



Meeting Minutes

Chesapeake Bay Program Forestry Workgroup (FWG) June Conference Call

June 1st, 2016, 9 AM – 10:45 AM

Meeting Participants:

Sally Claggett (USFS), *FWG Coordinator*
Julie Mawhorter (USFS), Mid-Atlantic Urban and Community Forestry Coordinator
Tuana Phillips (Chesapeake Research Consortium)
Frank Rodgers (Cacapon Institute)
Nancy Falxa Sonti (USFS)
Anne Hairston-Strang (MD DNR)
Justin Hynicka (MD DNR)
Greg Evans (VA DOF)
Jeremy Hanson (VA Tech)
Neely Law (Center for Watershed Protection)
Craig Highfield (Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay)
Ryan Szuch (PA DCNR)
Herb Peddicord (WV DOF)
Karen Cladas (Alliance for the Bay)
Jonathan Doherty (NPS)
Andy Fitch (USGS)
Earl Bradley (Sierra Club)

9:00 Welcome and Introductions

Sally Claggett welcomed everybody and confirmed participants.

Updates:

- **Please Save the Date:** June 23, 2-3:30 PM for a special FWG conference call to approve the UTC Expert Panel Report.
- There will be no FWG meeting in July.
- Tuana is leaving at the end of the month to start graduate school. A new Chesapeake Research Consortium Staffer will replace her to staff the FWG.

9:05 Urban Tree Canopy BMP Update

Julie and Justin proposed a solution to one of the issues that arose during the partnership-wide UTC Expert Panel broadcast on May 20th. This issue related to the Tree Canopy BMP not accurately reflecting the range of tree planting activities in developed areas, in particular those activities that are designed to restore the land to forest-like conditions. Justin reviewed the proposed solution which includes a two tiered credit system and the information that would be required in a Planting Plan for an

urban forest planting project. For more information, please see [this document](#). FWG members provided feedback during the call.

ACTION: Please provide additional input to Justin by COB Wednesday, June 8th. Send an email to Justin.hynicka@maryland.gov or call Justin at 410-260-8589.

Questions and Comments:

- On page two, the first bullet states that an urban forest Planting Plan should apply to a contiguous planting area with minimum length and width dimensions of 100 ft. (1/4 acre).
 - Comments: The main criteria should be the ¼ acre threshold and that it has to be contiguous. However, we can do instead a minimum of 50 ft. width/length because the planting areas may come in different shapes (i.e., not a perfect square).
- The next bullet states the Plan must include a list of the number and species of trees planted.
 - Comment: In Maryland we don't always do a planting density of 100 trees per acre with 1" caliper trees.
 - Comment: The Expert Panel may be able to help with the 100 trees per acre density issue.
- The third bullet states that the Plan must include a map of the planting areas showing the approximate location of trees.
 - Comment: Drop "of trees" from the sentence.
- The fourth bullet states it must include the average soil infiltration rate across the planting site determined through an infiltration test.
 - Comment: This type of information could help address slope issues, invasive species, also give indication to previous disturbance.
- The last bullet regards a post-planting maintenance schedule in the Planting Plan.
 - Comment: We are beginning to question the value of mowing around trees. Where there is grass the ground has more moisture. Have there been studies done comparing mowing vs. keeping it wild? Also comparing mowing to just using herbicides?
 - Comment: I would change the years to 1-5 and then also include something on invasives.
- Overall comment: I would suggest not being too descriptive with the information that would go in the Planting Plans. Instead, use general points.
- Overall comment: I like this two tiered approach. It will encourage localities to restore the urban land to forest-like conditions.

9:30 First Drafts of New Forest Conservation Maps

Jonathan Doherty (NPS) provided an introduction to the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership's Making the Case for Land and Landscape Conservation effort. He explained that forests is one out of the 5 goals of the effort. Further, the Partnership is interested in protecting forests beyond those that are good for water quality. There are four categories they are looking at: headwater and riparian forests, large forest blocks, wood lots, and forests on prime soils. For more information, please see his PowerPoint presentation slides [at this link](#).

The GIS Team at the Bay Program has been busy preparing the maps of priority forests for conservation under each of the four categories Jonathan went over. Andy Fitch (USGS) reviewed each of the four maps and requested feedback from FWG members.

