



Watershed Technical Workgroup Meeting

January 8, 2026
10:00 AM-11:40 AM

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

Purpose: To inform the WTWG on nominations received for Vice Chair, Chair, and At-Large membership, Progress data storage policies, and to discuss the mapping to BMPs and load source groups and draft Phase 7 NEIEN Appendix.

Summary of Actions & Decisions

Decision: The WTWG approved the [December 2025 meeting minutes](#).

Action: We will follow-up with numbers for the CSS harvested forest land use, once the land use has been finalized in Spring.

Action: Jess Rigelman, J7 Consulting, and Andy Fitch, USGS, will be updating Tableau with re-run data received by noon on January 9th. An update will be sent by COB, January 12th, to those involved with Progress.

Action: Auston Smith, EPA, will be reaching out to schedule additional calls with jurisdictions on agriculture/NRCS data as needed.

Action: Please email Auston Smith (Smith.Auston@epa.gov), Jess Rigelman (jrigelman@j7llc.com), and Caroline Kleis (Kleis.Caroline@epa.gov) if you have any concerns regarding the addition of a potential duplicates tab to the validation report. The group will approve this addition at the February WTWG meeting.

Action: Please submit acres to Jess Rigelman (jrigelman@j7llc.com) for pasture high and hay high by the end of January 2026, if you have not done so already.

Action: The WTWG will pause their process for confirming nominations for the Chair and Vice Chair position until additional guidance has been received from the Management Board. Please reach out to Auston Smith (Smith.Auston@epa.gov) and Caroline Kleis (Kleis.Caroline@epa.gov) if you would like to nominate yourself or others for the vacant at-large member positions (to be filled once the process has resumed).

Action: Jess Rigelman will reach out to the CBPO IT team regarding the feasibility of providing jurisdictions with a zip file of historical submissions, prior to their deletion from NEIEN.

Action: The Urban Stormwater Workgroup will finalize their recommendations for the developed sector mapping via email by January 20th. The Agriculture Workgroup (AgWG) will continue discussions on the agriculture sector mappings, including agricultural BMPs on solar land uses, at their January 29th

meeting. Given the short turnaround time before the February WTWG meeting, January AgWG materials will be shared with voting members on January 15th, and a final mapping matrix will be sent to WTWG members for their review on January 29th. The WTWG plans to vote on the final mapping of BMPs to load sources at their February 5th meeting.

Action: Please provide feedback to Jess Rigelman (jrigelman@j7llc.com) on the draft Phase 7 NEIEN Appendix prior to the February 5th WTWG meeting. Feedback will be discussed at the February 5th meeting, and the group will approve the Appendix in March.

Action: The WTWG is asked to provide feedback to Jess Rigelman (jrigelman@j7llc.com) on the following question related to the NEIEN Appendix: “Wetland restoration is mapped to restore and create depending on measurement name. Is this intended?”

Action: Tom Butler, EPA, will follow-up with Bill Keeling, VA DEQ, regarding questions posed on the Phytase BMP.

Action: Auston Smith will reach out to jurisdictions to confirm their understanding and acceptance of the transition from NEIEN to CAST in subsequent Progress years.

Meeting Minutes

I. Introductions & Announcements

Lead: Auston Smith, EPA

Auston Smith, EPA, provided the WTWG with the following announcements:

- Approval of [December meeting minutes](#)
 - The WTWG approved the December 2025 meeting minutes.
- Recap of December Feed Space Decisional Item
 - Auston recapped the decisional item on the methodology for allocating feed space acres for Phase 7. Auston noted that the feed space fraction will now be determined by the percentage of the rural ag and impervious roads within each LRSEG. The major differences between Phase 6 and Phase 7 are the spatial allocation of county feed space acres towards rural Land River Segments and the shrinking of specific land uses as opposed to shrinking all land uses by error rates. This methodology was accepted by the group via email in December.
- CSS Harvested Forest Land Use- Jess Rigelman, J7 LLC/CBPO
 - Jess noted that, in reconciling the mapped harvested forest land use with reported harvested forest, some harvested forest falls within CSS areas. However, CSS areas need to stay the same and are only adjusted by the CSO connection data sent via the non wastewater application. As such, a new harvested forest land use was created within CSS to help keep this accounting straight. This was shared with the WTWG as an informational update.
- Verification Call Overview/ NRCS and Progress Schedule
 - Andy Fitch and Jess Rigelman will be updating Tableau with re-run data, with the hope of sending the link out by COB Monday Jan 12th. That re-run will incorporate all data received by noon on Friday, January 9th.
 - Auston will be reaching out to each jurisdiction in the coming weeks for additional follow-up on agriculture or other Progress items of concern, now that NRCS data is now available for incorporation.

