Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.

Agriculture Workgroup Meeting Minutes

January 29, 2026
10:00am – 12:00pm

Visit the meeting webpage for meeting materials and additional information.

Purpose: To address one key discussion point and one decision item related to Phase 7 of the Watershed Model and better understand a water quality monitoring system in an agriculturally intensive part of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. This meeting will also be the platform for introducing the slate of nominees for the workgroup's vacant membership and leadership positions.

Summary of Actions & Decisions

Decision: The AgWG approved the December 2025 meeting minutes.

Action: At this time, the AgWG will pause their normal process to confirm nominees for the At-Large and Vice Chair vacancies until additional information has been made available from the Management Board and/or Clean Water Goal Team. AgWG staff will follow up with the workgroup on next steps as soon as possible.

Action: Signatory members are asked to please reach out to Caroline Kleis (Kleis.Caroline@epa.gov) and Eric Hughes (Hughes.Eric@epa.gov) if there are any changes to AgWG signatory membership at this time.

Action: The AgWG will continue to be engaged on the development of the E3 and No Action Scenarios, including scenario inputs, over the next 6-8 months. If there are any initial questions or feedback on the overview of these scenarios provided at the January meeting, please contact Auston Smith (Smith.Auston@epa.gov).

Decision: The AgWG approved the proposed matrix mapping BMPs to load source groups, including the mapping of 6 BMPs to solar land uses. However, there was a request from a partner for the Watershed Technical Workgroup to add an additional NEIEN Appendix BMP name for these BMPs that would include the word solar. The result of this vote and subsequent recommendations will be shared with the Watershed Technical Workgroup, ahead of their final approval of the Matrix at their February meeting.

Action: The AgWG will meet again on March 4th, immediately following the Bay in the Balance Conference. This meeting will be hybrid, with virtual and in person meeting options. For those joining in person, the meeting will be held at the same location as the Bay in the Balance Conference (the Wyndham Gettysburg Hotel & Conference Center in Gettysburg, PA. (95 Presidential Cir. Gettysburg, PA 17325).

Minutes

I. Welcome, roll call, review meeting minutes

Speaker: Kathy Brasier, AgWG Chair

Kathy Brasier, AgWG chair, reviewed the agenda and asked for approval of the December meeting minutes.

Decisions:

1. The AgWG approved the December 2025 meeting minutes.

Discussion Notes:

Caroline Kleis (in chat): Given our full agenda today, we would like to provide you with important announcements in the chat. Please note the following reminders:

1. Our February meeting date has been canceled. You should have received a notice with this cancellation. Please remove the February invite from your calendar and/or reach out to Caroline if it still remains on your calendar.

2. The deadline to reserve a room under the room block at the Wyndham hotel for Bay in the Balance is **tomorrow January 30th**. Note this is not the final day you can register, but rather the last day to reserve a room under the room block. Registration and lodging information is available here: https://web.cvent.com/event/38376f4a-f63b-4463-ac13-645d5db29195/websitePage:b2860af3-f3d9-45e7-91bd-105d298f567f?i=dR1-hjsec0Kq3cqPr9L2jQ&locale=en-US

All of today's meeting materials are posted here: https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/event/agriculture-workgroup-meeting-january-2026

II. AgWG Vice Chair and At-Large Member Nominee Introductions

Speaker: Eric Hughes, AgWG Coordinator

The AgWG leadership and staffing team has received 8 nominations for the workgroup's 6 at-large member vacancies and 1 nomination for Vice Chair. The nominees introduced themselves to workgroup participants ahead of a future vote from AgWG members to determine the group's next Vice Chair and cohort of at-large members. Vice Chair and At-Large nominee bios are available on the calendar page. Additionally, Eric noted that there has been a change in signatory membership for Maryland, and Alisha Mulkey, MDA, will now be the primary signatory member from Maryland.

Note: All workgroups have been instructed to pause their normal processes for voting on the approval of new members/chairs until new co-chairs have been selected for the CBP's Goal Teams and further instruction has been communicated. As such, the vote that will ultimately determine how vacancies will be filled will be delayed until further notice.

Actions:

1. At this time, the AgWG will pause their normal process to confirm nominees for the At-Large and Vice Chair vacancies until additional information has been made available from the Management Board and/or Clean Water Goal Team. AgWG staff will follow up with the workgroup on next steps as soon as possible.
2. Signatory members are asked to please reach out to Caroline Kleis (Kleis.Caroline@epa.gov) and Eric Hughes (Hughes.Eric@epa.gov) if there are any changes to AgWG signatory membership at this time.

III. E3 Scenario Refresher

Speaker: Auston Smith, EPA-CBPO

The E3 scenario is the Everything, Everywhere, (by) Everyone scenario in the watershed model and represents the best possibility of the watershed's ability to control pollutant loads. It is essential to determining the overall controllable loads within the Bay to inform planning target development. Sector workgroups are asked to provide input on data inputs for this scenario. Auston provided a brief overview of the E3 scenario to prepare the AgWG members to respond to a request for feedback at an upcoming AgWG meeting.

