**Chesapeake Bay Program**

**Management Board Meeting**

**August 13, 2015**

**Program Update**

**CBPO Calendar**

Sept 1 GIT Chairs Meeting

Sept 8-9 STAC Retreat

Sept 16-17 CAC meeting (Havre de Grace)

Sept TBD MB meeting

Sept 24-25 LGAC meeting

Sept 25-27 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Forum

Oct 15 MB call

Oct (16) Principals’ Staff Committee Meeting

**Program Updates**

**BMP Verification Review Panel Evaluations**

The CBP Partnership’s BMP Verification Review Panel has completed its evaluation on the seven watershed jurisdictions’ draft BMP verification program plans. The final evaluations were widely distributed on August 6 to ensure transparency about the ongoing review. The Panel’s feedback provides a significant amount of feedback directed across all the jurisdictions and all sectors as well individual assessments of each of the seven jurisdictions. The Panel will meet August 27-28 and will conduct one-on-one meetings with each of the jurisdictions to discuss their findings.

The seven jurisdictions will continue to make additional revisions over the next several months and will submit their final revised BMP verification program plans to EPA on November 15th.

Additional information about the evaluations is in Attachment 1 (below).

**2015 Chesapeake Executive Council Meeting**

**EC Meeting Actions**

On July 23, the Chesapeake Executive Council (EC) announced the release of 25 management strategies outlining the Chesapeake Bay Program’s plans for achieving the goals and outcomes of the landmark *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* signed in June 2014. The Management Strategies articulate the overarching and specific actions necessary to advance the restoration, conservation and protection of the Chesapeake Bay, its tributaries and the surrounding lands.

To further accelerate these efforts, the Executive Council also:

* Passed two resolutions: 1) Endorsing the recommendations of the State Riparian Forest Buffer Task Force and committing to collaborative efforts across the watershed that will increase the miles of forest on agricultural lands, where they can filter runoff and send clean freshwater to rivers and stream; and 2) Calling for the CBP to hold a symposium on innovative financing opportunities for environmental restoration efforts.
* Agreed to two joint letters supporting 1) Improvements to programs to keep livestock out of watershed streams; and 2) Appropriations of all funding in the President’s 2016 budget for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) monies, which includes more than $33 million going toward the Rivers of the Chesapeake collaborative proposal. Also agreed to consider sending individual letters to Secretaries Jewell and Vilsack to request ongoing support for Rivers of the Chesapeake in FY17 budget requests.

Contact: Carin Bisland, 410-267-5732, Bisland.carin@epa.gov

**Underwater Grasses Increase Bay-wide**

Between 2013 and 2014, underwater grass abundance in the Chesapeake Bay rose 27 percent, marking a 27,600-acre increase from the last decade’s low and an achievement of 41 percent of the 185,000-acre goal set in the Chesapeake Watershed Agreement (2014). Scientists attribute this boost in bay grasses to the rapid expansion of widgeon grass in moderately salty waters, even in areas where vegetation has not been observed before. Scientists have also observed a modest recovery of eel grass in very salty waters, where the hot summers of 2005 and 2010 led to dramatic diebacks.

For more information: <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/indicators/indicator/bay_grass_abundance_baywide>

**Land and Litter Group Proposes Plan for Delmarva poultry manure**

A new report from the Delmarva Land and Litter Work Group—a partnership of poultry and grain producers, conservation partners, academic experts and other stakeholders—outlines the group’s recommendations for reducing nutrient pollution related to poultry manure, or “litter,” on the Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake Bay. To support the group’s vision of a healthy and productive Chesapeake Bay, the report recommends developing action plans for the research, implementation, funding and coordination of regulations for nutrient management programs and technologies. Along with the report, members of the work group announced the launch of the Delmarva Land and Litter Challenge, an initiative to unite stakeholder groups and take the lead on the responsible use of manure and poultry litter.