- It is anticipated there will be a roughly two-month delay in the normal Progress schedule. As such, the hope is for all BMP submissions to be finalized by April for 2025 Progress, QAPPs may be delayed until early May, and the progress scenario will hopefully be released in July.
- Other announcements?
 - Jess Rigelman, J7 Consulting, noted that there was a request from one partner to add a list of potential duplicates as part of the regular validation report. The CBPO IT team developed that, and Jess walked the group through what that tab would look like on the validation report. This has not yet been put into production, and the WTWG will approve this addition at the February WTWG meeting.
 - Auston Smith followed-up on the December 2025 announcement regarding acres for pasture high and hay high. Jess noted that responses have been received from Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New York and confirmed that Delaware, West Virginia, and Virginia are working to provide these acres. Jess requested that this data be submitted by the end of January.

Actions:

1. We will follow-up with numbers for the CSS harvested forest land use, once the land use has been finalized in Spring.
2. Jess Rigelman, J7 Consulting, and Andy Fitch, USGS, will be updating Tableau with re-run data received by noon on January 9th. An update will be sent by COB, January 12th, to those involved with Progress.
3. Auston Smith, EPA, will be reaching out to schedule additional calls with jurisdictions on agriculture/NRCS data as needed.
4. Please email Auston Smith (Smith.Auston@epa.gov), Jess Rigelman (jrigelman@j7llc.com), and Caroline Kleis (Kleis.Caroline@epa.gov) if you have any concerns regarding the addition of a potential duplicates tab to the validation report. The group will approve this addition at the February WTWG meeting.
5. Please submit acres to Jess Rigelman (jrigelman@j7llc.com) for pasture high and hay high by the end of January 2026, if you have not done so already.

Decisions:

1. The WTWG approved the [December 2025 meeting minutes](#).

Discussion Notes:

CSS Harvested Forest Land Use

Dave Montali: Assuming that the submitted harvested forest acres are greater than the mapped acres in a county, would there be harvested forest within the CSS areas of that county?

Jess Rigelman: There can be harvested forest acres within the CSS area. We use your harvested forest mapped acres to distribute your reported acres. If you end up reporting more, then we take that out of forest. If you end up reporting less, we return that harvested forest to forest.

Dave Montali: Ok. I think I get it. It's unlikely that you would have mapped CSS areas for harvested forest, since the mapping usually only picks up clear cuts. If we report harvested forest at the county scale and we needed to take it, we would be taking it from forest throughout the county, and that might have harvested forest in CSS areas.

Jess Rigelman: Yes.

Dave Montali: Ok. I am just trying to understand that a little bit more. Thank you.

Bill Keeling (in chat): VA will need to see the numbers as applied since we only have 3 CSO localities.

Auston Smith: Jess, Bill mentioned that VA would like to see those numbers because of their limited CSO localities.

Jess Rigelman: I can't really show you those numbers because we don't really have a final land use. I can tell you what I have done with this draft land use, which is just a crude interpolation of the back-cast. But, being we don't have the MS-4 and CSO data, those will not be available until April 1 when I get the land use and start processing things for calibration.

Auston Smith: Bill, maybe we will be able to work with you and your team on that in the Spring.

Addition of Potential Duplicates to Validation Report

Norm Goulet (in chat): What fields are being used to assess duplication?

Jess Rigelman: It is basically where the state unique identifier, the state, the agency, the BMP name, the geography name, measure name, measure value, CAST BMP short name, and implementation date are the exact same. So, this is where there are two record counts where all of those records are the same. So, in general, it's very specific. I'm not saying these are duplicates, but when all of those records are the same, we've put it out there as something you might want to look into.

Tyler Trostle (in chat): We support this being included here at PA. Thank you very much Jess.

Cassie Davis (in chat): NY supports including this in the reports

Christina Lyerly (in chat): MD supports this as well

Samuel Canfield (in chat): WV also supports this.

Auston Smith: Thank you so much, Jess. I know we were not asking for a formal approval at this point, but we've gotten some shows of support in the chat. Maybe for the February WTWG meeting, we can bring this to a formal vote. Thanks a lot, Jess, for that overview.

Dylan Burgevin (in chat): What influences Geography Name? If there are similar (but not identical) lat/longs does that cause it to be flagged as a duplicate?