Actions:

1. The AgWG will continue to be engaged on the development of the E3 and No Action Scenarios, including scenario inputs, over the next 6-8 months. If there are any initial questions or feedback on the overview of these scenarios provided at the January meeting, please contact Auston Smith (Smith.Auston@epa.gov).

Discussion Notes:

Eric Hughes: Thank you, Auston. I think what we had in mind for today was just an initial overview for folks to consider. This is not really the deep dive yet. We are putting this on your radar and, as Auston said, he's going to be returning at multiple points over the course of the next several months to solicit our feedback. So, I think we can leave discussion in the chat for today. When you come back, we can maybe allocate more than 15 minutes and do a little bit of a deeper dive and really get at some of that initial feedback. So, for now, put questions and comments for Auston in the chat and then we will see and hear about this again in the future.

IV. Phase 7 Load Sources – Finalizing Mapping

Speaker: Eric Hughes, AgWG Coordinator

In December, Jess Rigelman provided an initial matrix outlining how BMPs have been mapped to Phase 7 Load Source Groups. The AgWG was asked to consider this preliminary mapping and provide any feedback. Discussion at the December meeting centered largely around agricultural BMPs on solar land uses. Following the meeting, the matrix was updated based on member feedback. At the January meeting, the AgWG was asked to review, discuss, and approve this updated matrix, ahead of the WTWG vote on its final approval.

Decisions:

1. The AgWG approved the proposed matrix mapping BMPs to load source groups, including the mapping of 6 BMPs to solar land uses. However, there was a request from a partner for

the Watershed Technical Workgroup to add an additional NEIEN Appendix BMP name for these BMPs that would include the word solar. The result of this vote and subsequent recommendations will be shared with the Watershed Technical Workgroup, ahead of their final approval of the Matrix at their February meeting.

Discussion Notes:

Alisha Mulkey: From Maryland's perspective, we have had legislation that came in in 2020, so it's not captured on the imagery/the acreage chart that Eric was showing, but we're seeing a significant number of these solar proposals coming into the state at the two to five megawatt range. So, we just want to make sure that we are preserving the opportunity, particularly since they're almost exclusively on cropland so both the agency and the soil conservation districts have a role in those. But, the vegetation management in and around the arrays and the perimeter, and also the vegetation outside the fence, is handled within the department and also soil conservation districts who do erosion and sediment control in most of our county. So, we just want to preserve the opportunity for those agencies to be stacked around these. Then we are also working as a state to increase the opportunities for agrivoltaics where we would have a dual use of these with animal grazing and other opportunities. So, we also want to preserve that opportunity. So, that was why we brought the proposal forward. I will turn it over to Virginia to talk about where we landed this morning on how to map these.

Bill Keeling: Virginia has an online application that we use to collect and report data, and it converts everything to NEIEN speak. We set it up that the BMP long name is very specific to a sector. So, we had a bit of heartburn about using an ag BMP name for what would end up being a developed sector application. So, we proposed an additional NEIEN Appendix BMP name for these BMPs that would include the word solar so that it is clear that these are for solar field applications, and that would allow Virginia to report these BMPs and program our warehouse to accept them and process them properly.

Eric Hughes: Thank you for explaining that, Bill. Where we settled was that this was not something that was going to have any sort of impact on our other partners and does not impact the language, and ultimately the matrix, that we're going to be voting to approve here today. Jess, I am going to call on you here just to confirm that your perspective is that we can move forward as planned, and then this is something that can be ironed out on the back end and the Watershed Technical Workgroup can approve. But, nothing would impact the Ag Workgroup here today.

Jess Rigelman: Yes, correct. What you are approving here is the BMP to land use mappings that are in CAST. NEIEN is how states report Progress and how that data gets to CAST. It will not be an issue to accommodate Virginia's request, and I will work on that, bring that forward to the Watershed Technical Workgroup next week, and work with Bill to make sure Virginia's needs are met.

Eric Hughes: Wonderful, thank you so much for confirming. Everybody had this two weeks in advance. We have addressed all of the comments and concerns that have come to us. I do want to open it up for any last-minute discussion before we go to a vote. So, does anybody have any last-minute comments or questions to add to the discussion? Hearing none, we can go to our vote and then it looks like we will hopefully be able to wrap up right on time. So, Caroline, do you want to run through this for us?

Caroline Kleis: Sure. So, with our new microphone procedure, is it ok if we just do that vote in the chat, Eric?

Eric Hughes: Yes.

Caroline Kleis: I believe we have one person calling in, so you should be able to unmute yourself to give me that vote if you can't put it in the chat. If you want to give your vote verbally, please just raise your hand so I can unmute you. Otherwise, please just put that number in the chat (1-5 on the Consensus Continuum).

Eric Hughes: As folks are doing that, I do just want to offer a reminder that this was shared in written correspondence two weeks ago when this went out to all of our members, but we have a slightly different voting procedure. Again, this is to maintain alignment to the best of our ability with what we are hearing from the leadership bodies of the Bay Program. We offered two weeks for folks to register their vote with us and then you will have that opportunity of course here on the call. Consensus will be built based on the responses that we receive up to today at noon. So, this vote will be finalized, and it will be consensus based on those who have participated. If we don't hear anything by noon today, we will note that member as a "stand aside" with a vote not recorded. So, this will be finalized here today.

