



Forestry Workgroup Meeting
April 6, 2022
9:00am-11:00am
[Meeting Materials](#)

Anne Hairston-Strang, MD DNR
Craig Highfield, ACB
Iris Allen, MD DNR
Paul Emmart (MDE)
Sally Claggett, USFS
Katie Brownson, USFS
Patti Webb, DE DNREC
John Rowe, FLP, WV
Rick Turcotte, Forest Service WV
Frank Rodgers, Cacapon Inst, WV
Rosey Santerre, WV Division of Forestry
Teddi Stark, DCNR Forestry, PA
Lydia Brinkley, Upper Susquehanna Coalition
Cassie Davis, NY DEC
Jim Woodworth, DC DOEE
Caitlin Verdu, VADOF

Kyle Hoyd, DE Forest Service
Renee Thompson, USGS
Jeff Mapes, NY DEC
Brenda Sieglitz - Keystone Tree Partnership - CBF
Ned Brockmeyer, PA BOF
Tom Stahl, DCNR Forestry, PA
Derrick McDonald, Bureau of Forestry
Danielle Gift - USDA FS
Andrew Szwak, land trust alliance
Scott Stewart, FLP, Washington
Neal Bungard, US Forest Service
Kirston Buczak, Region 9 Forest Program Manager
Rebecca Hanmer, FWG Chair
Sophie Waterman, EPA

Forest Legacy Program Discussion

Kirston Buczak, USFS

Kirston (USFS Eastern Region FLP Manager) provided information on the USFS Forest Legacy Program (FLP), including opportunities to work with land trusts or other groups to help facilitate project development and implementation.

The Forest Legacy Program (FLP) is a conservation program that is implemented in partnership with State agencies to encourage the protection of privately owned forest lands through conservation easements or fee purchases. The FLP was established in the 1990s, and is a state granting program. The states are the lead agency and the USFS provides oversight and assistance. The national budget for the FLP is roughly around \$94 million. Region 9 gets about roughly 25% of the national budget. As of January 2022, 53 states/territories are enrolled, 2.93 million acres conserved, and over \$2.08 billion total investment. Of that \$2.08 billion, \$961 million was from the federal government and \$1.12 billion was from partner contributions.

In order for states to be eligible for the FLP they need to have a Forest Action Plan or Assessment of Need and designated Forest Legacy Areas. Project eligibility: private forestland (industrial and non-industrial), have at least 75% forested, have at least 25% non-Federal cost share, willing landowner, within Forest Legacy Area, and multi-resource management plan. Projects are selected through a competitive process. Projects can include multiple tracts with multiple land owners. Lands or interests in land purchased through FLP must be held by a governmental entity. Land trusts can help facilitate project development & implementation. They can't be the owner/holder of land using FLP funds except for full donations. Land trusts can pre-acquire land to then be purchased by the State using FLP funds.

The Forestry Legacy selection process is done by a national panel made up of Federal and State members. The panel follows Reply Due Letter which includes detailed instructions and due dates, and scoring criteria for ranking. The whole process is lengthy and takes about a year and a half from proposal review to funded project.

States can submit a max of 3 projects, total FLP funding limit is \$20 million. All projects require a market analysis to support funding requests; it is required by Congress for all LWCF funded projects. The request provides an informed estimate of value for the proposed project. It is not an appraisal, and should be prepared by someone with real estate experience.

States can work with land trust partners to help facilitate project development & implementation. There is an option to use FLP administration grant funds or project grant funds to reimburse partners. Use of FLP administration grant funds can be used to work with partners earlier in the process. Partners can work on almost any activity that is eligible for reimbursement under FLP.

There are some challenges with the whole process. It is a lengthy process and land owners might change their mind. Appraisal phase can be complicated and lengthy. Communication sometimes is not clear. State manages communication and expectations of several agencies, partners and landowners. It needs to be clear.

