[Tree Canopy Indicator Decision/Discussion](#)- *Julie Mawhorter, USFS*

Julie gave a presentation reviewing the tree canpoy indicator options that have been propose over the years and focused in on the option that was discussed at the December meeting. The options that were proposed at the December meeting are the following:

1. Track tree cover gains and losses based on baseline (2010) census-defined areas that don't change over time.
   - Option 1- census places (2010)
   - Option 2- census places + census urban areas & clusters (2010)
2. Future project – work with the Land Use Methods & Metrics Outcome to develop a Forest or Tree Cover loss to development metric (not limited to urban) that could be reported as a supplemental/background indicator related to Tree Canopy

Julie paused and asked the group how they feel about this proposal before moving into approval.

Rob Schnable of CBF asked if this indicator looks at flat out canopy loss or just canpoy loss in urban areas. Would this indicator include loss canpoy to stream construction projects? Julie noted that the loss would be documented if the loss happens within the census places.

Marian Honeczy of MD FS asked in the chat: To clarify- for MD, option 1 matches the CARS report? Julie responded that we will be using census places and urban areas, so the communites in the CARS report should be picked up.

Julie then opened up the conversation to talk about making a decision for the indicator. She asked for states to weigh in on whether they preferred Option 1 or Option 2.

Anne Hairston- Strang asked if the urban areas and clusters would be capturing upcoming devlopment. Julie noted that it is an older data set, in some cases it is capturing suburban neighborhoods, and in other cases it is capturing forest and ag lands that have not been devloped. So, it has the potential to pick up potential upcoming devlopment.

Rob Schnable wanted to clarify that option 2 is just a broader scope. Julie noted that yes that is one way to look at option 2.

Laura Johnson of VDOF noted that from Virginia's perspective option 1 is the best-case scenario for a couple reasons (1) Urban and community forestry reports all their federal data by census places. (2) For urban forestry coordinators it is going to be a bigger lift because now they are going to have to think about Bay reporting vs federal reporting. (3) Census places are more devloped and have different issues compared to urban areas & clusters.

In the chat states stared to put what their preferences are

- Pennsylvania and Delaware expressed support for option 2.
- Others from Virginia expressed support for option 1.
- Maryland wanted some more time to talk with their GIS folks about what this will mean for Maryland.

Julie noted yes, we care about the tree canpoy loss that happens outside of these defined census places and urban communities, we have moved to include a secondary supplemental measure that captures all

forest and canpoy loss to devlopment. Julie could see why Laura is supporting 1 as that is what our outcome was originally set out to track, just urban areas.

In the chat Katie Brownson wrote: Also, as a point of clarification, whichever option we select here wouldn't change the reporting process. The selected option will just be used to guide a GIS analysis.

Anne asked if we should do option 1 to be consistent with federal reporting. Julie noted that federal reporting is not really an issue here because this a map layer that will help us track change from the LU/LC data. Option 1 is an urban baseline that is less likely to pick up on new devlopment.

Ned Brockmeyer from PA BOF noted that if we are capable of tracking devloping areas, we should be collecting that data in addition to the baseline urban areas. Julie responded by pointing out that our main issue with the tree canpoy indicator right now is how we define our urban places. We do not want to have a super busy map with lots of layers, so we want to pick one of the options to help guide our tracking. After that clarification Ned responded by saying that option 2 is best for PA, as their work is becoming focused on those devloping areas.

Marian Honeczy of MD FS noted that this indicator is not in its own little bubble, and this data will be used by others. This is not just for our workgroup, it just going to be used to help advance our goal. There is a bigger picture of folks who will be using this information.

Julie concluded by saying we still need to work through this indicator. However, there is agreement that we will be using a census-based definition to define our urban community footprint, but in the next couple weeks we will be figuring out which of the options to move forward with.

In the chat the following comments were made:

Orsolya Lazar: I think we potentially miss a lot of changes if not tracking the larger areas. Some places have little canopy, so may have very little left to lose. Not true for the fringe areas.

Judy Okay: One problem that we see is that there is tree loss for years after development due to damage during development and hydrology changes. Just because something is "developed" there will still be a significant loss. Will we capture that in both scenarios or in one or the other?

Action: Julie will follow up with each state Tree Canopy lead to try to get a consensus on how we should track tree canopy on Chesapeake Progress. There are two options for the Urban Tree Canopy Indicator: option 1 (2010 census places only) or 2 (2010 census places + 2010 census urban areas and clusters).