Jess Rigelman: In case where there is latitude and longitude (lat/long), it would be where the lat/long is the same. When I say that, I mean that within a certain level of precision. Since the lat/long is used to determine the LRSEG, you may have two different lat/longs that map to the same LRSEG. In that case, it would also check the lat/long. So, it is that specific.

Pasture High and Hay High Acres

Bill Keeling (in chat): VA will be supplying the numbers by 1/31.

II. Update on Calls for Nominations for Chair/Vice Chair and At-Large

Lead: Auston Smith, EPA; Nominees for Vice Chair, Chair, and At-Large

Auston Smith, EPA, provided the group with the list of nominations for Chair/Vice Chair and At-Large membership for the WTWG for the next term. The group received one nomination for Chair, Sushanth Gupta (MWCOG), and one nomination for Vice Chair, Christina Lyerly (MDE). No nominations were received for At-Large members. Nominees were given the chance to introduce themselves, and their respective bios are posted to the calendar page. While

nominations were received for these vacancies, Auston noted that the Partnership is currently in the middle of a restructuring process and that workgroups are instructed to pause confirming nominees until given additional guidance from the Management Board. As such, the WTWG will be made aware of next steps for confirming nominees, once additional guidance has been received.

Actions:

1. The WTWG will pause their process for confirming nominations for the Chair and Vice Chair position until additional guidance has been received from the Management Board. Please reach out to Auston Smith (Smith.Auston@epa.gov) and Caroline Kleis (Kleis.Caroline@epa.gov) if you would like to nominate yourself or others for the vacant at-large member positions (to be filled once the process has resumed).

III. NEIEN/Progress Data Storage Policy

Lead: Jess Rigelman, J7 LLC/CBPO

Given the accumulation of data storage from progress submissions, the Chesapeake Bay Program Office has put together suggested guidelines for NEIEN/progress data storage moving forward. Jess Rigelman presented these suggested guidelines for the WTWG's awareness and discussion.

Actions:

1. Jess Rigelman will reach out to the CBPO IT team regarding the feasibility of providing jurisdictions with a zip file of historical submissions, prior to their deletion from NEIEN.

Discussion Notes:

Tyler Trostle: When might this be run, Jess?

Jess Rigelman: When Auston says that 2025 Progress is official. We don't know that date, but let's just say that it's July of this year (2026). Then anything prior to the 2024 Progress season where "is true" or "is current" equals false would be deleted. So, all of the last two year's submissions would stay in there.

Dylan Burgevin (in chat): Can we receive all historical submissions before they are deleted?

Dylan Burgevin: One time, can we have a zip file with all historical things before we go in and delete everything, just so that we can maintain it for our records and have it in a centralized location? If that's not possible, maybe we can work something out on a case-by-case basis. What's the feasibility for that?

Jess Rigelman: I will verify with our IT team, but I am pretty sure that they can give you a zipped up folder of all your XMLs and send that over to you. I think we have done that in the past, but I don't want to commit to that until I have spoken to them. But, we should be able to work something like that out.

Dylan Burgevin: Awesome. Sounds good, thanks.

Alicia Ritzenthaler (in chat): DOEE would also appreciate a backup if feasible!

Jess Rigelman: I see DC wants that as well. Ok.

Bill Keeling (in chat): I believe you can download each XML from CAST

Dylan Burgevin (in chat): I only have access back to 2023. Maybe I can just request access to historical records and download it myself. Thanks Bill

Tyler Trostle (in chat): They did that for us. it was very helpful.

IV. **Follow-Up on Mapping to BMPs and Load Source Groups**

Lead: Jess Rigelman, J7 LLC/CBPO

In November 2025, Jess Rigelman provided an overview of an initial proposal for how Phase 7 load sources will be mapped to BMPs and Load Source Groups. Following this meeting, the Agriculture Workgroup and Urban Stormwater Workgroups were asked to provide their feedback on the mappings of BMPs to land uses for their respective sectors. Jess provided an update on the feedback received so far and discussed next steps.

Actions:

1. The Urban Stormwater Workgroup will finalize their recommendations for the developed sector mapping via email by January 20th. The Agriculture Workgroup (AgWG) will continue discussions on the agriculture sector mappings, including agricultural BMPs on solar land uses, at their January 29th meeting. Given the short turnaround time before the February WTWG meeting, January AgWG materials will be shared with voting members on January 15th, and a final mapping matrix will be sent to WTWG members for their review on January 29th. The WTWG plans to vote on the final mapping of BMPs to load sources at their February 5th meeting.

