



Agriculture Workgroup Meeting Meeting Minutes

March 4, 2026
1:45-4:45 PM

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

Purpose: The first in-person meeting of the CBP Agriculture Workgroup since 2020 will serve as a Bay in the Balance “debrief”, providing an opportunity for the partnership to collectively digest key messages and takeaways from the conference. If there are Bay in the Balance action items that the partnership believes the AgWG can help advance, we will discuss them while they are still top-of-mind. This meeting will also enable us to have meaningful face-to-face connection, and we will take advantage of that to leave knowing more about each other than when we arrived. Finally, this meeting will be used to advance core partnership initiatives related to agriculture-sector BMP crediting, tracking, and verification.

Summary of Actions & Decisions

Decision: The AgWG approved the January 2026 meeting minutes.

Decision: The AgWG approved Jenn Fetter as the next Vice Chair of the Agriculture Workgroup. With this approval, Caitlin Grady will assume the role of AgWG Chair through February of 2028. The workgroup leadership and staffing team will follow up with AgWG members on the process for confirming new At-Large members once we have received additional direction from the Clean Water Goal Team or Management Board/PSC.

Action: The AgWG received an overview of the recently published WIP and CAP Case Study, available [here](#). If you have any questions on the case study and overview shared with the AgWG, please reach out to Kate Beats (Kbeats@pa.gov).

Action: Eric Hughes, EPA, provided the AgWG with an overview of a spreadsheet summarizing BMPs and the last time they were evaluated for credit, as well as a breakout of potential opportunities for remote sensing of agricultural BMPs. Members will receive a request to provide their feedback by Thursday, April 9th. Feedback should be provided to Eric Hughes (Hughes.Eric@epa.gov) and Caroline Kleis (Kleis.Caroline@epa.gov), and discussion will continue at a subsequent meeting.

Action: Eric Hughes, EPA, will follow up with Denise Coleman and Ashley Lenig, NRCS, on questions specifically related to CSP practices and additional collaboration with NRCS. Eric will also follow up with Mark Dubin, VA Cooperative Extension, on additional recommendations moving forward.

Action: Eric Hughes, EPA, will follow up with EPA regarding the information and format that data would be shared with jurisdictions, should remote sensing based verification take place.

Minutes

I. Welcome, Roll Call, Review Meeting Minutes

Speaker: Kathy Brasier, outgoing AgWG Chair

Kathy opened the meeting with a roll call of the workgroup members and meeting participants. In-person meeting attendees were asked to add their name and affiliation to a sign-in sheet, and virtual participants will be asked to share their name and affiliation using the meeting “Chat” function. Kathy asked AgWG members to approve the January AgWG meeting minutes before providing introductory remarks to the group.

Decisions:

1. The AgWG approved the January 2026 meeting minutes.

II. AgWG Leadership Transition

Speaker: Kathy Brasier, outgoing AgWG Chair

The AgWG leadership team has received confirmation from the Clean Water Goal Team Co-Chairs that workgroups with nominees for vacant leadership positions are permitted to move forward with the selection process for filling Chair/Vice Chair vacancies. Eric Hughes, AgWG Coordinator, provided additional context to AgWG members and AgWG members were be asked to approve Jenn Fetter – the nominee for the open leadership position – as AgWG Vice Chair. Eric Hughes, AgWG Coordinator, presented certificates of appreciation to Kathy Brasier, Dave Graybill (At-Large), and Elizabeth Hoffman (MD Jurisdictional representative) for their years of service to the AgWG.

NOTE: Actions related to confirming new workgroup *members* are still paused. We will take the appropriate next steps to fill remaining AgWG vacancies when granted permission to do so.

Decisions:

1. The AgWG approved Jenn Fetter as the next Vice Chair of the Agriculture Workgroup. With this approval, Caitlin Grady will assume the role of AgWG Chair through February of 2028. The workgroup leadership and staffing team will follow up with AgWG members on the process for confirming new At-Large members once we have received additional direction from the Clean Water Goal Team or Management Board/PSC.

Discussion:

Caroline Kleis (in chat): View Jenn's bio [here!](#)

Clint Gill (in chat): Thank you for your service Kathy!

III. Strategies For Success: Collaborative Watershed Restoration

Speaker: Kate Beats, PA DEP

Kate Beats, with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, provided an overview of the recently published [WIP and CAP Case Study](#) from PA DEP. This resource outlines Pennsylvania’s strategy for collaborating with local communities to empower them to identify and achieve their water quality goals. The key takeaways from the report were highlighted, and specific points of interest for the agricultural sector were shared. Time was

allotted at the end of the presentation for the workgroup to discuss these takeaways and any questions.

Actions:

1. The AgWG received an overview of the recently published WIP and CAP Case Study, available [here](#). If you have any questions on the case study and overview shared with the AgWG, please reach out to Kate Beats (Kbeats@pa.gov).

Discussion:

Caroline Kleis (in chat): CAP Case Study:

<https://files.dep.state.pa.us/Water/ChesapeakeBayOffice/WIPIII/PADEP%20CAP%20Case%20Study.pdf>

Kristen Saacke Blunk: I was struck by your last comment about adapting the process or principles. Is it your sense that the other states have a window of need for this kind of process, or is it your sense that this model works really well for Pennsylvania? I am just curious if you have feedback that you are seeing this as an export process to the other states.

Kate Beats: I think it could be because this has worked well for us. This is a very new process for Pennsylvania. So, we figured if it is working here, in theory it should work everywhere else too.

Eric Hughes: How did you determine who was going to serve as CAP coordinator in any particular county? How did you make that call?

Kate Beats: We didn't. It was entirely up to the county. All we did was we created a one page scope of work that said these are the known things we need the coordinator to do- things like facilitating meetings, make sure they're distributing notes after the meetings, doing presentations, doing the annual progress reporting, that kind of work. We need them to specifically do those jobs. Everything else is their decision.

Amanda Barber: There's a variety of funding sources – state, federal, whatever else– and then you also talked about being able to track where those funds were used when projects were reported. Did the individual county decide the source of funding? How did that work?

Kate Beats: The federal funding required most effective basins, so it had to be located in what was deemed the most effective basin area which, for Pennsylvania, is all but 12 acres. So, it really wasn't as typical. Initially it was most effective basins - disadvantaged communities, and that was a much smaller area. So, we said we're going to give Lancaster County X amount of MEB-DC funds. In the award letters that we send out, we say this is your total funding, this is the amount you have for this funding pot, and it has to be used in this way. Then we track that out with the counties, and that was always part of the conversations. One of the things our coordinators do is they keep a project and grant tracking spreadsheet which has a tab for approved projects that they did not allocate the funding to but could be added in if a project falls out. Then they have a page for budget updates on every project and then they have a budget page where they say this is the funding that we put to this project, and on that page they have to identify what the funding source is so that we can see it.

Amanda Barber: Did you create those metrics?