The conclusions are that: The FLP is a state & federal partnership! State's can partner with others on many activities eligible for reimbursement under the FLP to develop and implement projects. Region 9 has a strong FLP and will continue to have a strong FLP

Discussion

Rebecca: On the map you showed a lot of dots of projects in New England. What are they doing differently? What are they doing to lead those projects? I was wondering if we could learn from them. It seems to me that the Chesapeake Bay Program is a partnership that would aspire to be covered with all the little dots like New England.

Neal Bungard, US Forest Service: There are a couple reasons. New England and Washington State were identified in the 1994 farm bill. So they have been involved since the beginning. Each of the dots represents a tract of land that was acquired, not necessarily a whole project. We do have some projects that have multiple tracks. Massachusetts for example has a project with 32 tracks of land. The design of the FLP was to protect private forest land, and there's a lot of large tracts of private forest land that are former industrial lands such as papermill lands.

Lydia: I was just wondering who the eligible applicants for the funding are? Is there a specific department or does it have to be the forestry department or can it be any entity within the state?

Kriston: Typically what happens is the state forest legacy coordinator is the one submitting the proposal and entering all the data in our database lists. Everything has been coordinated with the other partners, the coordinating committee etc. so by the time the state enters that there's been a lot of coordination done.

Sally: I like the idea of a project with multiple tracks. I was wondering if you can have one project with multiple tracks that span across different states.

Neil: The grant has to go to the state that applied for the programs, when you have two states applying you basically have to have an application from each state. For example: Maryland would have an

application for the tracts in their state and Delaware would have an application for the tracts in their state. Something like this happened in Massachusetts and Connecticut, the project was the same but each state named it differently. The Connecticut side was funded, the Massachusetts was not. States are competing against each other for funding. Having really good coordination is key. Calling it the same name with state variation or something like that might be useful. This is one of the limitations.

Katie: Are there any good examples of land trusts or NGOs helping with some of the work? Are there any projects that have done that particularly well? How has that kind of partnership approach led to a better application or project?

Krision: I know a lot of the States that are partnering with NGOs get some help developing their proposals, which I think is very useful because they can tell a really great story. They're also working with their partners on a lot of the due diligence activities which can be very time consuming. They have also relied on partners to help them do the contracting for their appraisals, because sometimes the state's contracting is a lengthy process or they have some stumbling blocks. In those cases they coordinate very closely with the forest service and we just make sure that there's a certain set of rules and responsibilities that are followed. There's a lot of opportunities for states to partner with land trust and others to get a lot of those activities done.

Neil: I would add that costs incurred by the partners need to be in coordination with the state. We can't have the partners going off without coordinating with the state and the state agreement that identifies the allowable forest legacy guidelines or even the grant. We want coordination, to make sure that it is meeting the state and national requirements.

Andrew Szwak: Something to consider: While land trusts can ably support procurement of due diligence, landowner negotiations, and promotion/communications around FLP projects, most will need associated staff expenses covered somehow. What strategies have states deployed to cover NGO staff expenses required to help develop FLP projects? (When we did this in Georgia, where FLP is used much more frequently, some of the bigger facilitating organizations - TNC, TCF, etc. - were 'made whole' in the process.)

Sally: I want to give each state the opportunity to talk about their legacy program if willing.

Kyle Hoyd, DE: In september of 2020 as part of the change I decided to write a new AON update to get us back in compliance. During that process we identified five new areas, we have only ever had four prior. Out of the four original legacy areas (White Clay Creek, Blackbird blackestin, Red in Allendale, and the Cypress Swamp areas) there are only really two that are viable anymore in terms of having larger tracts of land that are eligible for purchase or easements put on them. Talking with our partners like DE Wildlands, USFWS, DNREC, NPS, and the Nature Conservancy we were able to hone in on five new areas (Milfordneck, Marshyhope, Nanticoke , South-West Sussex, and Central Sussex). Four of those areas have a component within the Bay Watershed. They have good viable areas that can be protected from the housing boom in DE. Those identified sites are very pancelized and not all together. I think the biggest thing that hinders the legacy program take off is the fact that the Forest Service can only purchase lands directly tied to DE properties. The Governor has been awarding 10 million annually to the Open Space Committee which is eligible for partners like Parks and Rec, FWS, FS, and Historical and Cultural affairs for land acquisitions. The forest service is not in the business of buying more land. Only about 1% of the land that comes across my desk gets purchased. A lot of the land is not viable for us. There are other programs out there like the Forest Preservation Program that is funded through DE FS at \$1 million, easements are normally bought with that money. That \$11 million that is out there is trying to get

