



Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.

Agriculture Workgroup

September 2026

Agenda

1

**AgWG Membership
Update**

2

E3 Scenario Update

3

**VA Farm Voluntary Ag
BMP Survey / Verification
Framework
Consideration**

4

**Management Strategy
and Workplan
Development**



1

AgWG Membership Update

Why are we changing our membership structure?

- The revised Chesapeake Bay Program Governance and Management Framework limits number of voting members on workgroups to 15.
- In July, the Clean Water Goal Team issued a request for their workgroups to share the steps they would take to conform to the 15-voting member structure by 7/31. CWGT leadership also provided the following guidance:
 - Workgroups may deviate from the 9 signatory : 6 at-large Goal Team ratio if a signatory member declines filling their reserved membership spot.
 - Workgroups may not have non-voting members.

What change do we need to make?

- The AgWG has historically maintained 21 voting members (9 signatory, 12 at-large).
 - Shift will require at-large membership to be reduced from 12 to 6.
- We have been charged to conform to this new partnership structure.
 - Concerns with this change will be elevated; however, we must demonstrate how we will conform to the 15-voting member requirement.
 - The workgroup can determine *how* we reach that number.
- Robust discussion at July AgWG; needed more time for discussion and to come to an agreement on next steps.
- Further discussion at August AgWG meeting; approved process to conform to new structure.

Key elements of approved path forward

- Key stakeholder groups from which potential at-large members can be nominated were identified, forming at-large membership “categories”.
 - There will be a single voting member selected in each of six categories.
 - One alternate will be selected alongside each voting member; alternates are not required to represent the same organization as the primary voting member.
 - While voting members maintain ultimate decision-making authority in the case of a decision by vote (rather than decision by consent), close coordination with alternate should occur to represent the breadth of perspectives (organizational, geographic, etc.) of the stakeholder group they represent.
- At-large members will be selected by ranked-choice vote executed by 9 signatory members.
 - Mid-term at-large members will participate along signatories in future votes on membership.

Approved At-Large Member Categories

- Academia – land grant universities; regional colleges
- Agri-Business & Industry – commodity, specialty, livestock/poultry (etc.) associations
- Conservation Districts – county/regional district representatives
- Technical Assistance Providers – consultants; engineers
- Conservation NGOs
- USDA – NRCS; FSA; ARS



At-Large Member Category	Nominee 1	Nominee 2	Nominee 3	Nominee 4	Nominee 5
Academia	Robb Meinen PSU	Matt Royer PSU	Ken Staver UMD		
Agri-Business/Industry	Paul Bredwell US Poultry and Egg Assn.	R.O. Britt Smithfield Foods	Zach Evans Mountaire Farms	Sam Parker Mountaire Farms	Jim Riddell VA Cattlemen's Assn.
Conservation Districts	Emily Dekar USC	Jeff Hill YCCD			
Technical Assistance Providers	Jennifer Bratthauar TeamAg	Nick Hepfl HRG	Eric Rosenbaum Rosetree	Suzanne Shea Soil Life Stewardship	
Conservation NGOs	Matt Kowalski CBF	Tyler Walston ACB			
USDA	Vivian Dickson NRCS				





30-Second Introductions – Summer 2026 Nominees



Three horizontal lines at the top of the slide: a yellow line, an orange line, and a blue line.

**The following slides describe process and
are for reference only**

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Membership Adjustment Process – Nominees

- Signatories appointed their voting members.
 - Note: All 9 positions designated for signatory voting members were filled.
- Current AgWG at-large membership was dissolved.
- Candidates for 6 at-large positions:
 - Existing at-large members.
 - Nominees received during the winter 2025-2026 call for nominations.
 - Nominees received during the summer 2026 call for nominations.
- Nominees were assigned to the appropriate at-large member category.
- Final list of nominees presented at the September AgWG meeting.

Membership Adjustment Process – The Vote

- After the September AgWG meeting, signatory members will be asked to complete a form ranking the candidates, in order of preference, for each at-large member category.
 - “1” for first choice for voting member, “2” for second choice, and so on.
 - Every candidate on the ballot must be ranked.
- Form will be opened to signatory members by COB on 9/17.
- Form responses will be due by COB on 10/1.
- Form walkthrough?

Membership Adjustment Process – The Selection

- For categories with a single nominee:
 - Nominee selected as primary member.
- For categories with two nominees:
 - Nominee with majority of 1st-choice votes selected as primary.
 - Remaining nominee will serve as alternate.