The report, *New Approaches to Poultry Litter Management in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed: Win-Win Pathways for Agriculture and the Bay*, is available at: <http://www.sfldialogue.net/files/delmarva_2015_report.pdf>

**Advisory Committee Updates**

**Local Government Advisory Committee**

*The purpose of the LGAC is to advise the Executive Council on how to effectively implement projects and engage the support of local governments to achieve the goals of the Bay Agreement.*

LGAC's next quarterly meeting will be held in Shepherdstown WV in conjunction with the Chesapeake Watershed Forum, September 24-25, 2015. To be added to the Interested Parties list, please contact Amy Robins at [arobins@allianceforthebay.org](mailto:arobins@allianceforthebay.org).

Contact: Mary Gattis, [mgattis@allianceforthebay.org](mailto:mgattis@allianceforthebay.org)

**Citizens’ Advisory Committee**

*The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) is charged with responsibility for representing residents and stakeholders of the Chesapeake Bay watershed in the restoration effort and advising the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership on all aspects of restoration.*

At the last quarterly CAC meeting the members discussed the three main topics for recommendations to the Executive Council. Their comments will center around taking advantage of untapped federal funding, making the Agreement workplans relevant on the local level, and exploring ways to use innovation and independent evaluation of verification practices.  They also reconstituted their subcommittees to align with the Agreement Goals. The new subcommittees are: Water Quality, Agriculture and Fisheries, Land Use and Urban Stormwater, and Stewardship. The next CAC meeting will be held on September 16-17 in Havre de Grace, MD.

Contact: Jessica Blackburn, [jblackburn@allianceforthebay.org](mailto:jblackburn@allianceforthebay.org)

**Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee**

*The Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) provides scientific and technical guidance to the Chesapeake Bay Program on measures to restore and protect the Chesapeake Bay.*

STAC will hold its second quarterly meeting of FY 2015 on September 8-9, 2015 at an undetermined location in (or near) Annapolis, Maryland.  Please direct any STAC quarterly meeting questions or inquiries to STAC staff, Renee Kelly at [kellyr@si.edu](mailto:kellyr@si.edu).

FY 2015 Workshops: STAC approved funding for the following seven workshop proposals. Funding began on June 1, 2015 and ends on May 31, 2016. Planning for these workshops is underway.

1. Assessing Uncertainty in the CBP Modeling System
2. Conowingo Infill Influence on Chesapeake Water Quality
3. The Development of Standardized Climate Projections for Use in Chesapeake Bay Program Assessments
4. Comparison of Shallow Water Models for Use in Supporting Chesapeake Bay Management Decision-making
5. Optimization for TMDL Implementation Planning
6. Enhancing Capacity to Support the Chesapeake Agreement Outcome though Increased Integration of Regional Science and Management Efforts
7. Integrating and Leveraging Monitoring Networks to Support the Assessment of Outcomes in the New Bay Agreement

For additional information about the workshops above, contact Rachel Dixon at [dixonra@si.edu](mailto:dixonra@si.edu) or visit the STAC workshop webpage at: <http://www.chesapeake.org/stac/stac_ws.php>.

STAC is in the process of finalizing four workshop reports.  Below is a list of reports that STAC will distribute over the next few months.

1. Re-plumbing the Chesapeake Bay Watershed: Improving Roadside Ditch Management to Meet TMDL Water Quality Goals.
2. Assessing the Chesapeake Bay Forage Base: Existing Data and Research Priorities.
3. Evaluating Proprietary BMPs: Is it time for a State, Regional, or National Program?
4. Comparison of Shallow Water Models for Use in Supporting Chesapeake Bay Management Decision-making.

STAC distributed a workshop report in June, 2015. The report entitled "Exploring Applications of Behavioral Economics Research to Environmental Policy-making in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed” was distributed on June 29, 2015. This report is a summary of a 2014 workshop that investigated different potential applications of behavioral economics, and behavior decision research related to Policy-making in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. The report can be found on the STAC publications database at: <http://www.chesapeake.org/pubs/342_Abdalla2015.pdf>.

