



Chesapeake Bay Program

Science. Restoration. Partnership.

Forestry Workgroup Minutes November 6th, 2024 | 9:00 am - 12:00 pm [Meeting Materials](#)

Attendees:

Alanna Crowley, MD DNR
Alexis Dickerson, Potomac Conservancy
Anne Gilbert, MD DNR, USFS
Anne Hairston-Strang, MD FS
Arianna Johns VA DEQ
Ava Glasser, Upper Susquehanna Coalition
Bay Hanson, USFS
Caitlin Verdu, VA DOF
Celine Colbert, PA DCNR
Chris Miller, DE Forest Service
Chris Peters, PA NRCS
Collin Shephard, USDA FS PA
Craig Highfield, ACB
Craig Larcenaire, USFS
Emily Heller, EPA
Emily Shosh, DCNR Bureau of Forestry
Everaldo A. McDonald, PA DCNR
Frank Rodgers, Cacapon Inst.
Heidi Bonnaffon, Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments
Helen Golimowski, Devereux Consulting
Jake Reilly, NFWF

Jeffrey Larkin, Indiana University of
Pennsylvania
Jeremy McGill, WV DOF
Joel Cockerham, Cacapon Inst.
Judy Okay, J&J Consulting
Kalaia London, PA DCNR
Katherine Brownson, USFS
Lorenzo Cinalli, USFS
Louis Keddell, Chesapeake Conservancy
Marilyn Yang, CRC
Meghan Noe Fellows, DE Center for Inland Bays
Ned Brockmeyer, PA DCNR
Orsolya Lazar, PA DCNR
Rick Turcotte, USFS
Rob Schnabel, CBF
Robbie Coville, PA DCNR
Ruffed Grouse Society & American Woodcock
Society
Samara Pyfrom, CBT
Sophie Waterman, USGS
Susan Minnemeyer, Nature Plus
Suzanne Hartley, PA DCNR
Taryn Davidson, DE FS
William Byrum, NRCS

9:05 Announcements – Katie Brownson (USFS, FWG Coordinator)

- December FWG Meeting:
 - **December 2nd from 10am-3pm** we will be **meeting jointly with the Land Use Workgroup and the Healthy Watershed GIT**.
*Please note: This will replace our regularly scheduled FWG meeting on December 4th. The meeting will be **hybrid** with an in-person option available at the Chesapeake Bay Program Office - **if you're planning to attend in-person please fill out this form**: - We hope you can join us!*

- Chesapeake Agroforestry Network Meeting in January:
 - **January 7th from 11-12:30** – We are inviting the Ag Workgroup and the Forestry Workgroup to our January meeting. Stay tuned for more details on the agenda.
- Update on 2024 GIT funding project:
 - *Assessment of BMPs as heaters and coolers for local waters* project was a follow-up from the Rising Water Temperature workshop that was selected for funding. USGS will be completing the project.
- Beyond 2025 Update:
 - [Final Beyond 2025 Report](#) was approved by the PSC at their October meeting
 - EC charge is being finalized for Phase 2 of the Beyond 2025 process. Sets a goal to complete outcome revisions by the end of calendar year 2025.
- Welcome Craig Larcenaire (USFS), who will be detailing behind Lorenzo Cinalli for the next three months at the Chesapeake Bay Program!

9:15 [Timber Harvest Task Force- Updated Recommendations](#) – Katie Brownson (USFS)

Katie presented the revised recommendations to update the BMP efficiencies for forest harvesting BMPs.

Summary of the [updated recommendations](#):

1. Recommend correcting the loading rate ratios of harvested forests for TN and TSS (TN=7.03, TSS= 3.05)
2. Recommend changing the efficiency rates of forest harvest BMPs to:
 - TN from 50% to 60%
 - Maintain efficiencies for TP and TSS
3. Recommend changing the credit duration for forest harvest BMPs to three years

Discussion:

[Caitlin Verdu](#): Mentioned she talked with many of the forest management folks from VA and there is strong support for increasing the efficiency of BMPs. As for changing the credit duration from one year to three, they are supportive as long as it works from the data management side, which Caitlin noted the data management people recently confirmed this change would be possible.

