



United States Department of Agriculture



USDA-EPA Task Force on Crediting Chesapeake Bay Conservation Investments

Top Solutions

***Recommended by USDA & EPA
Leadership***



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Objectives

1. Develop a full accounting of practices, considering double counting
2. Identify and verify expired USDA practices
3. Credit more USDA practices
4. Develop time-savings methodologies



Criteria

1. Maintain scientific integrity of CBP decision-making processes and accounting tools
2. Ensure producer privacy is protected.
3. Holistic remedies that address all four objectives.
4. Save time, money, staff.
5. Sustainable

*Advanced by USDA and EPA Leadership for
Principals' Staff Committee Assignment to CBP Committee(s)*

**Conservation Data
Sharing Agreements
with States**

+

**3rd Party
Re-Verification**

**USGS Aggregate
USDA & State
Data**

+

**3rd Party
Re-Verification**

**Chesapeake
Watershed
Conservation
Survey**

**Farm
Inventories**

***Adaptive
Management
and Emerging
Technologies***

FSA Data
+10% spot
check

+

Transect Surveys
Cover Crop
Tillage

+

Remote
Sensing

Credit more
USDA Program
Practices
(CSP, etc.)

+

Refine CBP
Crediting
Process
New Practices



**USDA 1619 Data
Agreements with
States
+
3rd Party
Re-Verification**



Top Solution – New *USDA Conservation Data Sharing Agreements*



New conservation data sharing Agreements with eligible entities.

Coupled with 3rd Party Re-verification of expired practices.


EPA, USDA, and the State Ag and Environment Secretaries and Commissioners support this solution for States that meet eligibility requirements.

USDA will not pursue verification of expired¹ USDA practices under this solution, but will rely on states to execute verification. USDA-NRCS will continue to focus on its programs to encourage the adoption of voluntary conservation.

¹ – expired practices are those that have exceeded the Chesapeake Bay Program's credit duration.

Top Solution – *USGS Data Aggregation*

**USGS Aggregate
USDA & State
Data**
+
3rd Party
Re-Verification




- Continue current USGS conservation data sharing agreement with USDA.
- Add USGS data sharing agreements with States.
- USGS aggregate USDA and State data, remove duplicate records, report aggregated data back to States.

EPA, USDA, and State Ag and Environment Secretaries and Commissioners support this solution.

USDA will not pursue verification of expired¹ USDA practices under this solution, but will rely on states to execute verification. USDA-NRCS will continue to focus on its programs to encourage the adoption of voluntary conservation.

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Top Solution – *Chesapeake Watershed Survey*



Conservation Effects
Assessment Project
(CEAP)

FEBRUARY 2011

Assessment of the Effects of Conservation Practices on Cultivated Cropland in the Chesapeake Bay Region



Randomized, statistically-
valid survey of conservation
practices throughout
watershed.

Every 3-5 years.

EPA, USDA, and State Ag and
Environment Secretaries and
Commissioners support this
solution.

Top Solution – *Farm Inventories*

Farm
Inventories

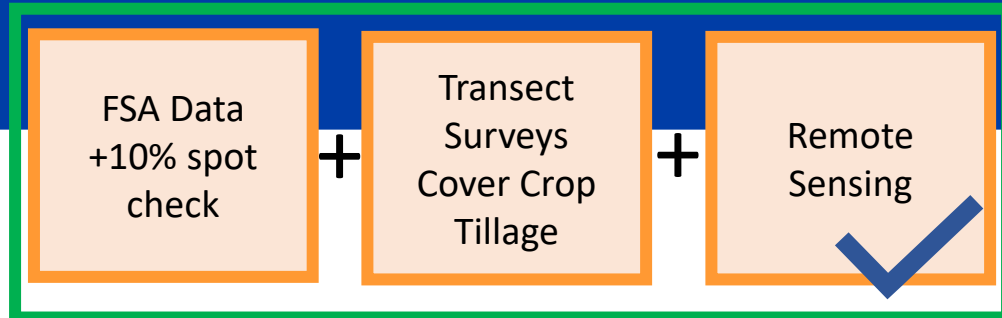


Trusted ag professionals take farm inventories to track and verify practices and assess opportunities for further conservation work.

Modeled after successful Lancaster Farmland Trust Salisbury Township effort.

EPA, USDA, and State Ag and Environment Secretaries and Commissioners support this solution. Highly effective and resource-intensive. Focus on specific ag communities/watersheds.

Top Solution – *Combo Approach*



Combine 3 partial solutions into one holistic solution.

Transect surveys, FSA reports, and remote sensing

Can focus on different practices and, when combined, can capture most of conservation on the landscape.

PA BMP REMOTE SENSING PILOT PROJECT UPDATE

SPONSORED BY:

USDA - NRCS
PA - DEP

PRESENTATION BY:

JOE KRAFT, SOIL SCIENTIST, NRCS
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ANDY KLING, DATABASE MANAGER, NRCS

Remote Sensing Pilot Project:
Potomac Watershed- Pennsylvania

EPA, USDA, and State Ag and Environment Secretaries and Commissioners support this solution.

Top Solution – *Credit more USDA Practices*

Credit more
USDA Program
Practices
(CSP, etc.)

+

Refine CBP
Crediting
Process
New Practices



Credit additional federal
program categories.

Advance opportunities to
streamline and expedite
crediting of new practices based
on USDA data.

EPA, USDA, and State Ag and Environment
Secretaries and Commissioners support this
solution.



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Solution: Emerging Opportunities

*New Recommendation for Task Force's Consideration
Based on input from Task Force and State/Federal Leadership*

Adaptive Management and Emerging Technologies

CBP partnership continue to take an adaptive management approach and consider the feasibility of emerging technologies like remote sensing and artificial intelligence (including machine learning) in reducing the technical and financial resources needed to credit and re-verify expired conservation practices.

Added solution/ emerging opportunity, following discussions with state and federal leadership as an additional path forward.

EPA, USDA, and State Ag and Environment Secretaries and Commissioners support this solution.

- 1. Task Force ‘Action Plan’ – finalizing a spreadsheet that includes additional detail for each solution:**
 - Current and additional scientific data required
 - CBP committee lead
 - Implementation steps
 - Time to enact
 - Partners to involve
 - Funding needs
- 2. Action plan provided to the PSC and Management Board to assign solutions to relevant CBP committees**