

## Meeting Minutes DRAFT

March 18, 2021

10:00 AM-12:00 PM

AgWG Conference Call

Materials: [link](#)

### Summary of Actions & Decisions

**Decision:** The AgWG approved February Meeting Minutes.

**Decision:** The AgWG approved a path forward regarding CAST-21 Workplan Task 2: Investigate alternatives to the current methods for forecasting agricultural land uses and animals and propose options for partnership consideration. The AgWG achieved consensus to continue using the current projection method (Double Exponential Smoothing: Alpha = 0.8). **CAST-21 Draft Workplan: Task 2**

**Action:** Interested parties please review CAST Issues Tracker on the AgWG homepage and communicate comments/feedback to AgWG Loretta Collins (lcollins@chesapeakebay.net) and Jackie Pickford (Pickford.Jacqueline@epa.gov).

**Action:** Chair Gary Felton will coordinate with Kelly Shenk, EPA, regarding the NRCS-USGS-EPA effort to enhance coordination of federal funding for ag conservation practices and goal of collecting feedback from the ag community.

### Announcements

**Welcome, introductions, roll-call, review meeting minutes**

- Roll-call
- New WQGIT/AgWG Staffer Jackie Pickford
- [New At-Large](#) Introductions
  - RO Britt, Smithfield Foods
  - Tim Rosen, ShoreRivers
  - Matt Royer, Penn State (alternate Tyler Groh, Penn State)
  - Jenna Schueler, CBF (alternate for Matt Kowalski, CBF)

**Decision:** The AgWG approved February Meeting Minutes.

### Data & Modeling

#### **CAST-21 DRAFT WORK PLAN TASK 2**

##### **Forecasting Agricultural Trends**

Jeff Sweeney

Jeff Sweeney, EPA, returns to the AgWG seeking a decision following a [February review](#) of findings from investigations on alternatives to the current methods for forecasting agricultural land uses and animals. In February, two options were proposed to the AgWG for partnership consideration. The AgWG was asked to review the Ag Census Projection Analysis [spreadsheet](#) and provide any feedback to Sucharith Ravi, UMCES, and Jeff by March 8<sup>th</sup>.

Option #1: Keep the current projection method (Dbl. Exp. Smoothing: Alpha = 0.8) **RECOMMENDED**

Option #2: Change to Linear Projection (Method 2)

##### **Discussion:**

[Ken Staver](#): What is the biggest impact of this whole discussion?

**Jeff Sweeny:** Largely, not much of an impact. Like I said before, you can find a better method for certain crops which acts as a worse method for other crops. We found that changing the method did not have a big impact overall. But it comes down to states and their interests. Over the years we've tried different approaches, but for Phase 6 there was a strong desire from the group to use the double exponential smoothing method to give more weight to the recent years.

**Matt Kowalski:** When you say the current Dbl. Exp. Smoothing gives more weight to the more recent years, how many years of data are you considering when you apply that alpha data?

**Jeff Sweeny:** Every 5 years since 1982, because that is when the census started. Some animal groups (hogs, turkeys, etc.), and I think a few crop groups, we use annual census data instead of 5-year census data. But what we do for those is outside of this decision.

**Gary Felton:** Is anyone opposed to keeping the current projection method?

**Gary Felton:** Hearing no objections, I'd say we just approved Option #1. Is there anybody that objects to that statement?

**Gary Felton:** Okay, we just made a decision. Moving on...

**Decision:** The AgWG approved a path forward regarding CAST-21 Workplan Task 2: Investigate alternatives to the current methods for forecasting agricultural land uses and animals and propose options for partnership consideration. The AgWG achieved consensus to continue using the current projection method (Double Exponential Smoothing: Alpha = 0.8). **CAST-21 Draft Workplan: Task 2**

### **Rapid Review: The Partnership & Agriculture Workgroup**

Loretta Collins

Loretta Collins, UMD, will provide an overview of the Chesapeake Bay Program and where the Agriculture Workgroup fits into it for the benefit of our new members and a refresh for those who have been around for a while.

#### **Discussion:**

**Dave Montali:** (Referencing the slide that says 4 out of 5 states increased their percentage of focus on Agriculture to address WIP Phase 3 from Phase 2) I think it's important to note that it may not be a drastic shift in priority, but as we accomplish reductions in other areas in our WIP Phase 2 (like West VA did with wastewater), it freed up more space for us to be able to focus on agriculture.

**Loretta Collins:** Good point, Dave, thanks.

**Dave Montali:** This is a big picture mention, but the modeling workgroup has plans to have a new watershed model and a new estuary model around 2025. There is talk about bringing this to the WQGIT to discuss issues people have with Phase 6 of the model. There is also talk about bringing back the AgWG Modeling Sub-committee to address modeling issues (that group has been dormant). Phase 6 was a simplification from Phase 5. There are a lot of details in the inputs that I think are over complicated that we may not need, so maybe folks want to think about how some of these things can be simplified further on the input side.