The AgWG provided their stance on the Consensus Continuum via the chat. Results are displayed in the Vote Tracker below:

Role	Name	Affiliation	Vote	Notes
Signatory	Brian Fox	DOEE	3	No vote registered.
	Clint Gill	DDA	3	No vote registered.
	Alisha Mulkey	MDA	5	
	Greg Albrecht	NY Dept of Ag and Markets	5	
	Scott Heidel	PA DEP	4	
	Seth Mullins	VA DCR	3	With the understanding that corresponding edits are made to BMP long names in the NEIEN Appendix, as it is reviewed by the WTWG.
	Cindy Shreve	WVCA	5	
	Marel King	CBC	5	
	Tom Butler	EPA	3	
At-Large	Jeff Hill	York Cty. Conservation District	5	
	Zach Evans	Mountaire Farms	3	No vote registered.
	Christi Hicks	NRCS	3	No vote registered.
	Dave Graybill	PA Farm Bureau	5	
	Jenna Schueler	CBF	5	
	Ken Staver	UMD	4	
	Paul Bredwell	US Poultry and Egg Association	3	No vote registered.
	RO Britt	Smithfield Foods	5	
	Emily Dekar	Upper Susquehanna Coalition	5	

	Nick Hepfl	Herbert Rowland & Grubic, Inc. (HRG)	4	Vote provided in advance.
	Matt Royer	PSU	5	
	Jim Riddell	VA Cattlemen's Association	5	

Caroline Kleis (in chat): If you have not provided your vote, please do so before this meeting ends. Otherwise, we will move forward with the votes we receive by the end of the call. Thank you!

Eric Hughes: Seems like votes are slowing down here. Caroline, let's work to track some of Virginia's comments here that they registered with us this morning. It's looking good here from the votes that were registered on the call and those registered beforehand. This is excellent, and this helps us adhere to our timeline. So, very much appreciate your engagement leading up to this and making sure that we went through this without any hiccups here today. We will get this final tracker posted as soon as possible.

V. Water Quality Monitoring in York County, Pennsylvania

Speaker: Natalie Schmer, USGS; Jeff Hill, York County Conservation District

At the July 2025 AgWG meeting, a series of presentations were delivered under the umbrella "An Overview of Chesapeake Bay Program Water Quality Monitoring" to help the workgroup, which traditionally focuses more on water quality modeling than monitoring, better understand the partnership's work in the monitoring space. At this month's meeting, at-large member Jeff Hill, YCCD, welcomed Commissioner Julie Wheeler to the Agriculture Workgroup and provided a brief introduction to the ongoing Water Quality monitoring efforts in York County. Commissioner Wheeler introduced herself to the AgWG, providing information on her background, the motivations behind York County's engagement with USGS to collect monitoring data, and the achievements of this partnership. Following this introduction, the workgroup heard a presentation from USGS on the York County Monitoring Program and its products, loads/yields data, related communications, and intended next steps.

Discussion Notes:

Joseph Duris (in chat): https://www.sciencebase.gov/catalog/item/643548edd34ee8d4adda7b79

Joseph Duris (in chat): https://rconnect.usgs.gov/york-qw/

Joseph Duris (in chat): Using Continuous Water Quality to Guide Conservation Efforts Geonarrative (storymap):
https://geonarrative.usgs.gov/using-continuous-water-quality-to-guide-conservation-efforts/

Joseph Duris (in chat): Assessing stream sediment conditions in Chester County, PA Geonarrative (storymap):
https://geonarrative.usgs.gov/chester-county-sediment/

Bill Keeling (in chat): Are there any plans to incorporate this in the upcoming calibration effort of [Phase] 7? Where I have seen continuous monitoring versus grab sampling, I have different pictures of what is going on in that system.

Eric Hughes: Thank you so much, Natalie. We made it through in record time. So, we have plenty of opportunity for questions and answers here. I want to take a quick look in the chat, but if folks

have any burning questions, just raise your hand, and we will make sure you have camera and microphone access. We do have one already from Bill Keeling. I may turn to Kaylyn for that one.

Kaylyn Gootman: Natalie, thank you so much for a great presentation and to York County for setting up this collaboration and doing this work. This is really informative. Bill, I see your question about plans to incorporate this in the calibration data for Phase 7. For the calibration data for Phase 7, there is some monitoring data, so traditional grab sampling information that is informing the calibration in our next generation model suite. When it comes to continuous water quality monitoring data, that is a question for a future model phase. There's a lot of really great information collected here, many other places including our river input monitoring stations on those continuous sensors. But, how that information gets incorporated/utilized/informs our models- that we've got to figure out as a partnership.

Bill Keeling: I figured that is what we were going to end up using for the calibration, because they are essentially not really comparable.

Kaylyn Gootman: USGS is working and has been working with scientists there about how we rectify the differences with traditional grab samples versus continuous monitoring. They are both monitoring information but, the way I see it, it is apples and oranges. So, figuring that out is a big effort. So, it's going to be all-hands-on-deck.

