

**Chesapeake Bay Program**  
**Watershed Technical Workgroup (WTWG)**  
**Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, September 4th, 2025

10:00 AM to 11:40 AM

[Meeting Materials](#)

**Summary of Actions and Decisions**

**Decision:** The WTWG approved the [August Meeting Minutes](#)

**Action:** NEIEN will eventually be phased out as Phase 7 approaches, and CAST will incorporate the capabilities of NEIEN. The group will continue to hear updates on these efforts as needed into future progress years.

**Action:** Olivia Devereux, Devereux Consulting/CBPO, and Auston Smith, EPA, will follow-up with Director Mike Rolband, to make him aware of the updated Urban Nutrient Management Expert Panel recommendations and deliberations, noting potential impacts to the numbers used in the runoff reduction model.

**Action:** If you have additional questions or feedback regarding the Urban Nutrient Management Expert Panel update, please contact David Wood, CSN ([wood.csn@outlook.com](mailto:wood.csn@outlook.com)). The Urban Nutrient Management Expert Panel Technical Appendix will be distributed to WTWG members, likely in October, and a vote on the approval of the technical appendix will (tentatively) take place in November.

**Action:** Caroline Kleis, WTWG Staffer, will reach out offline to members not present on the call to get their vote on the approval of the 2025 NEIEN Appendix.

**Post- Meeting Decision:** The WTWG approves the 2025 NEIEN Appendix for use in 2025 annual progress submissions.

**Action:** If you have questions or feedback on the 2025 progress verification call framework, please reach out to Auston Smith, EPA ([Smith.Auston@epa.gov](mailto:Smith.Auston@epa.gov)).

**Action:** Auston Smith, EPA, will be reaching out to verification teams with a Doodle poll to schedule a meeting in December from the 8-12<sup>th</sup>. If your jurisdiction has a preference for having non point source and point source people meet separately, please let Auston know.

**Action:** The WTWG will hear an update on BMP excess discussions taking place at the Agricultural Modeling Team meetings and will be asked to vote on the AMT's recommendation at a subsequent meeting.

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**Meeting Minutes**

10:00 **Introductions and Announcements** – Auston Smith, EPA (10 min.)

- *Please put your name and affiliation in the chat box for attendance purposes. Thank you!*
- **Decision:** The WTWG approved the [August Meeting Minutes](#)
- 2025 Progress Schedule/QAPP Revision
  - Auston Smith, EPA, thanked the group for their nonpoint source and point source QAPP submissions. You should expect to hear back from Auston and others reviewing the QAPP within 3-4 weeks, with initial sets of review questions.
- BMP and Wastewater Submissions to NEIEN
  - Auston Smith, EPA, reminded the group that we are in the middle of the land use submission period between August and November. Wastewater and BMP submissions are now underway and will go through December 1<sup>st</sup>.

- Submission of Harvested Forest on Federal Land
  - Auston Smith, EPA, reminded the group that agricultural and septic practices are assigned to jurisdictions, even when they are occurring on a federal land. However, the harvested forest is not reassigned to jurisdictions. In future submissions, if you do have harvested forest that is on a federal land should be reported as such.
  - **Bill Keeling (in chat):** VA does not get FH from USFS to provide a base condition.
- September CAST Webinar
  - Helen Smith, Devereux Consulting, noted that at this month's CAST webinar, there will be a guest speaker from NRCS who is going to share NRCS tools they use to plan agricultural practices and will translate that into CAST for modeling BMP effectiveness at the farm scale. Details on that, including the link to register, are available on the [free trainings video page](#).
- Phasing out of NEIEN
  - **Auston Smith:** As Phase 7 is approaches, NEIEN will begin to be phased out and CAST, as you know it, will have the capabilities of NEIEN built into it and incorporated. So, this will be an iterative process where NEIEN functions will remain the same as CAST is updated to that capability, to ensure nothing is lost and submissions remain smooth. So, I just want to continue to put that on people's radar that you will continue to see efforts surrounding that in future progress years in the interim before Phase 7.
  - **Action:** NEIEN will eventually be phased out as Phase 7 approaches, and CAST will incorporate the capabilities of NEIEN. The group will continue to hear updates on these efforts as needed into future progress years.

#### 10:10 **Update on August Decisional Items-** Auston Smith, EPA (10 min.)

Auston Smith, WTWG Coordinator/EPA, provided the group with a recap of the decisional items from the August WTWG meeting, noting approved changes for Phase 7. In particular, Auston noted that while there was initially a stop registered for the proposed cover crop methodology, after meeting with that voting member, their vote changed to a four. As such, the group reached consensus on the cover crop methodology discussed in the August meeting.

