



## Forestry Workgroup July Office Hours

July 29th, 2026  
4:00-5:00pm

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

**Purpose:** This OPTIONAL office hours will allow the Forestry Workgroup time to review the initial draft of the Management Strategy

### Minutes

#### I. Introductions and Announcements

- The Healthy Landscapes Goal Team meeting is on July 30th, from 1-4pm

Lead: Katie Brownson, Forestry Workgroup Coordinator

Materials: n/a

**Decisions:**

N/A

**Actions:**

N/A

#### II. Management Strategy Review and Q&A

The draft Management Strategy will be presented with time for review and questions.

Lead: Katie Brownson, Forestry Workgroup Coordinator

Materials: [Management Strategy Draft](#)

**Decisions:**

N/A

**Actions:**

N/A

#### Discussion Notes:

- **Rob Schnabel:** To refresh my memory, is community tree planting more on the urban side of things? Is that how this was defined?
  - o **Katie Brownson:** Yes, we are talking about urban tree planting BMPs in the developed sector. So urban tree canopy, urban forest planting, and urban forest buffers.
  - o **Rob Schnabel:** Okay. I know we stressed conservation moving forward, especially in the agriculture sector. Is it the same thing for community tree planting? Is there a conservation component for urban areas? For example forest loss in urban areas for people meeting MS4 permits, and there is no ammo to really protect their existing

forests. Is there a way to incorporate the conservation component for the urban areas and conservation tree canopy?

- o **Katie Brownson:** Yes. For this beginning section, it is really kind of baseline data. The way we capture it here is looking at the loss of community trees to show the need, and then when we move into identifying challenges and management approaches, that is where we can speak to the need for conservation efforts within the community. And as part of the protected lands outcome, they are going to be developing an urban greenspace conservation target. They just went through this whole process of defining what urban green space is and I think they are going to be setting new targets. With both of these outcomes under healthy landscapes I think there is going to be a lot more opportunity to collaborate as we are thinking about management approaches to advance both of our outcomes.
- **Rob Schnabel:** I had my GIS folks look at one county, Maryland's biggest county and biggest ag county at the same time. And we looked at the biggest ag preservation program and the percent of forest land that made up that. The MALPF program is Maryland's biggest ag conservation program, and we looked at the percentage that was forest, corn, etc. At the stream relief meeting next week I am going to be doing a presentation on what the GIS team came up with, examples maybe where we can maximize conservation benefits when we're spending public dollars for permanent easements.
- **Craig Highfield:** What about some of those older easement programs that are set 30 years or so? Rob mentioned MALPF in particular, and I know they had struggled with some of their older easements of the program only being 30 years, that type of thing. How would those kinds of lands be counted if there's a potential in the 10 or 15 years left that could be pulled out?
  - o **Katherine Brownson:** That is a good question. The protected land data set only tracks land under permanent protection. So shorter term easement should not be included in the protected lands database. Which is a bit of a gap, because there are other protection mechanisms that are valid as well.
- **Patricia Nylander:** Would that management be in the form of stewardship plans or do we have acres that are being managed defined?
  - o **Katherine Brownson:** The practices that are captured in that data are brush management, herbaceous weed treatment, upland wildlife habitat management, early successional habitat development management, and then forest stand improvement. And a separate data set down below on forest stewardship planning that came from the Forest Service data set. So this is NRCS data on actual implementation. This might be too much to include in our management strategy, but I think to start with I erred on the side of, let's throw it in and see what resonates.
  - o I pulled the list of practices from the NRCS database, and I looked at the top 10 NRCS practices in each state being implemented on forest lands and then looked across all states to see the ones most commonly implemented. I then took out the practices that were more for developing management plans because I thought those might end up getting double counted with some of the Forest Service stewardship plan data.
- **Cassandra Davis:** Some of the more detailed information, if we want to include it, could be part of our workplan for the workgroup and then the management strategies a higher level overview. I can go back and look, but I am thinking that some of this might need a few more sentences describing things like the FSP, which is new to me.
- **Rob Schnabel:** I love the bar graphs that model the past data, I wonder if it would make sense to have some into the future- like midway points that actually show what we would need. Maybe that would help folks to look to 2030 or out to 2035 just to forecast and see, sort of a goal to see every year how we are doing against our milestones.

- o **Katherine Brownson:** Yea, I think for Forest Management, since we don't have a very relevant numeric target, we probably wouldn't be able to do that, but for forest planning and tree canopy I think those are places we could have a line on the graph or something showing what we are aiming for and how far off we are.
  - o **Rob Schnabel:** And even the planting is good, but these days, even more so is the conservation component. What we have preserved is going to be equally as important going forward. A lot of times the planting can provide incentives for protection of existing forest at the same time, like the Maryland CREP permit easement program.
  - o **Katherine Brownson:** Some of that too will come out as we work up our new indicators and start updating them with more data. Our Chesapeake Progress updates are really where we tell the story about where we're going off the mark and what we need to do to meet our goals. In the Management Strategy context it is going to be tricky to have that level of information because it is just supposed to be a quick snapshot of where are we starting from and what sort of data are we going to leverage to track progress, and downstream is where we get to the meat of how we are going to do better.
- **Maggie Woodward:** You were talking about the data for forest conversion for things other than development that is maybe coming down the line with increasing confidence. I don't know if you want to maybe note that we would be able to measure this, and maybe within the time frame of the agreement, nudge the development of that data along.
  - o Katherine Brownson: That's a great point. Maybe that could fit into the monitoring progress and indicators section, where there is a little spot for how we are going to develop a new forest conservation indicator, so maybe I could make a note about that.
- **Rob Schnabel:** We are having a lot of riparian buffer forest loss due to the stream projects, which is directly a result of the 2013 bay program addressing stream restoration in lieu of addressing true storm water runoff from impervious acres. Even six years later, the co-author of the bay program report said that the system is broken and not working. So if we could revisit that, especially now that we care more about conservation vs. just planting, that is a big issue. It could fit with policy. Just for us to have a discussion about it a little bit, I feel awful how this has transpired, so the bay program needs to re-look at this,
  - o **Katherine Brownson:** Yea, I am wondering how to capture that and I might need to chew on it a little. Is this its own challenge or do we reference it at a high level in the policy box and then build out more approaches and a work plan item specifically focuses on that when we have more space for detail.
- **Rob Schnabel:** Maybe more education, I don't know if it is understood the value of forests and leveraging the forest protection while protecting agricultural land.
  - o Katherine Brownson: That is a great flag. I am making a note of it here, we can put it in a sort of all-encompassing blurb and then build it out lower down. Some of it might also be in the workplan because the management strategies have to be so high level.

### **III. Adjourn**

**Attendees:**

1. Julia Fucci -CRC
2. Maggie Woodward -CBC
3. Craig Highfield -Alliance for the Bay
4. Katherine Brownson -MD FS
5. Patricia Nylander -VADOB
6. Jarred Kinlein -WV DOB
7. Nancy Sonti -FS
8. Rob Schnabel -CBF
9. Cassandra Davis -NYDEC