Membership Adjustment Process – The Selection

For categories with three or more nominees:

Voting Member Selection

- Step 1: Tally first-choice votes
 - If a candidate receives 5 or more first-choice votes, they “win” that member seat.
 - If no candidate receives 5 or more first choice votes:
- Step 2: Candidate with fewest first-choice votes is eliminated; ballots cast for the eliminated candidate are transferred to those voters’ next preferred candidate still in the running.
 - Repeat step 2 until one candidate secures 5-vote majority.

Membership Adjustment Process – The Selection

For categories with three or more nominees:

Alternate Selection

- Step 1: Return to original 9 ballots, excluding “winning” nominee from consideration.
 - On any ballot ranking winning nominee as #1, first-choice vote is removed and other rankings “shift up” (second choice becomes first choice, third becomes second, etc.).
- Step 2: Execute elimination process described for voting member selection.

Membership Adjustment Process – Ties; Terms

Breaking Ties

- No tie possible for final winning spot; however, ties are possible during the elimination process (multiple candidates may share the fewest number of first-choice votes).
- If the tie occurs in the first round, the candidate who is eliminated will be determined by random draw.
- If the tie occurs after the first round, we will look back at the initial round tally and eliminate the candidate with the fewest first-choice votes.

Staggering Terms (applicable to 2026 vote only)

- The three candidates with the greatest margin of victory (difference between number of first-choice votes earned by voting member and alternate for each category) will serve two-year terms; remaining three will serve 1-year terms.
 - After this initial 1-year term, all at-large positions will return to a 2-year cycle.
 - Ties in margin of victory calculations will be broken by random draw.

Key Concept

Voting is not primary decision-making process; discussion to support every decision will be prioritized, and this discussion will remain open to all.

Phase 7 Ag E3 Scenario Update

Ag E3 Scenario: Path After AgWG Approval

- [8/20/26](#) – Ag E3 Scenario assumptions approved by AgWG
- [8/24/26](#) – Ag E3 Scenario assumptions introduced to Clean Water Goal Team
 - No questions/discussion; however, described differences between AgWG and Forestry WG assumptions for buffer, tree planting, and agroforestry BMPs
- [9/15/26](#) – Modeling Workgroup Special Meeting
 - Ag E3 Scenario not discussed, but group approved using NHD 1:24K flowlines for Phase 7 CAST
- [9/15/26](#) – Ag E3 Scenario discussed at Clean Water Goal Team September Office Hours
 - Dedicated time to discuss differences between Ag/Forestry proposals

Comparison of Agriculture & Forestry E3 Proposals

BMP	E3 Scenario Acres Credited (Watershed-Wide)	
	FWG Proposal	AgWG Proposal
Forest Buffers	80% of cropland within 30m of all unbuffered streams/ivers	70% of cropland within 20m of all unbuffered streams/ivers
	300,498 acres	175,299 acres
Forest Buffers (w fence)	80% of pasture within 30m of unbuffered streams/ivers	85% of pasture within 20m of all unbuffered streams/ivers
	114,128	80,845
Grass Buffers	20% of cropland within 30m of all unbuffered streams/ivers	30% of cropland within 20m of all unbuffered streams/ivers
	75,124	75,128
Grass Buffers (w fence)	20% of pasture within 30m of all unbuffered streams/ivers	15% of cropland within 20m of all unbuffered streams/ivers
	28,532	14,267
Tree Planting	3% of available ag land (excluding ag open space)	1% of available ag land (excluding ag open space)
	195,076	66,600
Agroforestry	10% of cropland/pasture	0%
	627,841	0
Total (excluding Agroforestry)	713,358 acres (9.3% of ag land)	412,139 acres (5.4% of ag land)

Comparison of Agriculture & Forestry E3 Proposals

BMP	E3 Scenario Acres Credited (Watershed-Wide)	
	FWG Proposal*	AgWG Proposal
Wetland Restoration	[matches AgWG proposal]	1% of available ag land uses, excluding ag open space
	143,606 acres	147,043 acres
Land Retirement to Open Space	[matches AgWG proposal]	Land retirement: combined 7% of available ag land uses
	495,094	506,945
Land Retirement to Pasture	[matches AgWG proposal]	Land retirement: combined 7% of available ag land uses
	255,686	261,165
Alternative Crops	[matches AgWG proposal]	1% of available row crop acres
	29,062	30,305
Sum (LUC BMPs excl. LRP, AF)	1,381,119	1,096,433
% LUC (excl. LRP, AF)	18.0%	14.3%

Additional Land Use Change BMPs that affect Ag land conversion rate

*Note the FWG did not make a specific proposal for these BMPs. These assumptions match the AgWG proposal

Next Steps

- If you feel strongly about this topic:
 - Communicate with your Clean Water Goal Team member
 - Join the September CWGT meeting
- [9/28/26](#) – Ag (and other sectors') E3 Scenario will be considered for approval
 - Decision Requested: After discussion and formulation of a specific proposal, CWGT will be asked to support using either the Agriculture Workgroup or Forestry Workgroup's recommended assumptions for certain Land Use Change BMPs for the Everything, by Everyone, Everywhere (E3) Scenario for Phase 7. These include forest buffers, grass buffers, tree planting, and agroforestry.