Bill Keeling: I just want to say there have been those of us advocating for the Bay Program to coordinate with USGS about setting continuous monitoring up since 2008 at the RIM stations. So, it would be really good if we had such because we could talk about calibrating to continuous versus grab sampling. Thank you!

Kaylyn Gootman: We do have continuous monitoring at all the RIM stations as of today and have for a little while. So sorry it's taken us so long, but it's there at the RIM stations.

Bill Keeling: Well, we've been rooting for you.

Kaylyn Gootman: Thank you! We sure appreciate it.

Greg Albrecht (in chat): Thank you, all! Could you expand on the role of the Soil and Water Conservation District in the monitoring efforts?

Eric Hughes: Greg put a comment in the chat, and then we will turn to you, Ken. We will turn this one to Jeff. Could you expand on the role of the Soil and Water Conservation District in the monitoring efforts? Before you take that, Jeff, this is the Cadillac of monitoring systems that you all have in here. So, expanding on what that took and the different roles the York County partners played in making that happen I think would be interesting.

Jeff Hill: Where the district assisted was in the beginning stages, working with our Watershed Department and the Planning Commission and some of the other ones behind the scenes on where we wanted to locate the monitoring system, working with USGS, and things like that. So, I would say we were more instrumental at that point. Once the gauges got up and functioning, we pretty much took a back seat and have stayed there in the shadows now for the past couple of years as they've been compiling the data. We really look to be moving forward with the Planning Commission as the next phase of this rolls out now on the idea of taking it to the field and seeing what we can do with it. The hope is that we will be able to do a more targeted approach from that standpoint, but the easiest way to handle some of this information now is to say we're going to go target and we're going to go focus on Watersheds. But, internally in the county, we're looking to try and move that needle even farther. Now that we have all this information, we need to be able to do more than just targeting. That's where the conversations are that we're currently having and we're bringing up to the Workgroup to kind of get this message out there that there's some

opportunities here that we view could fundamentally change the way we look at modeling in the future months and years. There's not a whole lot of people that have actually as a robust system as what York has, and that's kind of what we're finding out. We, as Eric said, kind of have the Cadillac system. It's how we move forward with it now. Can't state enough how USGS has been a super supportive partner in all of this and, truly on the technical side, getting us to some place with the data where we will be able to further these conversations. As for how it got set up on the financial side of things, I can't really get into that too much. The County Commissioners, working with the Planning Commission, really came up with the idea of, instead of moving towards the stormwater fee, to take a look at something a little bit different. Commissioner Wheeler mentioned it really quick in passing, but that's really where this came out of. It was this standpoint of instead of imposing another fee/tax, to try and manage stormwater let's look and see if what's actually coming into the water is representative of what we were being told it was. So, they focused in on that, and I think that has paid dividends in a better way really than where we were headed here a couple of years ago on the potential stormwater impact fee. So, it definitely was a perfect storm to navigate through, but the Commissioners and all of the partners got through that and now have been able to come out on the other side. Still not entirely sure what we are going to do with the information, but the information we have is pretty robust and showing a positive impact here in the county.

Marel King (in chat): How much does this cost? Are there plans to replicate this level of monitoring elsewhere? What would it take ($ and partnership) to do that?

Eric Hughes: Thank you, Jeff. It seems like that also addresses Marel's question. It sounds like we can't get into cost information that much. I do think it is interesting, though. What does that look like? What does it all look like? I don't know if that's something that you and the Planning Commission could weigh in on, or is that not for this platform?

Jeff Hill: I think it's something we could probably discuss further down the line. I can say that to run the system, it's not cheap. York County has a fairly large community that wants to be doing the right thing and that wants to know what's going on out there. So, that's kind of why I said the idea of having the storm water impact fee, or whatever they were going to call it back in the day, they weren't too cool with that. Turning it around and saying, instead of doing that, we're going to go in a different direction and hopefully showcase what we have done and try and control that narrative a little bit differently put a lot of people's fears at ease from the standpoint of utilizing cost and money, etc. Again, working with USGS to develop this partnership has been huge, but it's not cheap. I can tell you that.

Ken Staver: It's great to see people collecting data. That always helps. I have several questions. On the last comment about showing that you are making progress, I'm looking at this as more of a baseline/collecting some baseline data. So, when you say showing progress, I guess I'm a little unclear. This is a four-year data set with some big storms in it. So, progress versus what? I don't mean to be difficult, but this is always a problem of what is your baseline and are you just saying the loads are lower than what the model says they are?

Jeff Hill: You are pretty much right on with that one, Ken. I will defer to USGS, too, but that's really what it comes down to. The expectation from DEP and others was that York County is having loading rates and things of a certain amount. What we were able to provide was that that's not the case. So, it kind of changes the narrative here a little bit on where we go in the future because we are able to showcase, definitively, at least here with this data we have, that we are not in the same level as what the expectation was.

Ken Staver: So, is there a graphic that has been prepared on that? How do you make that sort of assessment in terms of where it is? Is it based on specific land uses- your forests, your developed land, your ag land? Or is it the Watershed in general/ in total? So, there's a lot in that package of what you are saying.