Discussion Notes:

Auston Smith: Thanks for flagging that this is really butting up against our February 5th meeting. We have confidence that the Agriculture Workgroup (AgWG) recommendations will generally be finalized by that point and would be supplied a week in advance. So, what Caroline and I are planning to do is to circulate to this membership the AgWG posted materials for that meeting to help ensure that you and your AgWG counterpart are on the same page regarding what these recommendations or changes may be. We do hope to be able to finalize the Watershed Technical Workgroup's approval of these recommendations in the February meeting. If there are any desires to take a little bit more time, we may try and hold the vote via email. But, at this time, that's not the direction we are hoping to head. I know we are always trying to make an effort to ensure that you have at least two weeks, and sometimes that's a limited amount of time, to review items. Everyone is constrained to ensure that, with this Phase 7 timeline, we are generally able to keep in line with the expectation of a finalized land use by April and then a calibration of the model starting in April. So, these steps- the BMP mapping and Phase 7 NEIEN Appendix in March- are the major steps that need to be finalized for that work to take place. I understand that this is a lot to ask of the workgroup to ensure that you are staying up to date on the myriads of topics through Phase 7. So, this is a great opportunity to express any concerns that you may have or any questions you may have for the group.

Norm Goulet (in chat): I'm coordinating with David Wood as we speak to make sure we have finalized by 20th

Dave Montali: I am working on the high hay and high pasture stuff and looking at a lot of different things. I just wonder, Jess, is there a discussion needed and who should have that discussion about the leguminous hay part of high hay and high pasture? I know we don't have a leguminous hay high. As I look at what nutrient management BMPs we submitted historically, we submit on, I believe, hay and alfalfa, because some portion of the nutrient management on

hay occurs on fields that have legumes. So, it just seems like there might be a little bit of confusion and some talking about the current new land uses and then the grouping. If we say “hay”, what does hay include as far as land uses if we say nutrient management BMP on hay?

Jess Rigelman: We’re going to have to have that discussion, and that’s part of the load source group to load source mapping that I’ve also presented. But, I’ve kind of let that go until we can figure out what BMPs need what load sources first. In general, as of right now, “hay” is high hay, high low, and leguminous hay. We can obviously create another land use that is just hay high and hay low and leguminous hay as separate, and we may have to do that, and determine whether or not pasture hay high includes all five or if it only includes four. So, yes, that’s the next step we need to do. Until this gets sorted out and the NEIEN Appendix gets sorted out, I’ve kind of set that aside because it’s just too hard to work on all those at once.

Dave Montali: Ok, fair enough. Thank you.

Scott Heidel (in chat): Are the inaccuracies in the ag land data set that were identified during the remote sensing project development being resolved in the new ag land use data set? We identified 30,000 acres that were misidentified and we hope to see that resolved as it will negatively impact our BMP reporting if left inaccurate.

Auston Smith: Jess, I believe that there was a discussion with Peter on this, but maybe you can update me on that.

Jess Rigelman: I don’t have the details of that. That would be a question for our Land Data Team or the Land Use Workgroup. This is something that is kind of out of this Workgroup’s wheelhouse, and I haven’t paid attention to it. I receive the land use from them and use it from there, so I would reach out to Peter Claggett, Sarah McDonald, and/or the Land Use Workgroup.

Auston Smith: I do remember this conversation, Scott, and I think that Peter would be the best contact. But, please feel free to copy me on that.

Scott Heidel (in chat): We did already reach out and it seems to have died.

Auston Smith: I see. Maybe we can touch base offline, Scott. Feel free to send me an email on this. Are there other questions from the group before we turn to the next topic? Thank you, all. I know that’s an expedited review timeline on everything, so I appreciate everyone’s general understanding.

V. Draft Phase 7 NEIEN Appendix

Lead: Jess Rigelman, J7 LLC/CBPO

Taking the updated mappings of BMPs and Load Source Groups into account, Jess presented a draft Phase 7 NEIEN Appendix for WTWG review and discussion.

Actions:

1. Please provide feedback to Jess Rigelman (jrigelman@j7llc.com) on the draft Phase 7 NEIEN Appendix prior to the February 5th WTWG meeting. Feedback will be discussed at the February 5th meeting, and the group will approve the Appendix in March.
2. The WTWG is asked to provide feedback to Jess Rigelman (jrigelman@j7llc.com) on the following question related to the NEIEN Appendix: “Wetland restoration is mapped to restore and create depending on measurement name. Is this intended?”
3. Tom Butler, EPA, will follow-up with Bill Keeling, VA DEQ, regarding questions posed on the Phytase BMP.

Discussion Notes:

Bill Keeling: If we are retiring the Phytase BMP, how do we account for those early years in the calibration where we reporting phytase and it was not automatically credited as a part of regular feed additives? I believe that actually transitioned in some way after the year 2000 or so.