pushed to partners. The state legislature has yet to let some of that \$10 million flow out of open space directly into their pockets to be able to purchase land. From 2004 to 2014 we submitted 9 projects over 3300 acres and about \$14 million in legacy funds. The thing now is stitching together projects and getting them to a place where they can compete with other states. DE is a tough sell, we are not protecting scenic waterfalls and we do not have direct ties to another state. So working with others to protect the Bay and make a larger project could potentially help bring more legacy money.

Andre Fotionos: In VA 80% of our Forest Legacy Projects are significant and are a long term partnership between the agency and some partner, usually a nonprofit. We do not do things alone. The spirit of the program is that it is landscape scale and they tend to be something bigger than we could do alone. We are actively working on both fee simple and easement type of projects. Our current workload is at least 3X the volume of work we have ever done. The program is 20 years old in VA. We have seen a lot of success with some of our recent applications and proposals, and are doing huge volumes of work. We have a need more than ever to work with partners who can pull off some of the technical work. To answer the question of what kind of help or support does VA need to get things done faster I would say groups like the conservation Fund have stepped up with recent staffing increases where they are putting together programs that can purchase appraisals, doing the environmental and survey work and then run it through our agency. We have a shadow program where they are doing all the real estate due diligence and paying for it all up front and then handing it off as simply as possible. When we were doing one or two legacy tracts we could do it all ourselves, but we are currently doing 13 and need the support. If you are a group with real estate expertise, project managers, staff capacity, are willing to think outside the box, and want to do forest legacy projects now is a great time to reach out and get involved.

Jeff Mapes: In NY we recently updated our assessment of need and added three new Forest Legacy areas. We have been working with maps and have found that small amounts of the areas overlap with the Bay watershed. We have one project that we are wrapping up in the next year or so and I think even now we are starting to look around and see what our next project might be. We are open to talking with people and partners to figure out what should be the next steps.

John Rowe: In WV we have used NGOs to contact for appraisals and in some instances it has worked really well. Those are opportunities that we would look for in the future as well. Those partnerships do require that we both have a property that we are both mutually interested in.

Sally: Do you ever convince NGOs to be interested in certain projects? How do you figure out what your various interests are? Do you stay in constant communication or talk with the landowner?

John: We do not have to rely on the NGOs to find properties, we do just fine without advertising and have people who are interested.

Sally: If you have NGOs who have a property and they come to you, is there a way for you guys to get involved with a certain tract?

John: Yes, we do keep in touch with various people about what they are interested in and what are some potential projects

Tom Stahl: In PA we are currently working on a remaining grant that funds the Northeast connection. There are approximately 3600 acres that have been preserved as conservation easements within the northeast connection. In the Delaware water gap area and the Delaware watershed we're working with the conservation fund on a project in that location. It is adjacent to the Delaware State forest. It is

approximately 558 acres in the Delaware river watershed. We are early in the appraisal due diligence process.

Iris Allen: Short summary from Maryland- Myself and Justin Arseneault are the interim coordinators for FLP as we have had some staff turnover over the last 2 years. Good news is that MD DNR is interviewing for the new FLP coordinator now, who will hopefully onboard by the summer! We're currently working on the due diligence for 9 tracts- 2 in Cecil County and 7 in Allegany County. It's a long process as we're figuring it out as we go. We've been talking with some folks at TNC for some help with future due diligence work, which would really help with the workload on our DNR lawyer.