Questions and Feedback:

1. Large forest blocks
 - 2011 NLCD was used to define forest based on 50% tree canopy coverage.
 - Large forest blocks are selected areas of contiguous forest 500 acres or larger.
 - Two question we have are do we want to further define un-fragmented and what is a large forest block?
 - In Maryland we look at smaller block size.
 - We can adjust the size and also look into how the pixels should connect in order to be considered contiguous.
2. Forests on prime soils
 - The map depicts areas that are considered prime soils and areas that would be considered prime if protected from flooding. Andy then put existing forest layer on top of that to see where they overlapped.
 - In Maryland we usually target prime agricultural soils for restoration, not so much for protection.
 - One issue is that the data are sampled in various ways across the watershed.
 - There is also an issue of finding good datasets.
3. Wood lots
 - We were struggling to define the data to give to Andy and he struggled additionally to find the correct layers. So what is it that makes wood lots worth conserving?-
 - Existence of wood lots is something people value in their communities.
 - Question: Why are we leaving out 100 to 500 acres?
 - 50 acres is a very manageable size.
 - Andy can add the 100 to 500 in another color if needed.
4. Riparian and headwaters forests
 - This may be the most challenging map because we have to ask ourselves, what do we consider headwaters?
 - The riparian layer is a 10 meter cell attached to the NHD dataset. Andy used the 100k, not 400k NHD stream. So it displays one pixel (10 meter) which is a minimum buffer width.
 - Comment: In terms of protection, Maryland and other states shoot for 100 feet width.
 - For the headwaters layer Andy looked at NHD catchments for the area. There is a need to limit what we consider headwaters because it is a lot of the watershed.
 - I think of the upper reaches of the watershed, not every first order stream.
 - We should look into how CBC defines headwaters.
 - Another thing to look at is stream length per block (i.e., stream density).

ACTION: Sally Claggett, Andy Fitch, Jonathan Doherty and select FWG members will work offline on this and come back to FWG with suggestions. Sally will organize the conference call. Volunteers to be on the call include Rob Feldt (volunteered by Anne Hairston-Strang), Justin Hynicka, Greg Evans (as a point of contact), Frank Rodgers, and Craig Highfield.

10:15 Forestry Workgroup Membership

Sally reviewed the proposed FWG membership document which can be accessed at [this link](#).

Comments:

- Earl Bradley is interested in being an at-large member.
- Have somebody from Stroud Water Research Center.
- Perhaps a local implementer such as Don Outen.
- Sally will reach out to Mary Gattis, Jessica Blackburn, and Natalie Gardner to see who could be a member from Advisory Committees.
- Have somebody from the Nature Conservancy.
- Perhaps representation from the University of Maryland Extension and research faculty.
- Also forestry schools at Penn State, WVU, and VA Tech.

ACTION: FWG Members should send Sally (sclaggett@fs.fed.us) their recommendations for the FWG membership list by COB Wednesday, June 8th.

Round-Robin Announcements

- Healthy watersheds forestry-TMDL project update (Greg Evans) – So far the Team working on the project has received really good feedback from localities, including localities outside of the Rappahannock region where the project took place. Next week Greg and the Team will go to PA to visit their partners there who are replicating the project in PA. Greg will be on the September FWG agenda to share more updates.
- Maryland Update: Next year MD will revisit the forest buffer assessment sites. The recently hired Riparian Foresters attended a training last week. There will be more data coming out with the forest buffers partnership initiative with Penn State. Also, emerald ash borer is causing a lot of problems in MD. MD received funds to use biocontrol and additional strategies to mitigate the effects of emerald ash borer. DNR is working with MDA, the Agricultural Resource Service and the University of Maryland on this.
- In PA the Riparian Forest Buffer Committee that Matt Keefer pulled together will be meeting tomorrow, June 2nd.
- The Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay applied for a conservation and innovation grant to work with mitigation and nutrient trading banks, possibly with land trusts.
- The Chesapeake Bay Funders network work involving land trusts and organizations across watershed is ongoing and trying to engage the land trust community to get involved in the watershed restoration work.