



Forestry Workgroup Meeting Minutes
July 1, 2020
9am-11am

Attendees:

Nora Jackson, CRC, *Staffer*
Sally Claggett, USFS, *Coordinator*
Rebecca Hanmer, *Chair*
Katherine Brownson, USFS
Anne Hairston-Strang, MD DNR
Iris Allen, MD DNR
Rich Mason, USFWS
Teddi Stark, PA DCNR
Tracey Coulter, PA DCNR
Peter Hoagland, NRCS

Jenny McGarvey, Alliance
Frank Rogers, CI
Amanda Doremus, DNREC
Todd Carnell, WV DOF
Cassandra Davis, NY DEC
Lara Johnson, VA DOF
Matt Poirot, VA DOF
Judy Okay, VA DOF
Julie Mawhorter, USFS

Remote Meeting Discussion

Sally Claggett, USFS

Workgroup members discussed virtual meeting platforms and prefer to use Zoom. Group agreed to continue with zoom, no issues so far. Anne Hairston suggested that the CBP make an official inquiry into MD DOIT to revisit their restriction in MD.

Strategy Review System, Part 2: Are we on the right course? Sally Claggett and Katie Brownson, USFS

Feedback was compiled from the states on the logic and action plan to assess progress towards the riparian forest buffer goal. With variation between the states, and a lot of ongoing work that many of the actions have been identified as “yellow” or “red”. This will be used to draft the narrative analysis and the presentation to the Management Board at the quarterly progress meeting on Thursday, August 13. We will revise the narrative analysis based on discussion and results today. Sally and Katie walked through the draft presentation and solicited feedback from the workgroup via Mentimeter.

Question and Comments

- Anne suggested, referring to the statement that we have not made progress, replacing that with language like, ‘We have opportunities that need advancement, identified potential in the farm bill changes and conservation financing options but need additional support.’
- Judy suggested asking for continuity and consistency, not improvement in the farm bill. It’s hard to make progress when you can’t do anything about putting things in the ground.

- Anne commented that it's a political process, and it's important to focus on the long-term objectives of CREP and making sure the program supports the objectives for water quality and wildlife habitat.
- Judy asked about a mapping tool to identify where buffers are most needed? Is it 70% cover goal for throughout the bay, or 70% where they are needed? The James River group has a planner to input buffer priorities based on nutrient flow. That could be applied to the whole watershed, and we might make more progress by making the goal more nutrient focused than the 900 miles a year.
 - Sally said we don't have the science to establish a target like that, but we know 80% of the work will happen on 20% of the landscape. We will know more about our progress towards the 70% buffered requirement once we have the new high-resolution data next summer.
- Rich asked about the cost of implementing the 900 mile a year goal, (230 million to over 1 billion) and that the reality of the cost should be highlighted at the next PSC meeting.
 - Buffer implementation is cheaper and a cost-effective strategy for improving water quality.
 - Judy suggested working with FSA on establishing the CREP standards for natural regeneration, referencing some projects in VA planting 110 instead of 400.
- Frank mentioned that local match requirements for federal funding should be loosened. Communities that are less well-off are less able to provide the local match, which results in funding going to communities that are already better-off.
- Frank mentioned the need for more "sticks" rather than "carrots". For example, if you refuse to fence cattle out the stream or crop to the stream, you should lose USDA flood insurance.
 - Judy suggested promoting the value of trees in flooding situations, to convince landowners to plant trees to stop flooding
 - Matt added that FEMA doesn't want trees on streambanks- fast storm flow to mitigate flooding.
- Jenny McGarvey shared that the Alliance and CBLP are developing a training series for green infrastructure professionals on riparian buffer design and care that will be another way at getting to the increase in workforce and trained professionals.
- Rebecca commented that this presentation is going to be made to the WQGIT on July 13, so many MB members will see it many times and the meeting forest buffer commitments in the WIPs are crucial to reaching 2025 goals.
- Rebecca asked about state revolving loan funds, and if that has been investigated as a financing option.
 - Only discussed with MD, and there would be many obstacles, but this is an option we are pursuing through the Natural Filters Restoration Program.
- Katie suggested looking for opportunities to bring buffers into the stream restoration industry
- STAC workshop on multifunctional buffers- the combination buffer?
 - Judy added it's also an answer to the concentrated flow issue. It was identified 10 years ago, time to bring it back up as an answer.
- Rebecca will represent the FWG on the new BMP Verification team, an opportunity to raise the issue of crediting and verifying buffers, planning to meet after the quarterly progress meeting in August.

Round robin

MD- Analyzing tree canopy change data, from 2014-2018, results presented today at LUWG, and finishing up a tree planting opportunity layer for all of MD, for targeting planting efforts. The final biomass webinar will be on the economics and financing of biomass systems on Tuesday, July 7 at 11am.

PA- Received a lot of positive responses from the Prime Prospects mailer, lots of residential landowners with small properties and erosion issues. Considering online options for a buffer summit in 2021. To receive monthly updates from the Northeast Mid-Atlantic Agroforestry group, send email to Tracey: trcoulter@state.pa.us.

WV- Moving forward with volunteer planting with social distancing, Tanner Haid used social media in Charleston for families to adopt a tree to plant. The interest was overwhelming, and plan on promoting this process going into the fall. Concerned about the school year, and potentially looking for professionals to plant trees at schools, or families adopting. Schoolyard BMP MWEEE project from the Stroud Water Research Center is wrapping up. Julie and Frank will bring a draft of the paper to the group in the next month or two, potential presentation with Education Workgroup.

VA- Working on the WIP and milestones, sentinel landscapes and hiring people to fulfill grant funded positions.

USFS- Maya Claggett, interning with Julie, looking into tree planting on school grounds. There will be a Tree Canopy call with the state leads in August.

Closing Comments and Next Steps

- Update on EQIP program from Peter Hoagland
- Presentation from Skip Stiles at EC meeting last year on green infrastructure, flood insurance, wetlands.
- Update on the James River planner at October meeting.
- Presentation on the green infrastructure training series from the Alliance.

Adjourn