Sally: Does your TNC staff help with identifying tracts or title work?

Iris: We're only just now exploring a partnership with TNC. At this point, I believe only the FLP coordinator has been in charge of identifying tracts in Maryland. The program in MD is fairly small, I think we have about 20ish funded tracts total

Sally: I have a question for the group: Is there a need to do better outreach to smaller land trusts in your region and if there is ever enough momentum for them to staff up and get them involved with the hopes of paying them back? Is there a need for a forum to bring in smaller partners?

Kyle Hoyd: In DE we currently have a group that's set up through the Open Space program that is separate from state agencies that meets with the Open Spaces Coordinator. About every 6 months we get together to see if there are things we can be working on together. We have checks and balances in place, but I think folks would be more than happy to meet more regularly to hear about what is happening.

Anne: We coordinate with our program open space as well, because our state funded program is much larger than the federal forest legacy program so they just have an eye out for where the federal forest legacy program is a fit for attraction and it also helps us with the match. There are strong connections to Maryland environmental trust and connection to smaller land trusts.

Andrew Szwak: To Sally's question, I'll note that smaller, more local land trusts are often more effective negotiators with local landowners than some of the bigger groups. They also tend to have good networks of local service providers. There is an 'ecosystem of organizations', so to speak, that exists between local, regional, and state-national organizations that could be more effectively utilized.

Tools for targeting conservation efforts

USFS Tools

Katie provided a demo of the USFS [Landscape-scale conservation in the Northeast and Midwest](#) mapping tool.

If you are trying to find your forest legacy areas or where there are forest legacy areas in the watershed you can pull up the forest legacy layer. There are all sorts of layers that you can use in conjunction with the forest legacy. For example you can look at where forest legacy areas intersect with important source watersheds. This tool has not just national layers, but also multistate priority layers. To look at the Chesapeake watershed you have to go to the mid Atlantic multi state priority areas and then click on the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative. With this tool you have the option to pull in your data, or data from ArcGIS online layers. Clicking on the about button will bring you to the user guide that has a lot of information on how to use the tool.

Questions

Anne: Can you download shapefiles from this tool?

Katie: I do not think you can download layers from the viewer, but you can navigate to where the data is from by clicking the three dots on the right of the layer and clicking show item details and download from there.

Bay Program Tools

Renee Thompson, USGS

Renee provided demos of a few relevant Bay Program tools for targeting conservation efforts, including the [Chesapeake Healthy Watersheds Assessment \(chesapeakebay.net\)](https://chesapeakebay.net) and [CBP Targeting Tools](#). She shared a video that was created by John Wolf, who is Assistant Director of Land Change Research, Hydrologic Transport and Response.

The video shows the targeting and conservation tools that the bay program has created. USGS folks have started to compile existing decision support tools that have been organized around 4 themes: Water quality improvements, coordinate habitat restoration, expand land conservation, and increase benefits to people. Many of these tools are increasingly leveraging data relevant to climate resilience since climate concerns are relevant to multiple goals and outcomes of the Bay agreement.

The first tool was the [watershed resources registry](#), which contains state specific riparian preservation and restoration models that were developed jointly by the individual states and EPA. By navigating to the *State Registries* button you can click on the state you want to look more closely at. When you click on the state there is some information about the state such as background and state contacts. Clicking on the *View Map* button will take you to the statewide map of your chosen state. There are many different layers that you can look at and click through. To look at the riparian areas navigate to the collection of layers under the *WRR Suitability Analysis*. You can see potential restoration or preservation of riparian areas, there are also a whole host of other options in this mapping tool. The riparian zones are mapped and are prioritized based on a composite suitability model developed by the state and by EPA. Zooming into a specific area you can see what riparian areas and corridors are in need of restoration or conservation. Maryland was used as the example to show how the tool works. The model in MD reflects a number of different factors that would be associated with multiple benefits of restoration along the riparian zones.