##### **Discussion:**

**Caroline Kleis (in chat):** The August meeting [minutes](#) and [vote trackers](#) have been updated to reflect the change in vote.

#### 10:20 **Urban Nutrient Management Expert Panel Updates** – David Wood, CSN (20 min.)

David Wood, USWG Coordinator/CSN, provided the group with an update on the Urban Nutrient Management Expert Panel, convened in September of 2024. Included in this presentation was an overview of draft anticipated recommendations from the panel and next steps.

##### **Discussion:**

**Bill Keeling:** I heard something about a credit duration of three years. Did I hear that right? Currently urban nutrient management is a one year. At least, the appendix I have has 1 year credit duration.

**David Wood:** I'm sorry, Bill, I might have misspoken on that. I have not dived in yet to the technical appendix portion of the report. I am waiting to kind of get the final decisions on the

non fertilized and the nutrient management plan, but you very well could be correct. That's my mistake.

**Auston Smith:** Any other questions from the group? Thanks again, David, for giving us that overview.

**David Wood:** No problem. If folks have questions following the meeting, please shoot me an email and feel free to reach out. I am happy to discuss.

**Olivia Devereux:** There was a huge effort to work with Virginia DEQ on the Virginia runoff reduction model to align that model the developers use to make sure that when they do construction, they're leaving the site meeting regulations in Virginia. They used the updated data that we didn't have in the models yet. Has anybody looked back to DEQ to talk about how this is going to jive? I know that was a huge priority with Mike Rolband, and I just wanted to know if anybody went back to him to check with him and let him know the direction this was going.

**Auston Smith:** I certainly have not. Bill or Arianna, are you in contact with someone, or is that something we can pick up now?

**Bill Keeling:** I have not been involved in anything to do with the runoff reduction. I really have no idea what has been going on. I don't know where it is, what to tell you, or anything. Sorry.

**Norm Goulet:** Not that I have been in recent contact with Mike, but Mike was warned that as soon as we went to Phase 7, and also as we revised the Urban Nutrient Expert Panel, and as soon as new fertilizer data came out, we would completely lose the connection between the numbers that were used for the runoff reduction method in the model. So, it would probably be fair to let Mike know things are changing, but he was forewarned that would happen.

**Arianna Johns (in chat):** I don't know anything about the run off reduction discussion with Director Rolband

**Olivia Devereux:** Good point, Norm. I think that maybe when this goes to the Water Quality GIT, we just shoot him an email. Or, I could do that, copy you, just so he's aware of the different subjects later.

**Norm Goulet:** Yeah, I think we should make sure that the Water Quality GIT rep definitely talks to Mike.

**Auston Smith:** Understood. Thank you for that flag.

**Action:** Olivia Devereux, Devereux Consulting/CBPO, and Auston Smith, EPA, will follow-up with Director Mike Rolband, to make him aware of the updated Urban Nutrient Management Expert Panel recommendations and deliberations, noting potential impacts to the numbers used in the runoff reduction model.

**Action:** If you have additional questions or feedback regarding the Urban Nutrient Management Expert Panel update, please contact David Wood, CSN ([wood.csn@outlook.com](mailto:wood.csn@outlook.com)). The Urban Nutrient Management Expert Panel Technical Appendix will be distributed to WTWG members, likely in October, and a vote on the approval of the technical appendix will (tentatively) take place in November.

10:40 **Phase 7 CAST Land Uses** – Helen Smith, Devereux Consulting (15 min.)

Helen Smith, Devereux Consulting, presented the group with an overview of the Phase 7 CAST land uses, specifically focusing on what has changed since Phase 6. The full crosswalk of Phase 6 and Phase 7 land uses is available on the [CAST Model Documentation page](#).

## 10:55 Review of the Final 2025 NEIEN Appendix – Auston Smith, EPA (5 min.)

Auston Smith, EPA, reviewed the finalized 2025 NEIEN Appendix with the group. Time was made for partners to ask any questions and provide feedback. The group was asked to provide their votes on the Consensus Continuum, indicating their support for the approval of the 2025 NEIEN Appendix.

**\*Note:** The order of presentations at this point were switched around to accommodate presenter time conflicts.

### Discussion:

**Auston Smith:** Caroline, would you mind going through our voting membership for the formal vote?

**Caroline Kleis:** I will pull up the vote tracker, Auston. I think we are missing about five people. So, I could get whoever is on the call to put votes in the chat and then follow up with those people.