Kate Beats: We created the initial version. We learned some lessons about its functionality and then stole HRG's version and distributed that to the rest of our coordinators. I like to say we are magpies. If we can find something else that's working better, we'll do that!

Caitlin Grady: I love the way you have tried to do all the lessons learned and build this out. You, DEP, are trying to take on burdens so that your local partners don't have to. My question to you is how is DEP deciding to take more burdens on to alleviate it elsewhere in the system, and how are you managing that burden?

Kate Beats: My team is very flexible. We just kind of go with the flow and adapt, which is a little bit different from broader DEP because we don't have very specific rules since we don't have that regulation behind us. So, it is just adding in as much as we can and scaling up when we can. When we started this in 2019, there were five-ish people in Bay office doing the efforts. By 2022/2023, we had 40 because we brought in non-point source side and we brought in compliance. Those are the statewide programs that have touched the Bay efforts, but we were able to scale up the number of people available. So, my section started as just the three of us. There's now five of us fully dedicated to county support. We had another five people dedicated to the technical support. We were able to scale up within DEP itself. We created a regional CAP support team, so I recruited people from the DEP regional offices to help me do that coordination and support the counties because one person just can't. So, we are very much so plucking from wherever we need the support and then we have the state action leaders from various agencies who are part of the development of the WIP, and we pulled in their expertise as well.

Suzanne Shea: I am Suzanne Shea, Adams County Farmer, and I was wondering if the microbial level of information has been verified in any of the projects yet?

Kate Beats: That's where our mutual accountability comes in. We just want to see the projects going in, and we rely on our partners at the conservation district to be the connection to that level of detail.

IV. Bay in the Balance Takeaways

Speaker: Caitlin Grady, incoming AgWG Chair

Caitlin provided a summary of key takeaways from the Bay in the Balance Conference and facilitated a discussion that builds upon the closing session of Bay in the Balance: *Bringing It All Together: Sharing Strategies, Defining Initiatives, and Prioritizing Action*. The AgWG was asked to self-reflect and engage in group discussion on the following questions:

- Of the many topics discussed this week, which are most in line with the scope of the Ag Workgroup?
 - Which of these has the greatest opportunity to “move the needle” in the overall Bay restoration effort?
- What role does the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership have in advancing the priorities outlined over the course of the conference?

Discussion:

Jenn Fetter: I did take apart Bay in the Balance and the topics we talked about and the alignment to the things that are addressed in two major pillars of the priority document for this workgroup, and I thought about what really aligned and some of the things that didn't. So, things like accelerating implementation, innovation, funding and incentives, technology for BMP verification and data sharing, and the recognition of co-benefits of some of these practices all were great topics discussed at the conference that align with our priorities. There were a few things that we didn't really address at the conference that are in the priorities and a few things that we did address at the conference that are not in the priorities. One that sticks out to me and is near and dear to my heart is that workforce development. As Matt said, it was very

present in this conference as an urgent issue, and we have been talking about it for decades. It is not something new. But I think we're at the point where we've addressed a lot of the other really urgent issues over time. This is one we're still stuck on and, because it is not in the priorities as a clear issue for this workgroup to address, my recommendation is that we start thinking about workforce as an enabler in the conversations that we're having at the workgroup. So, whatever priority we are talking about, whatever priority we are trying to address, we should remember to say, ok, what do we need from the workforce in order to do this and how do we get that addressed?

Caitlin Grady: You said that was one in the category where we did hear about it in the last 2.5 days, but it wasn't in the priority document. Do you want to share one of the opposite [things that are in the priority documents that we didn't really talk about]?

Jenn Fetter: One of the topics that came up in conversations but was not one of the major topics of discussion at this conference was the systemic use of monitoring data and what we are going to do moving forward with that. I think that really sits in some of the priorities of this workgroup, but we didn't really address it much at this conference. That's something we might need to talk about more.

Jim Riddell: I go back to the slide from Bob Waring, the economic side of production ag, conservation projects, and all of that, I am encouraged and heard in a lot of places that we need to understand that more, care more, do more budgeting, and show those budgets. I thought that was of value. Taking the other side of one of the things we've talked about in the workgroup, we've talked a lot about verification and the needs. A lot of what I heard this week was about self-reporting with guardrails, whether it's spot checks or whatever needs to happen. We are still seeing that we're not getting the accurate information we need necessarily across the whole watershed. Self-reporting with guardrails, whatever it needs to be, until we do have the body of data that we can trust and depend on are some of the things that I heard but we've also discussed in this workgroup.

Kate Bresaw: Data gaps. I think it's been a long time since the BMP verification task force sunset, and it's been a long time since we've spent a lot of time thinking about that. I think that data gaps existed then that maybe have been built up since then. The time may be ripe to start re-thinking about that. I know in York, 100% of their farms get inspected every year. We get some BMP verification data in Pennsylvania, and we've got some room to pass/fail data. Maybe it is time to start looking at that again to see what our credit durations truly are and/or can we afford at 10 years to lose 80%. So, trying to rethink some of that.

Robb Meinen: I was a facilitator, so I got to hear a lot of great conversation. I think there could be a need for some really cool multi-state, subject specific workshops. For instance, in my world of nutrient management I have been working in for 25 years, I go south of the border to Maryland, and I don't even know what their program really is about. Why don't we get together with the Maryland people, the Virginia people, New York, and Delaware, for a couple of days and ask, what do you do? Tell me what each state does. We can identify our differences, find alignments, find reciprocity, and then transfer some of the efficiencies that we have in any one state in our programs to our neighbors and start to align some of our common objectives. That's something I thought would be nice to do. It doesn't have to be nutrient management. It could be whatever group or subject matter you want.

Mark Dubin: A number of years ago, Robb, we hosted a cover crop two-day workshop and brought all the states together. It was nice because we did it outside of the AgWG forum, and it gave us the opportunity to bring in other partners in the discussion. That workshop was really the impetus for a number of partners re-looking at their cover crop programs, at adopting new directions, and all of that. So, I just want to tag on that that's an example we did a number of

years ago. But, it could be any topic. I think there was a real value for that, and people were still at the conference talking about it.

Eric Hughes: What role did the AgWG play in that? That wasn't a dedicated workgroup event?

Mark Dubin: That was a hosted/sponsored event that we held. It could be a model for how we do something like that, so we're not constricted on when we do it, timing and all that.

Kristen Saacke Blunk: I work as a private sector to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation in support of the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund programs. One thing I was hearing Elizabeth and Leon talk about and kind of goes to the example Robb just brought up is that these cross state areas that are going to benefit from elevation and exchange across the states are, in my opinion, perfect places for NFWF to invest planning and technical assistance funding into for the purpose of supporting facilitation or any kind of external resources needed to help support the states. Of course, the states have all the expertise they need to come to the table and have the conversation, but it might be that you need funding to make it so that it's not all of the states' workload to integrate and consolidate the data but to have support for that process. It just so happens that the Small Watersheds Grants planning and technical assistance RFP is out right now. So, I just want to put that out there.