The other tool highlighted was [Watershed Data Dashboard](#) which was created to support the development of watershed implementation plans. It contains a lot of different information relevant to freshwater streams and rivers titled water quality status and trends, geographic targeting, and tracking management actions. There are two main components related to RFB, but depending on your interests there's a lot of additional content that could be useful. The first tool is the [Riparian Forest Buffer Opportunities Module](#) which summarizes the current state of land cover in the riparian zone aggregated to watersheds. When you click on a segment on the map you get a column chart that represents the land cover in the RFB zone in the segment you clicked on, including how much is potentially available for additional forest buffer planting. The other relevant module is the [Buffer Opportunity Locations Module](#). This module shows the land use within the riparian quarter using the new High resolution land use, so it can be used to help identify specific opportunities on a much more local scale. There are a lot of

resources available to help target implementation or even just help with understanding of potential impacts of projects in the context of multiple watershed agreement outcomes.

After the video was shown Renee noted that she coordinates the Healthy Watershed Goal team, where they focus on identifying where high value areas are currently located within each of the jurisdictions. Jurisdictions have set their own definitions of what they consider to be healthy. The Goal team really cares about how we can begin to characterize whether or not we're sustaining those healthy watersheds, what is the spectrum of watershed health, and potentially some vulnerabilities associated with that health. Renee pointed out the list of questions under each theme that can help guide you to the right tool within that theme. When you're asking the right questions in regards to your project you will get you to the right tool. Renee then showed the [Chesapeake Conservation Partnership Forest Model](#), which shows the high value forests within the watershed. With the release of the new High resolution land use/land cover data there will be an opportunity to rerun some of the metrics and refine the information to help create an updated layer.

Renee then showed the [Chesapeake Healthy Watersheds Assessment](#) (CHWA), which is a tool that has been developing and being refined for several years. The primary goal is to understand the spectrum of watershed health across the watershed. There are many useful layers such as the state identified healthy watersheds. There is also information on catchment scale for the entire watershed. You can really dig into the metrics associated with healthy watersheds and the overall index score. In the health sub-indices section you can see grouping of metrics. You can look at just specific metrics to help answer your questions. You might also be interested in looking at stressors in a particular region and you can look at those by navigating to the vulnerability metrics, and taking a look at the various vulnerabilities a watershed may face. With the CHWA you can bring in additional layers to help answer questions. You can not download a specific shape file, but you do have the ability to create a map report by clicking on a watershed of interest and the watershed catchment report button to pull up metrics associated with the watershed. This can be useful to show local leaders or interested parties when it comes to preserving, protecting, or restoring these watersheds. It is a nice little fact sheet that can be useful for a multitude of reasons

Questions

Tom Stahl: Is there a certain buffer for riparian areas?

Renee: Yes, it is 30 m. We are currently customizing the healthy watershed assessment for MD. We have been refining how we define riparian areas using the improved hydrology layer, tidal shorelines, and High resolution stream and hydrography data. The GIS team is currently mocking up new methodology for delineating the right riparian of area within MD. We plan on expanding that out to the whole watershed. This layer can be potentially used for not only understanding where your buffered areas already are, but also obviously potential for them to be placed.

Cassie Davis: Is this tool live?

Renee: yes it is live, but i want to give the disclaimer that once you publish something in this day and age it is already out of date. We are working on updating some of the metrics and hope to have some of those refreshes later this year into early next year.

Cassie: how often is this updated?

Renee: We would love for the CHWA to be able to be automatically reset when it gets new data, but we are not there yet. The CHWA 2.0 is the HWGIT funding project that has just been released by the Bay Trust. We have built in some of that additional punctuality into the project. In a perfect world we will be updating the tool as new metric data sets become available and will re-run them and republish them.