Jeff Hill: This would be watershed specific type things. The different land uses do vary across the county. So, I wouldn't say that any one is the same as any other watershed. It's real time data, Ken. What we are hoping to prove here is that if you put in the time and effort in most of your areas, you might find that your water quality is actually better than what is parlayed out there. I understand that this is a very expensive process, and we have very good relationships and partnerships that have been able to do this. But, there aren't a whole lot of other areas around that know now what they are actually putting into their water, and York County is one of the few that do.

Ken Staver: When we do management, we manage particular land uses. In ag, we manage ag, and then we do certain things on different ag practices. With forests, we have things we do which are much more limited because the forests don't have too many problems, and then we have developed land. There's been a lot of this scale watershed monitoring done over on the Eastern Shore and at Greensboro. What happens is you don't really know what the different land uses are doing to generate the loads. So, when you go back in to do management, you are still left with this question of what is working, what's not working, and where are the loads coming from? Is this sediment stream channel erosion? Is it coming off of crop fields? Is it coming from developed land? This gives you the overall picture, but there's always a frustrating thing in terms of determining what makes it what it is.

Eric Hughes: I think that's a good point, Ken. I think the overarching message is that this is very much one piece of the puzzle. I don't think that any of the solutions that we have are truly comprehensive, and that's why we need to have monitoring in addition to modeling. But, I think your point is well made and certainly understand where you're coming from there.

Ken Staver: I have to ask one more question because the comment was made about the RIM stations now having continuous monitoring. Is that for all the parameters or is that just nitrate sensors? They've always had continuous hydrologic monitoring, so are we talking continuous for all the N and P parameters? I was unclear about what that meant.

Kaylyn Gootman: Thanks, Ken, for the question. I've got some USGS colleagues on the phone. If Jimmy Webber could be unmuted, that would be fantastic, Caroline. Appreciate the questions, Ken. Those are really helpful and ones that are really worth discussing in the partnership.

Jimmy Webber: The continuous monitors at the RIM stations were added a couple of years ago. That information is going to be able to provide an accurate assessment of loads delivered from those rivers, and the comparison would be versus the 20 times a year discrete sampling. Ken, you asked about what parameters are being measured. So, this is going to be the water temperature, specific conductance, pH, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, and, in some cases, a nitrate sensor. So, it would be a similar idea as to what Natalie shared in York County of using surrogate models to estimate loads. So, right off the bat, those continuous monitors can help you understand some of the process based information about the timing of pollutant transport- how loads are mobilized during storms, seasonality, and things of that nature. Then USGS is working across our agency to think about how those continuous loads could be paired with our long-term discrete records and think about the next generation of all of our load and trend information. So, a little bit longer term horizon vision of where the networks could go. But, there are folks actively working throughout the Survey, recognizing that these continuous records are being used more frequently. They're

getting longer, and we'd really want to marry those with our long-term discrete records to have a synthetic understanding about change over time. So, those are some of the motivations that were used to set up the RIM network.

Ken Staver: The storm flow, phosphorous, and sediment have always been the most challenging. The point was made about the nitrate looking like a lot of base flow nitrate, and that's not that hard to characterize with the way the sampling has been done with the grabs/discrete sampling. So, the one that really kills us on storm flow is storm flow P and sediment. So, I just want to be clear. Technology keeps leaping ahead. I haven't missed the development of a continuous phosphorous sensor yet?

Kaylyn Gootman: You have not, Ken. That's a tricky one.

Jimmy Webber: There are attempts. Total P is pretty good because it mobilizes with sediment, so the surrogate models usually do a very good job. So, the discrete sampling is never going to go away from these processes.

Ken Staver: Thanks a lot for all the explanation. It's always great to see more data.

Joe Duris: It seems like a simple question when somebody asks how much it costs, but I will just address some of the nuance in that question because I think it's important, and it also highlights the importance of our partnership here in York County and with the Bay Program. As Natalie explained at the beginning of the talk, three of these sites were existing non tidal network sites. What that means is that the Bay Program was already paying for sampling at those locations and was already paying for a stream gauge at those locations. Whereas, the three new sites she described, there was no sampling that had been ongoing. There was no instrumentation at those locations, etc. So, those were kind of from scratch, brand new locations and then the augmentation of the non tidal network sites, which is what Jimmy was just talking about. With the RIM sites, we did something really similar here in York County where we put additional water quality instrumentation at sites where there were existing stream gauges. We even moved one of the stream gauges. So, there was a lot of support that was coming from outside of York plus what was coming from inside York to really get this started. So, the question of how much it costs, the answer kind of moves around a lot. If you are talking about a site that already has a stream gauge and a water quality monitor present that maybe two other parties are paying for (somebody wants the flow and somebody wants the temperature and water quality), then the cost is going to be lower. If you want it at a particular location and it's never had a single bit of monitoring done there, then I think it's going to be more expensive. So, I think that question of how much it costs is really a little bit tied to what the existing infrastructure is. In response to the questions from Bill and from Ken, Jeff had kind of said that it's more than just targeting, but I think targeting is important. That's what this kind of data can do really well. Natalie mentioned that we're going to work on two reports, but we're going to do some of those analyses and really look at base flow separations. What are the timing of the storm events? Are there hydrologic conditions that are more associated with sediment movement, phosphorous and sediment moving with the storms? It's an age-old problem. So, what can we bring to the table? Seasonally- are there big differences where there are crops on or crops off? Are there locations or are there watersheds where nitrate isn't as big of a component in the groundwater? So, there might be more management practices that could be put on at the surface to try and control those issues. Then, of course, this monitoring isn't done. We've got four years. We are in our fifth year, and we're going to keep going. So, then we get into the prospect of saying are we moving the needle? Is the needle going up/is it going down at these locations? So, we will be able to do some trends analysis with a much higher granularity data set. So, we're excited for that, and I think we're