Finally, STAC is working closely with CBP representatives to plan for the upcoming CBP Partnership requested STAC sponsored independent scientific peer reviews. The ~8 remaining reviews will take place between now and 2016. The STAC reviews will help inform the Partnership’s 2017 Midpoint Assessment. The list of upcoming STAC reviews is below.

1. 2015 Chesapeake Bay Criteria Addendum
2. Proposed revised James River chlorophyll *a* water quality criteria
3. Application of WRTDS to watershed WQ trend analysis and explanation s and General Additive Models (GAMs) to estuarine WQ trend analysis and explanations
4. Chesapeake Bay Scenario Builder
5. Phase 6 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model
6. Chesapeake Bay Water Quality/Sediment Transport Model (WQSTM)
7. Approach being taken to factor climate change considerations into the 2017 Chesapeake Bay TMDL Midpoint Assessment

For additional information regarding the reviews above, contact Natalie Gardner at gardnern@si.edu or visit the STAC review webpage at: [http://www.chesapeake.org/stac/stac\_rev.php](http://www.chesapeake.org/stac/stac_rev.php%20).

**Goal Implementation Team, STAR and Communication Workgroup Updates**

**Fisheries Goal Implementation Team**

*The Sustainable Fisheries GIT focuses on advancing ecosystem-based fisheries management by using science to make informed fishery management decisions that cross state boundaries.*

* Blue Crab Advisory Report: CBSAC just published the 2015 Blue Crab Advisory Report which was endorsed by the Fisheries GIT Executive Committee. The blue crab population is currently **not overfished** and **overfishing is not occurring** based on the female-specific reference points for abundance and exploitation rate.

The report can be found [here](http://www.chesapeakebay.net/documents/CBSAC_2015_Advisory_Report_6-30_FINAL.pdf) under “Publications” on the Fisheries GIT web page.

* Full Fisheries GIT Meeting: The full Fisheries GIT met on June 1-2nd, 2015 at CBF’s Brock Environmental Center in Virginia Beach, VA. The meeting addressed multiple GIT priorities including striped bass, forage, habitat and blue crabs. GIT members also discussed management strategy public comments and next steps for developing work plans. Thanks to all the presenters for the really fantastic, compelling presentations!

The meeting featured updates on two projects funded by the EPA-CBP GIT funding: development of a striped bass health indicator and development of forage indicators.

All meeting materials (agenda, presentations) can be found [here](http://www.chesapeakebay.net/S=0/calendar/event/22470/).

* Cownose Rays: During the public comment period at the Fisheries GIT meeting, Sonja Fordham of Shark Advocates International requested that the Fisheries GIT support a workshop to discuss the best available science on cownose rays. The concern is that cownose rays are being killed using bow and arrow during tournaments, but potential effects this might have on their populations are not known. Cownose rays are considered to be nuisance by some because of perceived population increases and predation on oyster reefs and clam aquaculture.

Inquiries and press on the issue have been increasing in Maryland and organizations have been contacting the Fisheries GIT.

The NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office has previously funded research on basic biology and potential predation of oysters by cownose rays.

***Sonja Fordham is developing a workshop proposal for review by the Fisheries GIT***.

* Forage Workshop Report: STAC is currently reviewing the final report for the “Assessing the Chesapeake Bay Forage Base: Existing Data and Research Priorities” workshop submitted by co-chairs Tom Ihde (ERT/NCBO) and Ed Houde (UMCES-CBL). This is the last review period before the report is finalized.
* The Fisheries GIT Executive Committee will have their next monthly conference call in late July.