**Bill Keeling (in chat):** 3

**Kaylyn Gootman (in chat):** 3

**Christina Lyerly (in chat):** 5

**Norm Goulet (in chat):** 3

**Alicia Ritzenthaler (in chat):** 5

**Emily Dekar (in chat):** Voting a 5 for NY on behalf of Cassie Davis who couldn't make it today.

**Samuel Canfield (in chat):** WV 5

**Holly Walker (in chat):** DE- 5

**Caroline Kleis:** I think we should have everybody except for three of our at-large members and Pennsylvania.

**Auston Smith:** I think you flagged the members here that we don't have votes for, Caroline. We will follow up with them offline, and we will send an email with the results. Thanks a lot, everyone, for your attention to this subject.

**Action:** Caroline Kleis, WTWG Staffer, will reach out offline to members not present on the call to get their vote on the approval of the 2025 NEIEN Appendix.

**Post- Meeting Decision:** The WTWG approves the 2025 NEIEN Appendix for use in 2025 annual progress submissions.

## 11:00 2025 Progress Verification Analysis Overview – Auston Smith, EPA (20 min.)

Auston Smith, WTWG Coordinator/EPA, gave the group an informational overview of the major steps taken in the upcoming 2025 verification analysis of BMP data submitted to CAST.

### Discussion:

**Caroline Kleis (in chat):**

[https://www.chesapeakebay.net/files/documents/appendix\\_v\\_protocols\\_for\\_verification\\_of\\_annual\\_bmp\\_data\\_submissions\\_v1.15.2020.pdf](https://www.chesapeakebay.net/files/documents/appendix_v_protocols_for_verification_of_annual_bmp_data_submissions_v1.15.2020.pdf)

<https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/programs/bmp-verification>

**Olivia Devereux:** I know when sending out the doodle polls, some states like to include wastewater folks and non point source people all together. Some states say that we need to have separate meetings. I just wanted to see if maybe you wanted to check with the group now

or wait until you get a response to the general poll. It just occurred to me, so I thought I'd mention it.

**Auston Smith:** I am happy to just talk about that now. If anyone wants to send me an email about this as well, rather than speaking up on the call, that's perfectly fine. But, if you know that you want to have your nonpoint source and point source teams have a verification call separately, I would really appreciate knowing that. Frequently, we're of the impression that we think both in the same meeting would still be useful. But, if separate is best for you, I would love to hear it, and we will do that. So, maybe I can send out a reminder of this in the Doodle Poll request, if you need some time to think through that and talk with your team. Thanks, Olivia, for the flag. I will flag that again in the Doodle Poll.

**Action:** If you have questions or feedback on the 2025 progress verification call framework, please reach out to Auston Smith, EPA ([Smith.Auston@epa.gov](mailto:Smith.Auston@epa.gov)).

**Action:** Auston Smith, EPA, will be reaching out to verification teams with a Doodle poll to schedule a meeting in December from the 8-12<sup>th</sup>. If your jurisdiction has a preference for having non point source and point source people meet separately, please let Auston know.

#### 11:20 Informational Overview on Animal BMP Excess – Tom Butler, EPA (15 min.)

Tom Butler, AMT Coordinator/EPA, gave the group an informational overview of one of the topics the Agricultural Modeling Team (AMT) has been pursuing- animal BMP Excess. In particular he gave updates on Animal Waste Management Systems, Mortality Disposal, and Exclusion Fencing. Updates included efforts to avoid instances where more animal BMPs are submitted than can be credited in CAST, as well as the direction of these within the partnership.

#### Discussion:

**Elizabeth Hoffman (in chat):** 1000 linear feet

**Olivia Devereux:** Tom, are you suggesting that there would be a different default for each state, or that we would just change the default and then people can submit, as they can now, any number of the conversions?

**Tom Butler:** Great question. The direction the group is headed now is toward state specific. So, what we would do is take the number of animal units in each county in each state and kind of compare those against the acres of pasture that are stream adjacent, calculate a ratio for each state, and then have those play out. It was a recognition that, perhaps that Virginia study was not what was happening in Pennsylvania or Maryland, and that could be something that's useful to divide. There was interest in also looking at just the county spatial variability on that, so that is definitely up for examination. I don't know if that's the direction people wanted to go. But, I think they were headed to states.

**Olivia Devereux:** That makes great sense, and I appreciate it. I know that it's handled differently in different states because of the topology. I think this is an important acknowledgement of the variation in the landscape. My second question, Tom, was about the buffer. I believe the regular buffers are 35-150 because the Forestry Workgroup said that, beyond 150 feet, it's always great to have trees planted, but they do not function as a buffer. They're too far from the stream. Not that we want to discourage wider tree planting, but that is further from the stream and not functioning exactly as a buffer. Are you looking at expanding it beyond 150 or coming up with a different minimum? Are you looking at finding something as a midpoint between 35-150? Or are you looking at going wider than 150? In which case, that was an intentional decision by the

Forestry Workgroup, and we maybe should go back to them if that's the direction you are thinking.