## **CBP Assignments**

### **Ag Data Concerns Review**

Loretta Collins

The CAST concerns ad hoc group has been meeting monthly since September to discuss the draft "[CAST-21 Workplan](#)" items and additional concerns that were raised by the AgWG's jurisdictional membership. Loretta Collins, AgWG coordinator, will provide an update on progress of both the Workplan and additional concerns solicited from the state jurisdictions last year.

**Discussion:**

**Loretta Collins:** I was hoping we could have more time for discussion but what I really want to ask from you all is to take a look at this document and get back to me and/or Gary and let us know what other pressing issues are missing from this document. We need to curate a list to determine what we need to engage and ensure that we are addressing in the right way.

**Action:** Interested parties please review CAST Issues Tracker on the AgWG homepage and communicate comments/feedback to AgWG Loretta Collins (lcollins@chesapeakebay.net) and Jackie Pickford (Pickford.Jacqueline@epa.gov).

## Innovation & Implementation

### **NRCS-USGS-EPA Federal Coordination in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed**

Kasey Taylor, Delaware State Conservationist, NRCS; Scott Phillips, Chesapeake Bay Coordinator, USGS; and Kelly Shenk, Agriculture Advisor, EPA Mid-Atlantic Region will provide an overview of their efforts to enhance federal coordination in the Chesapeake Bay watershed with respect to funding for agricultural conservation practices and measuring the impact of those practices on water quality.

**Discussion:**

**Gary Felton:** What do you mean by “local” workshops and groups?

**Kelly Shenk:** In my perspective, we have these two teams that develop recommendations. Local doesn't make a lot of sense because we are meeting virtually, because really we're talking about agricultural works in the watershed who are trying to access federal funding to work with farmers to put in these ag conservation practices. This could be conservation districts, departments of ag., NGOs, land grant universities extension, anybody who has been struggling with the “alphabet soup” of acronyms and funding programs or the timing of everything and trying to figure out how to get the funding to support what farmers they work with to implement these practices. At the workshop we want to talk about what barriers they are facing with getting this funding and what we can do to address that. And what successes people are having that we can implement in other areas of the watershed.

**Gary Felton:** So you want to start dialogue with them to help 1) remove barriers and 2) target the best places to put monitoring?

**Kelly Shenk:** Yes, that's correct.

**Gary Felton:** The reason I asked about what local means is because I wanted to know who to target this at.

**Kasey Taylor:** yes, just to piggyback on Kelly's comment, I would say all of the above. Anyone that is actively engaged with the training, delivery, implementation, oversight, etc. we want to bring them in because we need to hear *everyone's* perspective, both on a small day-to-day basis but also on a larger scale.

**Amanda Barber (in chat):** Can FSA be added to the coordination team?

**Kasey Taylor:** FSA (Farm Service Agency, our sister agency) - absolutely. In the initial launching of this three team approach, our vision was to take a more internal look at voluntary conservation but more from a practice, implementation, and delivery perspective. When we start looking at the expansion of this, we will definitely have FSA there as a partner. And any other recommendations you can provide we will definitely take that back to the team.

**Scott Phillips:** We want to take advantage of the networks that the AgWG already has set up, so if you guys already have technical meetings set up to get to locals we would love to piggyback on those.

**Gary Felton:** Absolutely. I'll talk to Kelly more to see if we can get you connected with the appropriate people.

**Action:** Chair Gary Felton will coordinate with Kelly Shenk, EPA, regarding the NRCS-USGS-EPA effort to enhance coordination of federal funding for ag conservation practices and goal of collecting feedback from the ag community.

### New Business & Announcements

- **COVID-19 Announcements**
- **Non-Urban Stream Restoration** EPEG – In progress
- **Animal Mortality** Expert Panel Report – Expected release date April 2021
- **Soil Health Benchmark Study**
  - More than 100 farms contributed soil samples and field records to PASA's Soil Health Benchmark Study—the largest, most diverse community soil health science project in the country. <https://pasafarming.org/new-report-unearths-soil-health-insights/>
- **2021 Small Watershed Grants Program**
  - The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), in partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the federal-state Chesapeake Bay Program partnership, is now soliciting **Full Proposals** for the **2021 Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants** program. **Due Date: Thursday, April 22, 2021.**
  - Register for webinar [here](#).
  - For more info contact Jake Reilly ([jake.reilly@nfwf.org](mailto:jake.reilly@nfwf.org)), Stephanie Heidbreder ([stephanie.heidbreder@nfwf.org](mailto:stephanie.heidbreder@nfwf.org)) or Sydney Godbey ([Sydney.godbey@nfwf.org](mailto:Sydney.godbey@nfwf.org))
- **Other Announcements?** - send to Jackie Pickford ([pickfordj@chesapeake.org](mailto:pickfordj@chesapeake.org)) for inclusion in "Recap" email