Contact: Bruce Vogt, [bruce.vogt@noaa.gov](mailto:bruce.vogt@noaa.gov)

**Habitat Goal Implementation Team**

*The Habitat GIT is restoring a network of land and water habitats to afford a range of public benefits and to support priority species.*

* Wetland Expert Panel back up and running. The panel is reviewing wetland uptake efficiencies for 3 counties (one in each hydro-geomorphic region) in preparation for making recommendations to the Land Use Workgroup for the model re-calibration.
* The response letter has been prepared from the Chesapeake Bay Program Director to STAC regarding 'Designing Sustainable Stream Restoration Projects within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed' STAC report recommendations.
* SAV Workgroup has new Co-Chairs: Brooke Landry and Becky Golden, MD DNR.
* Stream Health Management Strategy issues with permitting language worked out to satisfaction of USACE, other partners; thanks to Neely Law and Rich Starr (Stream Health WG Co-Chairs) for leading these fruitful discussions.
* Steering Committee call held June 17; workgroups have begun prioritizing items for workplans.
* Planning for fall HGIT meeting in October; location TBD but will focus on applying landscape-level science tools to help prioritize and target actions called for in the biennial workplans.
* The Mid Atlantic Panel on Aquatic Invasive species met on June 30th to discuss proposals received for their small grants program.
* After 3 years of supporting the Habitat GIT, Staffer Hannah Martin will soon be moving on to other opportunities; she will be greatly missed!

Contact: Jennifer Greiner, [Jennifer\_greiner@fws.gov](mailto:Jennifer_greiner@fws.gov)

**Water Quality Goal Implementation Team**

*The Water Quality GIT works to evaluate, focus and accelerates the implementation of practices, policies and programs that will restore water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal tributaries to conditions that support living resources and protect human health.*

The WQGIT held a conference call on June 22:

* The WQGIT was briefed on the status of the Nutrient Management Phase 5.3.2 expert panel report, which was released for partnership review on June 25. WQGIT members were also invited to attend the webinar briefing of the full report on July 1.
* The WQGIT discussed potential revisions to their Governance Protocol to reflect recent changes in the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership’s governance document. Substantive changes that were discussed included an expanded definition of consensus decision-making; removal of supermajority voting; procedures for selecting a WQGIT Chair and Vice-Chair; and a definition of WQGIT and WQGIT Workgroup membership.

Upcoming WQGIT Topics for July 13 conference call:

* The WQGIT will be seeking final approval of the proposed revisions to the BMP Protocol document.
* The WQGIT will be seeking final approval of the Shoreline Management BMP expert panel report.

Other Updates:

* Draft BMP Verification Program Plans were due from the jurisdictions on June 30. All received draft Plans were sent to the BMP Verification Review Panel on July 1 so they could begin their initial review.
* The due date for jurisdictions to submit their draft historical BMP data was June 30.

Contact: Lucinda Power, [power.lucinda@epa.gov](mailto:power.lucinda@epa.gov)

**Healthy Watersheds Goal Implementation Team**

*The goal of the Maintain Healthy Watersheds Goal Implementation Team (GIT 4) is to maintain local watershed health across a range of landscape contexts. With this goal, GIT 4 intends to bring attention to the challenge of protecting streams and watersheds that are healthy today.  This initiative complements the "dirty waters" approach which focuses on restoring impaired waters.*

* The Healthy Watersheds, Land Use Options Evaluation and Land Use Methods and Metrics Management Strategies are now in final form thanks to GIT leaders and members who were significant contributors along the development process.
* GIT leaders are in communication with TetraTech who will, within the next month, provide a scope of work entailing costs and what likely will be required to successfully carry out the management approach tasks of the Land Use Options Evaluation Management Strategy.
* The GIT is in the process of brainstorming project proposal ideas for this year’s EPA GIT funding cycle.  Several ideas are very relevant to the land use and/or healthy watersheds management strategies.
* GIT leaders are currently preparing for a GIT meeting in September which will focus on the management strategy workplans.  It is also likely that there will be one or two case study presentations on ongoing healthy watershed conservation work.