Eric Hughes: Historically, workforce hasn't been a part of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed agreement. Now it's a dedicated outcome. Where we sit in the program architecture, as of now, is underneath the Clean Water Goal Team. I think that has long dictated the scope of the Workgroup, and we're focused on water quality. Traditionally, it would've been viewed as something outside of our scope to focus on something like workforce. But I think what we heard this week is if there aren't people to help implement these practices, workforce shortfalls are inherently a water quality issue. So, I think that there's a good opportunity for us moving forward to partner with the new Workforce workgroup or the Goal Team that's handling that work as they are developing their management strategy to get on board and really push for ag in that space as well.

Mark Dubin: Tagging onto that, the Bay Commission released a report a few years ago on workforce development.

Dave Graybill: One thing Anna said on the first day of table setting was the life, the land, the water, and the people, and I really appreciate the fact that they were simplifying this now through 2040. If you simplify it, you guys can focus a little bit better than if you have a whole bunch of things to shoot at.

Caitlin Grady: Now we have some reflections we can memorialize in our notes for this month's meeting.

V. BREAK

VI. Group Engagement Activity

Speaker: Meeting Attendees

This meeting was the first time in six years that the AgWG has gathered in person. The leadership and staffing team shared questions (see below) for meeting participants to answer in front of the group with the goal of learning about and engaging with one another. Both in-person and virtual participants had the opportunity to share responses to questions related to their Bay-related work.

- **QUESTION 1:** What is one project you have led or supported in the last year related to agriculture in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed that gives you the greatest sense of pride?

- QUESTION 2: What is one thing related to agriculture in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed that you are most looking forward to in the coming year?

Discussion:

Kathy Brasier (in chat): Those online, you are also invited to participate in these discussions! When we return from break, raise your hand and we will open your mic so you can respond to the two questions! Ready to jump in? Just raise your hand when you are ready to introduce yourself!

Caitlin Grady: I am going to give you an example of how we might do this with my own reflection. I work for the Global Food Institute, which is a part of George Washington University. In the past year, I took great pride in working to close out the Thriving Ag Project, which Matt and several of you in this room were a part of over the last six years. That was a major project and effort, and it ended as of December 31st, 2025, and I was actually very excited about the things we were able to do in that final year, including getting some more information disseminated about the things we did on the project and the things that we learned. I would say I am really excited about one of the things I heard here that there is acknowledgement of and openness to thinking about what types of people we need to bring into these conversations to think about them in new ways who haven't traditionally been at the table with us. So, I am excited that everyone seems so open to that and that that is an area of motivation where I see a lot of potential for bringing new people into the conversations about improving the Bay.

Tyler Groh: One thing I was really excited about over the last four years is that we've done a lot of biochar work and have been really trying to see if it is a viable option for farms in the Bay. We've got some water data, some greenhouse gas data, talking to US biochar initiative and are really going to start applying some of the lessons learned at their in-person session coming up in Lancaster in April. What I am looking forward to in the future is continuing to work for the Center for Ag Conservation Assistance Training and looking at other conservation practices, modeling improvements, things like that.

Matt Royer: Our center works with farmers in the lower Susquehanna region. One farmer in particular runs a beef operation and was really kind of looking for assistance in navigating partnership and funding sources, and we were able to help connect and were connected to NRCS district conservationist and figured out a way to blend NRCS EQIP funding with ACAP funding, CAP funding, NFWF, and others to fill the gap. We have been able to use this farm to host a variety of different tours over the last year just because the farmers are so grateful for that partnership and proud to show off the work they've done. So, that's a real source of pride for me. Every other year, I teach a small experiential course for ERM students on the Chesapeake Bay. That's coming up this coming year. I am always really rewarded by that. We cap it at 15 students, it's a small course, we get to really know each other and we take them down to the Bay and spend a weekend at Echo Hill outdoor school on the Eastern Shore in Maryland.

Amanda Barber: I am really proud to be a part of the Ag Advisory Committee, and I am really excited about the opportunities that that committee is going to provide the program. One of the things we are doing right now is talking about soil health and how we can partner with the AgWG on that topic. I also wanted to mention that, in New York, we have robust nutrient management planning standards. We have found, unfortunately, that that has in some cases limited our ability to do some basic nutrient management planning, especially with some of our smaller farms. We have a special project we have developed and have been working on with University of Vermont to modify their goCrop program so we can use that for basic nutrient management planning in New York. We're really excited because the big thing we are really

pushing for is the opportunity to develop an app to do record keeping and allow us to work with farmers to do record keeping. The vision is that you can click on your farm, click on a field, click on reporting, and you may be able to check a box that you are doing manure spreading with a manure spreader and, when you get back to cell service, it uploads into your database file and it makes it easy for farmers. So, we're working on that and really excited about that.

Alisha Mulkey: My pride and joy is the healthy soil program at the Department. It's had a lot of farmer response, I love to talk about it, so come find me if you want to do that. I'm most excited to support the Advisory Committee and shepherd that along with the help of our Secretary.

Cindy Shreve: We received a Most Effective Basin award. We were able to get cooperators involved that maybe haven't participated previously. So, that was a huge win for West Virginia. What I am most excited about is potentially investigating new BMPs we can get credit for in West Virginia.

Kate Bresaw: I spend a lot of my time working on our programs. I have been spending a lot of time trying to work with stakeholders to bring them into a similar if not the same place. While not directly related to the Bay, because we have a statewide program, some of them are very specific. Bringing this all into one place creates less opportunity for error, less opportunity for confusion. So, that's one of the things that I am very excited to be working on. There's so much really exciting stuff coming. One of the projects I am very excited about is our ability to create a feedback loop to the people that are entering our data and helping them make it useful statewide. This BMP data is going to go on our open data portal, and we'd use that in planning. It's not just for the Chesapeake Bay. But, closing that feedback loop and making sure that our field folks understand the value of the data, what we are asking of them, and how they can use that in their day-to-day.

Marel King: We're more in the policy development realm, so our arc seems very long sometimes, especially when we've had some big things recently. There are a lot of things we are working on. I've done nothing to the scale the Penn State folks have put into this conference, but I was really looking forward to this conference. I am really proud to be a part of the Steering Committee, and I am looking forward to seeing what happens afterwards.

Ashley Lenig: One of the things I really enjoy about my job is working with the national water quality initiative. Part of that effort is to work with partners, do educational outreach, and provide technical financial assistance within targeted watersheds to have the streams no longer listed as ag impaired streams. Seeing small streams getting de-listed, improvements being made, and projects being done in this area are a source of pride. In the coming year, it would be the same- continuing with that and also assisting with some Chesapeake Bay coordination activities under the leadership of Denise Coleman.