[Katie Brownson](#): Responds saying these data issues are expected to be addressed in the Watershed Technical Workgroup and that she talked to the folks that manage reporting databases, and they thought it was a straightforward issue.

[Jake Reilly](#): Asked for clarification on how the model differentiates between forest harvesting and forest management activities, particularly in the context of forest habitat restoration. He was curious about the overlap between these activities and how each is treated in the model.

[Anne Hairston-Strang](#): Explained that most active forest management activities involve some form of harvesting. She noted there is a difference between regeneration harvests (which remove a

substantial portion of trees) and partial harvests, but in the harvesting exercise where the trees get to contribute to larger sustainability cycles, it comes down to the roads, so hydrologically the partial harvesting can have an impact but typically the biggest impacts from harvesting are related to sediment, which is why road crossings and buffers are crucial in minimizing sediment impact.

Katie Brownson: Added to Anne's comment saying the model does not differentiate forms of harvests or intensities, even if it's a more selective harvest it's still getting increased loads, there's one rate.

Rob Schabel: Asked how we are incorporating input on aspects such as temperature and shallow water habitat and volume, beyond just tracking nutrients. Essentially, while the group is revising these numbers now, he asked whether there the Bay Program will also provide guidance on how different harvesting practices affect other important elements such as water filtration and retention.

Katie Brownson: Agreed with the need to evaluate broader impacts when evaluating forest management practices and mentioned that the Bay Program will hopefully address this issue during the phase two process. She mentioned the water temperature issue could be addressed in the new GIT-funded project, which would focus on the impacts of BMPs on water temperature.

Robbie Coville (in chat): On stream temperature, also wanted to make people aware that i-Tree Research Suite has a tool to estimate changes in stream temperature with changes in adjacent land cover. It is not a simple model to use - fairly detailed inputs to describe a stream segment - but the results can be useful. That's called i-Tree Cool River, mentioned <https://www.itreetools.org/tools/research-suite/cool-river> and i-Tree support staff could connect you with the researchers running & developing it.

Katie Brownson: Asks for each state to provide a pulse-check for whether they approve the recommendations or if they would like more time to discuss questions and/or concerns.

Anne Hairston-Strang: Acknowledges VA already approved, then asks for other states to respond.

Chris Miller: States that Delaware is fine with the recommendations.

Frank Rodgers: Asks whether forestry professionals from West Virginia weighed in.

Katie Brownson: Replies Jeremy McGill is actively involved in the Timber Harvest Task Force.

Jeremy McGill (in chat): WV Supports

Erica Carlsson (in chat): DC is OK

Anne Hairston-Strang: Confirms support from Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and mentions West Virginia and DC are supporting in the chat. Then asks for a response from Pennsylvania and New York.

Ava Glasser (in chat): NY is okay!

Everald McDonald (Derek): Responds that he does not know if he can speak for Pennsylvania as a group, but personally he is very supportive.

Robbie Coville: Follows up saying he is sitting in for Pennsylvania forestry staff and believes the recommendations make sense and supports the change.

Anne Hairston-Strang: Confirms unanimous consensus from the states and thanks Katie for advancing the recommendation.

Decision: The FWG approved the proposed updated THTF recommendations.

Action: The FWG will advance the recommendations to the Watershed Technical Workgroup and WQGIT for review and final approval.

9:35 Presentation on Dynamic Forest Restoration Block Programs – Dr. Jeff Larkin (Indiana University of Pennsylvania) and Ben Larson (Ruffed Grouse Society & American Woodcock Society)

Dr. Larkin presented on the American Bird Conservancy's (ABC) Dynamic Forest Restoration Block Program (DFRB). He describes the program as a landscape-scale conservation effort focused on restoring key forest habitats to support bird species of conservation concern and noted the success of the program, which has restored over 20,000 acres of forest since 2017, with \$14 million in funding. The program focuses on species like cerulean and golden-winged warblers, emphasizing the importance of forest block placement across public and private lands. Additionally, the program has leveraged LIDAR data to assess forest structure, helping to refine habitat restoration efforts by identifying key areas with high canopy heterogeneity that support avian biodiversity. He also mentioned the expansion of the program to include 60,000 acres in Pennsylvania state parks, supported by new funding and partnerships, and concluded by announcing the development of a deciduous forest framework by NRCS.