**Tom Butler:** I don't think anyone intended, and I won't speak for the group entirely on this, to exceed that 150 feet.

**Dave Montali:** We have an issue in a couple counties, and it's all based on CREP. We are not talking about 35-150. We are talking about something like a CREP that has a minimum 35 foot requirement and, with sinuosity, potentially the average is higher than 35. So, West Virginia doesn't have any information about that, but maybe some of the other states do. So, when you put a CREP buffer in, what's the average width? That's kind of the framework of what we are looking at, or what I thought we were looking at, anyway. It's not going to completely solve the problem, but it seems like the assumption of 35 is maybe a little low if we just report area.

**Olivia Devereux:** That makes sense. You're not looking at going beyond 150, so I don't think Forestry Workgroup necessarily needs to be consulted based on the history of decision making. I know we are going to look at some of the NRCS data together, but, for everybody's awareness, CREP buffers are reported by acres. So, what I'm getting is this only seems to arise if you are reporting lengths and you don't have width. But, for CREP, we have acres. So, I think that should be fine.

**Dave Montali:** What happens if you only report acres and not width is, if in fact certain projects were much wider than 35, it's giving extra credit for the livestock exclusion part. It gets pretty intense in a couple of counties where we are getting  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the acreage we submit, cut off. Not for the land use change or the filtering effect, but for the riparian deposition component. It's cutting off too many animals, I think.

**Elizabeth Hoffman (in chat):** One challenge is that this practice is credited in two parts, AU excluded and acres of land converted to buffer. With a very low minimum width, that means that reporting in acres results in OVER crediting linear feet of fencing when assuming only 35' vs 75' and then that OVER credits the amount of AU excluded. When there are not really that many linear feet of fencing on the ground.

**Olivia Devereux:** Thanks for clarifying for me that the issue was about the animals more than the acres credited. That helps me understand. So, thank you for the clarification.

**Action:** The WTWG will hear an update on BMP excess discussions taking place at the Agricultural Modeling Team meetings and will be asked to vote on the AMT's recommendation at a subsequent meeting.

#### 11:35 Recap of Actions and Decisions (5 min.)

##### Discussion:

**Elizabeth Hoffman (in chat):** Just flagging, the week of Dec 8th through the 12th is Bay in the Balance meeting, so that may be a conflict for some.

**Kevin DuBois (in chat):** Auston, I had a problem with accessing the first hour of the meeting. Who best should I talk to about the forest harvest BMPs on federal land?

**Auston Smith:** Kevin, you can talk to me. Feel free to send me an email.

#### 11:40 Adjourn

**Next Meeting:** Thursday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM.

#### Participants

Auston Smith, EPA  
Caroline Kleis, CRC  
Petra Baldwin, CRC  
Dave Montali, Tetra Tech  
David Wood, CSN  
Joseph Schell, DNREC  
Megan Thyng, EPA  
Emily Dekar, USC  
Christina Lysterly, MDE  
John Lancaster, PA DEP  
Samuel Canfield, WV DEP  
Eugenia Hart, Tetra Tech  
George Doumit, DNREC  
Coral Howe, USGS  
Helen Smith, Devereux Consulting  
Dylan Burgevin, MDE  
Holly Walker, DNREC

Bailey Robertory, MD DNR  
Alicia Ritzenthaler, DOEE  
Bill Keeling, VA DEQ  
Olivia Devereux, Devereux Consulting/CBPO  
Norm Goulet, NVRC  
Kaylyn Gootman, EPA  
Arianna Johns, VA DEQ  
Jeremy Hanson, CRC  
Fernando Pasquel, Arcadis  
Elizabeth Hoffman, MDA  
Bo Williams, EPA  
Sushanth Gupta, MWCOG  
Peter Claggett, USGS  
Eric Hughes, EPA  
Tom Butler, EPA  
Kevin Du Bois, DoD

### **Acronym List**

AgWG: Agriculture Workgroup  
CBPO: Chesapeake Bay Program Office  
EPA: Environmental Protection Agency  
EPEG: Expert Panel Establishment Group  
NEIEN: National Environmental Information Exchange Network  
QAPP: Quality Assurance Project Plan  
USFS: United States Forest Service  
USGS: United States Geological Survey  
VADEQ: Virginia Department of Environmental Quality  
WTWG: Watershed Technical Workgroup  
WQGIT: Water Quality Goal Implementation Team