Contact: Tuana Phillips, [Phillips.tuana@epa.gov](mailto:Phillips.tuana@epa.gov)

**Foster Stewardship Goal Implementation Team**

*The Fostering Stewardship GIT promotes individual stewardship, supports environmental education for all ages, and assists citizens, communities and local governments in undertaking* *initiatives to achieve restoration and conservation in the Chesapeake region. It aims to build public support of restoration efforts and increase citizen engagement and active stewardship.*

Citizen Stewardship

The Stewardship Team is continuing to make progress on developing a method to track changes in public attitudes, behaviors, and actions related to stewardship. A stewardship behavior survey tool is in the process of being developed; field interviewing is scheduled for late summer/fall. This summer the Stewardship Team will convene to kick off the work plan development process. Please contact Amy Handen at [Amy\_Handen@nps.gov](mailto:Amy_Handen@nps.gov) for more information.

Environmental Literacy

The Education Workgroup leadership met on July 6th to discuss the agenda for the upcoming Environmental Literacy Summit being held at NCTC on November 9 &10, and give updates on the ELIT tool data collection effort. Contact Shannon Sprague at [Shannon.Sprague@noaa.gov](mailto:Shannon.Sprague@noaa.gov) for more information.

Public Access

A July/August meeting is being planned for the Public Access Team to kick of the work plan development process. For more information please contact John Davy at [John\_Davy@nps.gov](mailto:John_Davy@nps.gov).

Land Conservation

Throughout May and June, a work group of the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership conducted research to inform the development of a coordinated mitigation strategy to minimize the impacts of linear infrastructure projects. The group is preparing a summary of preliminary findings and will brief the Steering Committee at the in-person meeting scheduled for July 21 in Annapolis.

Progress continues on the Protected Lands management strategy. The draft received minor public comments and the final draft scheduled to be released on June 30. The next phase is the formation of a biennial work plan which will outline the actions each jurisdiction​ or agency​ will accomplish over the next two years to contribute to the goal of protecting an additional two million acres by 2025.

Planning is underway for the Partnership's Annual Meeting on October 5-6, 2015 at the National Conservation Training Center. Capacity has been expanded to accommodate 150 participants in response to growing interest in the Partnership. Registration information will be sent in early July. For more information on the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership contact [Kate\_Baker@partner.nps.gov](mailto:Kate_Baker@partner.nps.gov).

Contact: Amy Handen, [ahanden@chesapeakebay.net](mailto:ahanden@chesapeakebay.net)

**Enhance Partnering, Leadership, and Management Goal Implementation Team**

*The goal of the Enhance Partnering, Leadership, and Management GIT is to continually improve the governance and management of the CBP Partnership.*

FY 15 GIT Funding**:** The Chesapeake Bay Trust has been identified as the organization to administer the funds for GIT Funding projects. A timeline and process have been outlined by GIT 6 and initial proposals for projects are due from the GITs, the Climate Change Workgroup, and the Diversity Action Team by September 8. Proposed projects must be related to Management Strategy implementation and Workplan development. Projects will be prioritized by the GIT Chairs during the month of September and CBT is tentatively expected to complete the sub-award process by December 2015.

Local Leadership:A formal Local Leadership Workgroup is being formed under GIT 6 to develop the two year workplan. A kick off meeting for the workgroup took place on July 29, and the next workgroup meeting will be in August 19.

Face to Face Meeting: GIT 6 will have a face to face meeting on September 2 in Harrisburg, PA. We plan to set the strategic direction of our goal team for the next year at this meeting, and we will discuss varied issues including: local leadership workplan development, CBP performance review, and CBP independent evaluator and the Chesapeake Bay Accountability and Recovery Act.