Denise Coleman: My biggest source of pride this year is that we will have 60 easements for the endangered bog turtle this year. So, I am very happy about that. Every one of those easements has a turtle or is directly adjacent to a turtle. So, happy to see the diversification of that. What I am looking forward to next year is closing out on the Kittatinny Sentinel Landscape project which, if any of you are familiar with Sentinel landscapes, the Department of Defense and USDA has been working together to get a contiguous block of protected land. So, I think we will have 17,000 acres protected on that ridge, and that is 17,000 within the Bay watershed. So, we are really happy about that.

Justin Cook: One thing I take pride in most is working with cooperators on the ground in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed area, working with cooperators, and putting BMPs on the ground. One thing I look forward to is working with more cooperators.

Grant Gulibon: One of the things we are most proud of at the Farm Bureau is continued support for the ACAP program. Dedicated funding is now available to make sure the program continues beyond 2026 because of the success it has had in bringing farmers to the table and helping them get projects on the ground that they wouldn't have otherwise been able to do, which has been very helpful not just in the Bay watershed, but around the rest of the state. For the coming year, I'm chairing Pennsylvania DEP Ag Advisory board, and we just kicked off the process of looking at the renewal of our CAFO permit. So, looking forward to working with our group there on getting a good product out that can hopefully be an inspiration for other states in the watershed if they're working toward their water quality issues as well.

Eric Rosenbaum: Our Rosetree team was involved in a Pay for Performance project through the SRBC/CWIP pool of money where we had farmers reduce their nitrogen rates through the use of a biological nitrogen product. We had a lot of success. We had 12,500 acres rolled in that, and farmers were very excited to do it and excited to do it again in 2026. One thing I am excited about in 2026 is we are working towards using precision ag data to calculate economic return on investment and then parlay that into conservation, identifying lower yielding high nutrient loss areas where our clients should walk away from, not farm, or put into grass plantings to be more profitable.

Jennifer Bratthauer: I've worked at the Franklin County District for 11 years, but I just really felt the need to do something different, and I really enjoy writing plans with farmers and working with farmers on their nutrient management plans and conservation plans. I think education is a big deal, and I feel like I can educate the farmers better in my role now. I am always looking for something bigger or better and to make improvements for the farmers and make improvements for the environment. Just because something has been done this way for 30-40 years doesn't mean that is the best way to have it. There's always room for improvement.

Dave Graybill: Last year was my final year farming. When you had your final year of high school, what was it? It was graduation. Last year of college, you graduated. So, I graduated from crop farming last year. Yes, I am watching farm die because it is becoming a solar field. The landowner decided that was going to happen, and there's a lot of negativity about that in the community. One of the things I am looking forward to in this coming year is to help them understand that we can't make changes to those decisions, but there are good people working to make that field happen. I have good relationships with E&S folks on the farm right now, I have good relationships with the construction team, I've already talked with the supervisor that will be onsite putting in the panels, and then I'm working with the conservation district on the nuanced things. For example, the other day wife calls me and says there's a problem with the construction entrance they just put in to move equipment on and off the site from Route 35. I made a phone call to the supervisor and asked if they could check it out. So, my goal is to make sure as we move forward in this project, the community folks may not like it, but at least together we can work through it. Because we sell honey right from our front door, they have to come across the project. Invariably if someone has not been there in a couple of months, it's not uncommon to meet them at the front door in tears because they can't believe the farm looking like that. So, my wife and I are there to help them walk through that. Now, when I leave this committee, it will be another graduation. As you walk through life, those difficult things come up. You have to be able to know where you are going and what you are doing. I am looking forward to expanding the bee business. You have to be looking forward. If you are looking back, you are looking at the problems, and they become bigger problems.

Jim Riddell: My family are sixth generation beef farmers from Virginia. In the last year or so, we finished up projects with about 13 waterers. I've got four grandsons, and we are looking to the future. For the next generation, it's all about water quality. I'm also the government relation specialist for Virginia Cattlemen's Association. I am chair of the Agribusiness Council in

Virginia and, I am most proud of the fact that, in the last three years, we have had full funding of our BMP program (245 million dollars in Virginia). So, we've had full funding in the last three years. I am proud of that. We need to keep working on that. It's not something that's a given. It's very important because we are close to the goal. How did we get there? Working with all of our partners, and putting it all together, that's how we got there. I'm looking forward to working with this group. I learn so much from you all in different counties, towns, and states. You all do great things. So, I am really tickled to be part of the group.

Kathy Brasier: I am proud that we finished our priority planning document in the last year. That was not a small lift, and it was a wonderful experience to have all of the input of everybody in this room into what this looks like. I am looking forward to returning to some research. One of those is a project that looks at the impacts of collaboration. So, not unlike some of what we have heard over the last couple of days to see what the minor level impacts of collaboration are in local partnerships.

Caroline Kleis: I am proud of us for gathering in person here. I know it's been a long time. I think six years. We're trying to do virtual and in person, so thanks for bearing with us. But, I think it's good to see everyone in person. Like Kathy said, I was going to bring up the planning and prioritization document, working on that, and really focusing on the group's priorities this year.

Robb Meinen: The Nutrient Management Education Program at Penn State, I have two people who work for me- Don Orner and Dr. Kathleen Arrington whom some of you might have met or saw this week. I am very proud of their growth in the couple of years that they've been with me into even more of a fantastic resource and someone that moves things forward. Looking forward, we talked about funding. Some of it is actually going to come our way from our grant with the State Conservation Commission. Our grant with them will receive an increase. So, I am looking forward to having the ability to hire two new people that will help us move the needle in nutrient management in Pennsylvania in the next five years as we have our future visions. Another part of that funding will be to purchase a dribble bar, which is an emerging technology that we see being utilized. We do not have good research on the nitrogen availability for that in Pennsylvania, but taking that, researching that, and putting it into our agronomy guide which will transfer into our manure management plan, our nutrient management plan, so we can encourage the adoption of that and possibly funding down the road as a nitrogen conservation tool.

Suzanne Shea: Every time you say research, my pulse goes up! My favorite project from last year was working with a farmer who is a market gardener. He texts me all the time to tell me the emails and texts he gets from his buyers (restaurant owners) that ask him things like what are you doing to your lettuce, it tastes so much better! So, that's been exciting. It comes back to microbes – that's what we do. We make a compost using your native ingredients, so your native microbes are building that soil and it's unlocking the nutrients and a flavor that's so satisfying to work in what I do. To save farmers that are ready to possibly lose their farm because of the expenses for the inputs. I talked to farmers in Tennessee that spend a million dollars a year on inputs for 1,000 acres of crop. How do you survive that? So, we need to keep that in mind and help our farmers navigate all of that. My upcoming favorite thing is I have started a microscope program that I take to schools to have kids see living microbes on the spot in real time. Before I go, I have 4/100 that have ever seen soil microbes through a microscope, and then 98% said they are more interested in the soil after they have seen that. So, that's an exciting thing. I am beginning a project on April 2nd in North Carolina. They were hit with a flood really bad. You hear all these heartbreaking things, and these kids have had to go through that. So, I'm donating a microscope to them. We are doing a three-year study on flood soil and how it regenerates

itself. We are going to write a whitepaper when it's done, and each of those kid's names are going to be on there. So, that's my favorite.