Ben discussed four dynamic restoration blocks being developed by the Ruffed Grouse Society and partners in Maryland and Delaware, in collaboration with the Maryland Forest Service, Delaware Forest Service, and the University of Maryland Extension. He explained these forest restoration blocks, which are large collaborative efforts with Dr. Larkin and several other organizations, focus on improving habitat, water quality, and forest resilience, with particular attention to early successional habitats and grass-based systems. Larson highlighted their work includes outreach to underserved landowners and improving forest management practices to address issues like unmanaged logging, which can negatively impact human health, such as resulting in boil water orders. He concluded saying this initiative is part of a broader landscape-scale restoration effort that spans multiple states, including West Virginia, Virginia, and beyond, aiming to integrate forest management with water quality improvement.

Discussion:

Frank Rodgers: Mentioned he found a presentation on the Society of American Foresters from 2022 and was curious whether other woodlot owner organizations have stepped up and shown interest in these approaches, essentially how the approach is going with the public.

Jeffrey Larkin: Responded he believes the program is going very well with the public, noting there is funding specifically for private landowners near dynamic forest blocks, and these funds are augmenting those provided through NRCS programs like EQIP. He also highlighted there are seven private DFRB blocks, owned by hunt clubs or foundations, that are actively working on projects with the help of grant funds. He expressed confidence that the program will continue to assist landowners with technical and financial support and emphasized this funding provides an alternative to federal assistance programs for landowners who may be hesitant to apply.

Katie Brownson: Said she's happy to hear they've had success with working with private landowners and that given that many of the forests in watersheds are privately owned by smaller landowners, she asked what their coordinating strategy is for engaging enough small landowners to generate the desired impact.

Jeffrey Larkin: Responded that there are two perspectives when prioritizing landowners for the program. Ideally, they try to focus on landowners close to existing dynamic forest restoration blocks, however, he also emphasized the importance of not excluding landowners who are slightly farther away but still interested in doing good work on their land. There is a balancing act between focusing on proximity to DFRBs and encouraging a broader adoption of conservation principles.

Rick Turcotte: Asked about the challenges of treating spongy moth populations on private lands when funding constraints lead to only focusing treatment on public lands, but not private lands.

Jeffrey Larkin: Agreed noting that many private landowners in Pennsylvania are frustrated due to the significant tree mortality caused by spongy moth infestations. Larkin mentioned that many have requested more assistance for spraying private lands, and he acknowledged that incorporating this into their funding strategies may be necessary.

10:15 Forest Management and NFWF – Jake Reilly (National Fish and Wildlife Foundation)

Jake Reilly, Director of Chesapeake Bay Programs at the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), introduced NFWF's role in leveraging federal and private funding for landscape-scale conservation efforts. He highlighted the need to refresh and adapt NFWF's strategies for the Chesapeake Bay, especially as they approach the 2025 deadline for their Chesapeake Bay Business Plan where they are exploring new ventures, particularly around terrestrial habitat strategies, including forest habitats, which make up 60% of the Bay watershed.

Jake explained NFWF's Chesapeake Wild program, which allows the organization to focus on goals beyond the Bay Program's specific goals. He emphasized their interest in incorporating dynamic

forest block strategies into their Chesapeake efforts and pointed out the opportunity to build out comprehensive forest habitat strategies across different forest types in the watershed. He concluded by inviting the forestry workgroup to consider how they might support NFWF in developing forest habitat strategies, with an emphasis on aligning state forest action plans and wildlife action plans.