Contact: Greg Allen, [allen.greg@epa.gov](mailto:allen.greg@epa.gov)

**Scientific, Technical Assessment, and Reporting Team**

*The purpose of STAR (Scientific, Technical Analysis and Reporting) is to facilitate productive deployment of scientific resources, to provide timely, quality information to managers, and to expand communication between workgroups.*

Water Quality Monitoring Reports

STAR has two reports out for review. The first, Building Environmental Intelligence: Leading the Future of Water Quality Monitoring is the culmination of BEI’s (formerly BASIN) Phase II: Exploration and Discovery. It is a compilation of the innovations and new ideas that STAR experts uncovered in the course of their outreach to groups around the world, as well as wisdom gleaned during topical workshops and internal discussions. It provides STAR’s best and highest recommendations for Bay Program leadership to consider in order to foster a strong and resilient monitoring network that will take the partnership into the next generation of watershed restoration.

The second, Ambient Water Quality Criteria for Dissolved Oxygen, Water Clarity and Chlorophyll a for the Chesapeake Bay and Its Tidal Tributaries: 2015 Technical Addendum, is a culmination of the work of the Criteria Assessment Protocols (CAP) Workgroup. This Workgroup is the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership’s established forum for resolving issues, factoring in new scientific findings, and ensuring implementation of consistent bay-wide criteria assessment procedure development and implementation. The CAP Workgroup draws upon the talents and input from state, federal, river basin commission and academic partners as well as local government and municipal stakeholders. This 2015 addendum provides previously undocumented features of the present procedures as well as refinements and clarifications to the previously published Chesapeake Bay water quality criteria assessment procedures.

Explaining Trends

Team members working with the Integrated Trends Analysis Team through STAR have been developing a plan to analyze long-term patterns in water quality criteria attainment, and presented the approach to the Bay Managers on July 28. The team has developed preliminary graphics demonstrating the evaluation of attainment patterns at different levels of aggregation, options for evaluating “progress-towards-attainment,” and an analysis approach for linking changes in attainment to factors in the watershed. Next steps are to (1) complete graphics and presentation of attainment patterns at different levels of aggregation, (2) dig in to the attainment results to identify where and when changes are happening with maps and trend tests conducted on the incremental percent-to-attainment results for shallow water, dissolved oxygen, and chlorophyll by segment, and (3) link any observed attainment patterns to ongoing analysis of station-based water quality observations being conducted by the Trends Team.

Contact: Peter Tango, [ptango@chesapeakebay.net](mailto:ptango@chesapeakebay.net)

**Communications Workgroup**

*The Communications Workgroup provides strategic planning and expert advice to support the communication needs of the Chesapeake Bay Program partners, and spur public action through consistent messaging, expanded media coverage, use of multimedia and online tools, comprehensive branding and promotion, outreach to stakeholders, and coordinated internal and external communications.*

Upcoming Editorial Calendar

July

7.1(Wed.) Media release/News post: [CBSAC Report](http://www.chesapeakebay.net/blog/post/blue_crab_population_shows_modest_rise_stock_considered_sustainable)

7.2(Thurs.) Chesapeake Currents/John Davy article on public access

7.2(Thurs.) News post: STAC report on behavioral economics

7.6(Mon.) From the Field: CBIBS buoys

7.7(Tues.) Restoration Spotlight: Oregon Dairy in Lancaster County, Pa.

7.9(Thurs.) Feature: Green Muslims

7.21(Tues.) By the Numbers: Chemical contaminants

7.23(Thurs.) Media release/News post: EC Meeting

July TBD

UMCES: Chesapeake Bay report card (when SAV data is in)

Photo Essay: Eagle tagging

News post: Urban Waters Small Grants awards

August TBD

News post: SAV data

Restoration Spotlight: Butler Farms in Inwood, WV

CBP News Releases

* CBSAC – see: <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/presscenter>
* SAV data – discussion abt promotion

CBP Comm Activities

* MS Release (6/30) – complete
* EC Planning
* Working with the Web Team on responsive redesigns of the Field Guide and Track the Progress sections of the Bay Program website

Contact: Margaret Enloe, [menloe@chesapeakebay.net](mailto:menloe@chesapeakebay.net)