Erin Sonnenburg: Something I am really looking forward to is the integration of ag voices into the Advisory Committees. And then, I look forward to Ag Progress days every year.

Eric Hughes: Over the last year, I am really proud of the partnership for completing the huge task of revising the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement and adding farms and agriculture at multiple points. Huge shoutout to the Agricultural Advisory Committee. I think you all played a major part in getting that to be a prominent part of the agreement or a piece that wasn't considered before. In the coming year, I am looking forward to, fingers crossed, getting some certainty. With structure and governance at the Bay Program level, it can be difficult engaging in this space and trying to make sure that we are staying in alignment with all of the different things that we are hearing, all the processes, all the timelines. So, as we start to get a little bit more certainty, as we start to get a little bit more direction, that will enable us to really jumpstart taking things that we hear at conferences like this and applying them and really using it to move the needle.

Mark Dubin: This past year has been a big transition from the University of Maryland over to Virginia Tech, and I'm looking forward to that in the coming year and to develop new agricultural BMP implementation data for the Commonwealth and work with a variety of partners including producers directly, which I always enjoy, as well as with agribusiness and tapping new sources of partnerships out there across the Commonwealth.

Jenn Fetter: This past year and the past three years, my biggest work has been around building, growing, and implementing our new Center for Ag Conservation Assistance Training. The thing that has happened in this last year since the Fall that I think is a really huge source of pride not just for me but for us as a group, is that we had the first students enrolled in agricultural structural engineering course at Penn State. It's been a very long time since any kind of structural engineering has been taught in our ag and biological engineering department. We are really excited to lead the charge to bring that back to coursework in all the land grant universities across the country, because they've all given that coursework up and now we are seeing it in the workforce and it's terrifying. So, that was just huge for us to pass those students through that course this fall. Something I am excited about is the role that you all just threw me into. I think the piece of that that excites me the most is that I have been dealing with local issues and local change for the last few years, and this will be a refreshing opportunity to really dig deep into scale change and systemic change that plays a nice counterpart to that.

Hunter Landis (in chat): 1. Supported AMT overall efforts and output in the past year (first time working on AMT) 2. Increased use of technology: at the field level to enhance managing nutrients, also using technology/data to better track/report BMPs.

VII. (Re) Evaluating Ag BMPs for CBP's Suite of Modeling Tools

Speaker: Eric Hughes, AgWG Coordinator

The AgWG is responsible for making decisions related to the crediting of agricultural best management practices in the Chesapeake Bay Program's modeling tools. To effectively act on this responsibility, we must understand which ag practices are credited and when that credit was assigned or updated. Key information from the [CBP Quick Reference Guide for Best Management Practices](#) (ag section: pages 30-103) was summarized and shared with the workgroup. Eric Hughes, EPA, walked the group through the associated spreadsheet and engaged the group in discussion. While this is non-decisional, workgroup members will receive a separate request to provide formal feedback on ag BMPs to consider adding to CBP's suite of

modeling tools and on ag BMPs already receiving model credit that should be considered for an update based on best available science.

Actions:

1. Eric Hughes, EPA, provided the AgWG with an overview of a spreadsheet summarizing BMPs and the last time they were evaluated for credit, as well as a breakout of potential opportunities for remote sensing of agricultural BMPs. Members will receive a request to provide their feedback by Thursday, April 9th. Feedback should be provided to Eric Hughes (Hughes.Eric@epa.gov) and Caroline Kleis (Kleis.Caroline@epa.gov), and discussion will continue at a subsequent meeting.
 - a. Eric Hughes, EPA, will follow up with Denise Coleman and Ashley Lenig, NRCS, on questions specifically related to CSP practices and additional collaboration with NRCS. Eric will also follow up with Mark Dubin, VA Cooperative Extension, on additional recommendations moving forward.

Discussion:

Caroline Kleis (in chat): This spreadsheet and additional meeting materials are available on today's calendar page: <https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/event/agriculture-workgroup-meeting-march-2026>

Kathy Brasier (in chat): Any of our online participants - please raise your hand if you would like to add your thoughts about these questions: what is missing from BMP listing? what needs to be revised?

Jim Riddell: We are using standards from years past, but the 10-year credit duration is a real problem. Anyone that has ever built a fence or paid to build a fence knows that you just don't have a fence there and then, "poof", they're gone. In 2017 in Virginia, we showed 57,000 acres of stream exclusion. Three years later it showed 19,000. I keep asking the question why did this happen? We've found that this is tied to the reporting of the NRCS data. It's credit duration, lifespan, whatever you call it. That's just one example, and there's a couple more.

Alisha Mulkey: [Question was not captured due to audio error in recording]

Eric Hughes: So, that's part of it. I think what you're mentioning is something we can talk about- the verification side of things, credit duration, etc.

Denise Coleman: [Full comment not captured due to audio error in recording] ...Credit conservation stewardship contracts, they help with the verification. Ashley is program manager of CSP, so she will correct me and she can explain this better than I can. In order for work to be funded, you have to document resource concerns, and you have to document whether those concerns are being met and what is actually out there on the landscape. So, there are legacy practices that may have lost their lifespan that will be in the plan for a CSP contract. What I encourage you to do is not look solely at the practice types, that's one thing, but look at the program and anything that the program is pulling in because you can verify that that practice is there that may be a legacy practice is still working and will work for the next five years because that CSP contract is going to be in place.

Ashley Lenig: Through the Conservation Stewardship Program, we do an assessment of the operation and that entails saying if things are existing or observed and then if they are functional. So, if they are there, they are getting credit in this assessment. Some of those things aren't going to be planned.

Denise Coleman: That's going to be existing in our data and our mapping. So, I think looking at the CSP program and looking at those identifiers because the planner is going to have to make a judgement call. The planner has to make that judgement call and that assessment. When he tries to evaluate more CSP, he's going to make an assessment whether it is functional or not and

whether it is working to the capacity that it should. If it's not, they are not going to mark that as a practice that's acceptable. So, this is an automatic way to get a lot of legacy practices in because they have to be evaluated as they are coming through. With CSP, it's the whole farm, so you are not doing just one field. You have to evaluate these based on the whole operation, so you are getting this credit across a wide array of farms that you aren't getting now because you aren't looking at CSP. So, it's very important that you not only document the enhancements that CSP is putting in, but what the planner is looking at. That planner, if they don't have job approval authority, they will ask somebody who does to say should we be counting this or not? They're going to look in favor of the farmer to make sure that they can get into this.

Jenn Fetter: And those aren't reported along with your new BMPs?

Denise Coleman: No, because they are not a newly applied practice. But, it's an existing practice that's still functioning and it has to function for the next five years, for the life of that practice.