Discussion:

Anne Hairston-Strang: Mentioned Maryland's interest in finding connections to markets, thinking broadly about markets. She listed questions they have discussed about how to pay for forest restoration work, noting that funding is needed to show impact on the landscape in areas where traditional markets may not be effective. She suggested that dynamic forest restoration blocks with measurable metrics and associated goals could help create a market structure around ecosystem services. Additionally, she mentioned looking at traditional market aspects that could help fund forest conservation, like those used to keep forests on the landscape.

Jake Reilly: Responded by giving context for what NFWF's process starts with, which is identifying the conservation need in a landscape, specifically for forests and forest habitats. He emphasized defining the associated species and habitat outcomes, and then determining the strategies needed to achieve those outcomes. He noted that if the lack of robust traditional forest product markets is seen as a barrier to active management, there is room to creatively use NFWF funding to address those challenges, alongside advancing other strategies beyond the basics of the DFRB work.

Katherine Brownson: Expressed excitement in the possibilities of NFWF's Wild program and encouraged the workgroup to think beyond the traditional scope and contribute ideas for a broader, more holistic strategy for restoring forest habitats and enhancing forest health in the watershed, recognizing the Bay Program has historically overlooked terrestrial habitats and the quality and resilience of forests.

Jake Reilly: Pointed out that while the future direction of the Bay Program partnership may or may not provide direct opportunities, NFWF is eager for these discussions to develop strategies that will have tangible impacts by getting money on the ground.

Judy Okay (in chat): In the past the focus at CBP has been the way terrestrial landscapes negatively affect the Bay's Health. From the forestry aspects we should look more at "forest block" positive influences on Bay Health. Losses of the positives influence that go with forest losses "ecosystem service" on the forefront.

Anne Hairston-Strang: Mentioned that state forestry agencies are currently revisiting their Forest Action Plans, providing an opportunity for the FWG to advocate for the Bay Program's goals to be reflected in these plans. This comment naturally segued into the next topic on planning for 2025.

10:35 Looking forward at 2025 – Katie Brownson (USFS)

In preparation for the year ahead, Katie facilitated a brainstorming session to solicit ideas for future priorities and meetings in 2025. Attendees participated in a Mentimeter survey to gather feedback on the following questions:

- How can the Forestry Workgroup support efforts to better integrate forest management and forest habitat restoration into the Bay Program going beyond 2025?
- What meeting topics or speakers should we prioritize for 2025?

Discussion:

During the discussion, attendees were actively responding to the Mentimeter which was then screenshared to help facilitate the conversation. Responses to the Mentimeter can be reviewed [here](#)

Katie Brownson: Responded she liked the suggestion to get presentations from the states on what is happening.

Anne Hairston-Strang: Followed up saying it would also be helpful to have updates about what's happening across the Bay Program to help increase familiarity in the state forestry staff beyond the watershed rep. She then asked to hear more about a comment on the North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative.

Frank Rodgers: Shared that the North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative (NAACC) has created a survey method to evaluate culverts and bridges for aquatic and terrestrial passage capacity and developed a scoring mechanism. He mentioned Cacapon Institute has conducted surveys in the Potomac Highlands and Tuscarora watersheds, including the stream through Martinsburg and pointed out that culverts are ubiquitous, and even minor changes can greatly improve how well aquatic species, such as turtles, can pass through.

Frank Rodgers (in chat): https://naacc.org/naacc_search_crossing.cfm

Anne Hairston-Strang: Said there has been positive response from the combination of reforestation of buffers and culvert replacement work. She highlighted that brook trout moved into an area after the culvert was replaced, allowing them to access good habitat where buffer work had been done, emphasizing the importance of looking at the whole chain of connectivity.

Katie Brownson: As people kept submitting responses, Katie mentioned that the overarching agreement for the Bay Program will be revised in response to the charge from the Executive Council, though the exact process remains unclear. She noted that the charge could involve adding new outcomes, such as integrating landscape stewardship and conservation more explicitly into the Bay program. She suggested that this could be an opportunity to include goals related to forest habitat quality and restoration, although she acknowledged it might be challenging.