Virginia Farm Voluntary Ag BMP Survey



Presentation





Questions?



Management Strategy and Workplan Development

Background

- Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement defines goals, outcomes and targets that the Chesapeake Bay Program has committed to implement to restore, conserve and protect the Bay and its watershed.
- Each of the 4 goals in the Watershed Agreement have an associated Management Strategy
- Management Strategies describe challenges to outcome attainment and the management approaches that should be pursued to address those challenges over a six-year period
 - Management Strategies include Management Approaches: outline the general approach needed to fill existing gaps and identify the partnership's role in that approach. These are the actions that the program will undertake to address the challenges to goal and outcome attainment that are described in the Situation Analysis.
- Workgroups will also develop workplans which state actions that partners will undertake to implement management approaches over a one- to three-year period

Next Steps

- Clean Water Goal Team will describe expectations for Workgroup Workplans at their September meeting ([Day 2, 1:20-2:05pm](#))
 - Timeline
 - Initial set of assignments for workgroups to pursue
 - Desired cadence and structure of workgroup updates
- What we're expecting:
 - “Big-picture” ideas by December
 - Final workplans due to CWGT for approval by ~February outlining next three years of work for AgWG
- AgWG's head-start – 2025-26 Prioritization Document

Priorities We've Identified

Implementation of Ag BMPs	Crediting and Verification of Ag BMPs
Understand and evaluate ag-sector WIP progress	Evaluate credits for BMPs not currently incorporated into the CBP's suite of modeling tools
Accelerate BMP implementation across the watershed	Regularly evaluate BMPs currently receiving credit in the CBP's suite of modeling tools
Enhance cross-partner communication/idea-sharing	Develop methods for verifying BMPs not implemented through traditional channels
Expand AgWG reach through external communication and education	Leverage technology to enhance BMP verification
Track and understand ag industry trends and their implications for ag nonpoint-source pollution	Enhance understanding of, and explore crediting options for, BMP co-benefits
Assess options for innovative BMP implementation programs	Enhance focus on water quality monitoring data

Management Approaches

Relevant Management Approaches: Clean Water Goal and RENPS Outcome

2.0.1: Continue to improve the effectiveness of the Clean Water Goal Team and its workgroups by enhancing coordination, communication, information sharing, adaptive management, and innovation as it strives to achieve Clean Water Goals and Outcomes

2.0.2: Expand local capacity and TA through strategic cross-partnership collaboration, particularly the Workforce, Land Use Planning & Decision Support, and Local Government Leadership outcomes.

2.0.3: Assess and integrate jurisdictional data sources to improve the accuracy of model predictions.

2.1.1: Complete the Phase 7 suite of modeling tools.

2.1.2: Revise planning targets for 2040 based on the final Phase 7 suite of modeling tools.

2.1.3: Develop new or amended WIPs

Management Approaches

Relevant Management Approaches: Clean Water Goal and RENPS Outcome

2.1.4: Continue to increase implementation of Phase 3 WIPs through 2030 to achieve interim planning targets and share successful or emerging innovative strategies or opportunities to achieve greater nutrient and sediment reductions.

2.1.5: Explore a tiered implementation structure for achieving nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment reductions.

2.1.6: Assess nutrient mass imbalances and advance innovations that strengthen the adoption or performance of nonpoint-source BMPs.

2.1.7: Incorporate additional lines of evidence into assessments of progress.

Workplan development will entail linking AgWG priorities to Management Approaches within the Management Strategy for the Clean Water Goal.

To prepare for workplan development, members should:

- Review resources on [Strategic Plan and Workplan Development webpage](#), specifically:
 - [Workplan Template](#)
 - [Workplan Example for Backyard Birds](#)
 - If additional context is needed, [Management Strategy Template](#) and [Backyard Birds Example](#)
- Review the Management Strategy for the Clean Water Goal (to be approved at September CWGT meeting)
 - Draft-final version linked [here](#)
- Review the [Agriculture Workgroup Prioritization Document \(2025-2026\)](#)

Anything else?

- Send to Caroline Kleis (Kleis.Caroline@epa.gov) for inclusion in “Recap” email

Thank you!

Any questions?

You can contact me at Hughes.Eric@epa.gov



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