are also losing a lot of trees, but Caitlin is absolutely right. It is a big deal and should be highlighted.

Matt Keefer noted that the term conservation might not equate to protection for some MB members, and something Katie could clarify. Matt also noted that it would be okay to highlight the fact that PA's numbers are not looking so great and that it has to do with a complex framework BUT there is a lot of support for buffers. Specifically, the PSC rep for PA has the idea of making trail networks within conserved buffers to help promote them. Katie noted that the idea is a great one to help the MB think bigger and connect the buffer outcome to the public access one; it has the possibility to really excite the MB.

Judy noted that several projects are out there that are creatively addressing multiple outcomes. For example, a high school in VA had a MEWEE experience planting a food forest buffer.

In the chat Frank noted that "In WV we have the Safe Water Conservation Collaborative, led by Potomac Conservancy, focused on protecting drinking water sources (i.e., all our streams serve the Potomac water supply). Landowner outreach in 2024 has led to 50 acres of potential RFB." And that "WV just buffered 100' of walking trail in Morgan's Grove, Shepherdstown, WV."

Frank also spoke up and asked if there is any way for us to forecast the number of planted trees in the last couple of years and if we project how much cover we should hopefully see.

10:10 **Update from the Timber Harvest Task Force:** *Lorenzo Cinalli (USFS) and Katie Brownson (USFS)*

Katie provided a short synopsis of discussions held with the Timber Harvest Task Force to-date. Lorenzo summarized a recent literature review on the effectiveness of forest harvesting BMPs in mitigating water quality impacts and requested FWG support in re-evaluating BMP efficiency rates for Phase 7. The literature review will be sent out to the FWG once it is ready to share.

Discussion:

Anne Hairston-Strang noted that former Chair Rebecca Hamner might be a good person to talk to about why we were so conservative with the efficiency rates.

Lorenzo noted that the benefits of re-evaluation are helpful not only for a more accurate measure but also have the potential to be more incentivizing for BMP reporting.

Action: Please let Lorenzo know by 5/24 if you have concerns about the Timber Harvest Task Force formally re-evaluating forest harvest BMP efficiencies, otherwise we will assume the FWG supports this re-evaluation (Lorenzo.cinalli@usda.gov). Note the recommendations for revised efficiencies would be brought to the FWG for approval at a later date.

10:30 Improving crediting of agroforestry BMPs: Katie Brownson (USFS)

Katie provided an update on plans to work with the Agricultural Workgroup to convene an Expert Panel Evaluation Group (EPEG) to determine if and which agroforestry BMPs can be credited under existing BMPs or whether an expert panel is needed. Katie and Ruth Cassilly have developed a draft charge for the EPEG and volunteers will be requested to participate on the EPEG.

Discussion:

In response to the potential practices to get credited, hedgerows came up as a potential practice to look into. Anne Hairston-Strang asked if we are seeing hedge row implantation, Katie noted that Rob Schnable from the CBF brought it up. Katie noted that the EPEG will look into the practices and do research to see if they are worth crediting.

Ruth Cassilly noted that the NRCS is pushing hedgerows, and the Bay program crosswalks hedge rows into soil and water conservation BMP, but states have somewhat of a say in what goes into the soil and water conservation BMPs, so in some cases, it might already be credited.

Frank Rodgers noted that the EPEG should also examine what BMPs farmers like and prefer and what works really well across the watershed. Katie responded that this is something the Chesapeake Agroforestry Network will be looking into.

Matt Keefer noted that PA is seeing an uptick of reported ag tree planting and would love to learn more about that and which practices are being used.

Ruth is currently compiling an inventory of resources that will lend to the EPEG conversation. Ruth asked that if you have any note worthy information on agroforestry practices to please send them to her:

rcassilly@chesapeakebay.net

Action: Please let Katie know if you have feedback on the draft charge for the EPEG or if you have concerns about the FWG working with the Ag WG to convene this EPEG by 5/24. If we do not receive feedback or concerns by 5/24, we will assume the FWG supports convening the EPEG. Any nominations to serve on the EPEG are also welcome.

10:45 Round Robin – Ran out of time

11:00 Adjourned