Kate Bresaw: You have the data on your end that we could get added to the aggregate?

Denise Coleman: We have the data, and it should be in the downloads for you guys. But, you have got to look at CSP, and I think that's been the reluctance of some folks because they don't want to look at CSP. Mark, you can talk about this, but all of our CSP enhancements crosswalk to a practice. So, there should be something that's easily done for that.

Eric Hughes: I will echo what Regional Administrator Van Blarcom Lackey said on day one. We are very much looking forward to enhancing our partnership with you all. So, that is that we are very much looking forward to enhancing our partnership with you all. So, this is a space that I could absolutely use an education, so I want to come and follow up with you all after this to see what we can do in this space.

Denise Coleman: Mark may have the history that I don't because I've been in and out of this task force over these years. Why has there always been a reluctance on CSP? But, I think we should get beyond that.

Jim Riddell: That's not the only one. It's not just the NRCS data that's causing this problem. But, it's a major one.

Amanda Barber: I think there is the potential that some of our definitions, some of our understandings of the practices have been changed, and maybe we need to update some things, maybe we need to change some credit, and we need to re-look at them. We are changing how we implement these practices. I think, in particular, there was some interest in some cover crop strategies. Maybe there should be some changes in our credit. That's one issue. I think the other issue is that, and this is going to vary by state, where the data comes from. In New York, all the data comes from the soil and water conservation districts. We're the gatekeepers for the data. We provide it in the aggregated format to the state who then reports it. So, when it comes to verification, we have and know where every single practice is. So, we can go back through and verify all of those practices. So, when they reach their expiration, we can reevaluate and recredit them. My understanding is some of the problems with the NRCS reported practices is there is no known location. So, when they reach their lifespan, they expire, and they disappear from the system.

Denise Coleman: For CSP, you should be able to have that system talk to you about when that contract life is and when that assessment is done.

Amanda Barber: I'm also talking about practices that are done under EQIP.

Denise Coleman: They reach their lifespan, but they are still functioning. Our planner has to decide.

Amanda Barber: [Beginning of comment not captured due to audio error in recording] If they don't go into CSP, you lose them.

Jim Riddell: We are not getting the data. I hear we are getting closer with NRCS, but NRCS is not giving us the data we need.

Denise Coleman: You have all the data you need. You have a USGS download.

Amanda Barber: Is it aggregated?

Denise Coleman: It's aggregated by county.

Amanda Barber: So, we don't know where they are in the county.

Denise Coleman: I think that's part of the discussion to have in the future as we look at this. We can do some intelligent thinking of where those practices are.

Jim Riddell: We are focused on what is missing, what's the gap, and where do we need to go? We've brought this up multiple times, and it's supported by data. In Virginia, we are actually going through the extra step of building a survey to gather information because we don't have that type of specific data.

Eric Hughes: I think the bottom line is there is opportunity for us to talk more. I think the next step is for me to follow up with Ashley and Denise, and I'm looking forward to having those discussions and seeing what we can do.

Denise Coleman: You can say that, with CSP, there has been a reluctance. But, I think CSP would document those EQIP practices that get that producer to where that score is.

Caitlin Grady: I think this is a good topic we maybe want put on the April agenda.

Mark Dubin: I would be happy to talk about some of these data things. I have some recommendations that I've put out there that I think would be good for this group to think about on how to move forward on some of these things.

Kate Bresaw: [Comment not captured due to audio error in recording]

Jenn Fetter: The locations and the need to re-verify gives serious thoughts about the workforce that's needed to go out and re-assess.

Mark Dubin: I did some work way back and identified some things with CSP that would be worth bringing back to this group.

V. Remote Sensing Based Verification of BMPs

Speaker: Eric Hughes (on behalf of EPA)

The Chesapeake Bay Program Office is beginning the process of soliciting partnership feedback on priority BMPs for watershed-wide remote sensing-based tracking and verification. CBPO staff are exploring opportunities to conduct watershed-wide remote sensing of BMPs with the end goal of reducing the reporting effort and associated resource expenditure shouldered by our partners. Suitability of remote sensing as a solution for the tracking and verification of ag BMPs is being assessed; workgroup members will receive a spreadsheet (also to be posted on meeting page) of agriculture-sector BMPs in CAST that includes *initial* findings from the suitability assessment (i.e., which BMPs may be candidates for this work, and which aren't). Eric Hughes, EPA, walked the group through the "remote sensing" tab of the Ag BMP spreadsheet and opened the conversation up for group discussion. While this is non-decisional, workgroup members will receive a separate request to provide formal feedback on priority BMPs and ongoing efforts related to remote sensing of agricultural conservation practices. Eric shared EPA's perspective on this effort.

Actions:

1. Eric Hughes, EPA, will follow up with EPA regarding the information and format that data would be shared with jurisdictions, should remote sensing based verification take place.

Discussion:

Caroline Kleis (in chat): We are on the "Remote Sensing" Tab of the same spreadsheet: <https://www.chesapeakebay.net/files/documents/Ag-BMPs-Spreadsheet-March-AgWG-Meeting-1.xlsx>

Lisa Duriancik (in the chat): Just sharing our slide from the Monday afternoon presentation on remote sensing approaches for conservation practices in watersheds that began with CEAP development, and has continued in collaboration with USGS, Dean Hively, now USGS, formerly USDA ARS and Greg McCarty, USDA ARS Retired. Here are two papers you may wish to reference: <https://doi.org/10.1002/jeq2.70082> and <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rse.2020.111943>

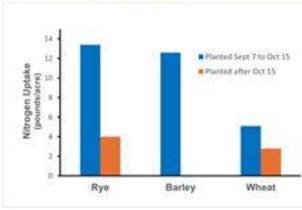
Also under CEAP, ARS in Idaho, in partnership with UVA, has worked on remote sensing and AI techniques on irrigation mapping in watersheds: <https://scinet.usda.gov/posts/2025-08-04-nouwakpo-hoque>

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

USDA Agricultural Research Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Satellite Imagery for Cover Crop Performance and Crop Residue Cover

- Remote sensing tools have been developed to map, monitor, report, and verify winter cover crop practices and outcomes.
- Landsat satellite imagery detects winter cover crop biomass, nitrogen content, cover crop green-up and termination and ground cover over winter. Was validated with soil and biomass data from CEAP Watershed.
 - tool used to adapt MDA cover crop program incentives for more effective species, planting date and method, and termination date to improve nutrient reduction
 - tool used operationally by the MD Dept. of Ag. to monitor cover crop performance on >25,000 fields annually
- Additionally, crop residue cover data can be linked to tillage intensity and used to map and monitor adoption of reduced tillage at landscape scale.



