



**Chesapeake Bay Program
Watershed Technical Workgroup (WTWG)
Meeting Minutes**
Thursday, June 3, 2021
10:00 AM to 12:00 PM
Calendar Page: [Link](#)

Summary of Actions and Decisions

Decision: WTWG approved the April and May meeting minutes

Action: The at- large nomination process will begin post- meeting. The WTWG (members and interested parties) will have until June 25, 2021, to submit nominees (please make sure that nominees are aware and agree to being a potential at- large member)

Action: WTWG leadership will ensure the role of at- large members and the scope and purpose of WTWG is provided to the group.

Decision: The WTWG approved the back out method described below (DC registered as stand aside):

- *Back out of forest and tree planting land use change practices (listed below) will be based on the date of the land cover imagery used in the model's base conditions minus 15 years as recommended by the Forestry Workgroup.*
 - Forest Buffers
 - Forest Buffers Exclusion
 - Forest Buffers Exclusion Narrow
 - Forest Buffers Narrow
 - Forest Buffers Urban
 - Tree Planting
 - Urban Tree Planting

Action: WTWG participants should send any questions regarding low-vegetation, septic, wetland, and urban BMPs related to back- out to Vanessa Van Note (vannote.vanessa@epa.gov) and Cassandra Davis (Cassandra.davis@dec.ny.gov).

Action: WTWG leadership will invite Peter Claggett to speak to the WTWG at their July 1st meeting.

Meeting Minutes

10:00 AM – **Introductions and Announcements** – Cassandra Davis, NYSDEC

- Approval of April and May Meeting Minutes – Cassandra Davis, NYSDEC
 - **Decision:** WTWG approved the April and May meeting minutes
- BMP Verification Ad Hoc Action Team – Vanessa Van Note, EPA

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- *Tabled barnyard runoff control decision and identified paths forward. Moving forward with partial credit discussion at next week's meeting (Friday). Other half will be devoted to the 16/19 agreements.*
- FWG approved 15-years for back- out and credit duration – Sally Claggett, USFS
- NEIEN Enhancements – Jess Rigelman, J7 Inc.
 - *Created an excel spreadsheet that is updated every time data changes in NEIEN (no longer will be out of date). If you go to track TMDL on CAST and then to documentation it can be found there.*
- Other announcements

10:15 AM – CAST 2021 Spreadsheet – Olivia Devereux, Devereux Consulting

Olivia Devereux will review the inputs to CAST, and updates received so far for CAST- 2021.

Discussion:

Cassie Davis: should NY report the construction acres ahead of time?

Olivia Devereux: are they all compliant? If they are 100 acres of construction, I think then 99 acres are compliant. You would report the total acres.

Cassie Davis: What is the current default method?

Jessica Rigelman / Olivia Devereux: It's the difference between the developed this year and the developed of next year times multiplied by 1. Something

James Martin: Is there a data quality standard for any of these columns?

Olivia Devereux: If it is jurisdiction specific data it should be documented in your QAPP. We also look at any large changes (for example if chickens are suddenly 2x as heavy) and we look at the trends as well.

Matt English: Does the spreadsheet in CAST have the due dates?

Olivia Devereux: I can add those, that's a good idea.

Link in CAST: <https://cast.chesapeakebay.net/Home/TMDLTracking#progressReportingSection>

10:30 AM – Voting Membership List and At- Large Recommendation Process – Vanessa Van Note, EPA

Vanessa Van Note will review the up-to- date voting membership list and review the at- large nomination process.

Discussion:

Greg Sandi: It might be helpful to provide information on what the at- large members role would be in the group.

Vanessa Van Note: I can definitely do that.

James Martin: will individuals be able to self- nominate?

Loretta Collins: in the AgWG, you can self- nominate and actually they don't have to be nominated by the signatory members, they can be nominated by anyone.

Kevin Du Bois: What's the purpose of the resume if the member can nominate an alternate.

Loretta Collins: the alternate for the at- large member is always in the same organization.

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Hilary Swartwood: Like we did for WQGIT, the signatory members rank each at-large nominee and the 6 nominees with the lowest ranking are the new members (ex. If there were 8 nominees, they would be ranked 1-8, with 1 being your top choice and 8 being your last choice. The top 6 with the lowest average score, are the new nominees). Additionally, signatory members (states, DC, EPA, CBC) vote for the initial selection of at-large members. All subsequent votes involve both signatory AND at-large members.

Action: The at-large nomination process will begin post-meeting. The WTWG (members and interested parties) will have until June 25, 2021, to submit nominees (please make sure that nominees are aware and agree to being a potential at-large member)

Action: WTWG leadership will ensure the role of at-large members and the scope and purpose of WTWG is provided to the group.

11:00 AM – Approval of Proposed Back-out Method based on FWG Recommendations – Vanessa Van Note, EPA

Vanessas Van Note will review the proposed back-out method and any comments/ concerns received by the Workgroup before asking for consensus.

Revised Proposed Back-out Method: *Back out of forest and tree planting land use change practices (listed below) will be based on the date of the land cover imagery used in the model's base conditions minus 15 years as recommended by the Forestry Workgroup.*

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Discussion:

James Martin: while it may be showing up as tree canopy it may not be classified as forest. It could be classified as something else (tree canopy over turf, etc.)

Ted Tesler: there is also the latency of the imagery to consider too.

Matt English: I was the one that brought the double counting issue up, and I just wanted people to be aware of this. It's not just full double counting at 12 years, its 50% of double counting at 15 years. So, there will be double counting as time passes.