excited for the future collaboration. We've got York County at the table. Clearly EPA has invested. DEP has invested, and we have some locations now with these non-tidal network stations that are going to maybe allow us to do some of these future comparisons. But, [it is important that we are] clearly building the datasets and documenting the processes so that we have a firm idea of how each system is working and then how they compare to each other. It's not just one thing that York County is going to do or DEP or EPA. It's going to take everybody, and it's going to take a lot of this different information in order to bring to bear on that question. So, I just wanted to kind of address those couple of things.

Eric Hughes: Really well said, Joe. I appreciate you covering all those bases there. So, this is a lot. There's a lot going on here, a lot of great work. To our colleagues in York County, let us know what your wish list is, what your desires are for what we talk about partnering on and what can come from the partnership. Just let us know what your desires are, and I think we can point you in the right direction and say, alright, you need to talk to these folks. This is the group that would be involved in making decisions related to that ask, and they can let you know what is possible and what is not. Most importantly, and I think this gets lost a lot, the "why" behind the systems we have currently, and the possibilities and limitations that exist within those. Without that wishlist, without those desires being clearly articulated, I don't think much can change. So, looking forward to building on the phenomenal partnership that you have already established with so many in York and what we can do with that moving forward. I know we still have a few minutes left, and we set this to go right to the end, so I will not have the last work on this. We will take a look at any other questions or comments.

Ken Staver (in chat): How did water yields from these basins compare to long term regional water yields?

Eric Hughes: The only question that I am seeing is from Ken.

Joe Duris: This is an unsatisfying answer, Ken, but: that's going to be part of our analysis. We're going to be looking at how the timeframe that we've been monitoring compares to historical long term averages for all the information that we can get- precipitation, yields, etc.- because if we want to make these kinds of comparisons basin to basin, then we're going to need that context to put that in. So, stay tuned is the response there.

Ken Staver: Thanks.

Caroline Kleis (in chat): Another opportunity to learn more about other monitoring is coming up. There will be a Monitored and Expected Total Reduction Indicator for the Chesapeake (METRIC) Tool webinar on February 9th from 12:00-1:00. The METRIC Tool allows users to look at data collected from non-tidal monitoring stations and compare what is being observed with what the partnership models are showing. If you would like to register, use the following link: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_i2-drgbDThCdcr3nofBsbQ

Joseph Duris (in chat): Really interesting. Thanks for sharing that, Caroline.

Scott Heidel (in chat): It would be good to tie trends in BMP implementation to this level of monitoring.

Eric Hughes: Thanks for the question, Ken, and Joe, for the answer. Scott has a really great point in here. I might steal this and try and form it into a question, Scott. I think Jeff had mentioned using this in targeting. So, I am wondering to what extent are these data being used to engage landowners? Are we getting at BMP implementation with this at all, or is that sort of a future thing or something being done now or not at all? That may be for Jeff.

Jeff Hill: That's the hope. There is definitely hope that we'll be able to use this information and then go back through the watersheds and target some of that BMP implementation. To be honest with you, we haven't worked with it too much here just because we've been busy cleaning up some other programs and some funding sources that we had here in 2025. Since this information is out there now and USGS is comfortable with the data they've recouped so far, it's something that I think we will be working with the partners, in the Planning Commission especially, and some of the other groups to move forward as we go. Probably later on in 2026, but more than likely starting in 2027, is a focused effort probably to move in that direction.

Joe Duris: I think this is, again, the power of the partnership. When you've got USGS working with the Conservation District and they can provide implementation information at a different level than what we have access to, I think that there's power in that. I agree with Scott, and I agree with you too, Eric, that it's great information. To be able to show real impacts to folks from either a lack of BMPs or just what the system does under its normal conditions, I think could be a super powerful tool to show this is why we want to put in this kind of BMP. So, we hope that the data is going to get used that way. Moving forward, that's going to be part of our partnership with York County.

Eric Hughes: That's great- to give York residents a better idea of what's going on in their area. So, a really powerful tool for that, indeed. We are at 12:00, so I am going to turn it over to Kathy and Caitlin here to close us out. Thank you, Natalie and Joe, Jeff, and Commissioner Wheeler for the wonderful presentation and substantive discussion.

Mark Dubin (in chat): More so for the new monitoring station, has USGS been able to ascertain the acreage of land uses within the associated watershed for land use targeting and loads?

Scott Heidel (in chat): Excellent work and presentation! Thank you.

Ashley Lenig (in chat): Appreciated the presentations.