Paul Emmart: I was wondering if we brought in our own data set for property view to show properties and boundaries. Would it be possible then to filter the overlap between where there are gaps in the 30 meter buffer around streams? To filter it with that data from property view to realize what are the specific properties that have gaps. Is the CHWA capable of doing that right now?

Renee: You would have to integrate some sort of analysis tool. We are trying to make sure that these tools are working for you. Maybe we take it a step further than just visualizing. That analysis component is not supported in this version.

Frank Rodgers: Can we run HUC comparison, or side-by-side, reports?

Renee: Unfortunately there is not a simple way to compare other than creating a report for each catchment of interest. I think this is another great example of opportunities to improve the tool for end users though. Thank you!

Update on Membership

Katie Brownson, USFS

Katie reviewed the updated signatory membership list and the nominations received for at-large membership. We have yet to receive 6 at large member nominations. Introductions and voting on at large members will be postponed until the May meeting. Members of the workgroup are encouraged to send their nominations in to Sophie (swaterman@chesapeakebay.net) by 4/22. Our signatory member list is almost complete, there is some clarification on what federal agency can represent the federal government that Katie and Sally are still trying to sort out. The CBC position also still needs to be filled. See the list of the most up to date signatory members and list of at large member nominees. Signatory Members:

Delaware

- Kesha Braunskill, Delaware Forest Service
- Patti Webb, DNREC

Maryland

- Anne Hairston-Strang, Maryland Department of Natural Resources
- Iris Allen, Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Pennsylvania

- Matthew Keefer, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

New York

- Cassie Davis, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- Lauren Townley, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Virginia

- Caitlin Verdu, Virginia Department of Forestry
- Terrance Lasher, Virginia Department of Forestry

West Virginia

- Jeremy McGill, WV Div. of Forestry
- Rosalie Santerre, WV Div. of Forestry

Washington, DC

- Jim Woodworth, DOEE
- Robert Corletta, DDOT

Chesapeake Bay Commission

- open

Federal government/EPA

- open

At Large Member Nominations

- Lydia Brinkley, Upper Susquehanna Coalition
- Craig Highfield, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
- Judy Okay, J&J Okay
- Frank Rodgers, Cacapon Institute
- Rob Schnabel, Chesapeake Bay Foundation

Upcoming Riparian Forest Buffer Workshop

Sally provided a brief update on plans for the April 27th Chesapeake Riparian Forest Buffer Leadership Workshop. The workshop will be hosted by Cindy Dunn, the Secretary of PA DCNR. We are expecting high level participation from all states and we hope to be “workshopping” their state RFB plans. This is the first time that we will have ever seen this kind of a focus on how we are going to make our forest buffer goal. Our two webinars took place back in March and I want to thank the panelists who came and presented to the group. Thank you to Teddi, Craig, Lydia, Todd, and Amber. The webinars are recorded and you can check them out on each of their respected meeting sites ([Webinar 1](#) and [Webinar 2](#)). Sally noted that she is very curious on finding out how states are doing on their RFB plans and if there is any additional help or support that we can give to help move things along prior to the 27th. It was also noted that we have a contract with an EPA contractor who is taking the time to interview jurisdictions. Draft reports are being created from those interviews. Those reports should be out soonish. We are hoping this interview process will generate some really good dialogue and help identify some of the barriers states are facing. We think we know what is working with successful state funded programs, but there are potential barriers making it difficult.

Discussion

Anne: I do not have clear expectations of what we’re supposed to be delivering on the 27th. In MD we got our stream relief plan that is basically aligned with the forest buffer logic and action framework. Is there a difference between the two?