**Recent Meetings and Events**

June 30 Management Strategies final

June 30 Jurisdictions finalize BMP Verification Programs

June 25 Scientific Technical Analysis and Reporting (STAR) meeting

June 18 Federal Leadership Committee Designees Meeting

June 16 1 year anniversary of Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement signing

**ATTACHMENT 1**

**BMP Verification Update**

Below is a color coded summary of the CBP Partnership’s BMP Verification Review Panel evaluations of jurisdictions’ July 2015 draft BMP Verification Program Plans by the six sectors.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | DE | MD | WV | VA | PA | NY | DC |
| Agriculture |  |  |  |  |  |  | NA |
| Forestry |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Stream Restoration |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Urban Stormwater |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Wastewater |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Wetlands |  |  |  |  |  |  | ? |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| KEY: |  | = Predominately consistent with the Partnership’s Sector Guidance and Verification Principles published in the Chesapeake Bay Basinwide BMP Verification Framework. |
|  |  | = Notable gaps and some inconsistencies compared to Sector Guidance. Jurisdictions must fill gaps in order to be in agreement with Sector Guidance and Verification Principles. |
|  |  | = Inadequate or does not follow Sector Guidance or meet many Verification Principles. Missing substantial amounts of information or may need to change approach. |

**Key**

NA**-**no agricultural lands within the District of Columbia.

? – Panel questioned whether the District of Columbia would be seeking credit for restoration wetlands

Here’s a short narrative snapshot of the Panel’s feedback:

* **Delaware**’s submission was the best of all seven jurisdictions, following the guidance in the Basinwide Framework the best and providing comprehensive descriptions of its verification plans across its priority BMPs across all six sectors.  Delaware has the holes in its program description and the issues to address, but was clearly the model to follow.
* **Maryland** provided a very strong, comprehensive description of their existing and planned agriculture verification program. However, for the remaining source sectors they submitted QA plans which were entirely focused on BMP tracking and reporting system, not verification, and several plans were years old and never updated.
* **West Virginia’s** BMP verification plan was a solid draft across the sectors, but the Panel has a number of questions upon reading their documentation which need answering.
* **Virginia’s** submitted a draft BMP verification plan which clearly articulated DEQ responsibilities were but missed contributions from many other state, federal and local agencies.  Virginia’s draft plan depends heavily on statistical-based sub-sampling approaches particularly for agriculture—the Panel had significant contributions with the proposed low levels of sub-sampling for many groups of agricultural BMPs (1-3 percent).
* **Pennsylvania** submitted a well-organized, very informative draft BMP verification program document, but there were a number of questions and documentation missing based on the Panel’s in-depth review.
* **New York** submitted excellent documentation of the BMP tracking and reporting systems in place for all its source sectors, but provide minimal to no documentation on their verification protocols and programs.
* The **District of Columbia** provided excellent documentation of their comprehensive urban stormwater BMP and wastewater treatment tracking and reporting systems, but provided no documentation of what most of the Panel members knew were excellent urban stormwater, stream restoration and wastewater verification protocols and programs.

Here’s the next steps and the schedule ahead:

* The BMP Verification Review Panel’s comprehensive and in-depth feedback to all seven jurisdiction and the CBP BMP Verification Committee was distributed on **August 6th** and posted on-line.
* The Panel meets with each of the seven jurisdictions, one-on-one at the Panel’s **August 27-28** meeting in Annapolis.
* The jurisdictions work to revise their draft BMP verification program plans, working directly with Panel members over the next several months.
* BMP Verification Panel Chair Dana York presents the Panel’s findings to date to the WQGIT, MB, and PSC at their **September/October** meetings.
* The Panel submits it final set of recommendations to the CBP Partnership on **October 15th** and is then sunset.
* The seven jurisdictions submit their final revised BMP verification program plans to EPA on **November 15th**.
* EPA has a month to review the revised plans and determine, by **December 15th**, whether to approve them or request specific changes and improvements prior to approval.