Tree Canopy Outcome SRS Presentation & Discussion- *Julie Mawhorter, USFS*

Julie reviewed highlights of the status of actions from our 2020-2021 Logic & Action Plan and shared the draft Tree Canopy presentation for the February 9 Management Board Quarterly Progress Review. We will be creating a new logic and action plan and revise or management strategy after the MB meeting. The new materials are due in May, but we will be seeking an extension to give us time to include input form the Tree Canopy Round Table into our next work plan.

Julie opened a Jambaord for folks to write down reflections on tree canpoy work that they have done over the last 2 years, and what they want to focus on in the next 2 years.

After Julie ran through the draft Tree Canopy presentation she opened up the floor questions, comments, and feedback.

In the chat Anne Hairston-Strang wrote: Really appreciate the focus on training, workforce, and tree supply with an equity focus.

Rob asked a question about the Tree Canpoy Fact Sheets and if they would be available for all counties. Julie noted that yes they are, they are just in the final automation stage for all counites in the watershed.

Judy Okay it would be great to get this work into the public eye. Maybe we should write columns or work with local journalists to get this work more notice.

In terms of the tree canpoy fact sheets Rebecca asked if we should ask the management board to be on standby to be a part of the conversation if anything political that comes out of the fact sheets. She then asked the group if others had thoughts on how to handle the fact sheets. Anne agreed that it is a good recommendation. She also recommended that it might be helpful to show to the MB and to the public how urban areas tree canpoy changed with devlopment. Julie noted that story will most likely be shared in the State of the Forest report.

In the chat Anne wrote out her recommendations in full: In outreach, we could frame the tree canopy loss in the context of the development that has occurred. The referenced chart is in the Forest Technical Study on p. 57. https://agnr.umd.edu/technical-study-changes-forest-cover-and-tree-canopy-maryland. Jurisdictions where they have minimized tree loss in the face of high growth may be sources to look at helpful policies or programs.

In the chat Renee wrote: I would love to see some opportunities or actions related to cross outcome collaboration. For example, what opportunities are there for tree canopy expansion or targeting in healthy watersheds? OR how can the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership and the protected lands folks coordinate with tree canopy folks to also target and increase tree canopy and open space in urban areas? I appreciate the questions and comments related to how to define "urban" and "communities" as well as the need for technical assistance. These are examples of cross outcome opportunities as well.

Action: Julie asked members to please view the draft SRS materials on the meeting webpage and to send comments to julie.mawhorter@usda.gov by 1/17. Members also utilized a Jamboard to share their thoughts on tree canpoy related successes and challenges and what they think the focus of the outcome should be for the next two years.

RFB Update- *Katie Brownson, USFS*

Katie gave a Riparian Forest Buffer SRS update and let members know where we are in the process.

The RFB Outcome had their QPM back in December. Secretary Dunn from Pennsylvania gave a brief introduction on the buffer outcome and summarized the Buffer Leadership workshop and shared the themes that emerged from state buffer action strategy plans with the Management Board (MB). She reminded the MB of the work that went into those action strategies and stressed the importance of maintaining a high level leadership involvement with the buffer outcome and implementing the action strategies.

Katie then talked about the buffer outcome MB asks:

1. Commit to a tracking and accountability framework for the state Action Strategies:
   - Report on progress in 2-year programmatic milestones.
   - Provide annual updates on plan implementation at MB meetings between now and 2025.

2a. Support investments in effective, standalone flexible buffer programs (existing and new programs).

2b. Improve grant and funding provisions to better support building capacity in staff, contractors and outreach.

The MB agreed to report out on progress towards implementing the action strategies and milestones, but the timing wasn't great this year since they were already in the process of finalizing their milestone reporting for 2023. So, they did seem willing to report on progress in the future reporting years.

MB time is limited since the program moved to a twice a month two-hour meeting schedule, the next couple MB meetings will be taken up by SRS and CAST, so Katie is not 100% sure when we will be able to have the time for states to talk about what they have accomplished in terms of their action strategies. Katie noted that she will keep pushing to ensure that we get on a meeting agenda at some point.

The MB can not commit to funding, but they did agree that asks 2a and 2 b are important. The MB agreed to incorporate a report out on any actions towards implementing buffer programs or improving grant funding provisions. A conversation on what can be done at the state level and partnership level also happened, and if there are any key actions that come up that need to be elevated to the PSC those things would be discussed and presented at a MB meeting.

Katie then talked next steps for the Buffer Outcome:

We will be devloping our new science needs for the STAR science need data base. You can view them here. Please share any thoughts or comments you have about the science needs to Katie and Sophie. The science needs will be presented to STAR on January 26th, where we will be getting additional comments from folks about out science needs. Note: we can update our science needs at any point, but during the SRS process gives us some more time and attention on the topic.

We will start to develop our next 2-year work plan and update our management strategy at our February forestry workgroup meeting where we will have some draft materials teed up for that meeting. The work plan and the management strategy will need to be in their near final form by February 24th for public comment.