Sally: This takes a step further and reveals to your peers what is in your plan. Last year we sent out a guide that speaks to what we are looking for, you can find it [here](#). The idea is that there's going to be some analysis going on to better understand what you are proposing. Your plan is going to address the gaps that you are currently experiencing. This plan should be the most in depth plan that we've seen. In addition to the creation of an in depth plan states will be asked to give a 15 minute presentation. We are assuming that they will be powerpoint presentations, but it is ultimately up to the states to decide what they will show. After the 27th states will have two months to put the finishing touches on the plans. The two month deadline is just a starting point leadership folks might say they want more time. Strategic action plans are not just analysis, they also outline how these actions are going to get you where you need to be, they will give detail on point a to b. We do not want to tell you what to put into your plan but give some guidance.

The one thing that we have been constantly trying to communicate is that this should not fall back on forestry folks. We understand that this is an agricultural practice, it is also a water quality practice and it

should be a very highly prioritized practice among various sectors. It's not just forestry and we wanted to demonstrate that these plans are not just foresters putting forward a forestry plan. In order to truly capture that we are asking for either your Principal Staff Committee member or Management Board member to be the one who helps take this on. We know that forestry folks are integrated into this process, but someone at a higher level needs to be involved to get states to understand that this is not just a forestry practice.

Anne: It's our opportunity to make sure that they know that we're working on it. It is 2022 , the consent decree is 2025. There are not many planting seasons. We want to make sure that we are communicating, that might be building on the resources that you've developed with the buffer and tree canopy websites. The RFB and wetland goals are the two that the bay program is really trying to take a look at and say "we know these practices are really important for things like the TMDL and co benefits, how do we do a better job at addressing these goals?" We want to have effective bay restoration and these goals are how we do it. Communication is one of the best ways to address these goals and I do not think we have realized the potential there. We could be doing more in the communication department.

Sally: We are hoping that these plans are in use for 5 to 10 years, we want the long term... 2025 and beyond. We want these plans to get states to roll up their sleeves and lay out what they think will work, what they may need help on, and to get states to really see their strengths and weaknesses in their plans. This workshop is to get high level folks sharing and being candid about getting RFB in the ground. We understand that challenges are going to be different for each state, we want to be able to talk about those challenges during the workshop.

Annie: How do we engage some of these larger movements outside of the Bay Program like trillion trees? We can think big all we want, but if we do not have the resources to make it happen how will we get it done? When we have funding and staffing it can make the job go easier.

Rebecca: I think it's obvious to everyone, but when you have a PSC Member take responsibility for making the presentation it goes a bit further. It is not just a presentation they are making, they are also accepting that the commitment is valid. What I've been wondering is whether or not the expectations are that the foresters would deliver without any further help. I do not know whether any of the states have encountered the questions from their upper leadership about where the number that need to be planted has come from or why do we have these numbers or are we really serious about these goals. The pre workshop webinar is helping us have these tough conversations.

Sally: The Management Board has been having these conversations since last summer. They have been talking about outcome attainability and the need to focus on buffers and wetlands. They heard from us in December about our plans for this series. They have heard from us and they should know that they are the target audience at this point and what they are supposed to be doing. They may have not reached out to forestry partners, but we have been asking them to do that since August of 2020 when we did the last SRS. The management board agreed that we should make plans.

Rebecca: I am talking about the next level up, Were you able to effectively brief the PSC?

Sally: We did back in february. We talked with them about the workshop. Cindy Dunn and I both spoke to it as she accepted the role of running the workshop.

Katie: Cindy also put out a letter to the PSC and MB. SO they are aware. MB members may be the ones putting them together, but we want the PSC member to formally endorse the plans at some point and speak to them. That endorsement is the next phase.

Anne: I think the hardest part is engaging with the leadership. Each states have different expectations on things like communication

Round Robin

Katie Brownson: GIT Funding projects are open, the Forestry Workgroup has two projects. One is on buffers and one is on tree canopies. If you or your partners are interested please [check them out](#). Julie Mawhorter has asked me to share that the Tree Canopy User Guide is almost ready for review. It will be sent out to the forestry workgroup via email hopefully by mid to late April. Members will have 2 weeks to review. The goal is to get it in the best shape possible prior to the release of the new land use/ land cover data.