Katie Brownson: I think the double counting issue is a challenge, but I don't think we will ever find a perfect year for this issue, but the FWG decided that 15 years would be the year that we could more reliably pick up tree canopy.

Decision: The WTWG approved the back out method described below (DC registered as stand aside):

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11:30 AM – Continued Discussion on Additional Back- Out Proposals (ex. septic connections) – Cassandra Davis, NYSDEC, Vanessa Van Note

Cassandra Davis and Vanessa Van Note will lead a discussion on additional back- out proposals and next steps.

Discussion:

Greg Sandi: the way I view grass buffers is that those are managed BMPs, once they are converted, do they still get the upland credit?

Vanessa Van Note: the efficiency is that upland benefit. Grass buffers will convert the land but still receive that upland credit.

Leon Tillman: Are we assuming there is going to be management with wetlands? There can be tree growth without it.

Vanessa Van Note: yes, we are making a big assumption about management. Wetland and wetland restoration can be in here for 15 years. I am going to the Wetland WG to ask about this specifically. I will follow up with you on that question.

Jess Rigelman: I think going forward, Peter Claggett would be the person to bring to this group to answer specific questions.

Vanessa Van Note: we would like for the WTWG to take some time to think about what questions they need answered by the Land Use team and send those to the WTWG leadership.

James Martin: The intent is to avoid double counting and the only way this will occur is if they are detected in the imagery land cover and in this case, they won't be because the land cover doesn't differentiate between any of these practices that fall under a low vegetation class. The ag census doesn't have the accuracy to determine what percentage of ag acres have been put into a different class.

Jeff Sweeney: we are doing the best we can with the information we receive. The low vegetation is more dealing with the ag census and hoping that it has captured things correctly.

Greg Sandi: in my mind it just doesn't jive to call recaptured ag as a wetland even if it's turned into a wetland. If we take something that was engineered to be a treatment practice and then consider it a land conversion, I still have a hard time with that.

Jeff Sweeney: here the assumption is that this data is being picked in several datasets we use to determine wetlands. But modelers prefer to err on the side of caution.

Cassandra Davis: it would be interesting to see how many of these BMPs are actually being picked up in the land use change product. This wouldn't occur until we had the data.

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James Martin: there is already 14 counties available for review, but I think if you look at that you will see that it doesn't break a field border that is along a road that's not actively farmed, it considers it the same use as the field use. I am speaking generally; you can see it in the classification.

Vanessa Van Note: do you feel like the AgWG May decision, do you feel like that puts us in a better position to identify the land use or do you think that still won't provide enough information?

James Martin: I think that still is only going to help us identify the total acres of ag in a county. I don't know if it changes anything from my perspective. We are working in smaller percentage of the total ag acres. I think generally speaking all these practice s are ag land retirement and ag producers don't like doing that so these percentage are well below 10%.

Jeff Sweeney: are we getting the ag area from Peter's group as total ag acres or is there a division?

Jess Rigelman: there is a division that splits it into pasture/hay and cropland.

Vanessa Van Note: is the intention to merge the land use product with the ag census?

Olivia Devereux: we plan to use the ag footprint and apportion the ag census to it and then use those percentages to break apart the acres we get from Peter.

James Martin: the wetland practices are a little different because they are not identified as ag. The Wetlands classification based on other wetland categorizations (national hydrographic data set, NHD, NHD+). And these datasets are old and very rarely updated. A newly established wetland is not going to show up in our base conditions any time soon.

Jess Rigelman: I think everyone is raising good points, but I think to answer a lot of these questions we need to get Peter Claggett in front of this group. Are there any other points people want to raise so that we can better prepare Peter and move towards a decision at our next meeting?

Jeff Sweeney: these were just about the low vegetation ones? There were a couple more in the urban sector, do you have proposals for those, or it is just the ag and septic ones?

James Martin: the fundamental question applies to the urban ones as well. If we are trying to avoid double counting and over crediting, because we believe that these are already captured in the base conditions, I think the question applies.

Vanessa Van Note: I am sure people will have similar questions and Peter gave me a break down before he left for vacation. That is included in this presentation and people should feel free to look that over and send any questions my way. I think for the next meeting we should really break down how everything is included into the model.

Action: WTWG participants should send any questions regarding low-vegetation, septic, wetland, and urban BMPs related to back- out to Vanessa Van Note (vannote.vanessa@epa.gov) and Cassandra Davis (Cassandra.davis@dec.ny.gov).

Action: WTWG leadership will invite Peter Claggett to speak to the WTWG at their July 1st meeting.

12:00 PM – **Meeting Adjourn**

Next Meeting: July 1, 2021, from 10:00 to 12:00 PM

Call Participants

Hilary Swartwood, CRC

Vanessa Van Note, EPA

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Cassandra Davis, NYSDEC
Olivia Devereux, Devereux Consulting
Emily Dekar, USC
Jeff Sweeney, EPA
Arianna Johns, VA DEQ
Bill Keeling, VA DEQ
Clare Sevcik,
Clint Gill, DNREC
Dave Montali, Tetra Tech (WV) / Modeling WG
Elizabeth Hoffman, MDA
Greg Sandi, MDE
Jackie Pickford, CRC
Jess Rigelman, J7
Jessica Rodriguez, DoD
Norm Goulet, NOVA
Brittany Sturgis, DNREC
Matt English, DOEE
Mark Dubin, UMD
Loretta Collins, UMD / AgWG Coordinator
Ruth Cassilly, UMD
Ted Tesler, PA DEP
Alana Hartman, WV DEP
Katie Brownson, USFS
Kevin Du Bois, DoD
Jen Walls, DNREC
James Martin, VA DEQ
Leon Tillman, NRCS