Jess Rigelman: That is accounted for in the nutrient concentration data that is supplied. It was supplied through the original Ag Modeling Subcommittee, and now the AMT has the chance to revise that. No one has, but those numbers are accounted for in that data. So, we actually haven't even allowed this BMP in Phase 6 because we've accounted for it in other ways. So, there's no need to report it. It should be in your nutrient concentration data.

Bill Keeling: They are accounting for Phytase in the early years when it was only partially being used? I am talking about the 1980's or 1990's when this was not assumed to be automatic, and we were collecting litter data to indicate it. I'm not clear how that works over time.

Jess Rigelman: I might be mischaracterizing this here. In general, we use the data from the Poultry Litter Subcommittee. The Poultry Litter Subcommittee did their analysis and supposedly accounted for it within that data. So, it has never been a BMP in Phase 6. It should have been accounted for. I am not exactly super familiar with the Poultry Litter Subcommittee, but that is how it is accounted for.

Bill Keeling: If you say so.

Jess Rigelman: I can ask Tom to follow up with you on that if you want more information. He is more familiar with that report. But, that's just what I know from what we were told to do for Phase 6.

Clint Gill (in chat): Poultry litter Subcommittee-

https://www.chesapeake.org/stac/presentations/268_3A%20Terrestrial%20Inputs%20Appendices.pdf

Mark Dubin (in chat): The PLS and subsequent research papers utilized historic manure analysis data and algorithms to provide manure characterizations over time.

Joseph Schell (in chat): Is there any guidance on how to transition water control structure BMPs to a newer equivalent BMP? We still receive a fair bit of reporting of WCS from partners.

Auston Smith: We have a question in the chat. "Is there any guidance on how to transition water control structure BMPs to a newer equivalent BMP?" Is that the exact equivalent the drainage management BMP?

Jess Rigelman: No, it is absolutely not. If you know you have water control structures, that's great. You should report water control structures, and they will not be moved over to CAST because that is retired. Drainage water management is a type of water control structure, but not all water control structures are drainage water management. I guess what I am saying is we can't assume because you receive water control structures from NRCS or another source that it is drainage water management. So, you would have to do some work on that as far as knowing whether or not they were actually drainage water management or not.

Auston Smith: Thank you. Joseph, I hope that answers your question and let us know if you'd like details on the slight differences there.

Joseph Schell (in chat): Yes, thank you.

VI. Wrap-Up

Lead: Caroline Kleis, CRC

Actions:

1. Auston Smith will reach out to jurisdictions to confirm their understanding and acceptance of the transition from NEIEN to CAST in subsequent Progress years.

Discussion Notes:

Auston Smith: This did jog my memory for one additional item. I am planning to reach out to partners to confirm their understanding and acceptance of the update we are trying to make for 2026 Progress regarding NEIEN. As many of you know, we are trying to move away from NEIEN. So, we have stood up a similar data submission process in CAST, and we want to finalize that for next year. We know many of our partners have used the new system, but before we finalize that, I am planning to reach out to you all to double check before we moved NEIEN out of production. So, just wanted to put that on folks' radars as well. But, Caroline, I had nothing else to add. Thanks, everyone.

VII. Adjourn

Next Meeting: February 5th 2026, from 10:00AM-12:00PM

Attendees:

Auston Smith, EPA
Caroline Kleis, CRC
Petra Baldwin, CRC
Emily Dekar, USC
Sushanth Gupta, MWCOG
Joseph Schell, DNREC
Samuel Canfield, WVDEP
Bill Keeling, VA DEQ
Holly Walker, DNREC
Arianna Johns, VA DEQ
Dave Montali, Tetra Tech
Christina Lyerly, MDE
Cassie Davis, NYSDEC
Olivia Martin, Devereux Consulting
Tyler Trostle, PA DEP
Samantha Cotten, DNREC

Jess Rigelman, J7 Consulting/CBPO
Kevin McLean, VA DEQ
Eric Hughes, EPA
Scott Heidel, PA DEP
Eugenia Hart, Tetra Tech
Norm Goulet, NVRC
Clint Gill, DDA
Megan McClaugherty, ICPRB
Mark Dubin, VA Cooperative Extension
Josh Glace, Larson Design Group
Bailey Robertory, MD DNR
Fernando Pasquel, Arcadis
Alicia Ritzenhaler, DOEE
Sabine Miller, MDE
Ashley Hullinger, PA DEP
Dylan Burgevin, MDE