New York

Lydia Brinkley, Upper Susquehanna Coalition: We are prepping for the planting season which starts next week, they are able to have an additional technician thanks to USFS funding. USC is working on several grant applications to support buffers, upland forests, wetland restoration, and stream stabilization.

Cassie Davis, NY DEC: Lydia Brinkley, Lauren Townley, and myself attended the most recent state buffer meeting. It was a helpful call.

Pennsylvania

Teddi Stark: We have four new positions coming online that will give us a total of six regional watershed forestry specialists. It has taken a long time to get the paperwork through, but those positions should finally be posted by the end of this week (April 8) or early next week (April 11). We are really excited about these positions and will be doing interviews mid to late May. We will hopefully have someone on board this summer. We are doing a planting on May 4th with the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and the Chesapeake Bay Commission. This is because the Commission meeting will be on May 5th and 6th and will be taking place in Lancaster. Secretary Dunn had been to a big Commission meeting earlier this year or late last year and had talked about wanting to do a planting, so we have been working with Ann Swanson and Merell King to get this planting set up. The invites for the planting went out to the CBC last week, and we hope to get a few of them out planting. We are going to start from scratch with them, get them to lay out flags and then plant trees. We are hoping that this gets the commissioners out seeing what it is like to really put a buffer in the ground.

Delaware

Patti Webb: There's been several volunteer opportunities over the last couple weeks helping the Delaware forest service wrap loblolly pine seedlings to provide to elementary classes throughout the state who are participating in an arbor day poster contest. Our Management Board is up to speed and working on their presentation and delivery for the April 27th RFB Workshop.

Maryland

Anne Hairston-Strang: Happy Maryland Arbor Day! We are giving away seedlings in celebration. A proclamation from the Board of Public works was put out in celebration of one of our staff members who has been with us for 48 years. We are working hard on the 5 million trees program and hope to have those announcements out either later this month or early May. Those announcements are getting finalized right now with our Department of Budget and Management. One of the items of note with our 5 million trees program is that the Chesapeake Bay Trust has their big urban and underserved grant program that the legislator budgeted \$10 million. In the first RFP they got \$14 million in requests right out the gate. This is just an example of some of the enthusiasm and interest for planting trees that we hope will carry over to some of our other programs. We are also working on the economic adjustment strategy and have design charrette for Maryland wood branding in Western Maryland. A Manufacturing Extension Partnership Workforce Development Needs meeting will be taking place on April 20th. We are trying to look at the forest and buffer tree planting from a whole life cycle perspective. We need to not just plant trees, we need to be able to care for and manage the rest of our forest landscape. US Forest Service grant opportunities that are coming open, every state should be having a Forest Action Plan priority opportunity. There are a half a dozen different funding streams in the infrastructure investment and jobs act. If your state forester doesn't have ideas about what needs might be for just big Bay goals this would be the time to be putting a bug in their ear.

Craig Highfield: Planting season is underway with our partnership with MD forest service with the program Healthy Forests Healthy Waters. We are putting in about 336 acres of riparian and upland forests. With PA we are planting 75 acres of riparian forest buffers.

Virginia

Catlin Verdu: We are busy bringing the new cabinet and administration up to speed. Everyone is brand new so there is a lot to be done there. I am spending the next two weeks hiring for three new watershed stewardship specialist positions that will be placed in our three regions around the state. Very busy but very good stuff!

West Virginia

Frank Rodgers: It is great to have Rosey on the team and to be able to talk regularly with her and move things forward. On the urban forestry side of things we are very busy with the planting season. We had our typical nearly 3 dozen projects and then in Berkeley County we are planting 250 trees for 250 years. We have added 27 schools to the 250 trees project. Lots of planting happening this spring. It is a lesson to us that we have to build our capacity here, the Berkeley County 250 trees was pretty much all Cacapon institute. We are really pleased to be back on our feet and doing classroom education.