[Anne Hairston-Strang](#): Emphasized the importance of choosing the right battles in the effort to restore the Chesapeake Bay. She highlighted that a restored Bay will require a landscape with many trees, and it is crucial for the forestry community to advocate for this.

[Robbie Coville \(in chat\)](#): 'What does the restored Bay look like? It has a lot of trees in it. ... And it's not just preserving a tree, it's conserving a landscape in ways that meet people's needs...so they are more resilient in the face of real changes coming.'

Very quotable guiding star for this group and its outreach to other GITs! Thanks for that Anne!
Good point, I didn't think of how sentinel landscapes span so much of the Bay. Makes sense

10:50 Round Robin

[Anne Hairston-Strang \(For MD\)](#): Shared Maryland has announced the second round of Community Forestry Capacity Grants funded by the Inflation Reduction Act, supporting urban and community forestry projects. The focus is on capacity building, helping organizations implement long-term urban tree canopy management. She also highlighted the state's heightened attention to wildfire risk, noting active responses and an expansion of the prescribed fire program as part of a broader approach to forest protection.

[Caitlin Verdu \(For VA\)](#): Shared updates on the ongoing Riparian Forest Buffer program, which is offering statewide no-cost buffer establishment and one year of maintenance for landowners. They plan to review the program this winter to assess its effectiveness and demand, with potential for future expansion. Additionally, she mentioned Virginia's coordination of the Security Corridor and Sentinel Landscape programs, including the newly designated Middle Chesapeake landscape, which overlaps with parts of Maryland. She suggested potential funding opportunities through the Department of Defense (DoD) for landscape projects.

[Frank Rodgers \(For Cacapon Institute\)](#): Shared exciting news about their forestry education program, which will reach third graders in Morgan, Berkeley, and Jefferson counties. They are also producing a permanent poster about forests and watersheds, commemorating the planting of 250 trees with Berkeley County schools as part of the "250 Trees for 250 Years" initiative. The poster will highlight the benefits of trees and watershed locations, and will be displayed in nearly 40 schools in Berkeley County.

[Taryn Davidson \(For DE\)](#): Announced they have several funding opportunities are currently open, including their core annual grant program for tree planting and maintenance projects, ash tree removal funding, invasive tree species removal funding, and IRA funding.

[Erica Carlsson \(For DOEE\)](#): Shared that her primary role involves managing tree data for the District of Columbia and there's a challenge of tracking planting data due to the involvement of multiple jurisdictions. DC is working toward a canopy goal of 40% by 2032. Additionally, they

awarded a grant to Casey Trees for planting in parks and private properties. Link to their website for more information is available [here](#).

Robbie Coville (For PA): Pennsylvania will use \$7.5 million from a Monsanto settlement for statewide buffer establishment through the C2P2 grants and ITQ contracting process. This funding will support buffer projects over the next few years, with potential for use in long-term habitat efforts as well. Robbie also introduced two new members of the Bureau of Forestry team: Suzanne Hartley, South Central Region Community Forestry Specialist, and Emily Shosh, Northern Region Community Forestry Specialist.

Craig Highfield (For the Alliance for the Bay): Recapped the successful 3-day Chesapeake Watershed Forestry Retreat at the Karen Noonan Center in late October, which had great weather and a good turnout. He mentioned they plan to continue it next year, potentially in the spring and will discuss details with Katie in the future.

Ava Glasser (For Ava Upper Susquehanna Coalition) (in chat): I'll just type my update- we are in the middle of planting 50K trees. We're also working on entering into an agreement with our Dep of Ag and Markets to develop a state afforestation program, and we're entered into an agreement with TNC to do afforestation technical assistance. So, we're piecing an afforestation program together, but don't have funds at the moment for gap-filling implementation or dedicated staff. We've also gotten some CREP on the ground in a county where we haven't gotten CREP in years, so hopefully we can continue that.

11:00 Adjourn