Crop	Planted Sept 7 to Oct 15 (pounds/acre)	Planted after Oct 15 (pounds/acre)
Rye	~13.5	~4.5
Barley	~12.5	~3.5
Wheat	~5.5	~2.5

<https://doi.org/10.1002/jeq2.70082> <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rse.2020.111943>

Soil Science and Resource Assessment (SSRA) Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP)

Denise Coleman: [Beginning of comment not captured due to audio error in recording] ...Looking at your yellows, some of your green could be indicators that your yellows could be greens. For example, an underground outlet or something like that, that may be something that's underground and you can't see, but there are indicators of other practices that are in place that are going to look at that underground outlet and determine that something is going to be there. So, one of them was poultry. How do you tell the difference between the poultry barn and hog barn between the two facilities with roofs? We can use indicators. Usually there's an outdoor/outside poultry composting facility. Therefore, you can say it's a poultry barn. Then you can look at the size of the barn and see if there's an actual storage that's next to it because the barn is that much bigger than an industrial poultry barn. So, there are things that may be red but, with other indicators in the field, are probably going to be green. So, I think that's something people should think about.

Eric Hughes: I think that's an important point. Ultimately, it's going to come down to what the partnership is comfortable with. So, if we identify potential indicators and the partnership agrees that there is validity to the use of those indicators, then I think that's a possibility.

Amanda Barber: We too did a pilot with Dean several years ago. One of the limitations in New York was snow cover and cloud cover and the satellite's ability to then interpret what's happening. I wonder, have things changed? Are we now able to somehow compensate for that? I am wondering if you are doing that verification and let's just say you come up with a certain number of acres of cover crops, I recall from some of our verification discussions and when writing out plans that depending on what technology we are using to do the verification, there was some discounting of the credit you would get. So, if there's 10,000 acres of cover crops, are we only going to get credit for 8,000 because we assume some error in that process? What's going to happen there? It might be worth it to us to do the essentially 100% verification that we do already.

Eric Hughes: From New York's standpoint, it's not going to stop people from going out on the farms, right? So, it's not necessarily going to save New York anything if we were to do that. So, all stuff that we want to take into consideration.

Mark Dubin: Just to add onto that, Amanda, it would be difficult to tell the species. So, then you are going to go at least to the common denominator, the least value of all the species, so that's where those discounts come into play.

Eric Hughes: On the cover crop front, we have 104 unique BMPs. So, species, planting timing, and then seeding method, we are not going to be able to determine. So, we would be looking at a new framework for how we'd be going about that.

Mark Dubin: The framework is built in there now. But it's just the application.

Alisha Mulkey: [Full comment not captured due to audio error in recording] ...Would this Baywide effort focus more on the fall planting season the way the reporting is done as opposed to the spring kill-down?

Eric Hughes: That's part of the reason why we are bringing this to you. I think Virginia is in a little bit of an interesting spot with this as well where they may be looking to do more with it than just presence-absence. For example, presence/absence. Is there cover crop out there or not? If we can take into consideration what all the jurisdictions are interested in doing, what your needs are, then that could help inform what our data collection looks like. Do we do fall and spring to make sure that the product we have for you all is comprehensive enough to give you what you need to actually stop using your resources on that? So, I don't have an answer for you now in terms of what that looks like, but we want people to weigh in and tell us these are our needs for this BMP.

Alisha Mulkey: [Response not captured due to audio error in recording.]

Caitlin Grady: These are all great ideas to brainstorm further – we don't necessarily need to figure it all out today.

Mark Dubin: In some of the work I did with Dean involved the performance of cover crops. Like I said, there are other elements of that versus whether we see it or not. So, that wider picture window gives you that ability to look at other aspects of it other than just presence. One of the things we are looking at is we have some new technology coming on board that's going to allow us to track residue cover as well as the vegetated cover. So, that's going to be a game changer to be able to have both of those.

Jim Riddell: We're encouraging you to go further with this. It's a green light from us to keep working towards doing more with this.

Mark Dubin: I think that's going to hopefully give us more data to look at efficiencies and those aspects.

Denise Coleman: Some producers have to go to FSA, and they have to declare what cover crops they are planting. So, there's that possibility of accessing that. Again, it's probably aggregate data, but you can see what is being planted in that area for that county.

Eric Hughes: Ok. That's a good point. I was going to call on Ken, is Ken still here? I wanted to get your take on this. What are your thoughts on us going down this path?

Ken Staver: We've hacked away at this a lot of times over the years. Dean has been working on remote sensing stuff for years, and a lot of progress has been made. A lot of stuff has already been mentioned that the program is structured to incentivize the most effective practices, which sort of gives the opportunity for targeting. Mark mentioned this in his comments that when you go the more general presence/absence, you start falling back in credit. The way we always handled it before was if you just want to say cover crop, then you basically get the minimum credit. I don't know if states prefer that -do less work and get less credit, I guess that could be an option. But, I think if we really want to push the practice and get the most out of it we can, I'm a little wary of going that route. When we cost share, we know what's done, so that's not really a problem in terms of getting that information. So, where it is not cost shared is the biggest challenge. Technology keeps getting better. If technology gets good enough at everything, it can do everything. But, I am still not there yet on having much confidence in that being the case. I guess I am worried about spending a lot of time chasing it and, at the end, there's still going to be a lot of limitations.

Amanda Barber: The EPA is willing to share all that data with us, correct? Any data you collect, you would be willing to provide that information to us in whatever format is needed to make it usable? It's not going to be aggregated or anything like that?

Eric Hughes: I am not in a position to confirm that here, but I anticipate the answer would be yes.

Amanda Barber: That would be an important element.

Eric Hughes: Absolutely. That is an answer I would want to get for you as soon as possible. The conversations that I have had internally so far have been promising in the sense that I think there is an understanding that there is a lot the partnership will need to see in order to feel comfortable with this, and there was an acknowledgement of that. That's something that we could work on.

Matt Kowalski (in chat): Isn't it true that most States are only reporting cover crop data according to 7 general categories?

Eric Hughes: Maybe I should know the answer to that, but I might turn to Mark.

Mark Dubin: I think that it varies by state. Definitely not all states are qualifying the cover crops in all categories. So, there are defaults being used as far as what those credit values are.

Lisa Duriancik (in chat): Thank you for offering a virtual option for this meeting. If EPA or others are interested in learning more about CEAP efforts on remote sensing of conservation practices, please feel free to reach out.

Eric Hughes: Shifting away from cover crop/tillage, areas where you all have work going on already or practices where you think opportunity is ripe for going down this path? I don't want to duplicate efforts, but I know Pennsylvania is heavily involved in a lot of this work and Virginia is interested in pursuing this. Is there work that has already been done in the spaces where you engage/you are aware of that we collectively may want to consider?

Jim Riddell: You heard the research we shared six months ago or more. Virginia Tech has done quite a bit. You have the resources from our meeting.

Eric Hughes: Ok, I think we will follow-up on this, and it will be a point to discuss at later meetings. But, the EPA is very much interested in seeing some progress here, and I know we are going to be hearing more about it at other layers of the partnership.