Discussion

Rebecca asked if we have any updates on understanding the definition of stream miles and its affect on calculating buffer acres. Katie noted that Peter Claggett of USGS has said that we are not going to have hyper resolution hydrography ready for another year or so. The GIS team is producing an interim product that will be better than the one we have now. Sarah McDonald, USGS noted that Renee Thompson of USGS is working on a 1:24k buffer layer and that should be out in early summer. Sarah suggested that the FWG should go ahead with planning using the 1:24k layer.

Land Use/Land Cover: Further Refining Classification Scheme for Forest and Tree Canopy Classes-
Sarah McDonald, USGS

Sarah gave a brief presentation on refining forest and tree canpoy classed. The Chesapeake Bay Land Use/Land Cover Data team has been seeking feedback on a proposed expansion of their classification schema. It has been suggested that the team look into further refining their classification to include a breakdown between deciduous and evergreen tree canopy. The team is interested in feedback on how useful this additional classification would be; the impacts it would have on analytical and modeling use cases; and recommendations of data sources to distinguish evergreen and deciduous. Sarah proposed some questions to the group that would help her, and the land cover team better refine the data:

1. Is it useful to map evergreen vs deciduous?
2. What are the implications of mapping evergreen vs deciduous in the model?
3. What data can be used to map evergreen vs deciduous?
4. Add this classification scheme (83 classes) or sperate overlay?
5. Produce for 2021/22 only, or make a time series?

In response to the first question Anne Hairston-Strange said that looking at the difference between evergreen vs deciduous is not something that she looks at frequently. The NLCD has the distinction, but unsure at how precise the mapping is. This question is something can be useful to ask when looking at measuring diversity.

Catlin Verdu of VDOF noted that VA has a hardwood initiative and understanding the difference might be useful to their work. Catlin said she will connect with them and see what they have to say.

In the chat Orsolya Lazar wrote: Evergreens have higher stormwater management value. Anne added that this due to the fact that they are more hydrologically active compared to hardwoods.

Katie Walker of the Chesapeake Conservancy noted that it sounds like there are potential benefits towards having the two types of trees mapped at the one-meter scale.

Sarah then asked if anyone is familiar with how the two are handled in the model. Helen Golimowski, who works closely with CAST noted that there is no distinction in CAST.

In the chat Susan Minnemeyer wrote: Evergreens are also more likely to be managed for timber/wood products (e.g. managed pine plantations).

Sarah then moved onto question 3 and asked if folks knew of any data that can be used to help with the distinction.

Anne said other than the NLCD data she has old GAP data. She also noted that its MD forest service would like to go to an even finer scale and look at what species or species groups are in an area to help get a diversity questions. She also suggested the Land fire mapping tool.

In the chat Susan Minnemeyer wrote: Deciduous vs evergreen mapping is also available widely at moderate resolution (Landsat scale). I think one question is whether the applications for this data require high res. e.g., using Landsat-scale data to map managed pine plantations.

In response to the 4th question members did not want this to be added classification scheme. Julie Mawhorter noted that number of land use classes are already overwhelming/complicated enough! Anne

noted that if you were going to map this an overlay would be the better option. Rebecca spoke up to note that overcomplication is a danger.

In response to question 5 Catlin Verdu noted that if this work was to be done it would be helpful to get a time series and not just have one limited snapshot. It would be great to go back in time and track into the future.

Sarah concluded by saying that she will come back to the FWG to make sure that the decsions they go with are appropriate and useful.

Announcements-*Katie Brownson, USFS*

[RFB Network website](#) updates: The website has been updated, including the addition of a new RFB resource library! A big thanks to Barbara McGuinness for her efforts to revamp the website! A new feature to the website is the buffer resource library that the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and James River Consortium initiated. Barba noted that they are still collecting current success stories of buffers, especially from this past planting season. Please email those success stories to Sophie Waterman (swaterman@chesapeakebay.net)

C-StREAM intern for summer 2023: We have been selected to host a [C-StREAM](#) (Chesapeake Student Recruitment, Early Advisement, and Mentoring Program) intern through the Bay Program Office this summer. The project we proposed is "Evaluating financial and human capacity needs for accelerating riparian forest buffer planting". Stay tuned for more details!

March FWG field trip: Cacapon Institute will be hosting us for a field trip focused on tree stock, nurseries, and propagation issues on **March 8th** at Casey Tree's farm in Berryville, VA.

Next meeting: **February 1st 9-11**. The focus will be on planning for 2023 and getting input on the new RFB Workplan and Management Strategy. Let us know if there are other timely topics that need attention!