VI. Wrap-Up and Adjourn

Lead: Eric Hughes, AgWG Coordinator

Actions:

1. The AgWG will meet again on March 4th, immediately following the Bay in the Balance Conference. This meeting will be hybrid, with virtual and in person meeting options. For those joining in person, the meeting will be held at the same location as the Bay in the Balance Conference (the Wyndham Gettysburg Hotel & Conference Center in Gettysburg, PA. (95 Presidential Cir. Gettysburg, PA 17325).

Announcements:

- **CBP Communications Office Webinar: Data to Decisions: Using the METRIC Tool to Measure Watershed Progress**
  - The CBP's Communications Office will host a webinar on February 8th from 12:00-1:00 PM to explore the Monitored and Expected Total Reduction Indicator for the Chesapeake (METRIC) Tool, an innovative resource enhancing our understanding of Chesapeake Bay watershed health. The METRIC Tool allows users to look at data collected from non-tidal monitoring stations and compare what is being observed with what the partnership models are showing. This information can help in assessing the impact of best management practices (BMPs) and such changes in the watershed, like land use, in reducing nitrogen,

phosphorus and sediment at the local level. Currently, the tool offers comparisons for 92, 80, and 78 non-tidal monitoring stations for nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment, respectively.

- To register to attend, use the following link: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_i2-drgbDThCdcr3nofBsbQ

- **Bay in the Balance 2026 Conference**
  - As the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort continues beyond 2025, revised outcomes of the watershed agreement and new efforts to facilitate greater engagement of the agricultural sector provide a unique opportunity for the agricultural community to come together to shape the future trajectory of agriculture in the Chesapeake Bay in meeting water quality goals. This conference will provide a collaborative forum where motivated leaders throughout the watershed's agricultural and conservation community can collectively identify new, innovative solutions that can help agriculture meet water quality goals for the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed.
  - This event has been rescheduled and will now take place March 2-4th, 2026, at the Wyndham Conference Center and Hotel in Gettysburg. For more information on the event and to register, please visit the following site.
- **Agricultural Advisory Committee Meetings 2026**
  - The Agricultural Advisory Committee has set their dates for quarterly meetings in 2026 (see below). More information will be posted on the AAC page as it becomes available: https://www.chesapeakebay.net/who/group/agricultural-advisory-committee
    - 2/4 Virtual Meeting
    - 5/6 Virtual Meeting
    - 8/5 In-Person Meeting (location TBD)
    - 11/4 Virtual Meeting
- **2026 AgWG Meeting Dates**
  - Our meeting schedule for 2026 has been sent out to AgWG Members and Interested Parties distribution lists. Please note that the February meeting has been canceled and the March meeting has been rescheduled to March 4th from 1:45-4:45.
  - The AgWG will meet for a hybrid meeting on March 4th, immediately following the conclusion of the Bay in the Balance Conference. Additional details will be shared with the group as they become available.
- **MDA Agroforestry Position Opening**
  - MDA's Resource Conservation's Healthy Soils Program is seeking a contractual Agroforestry Specialist. This position is described as a "contractual position is to advance the State's climate mitigation efforts through increased agroforestry practice adoption and enhanced natural carbon sequestration across the state, consistent with EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant awarded to the department. The position will support the delivery of the Maryland Healthy Soils Program which involves a working knowledge of soil health principles and methods related to the planning and implementation of conservation practices that achieve soil health benefits."
  - This position may be located in MDA Headquarters, the Patuxent Regional Office, or the Frederick Regional Office. To learn more about this position and to apply, visit the job posting.

- The deadline to apply for this position is January 22, 2026.

- **2026 Mid-Atlantic Agroforestry Conference**
  - The 2026 Mid-Atlantic Agroforestry Conference will take place on June 4-5, 2026, in Pennsylvania Furnace, PA. The agenda will include farm/site tours, panel discussion, and resource guidance and statuses. Read more at Penn State Extension's conference announcement. Registration will open in early 2026.
- **PASA Sustainable Agriculture Conference**
  - The PASA Sustainable Agriculture Conference will take place on Feb 5-6, 2026, in Lancaster, PA. To learn more and register, visit the following site.
- **NFWF Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund Grant Programs Requests for Proposals and Pre-Proposals**
  - NFWF, EPA and CBP are soliciting proposals for the Small Watershed Grants (SWG) program until Thursday, April 2nd. NFWF will host an applicant webinar detailing this Request for Proposals on Monday, February 2nd at 1pm. Learn more about SWG and read the RFP.
  - The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), EPA, and CBP, are soliciting pre-proposals through the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund under the Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction (INSR) Grants program. Preproposals are due by noon, February 12, 2026. For more information and to view the request for pre-proposals, click here.
  - NFWF in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is soliciting proposals through the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund for the 2026 Chesapeake Watershed Investment for Landscape Defense (WILD) grants program. Funding will be awarded through three funding opportunities: 1) WILD Implementation grants of $75,000 to $500,000 2) WILD Collaborative Conservation grants of up to $200,000 and 3) WILD Planning and Technical Assistance (PTA) grants of up to $75,000. Proposals are due 12:00PM Thursday, April 9, 2026. An applicant webinar will be hosted at 1:00PM on Tuesday, January 27th. To learn more and view the RFP, click here.
- **Pooled Monitoring Initiative's Restoration Research Award Program RFP**
  - The Pooled Monitoring Initiative's Restoration Research Award Program is now open, and applications are due January 29, 2026. The goal of this research program is to answer several key restoration questions that are a barrier to watershed restoration project implementation. The Pooled Monitoring Initiative pools funding resources to answer these key restoration research questions, as outlined in the request for proposals (RFP). The RFP and application link are available at the following website.
- **STAC At-Large Membership**
  - The Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) is seeking selfhttps://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc6S5fRc3MGzQOHZiakU3AJqkVANVD5IhA8afgC5F9tSkueAQ/viewformnominations for At-Large member positions through Monday, March 16th. Please consider submitting a nomination or sharing this solicitation with others who may be interested and well-suited to contribute to STAC's work. Questions may be directed to Meg Cole, STAC Coordinator, at colem@chesapeake.org. Learn more and submit your nomination here.
- **Chesapeake Community Research Symposium Presentation and Poster Abstracts**