Kate Bresaw: [Full comment not captured due to audio error in recording] There should be QAQC at the end of it before we accept the fact that these are our numbers, but we are excited about the opportunity.

Matt Kowalski (in chat): My main thought is that we could probably easily decide how to remotely assess cc if they are already being broadly categorized.

VI. Wrap-Up and Adjourn

Speakers: AgWG Leadership and Staffing Team

- Eric Hughes, AgWG Coordinator, and Tom Butler, AMT Coordinator, highlighted ag-related decisions taking place around the partnership. These include ongoing discussions on updating broiler data in the Delmarva region of the watershed with data collected from the industry and making final decisions on efficiencies for supplemental nutrient management rate, placement, and timing (taking place at the March 5th Watershed Technical Workgroup meeting). Eric noted that the AgWG is awaiting further direction before proceeding with the process for confirming new at-large membership.
- Caroline Kleis, AgWG Staffer, reviewed action items from the day.
- Caitlin Grady, incoming AgWG Chair, provided closing remarks to summarize our collective experience with Bay in the Balance and the in-person AgWG meeting. Caitlin pointed the group to the list of upcoming webinars, events, and other announcements listed in the agenda and reminded the group of the next meeting date (April 16th). Jenn and Caitlin will communicate on proposed governance and structure changes and keep the group updated on how the partnership moves forward with those changes.

Announcements:

- **New! Upcoming Chesapeake Stormwater Network Webinars**
 - The Chesapeake Stormwater Network is hosting a series of upcoming webinars on the following topics:
 - Updating Urban Fertilizer Management in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed- February 24th
 - Reimagining Watershed Management- Creative Funding Models for an Inclusive Future- March 3rd
 - Assessing the Effectiveness of Green Stormwater Infrastructure for Addressing Stormwater Management Goals at the Watershed Scale- March 10th
 - Assessing and Managing Stormwater Impacts of Solar Installations in Virginia and Central Pennsylvania- March 19th
 - For the full list of upcoming webinars and to learn more or register for these webinars, click [here](#).
- **Farm, Ranch, and Rural Communities Federal Advisory Committee Solicitation for Nominations**
 - The EPA issued a call for nominations for the Farm, Ranch, and Rural Communities Federal Advisory Committee (FRRCC) on January 16, 2026. Nominations should be submitted to FRRCC@epa.gov by March 2, 2026.
 - The FRRCC is described as “an advisory body that will address specific topics of unique relevance to agriculture as identified by the Administrator, in such a way as to provide thoughtful advice and useful insights to the Agency as it considers environmental policies and programs that affect and engage agriculture and rural communities.”
 - Members may represent farmers, ranchers, and rural communities; allied industries, including farm groups, rural suppliers, marketers, and processors; academia and researchers; state, local, and tribal government; and nongovernmental organizations.
 - For more information and to apply, visit the following [site](#).
- **METRIC Webinar**
 - On February 9th, the Chesapeake Bay Program hosted a webinar, “Data to

- Decisions: Using the METRIC Tool to Measure Watershed Progress.”
- The [METRIC Tool](#) allows users to look at data collected from the Non-Tidal Network of monitoring stations and compare what is being observed with what the partnership models are showing.
 - The webinar recording is now available. You can watch the recording [here](#).
- **Rooting DC 2026**
 - The 2026 Rooting DC event will take place on March 7, 2026, from 9:00AM-4:00PM at Eastern Senior High School in DC.
 - This free event “provides education and community building around urban agriculture and food systems, with the goal of cultivating personal, community, and environmental wellbeing.”
 - The event includes interactive workshops on a variety of interesting topics and an exhibitor hall of local businesses, non-profits, and government entities from across the metropolitan region.
 - To learn more and to register, please use the following [link](#).
 - **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](#).
 - **Agricultural Advisory Committee Meetings 2026**
 - The Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) has set their dates for quarterly meetings in 2026 (see below). Information will be posted on the AAC page as it becomes available:
<https://www.chesapeakebay.net/who/group/agricultural-advisory-committee>
 - Next Meeting: 5/6 Virtual Meeting
 - 8/5 In-Person Meeting (location TBD)
 - 11/4 Virtual Meeting
 - The AAC held their last meeting on February 4th. Materials for the February AAC Meeting are available [here](#).
 - **NFWF Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund Grant Programs**
 - NFWF, EPA and CBP are soliciting proposals for the [Small Watershed Grants \(SWG\) program](#) until Thursday, April 2nd for projects within the Chesapeake Bay watershed that promote voluntary, community-based efforts to protect and restore the diverse and vital habitats of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributary rivers and streams. 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](#).
 - NFWF recently released the 2025 grant slate for the INSR and SWG programs. Visit the following links to view the grant recipients for the 2025 [INSR](#) and [SWG](#) grants.
 - **2026 Mid-Atlantic Agroforestry Conference**
 - The [2026 Mid-Atlantic Agroforestry Conference](#) will take place on June 4-5, 2026, at the Special Events Building, Ag Progress Days site 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. Please sign up for the [Woods and Wildlife Newsletter](#) to stay informed of conference information.

Next Meeting: April 16, 2026 from 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

Attendees:

Kathy Brasier, PSU
Caitlin Grady, GWU
Eric Hughes, EPA
Caroline Kleis, CRC
Erin Sonnenburg, CRC
Auston Smith, EPA
Alisha Mulkey, MDA
Clint Gill, DDA
Nick Hepfl, HRG
Jenna Schueler, CBF
Zach Evans, Mountaire
Tyler Trostle, PA DEP
Cassie Davis, NYS DEC
Natasha Rathlev, Sustainable Chesapeake
Brady Seeley, PA SCC
Emily Heller, EPA
Hunter Landis, VA DCR
Brooke Walls, DDA
Alex Soroka, USGS
Tom Butler, EPA
Lisa Duriancik, USDA NRCS
Arianna Johns, VA DEQ
Carlington Wallace, ICPRB
Matt Kowalski, CBF
Kristen Saacke Blunk, Headwaters LLC
Katie Brownson, USFS
Robb Meinen, PSU
Dean Hively, USGS
Jim Riddell, VA Cattlemen's Association
Eric Rosenbaum, Rosetree Consulting
Jennifer Bratthauar, Team Ag
Tyler Groh, PSU
Kate Bresaw, PA DEP
Ashley Lenig, USDA NRCS
Natahnee Miller, PA DEP
Kate Beats, PA DEP
Krista Crone, PA DEP

Elizabeth Hoffman, MDA
Leon Tillman, USDA NRCS
Hans Schmidt, MDA
Grant Gulibon, PA Farm Bureau
Cindy Shreve, WVCA
Dave Graybill, PA Farm Bureau
Marel King, CBC
Matt Royer, PSU
Jenn Fetter, PSU
Mark Dubin, VA Cooperative Extension
Suzanne Shea, Old Sword Farm
Amanda Barber, NY Cortland County SWCD
Denise Coleman, USDA NRCS
Justin Cook, WVCA

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