- The 2026 Chesapeake Community Research Symposium is accepting presentation and poster abstract submissions until Friday, February 13th at 5pm. Please consider submitting an abstract for one or more of the special sessions. The 2026 edition of the biennial symposium will be held June 1-3, 2026, in Annapolis, Maryland. The theme of the 2026 Symposium is Chesapeake Bay Research and Restoration: Next Generation Tools for a Dynamic Future. Learn more and submit an abstract here.

Next Meeting: March 4, 2026, 1:45 PM - 4:45 PM, in-person (Wyndham Conference Center and Hotel in Gettysburg) with hybrid option

Attendees:

Kathy Brasier, PSU
Caitlin Grady, GWU
Eric Hughes, EPA
Caroline Kleis, CRC
Emily Dekar, USC
Dave Graybill, PA Farm Bureau
Eric Rosenbaum, Rosetree Consulting
Mojy Rouhi, YCPC
Jennfier Fetter, PSU
Brooke Walls, DDA
Greg Albrecht, NY Dept of Ag & Markets
Tyler Groh, PSU
Alex Soroka, USGS
Kate Bresaw, PA DEP
Robert James Meinen, PSU
Karl Blankenship, Bay Journal
Ashley Lenig, USDA NRCS
Auston Smith, EPA
Seth Mullins, VA DCR
Tom Butler, EPA
Jeff Hill, YCCD
Brady Seeley, PA SCC
Marel King, CBC
Matt Royer, PSU
Tyler Trostle, PA DEP
Bailey Robertory, MD DNR
Hunter Landis, VA CR
Natalie Schmer, USGS
Cindy Shreve, WVCA
Denise Uzupis, PDA
Alisha Mulkey, MDA
Mark Dubin, VA Cooperative Extension
Jenna Schueler, CBF
Elizabeth Hoffman, MDA
Matt Monroe, WVDA
Rachel Stahlman, YCPC
Grant Gulibon, PA Farm Bureau
Joe Duris, USGS
RO Britt, Smithfield Foods
Natasha Rathlev, Sustainable Chesapeake
Leah Martino, EPA
Kristen Hughes Evans, Sustainable Chesapeake
Amanda Barber, NY Cortland County SWCD
Scott Heidel, PA DEP
Caroline Harper, Campbell Foundation
Ken Staver, UMD/Wye
Alex Echols, Campbell Foundation
Samantha Cotten, DNREC
Kristen Saacke Blunk, Headwaters LLC.
Dave Montali, Tetra Tech
Bo Williams, EPA
Krista Crone, PA DEP
Bill Keeling, VA DEQ
Jess Rigelman, J7 Consulting/CBPO
Sarah McDonald, USGS
Matt Kowalski, CBF
Jen Nelson, Resource Smart LLC/ AAC Coordinator
Lee McDonnell, EPA
Julie Wheeler, York County Commissioner
Kaylyn Gootman, EPA
Emily Neideigh, Watershed Alliance of York
Jimmy Webber, USGS

Acronym List

AgWG- Agriculture Workgroup
AMT- Agricultural Modeling Team (Phase 7)
BMP – Best Management Practice
CAST- Chesapeake Assessment Scenario Tool (user interface for the CBP Watershed Model)
CBP- Chesapeake Bay Program
CBPO- Chesapeake Bay Program Office
CBW-Chesapeake Bay Watershed
CTIC – Conservation Technology Information Center
CVN – Conservation Validation Network
DLLC- Delmarva Land and Litter Collaborative
EPA - [United States] Environmental Protection Agency
FSA – Farm Service Agency
MLRI – Modeled Load Reduction Indicator
NRCS – Natural Resources Conservation Service
NFWF – National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
PADEP – Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection
PSC – Principals' Advisory Committee (CBP)
PSU- Penn State University
SARE- Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education
SWCD – Soil and Water Conservation Districts
WQGIT- Water Quality Goal Implementation Team
UMD - University of Maryland
USDA – United States Department of Agriculture
USGS – United States Geological Survey
USFS – United States Forestry Service