### Review of Action and Decision Items

#### Adjourn

**Gary Felton:** Motion to adjourn.

**Clint Gill:** I'll move to adjourn.

**Matt Kowalski:** I'll second that, Gary.

### Next Meeting:

**Thursday, April 15th, 10AM-12PM: Conference Call**

#### Participant List

Loretta Collins, UMD/CBPO

Gary Felton, UMD

Jeremy Daubert, VT

Jackie Pickford, CRC

David Graybill, Farm Bureau Dairy Operator

Ken Staver, UMD

Paul Bredwell, U.S. Poultry & Egg Association

R.O. Britt, Smithfield Foods

Emily Dekar, Upper Susquehanna Coalition  
Tim Rosen, ShoreRivers  
Matt Royer, PSU  
Matt Kowalski, CBF  
Jenna Schueler, CBF  
Chris Brosch, DDA  
Clint Gill, DDA  
Elizabeth Hoffman, MDA  
Bill Tharpe, MDA  
Greg Albrecht, NY State Dept. of Ag. and Markets  
Amanda Barber, Cortland Co. SWCD  
Cindy Shreve, WV Conservation Agency  
Matt Monroe WV Dept of Ag.  
Marel King, CBC  
Kelly Shenk, EPA  
Jeff Sweeny, EPA  
Kristen Hughes Evans, Sustainable Chesapeake/NFWF Field Liaison  
Pat Thompson, EnergyWorks Group  
Amanda Barber, New York  
Karl Blankenship, Bay Journal  
Mark Dubin, UME/CBPO  
Peter Hughes, Red Barn Consulting  
Elliott Kellner - WVU  
Kristen Saacke Blunk, Headwaters LLC  
Ruth Cassilly UMD  
Cassandra Davis, NYS DEC  
Carlington Wallace, ICPRB  
Scott Phillips, USGS  
Olivia Devereux, Devereux Consulting  
Dave Montali, Tetra Tech, WV, MWG  
Katie Bockwoldt. Vermont DEC  
Ted Tesler, PA  
Joel Blanco-Gonzalez, EPA

### **Chat Discussion**

*From Kristen Hughes Evans to Everyone: 10:00 AM*

Good morning everyone! Kristen Hughes Evans here from Sustainable Chesapeake/NFWF Field Liaison.

*From Kristen Saacke Blunk to Everyone: 10:01 AM*

Good morning Kristen Hughes Evans!

*From Patrick Thompson to Everyone: 10:01 AM*

Pat Thompson, EnergyWorks Group

*From Amanda Barber to Everyone: 10:02 AM*

Good morning! Amanda Barber, New York here.

*From Jenna Schueler to Everyone: 10:02 AM*

Good morning everyone! Jenna Schueler, Chesapeake Bay Foundation

*From karlblankenship to Everyone: 10:02 AM*

Karl Blankenship, Bay Journal

*From Mark Dubin to Everyone: 10:03 AM*

Mark Dubin, UME/CBPO is present.

*From Peter Hughes to Everyone: 10:03 AM*

Peter Hughes Red Barn Consulting

*From Elliott Kellner to Everyone: 10:03 AM*

Elliott Kellner - WVU

*From Kristen Saacke Blunk to Everyone: 10:03 AM*

Kristen Saacke Blunk, Headwaters LLC, serving as a field liaison in support of NFWF's Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Program.

*From Jeremy Daubert to Everyone: 10:06 AM*

Jeremy Daubert, VCE/VT, vice-chair

*From Ruth T. Cassilly to Everyone: 10:06 AM*

Ruth Cassilly UMD

*From Cassandra Davis to Everyone: 10:06 AM*

Cassandra Davis, NYS DEC

*From Carlington Wallace to Everyone: 10:06 AM*

Carlington Wallace, ICPRB

*From Scott Phillips to Everyone: 10:06 AM*

Hi, Scott Phillips, USGS

*From Olivia Devereux to Everyone: 10:07 AM*

Olivia Devereux, Devereux Consulting

*From dave montali to Everyone: 10:07 AM*

Dave Montali, Tetra Tech, WV, MWG

*From Katie Bockwoldt to Everyone: 10:07 AM*

Katie Bockwoldt. Vermont DEC. Lead of the Vermont Agriculture Workgroup. Happy to be here to learn lessons from CB watershed!

*From Ted T to Everyone: 10:07 AM*

Ted Tesler Pa

*From Scott Phillips to Everyone: 10:09 AM*

Go JMU Dukes (a graduate myself)

*From Kristen Saacke Blunk to Everyone: 10:09 AM*

Welcome Jackie! Great to have a JMU Duke dog!

*From Kelly Shenk to Everyone: 10:10 AM*

Welcome Jackie! Great to have you here!

*From Loretta Mae Collins to Everyone: 10:11 AM*

Good Morning and Welcome! If you were not announced or missed Roll Call please enter you full name and affiliation in the Chat Box.

*From Joel Blanco-Gonzalez, USEPA to Everyone: 10:13 AM*

Joel Blanco-Gonzalez, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region III, Water Division, Clean Water Branch, NPDES Permits Section

*From Loretta Mae Collins to Everyone: 10:29 AM*

[https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/event/agriculture\\_workgroup\\_conference\\_call\\_march\\_20211](https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/event/agriculture_workgroup_conference_call_march_20211)

Today's calendar page and materials...

*From Clint Gill to Everyone: 10:38 AM*

Thanks for the work on this project!

*From Olivia Devereux to Everyone: 10:38 AM*

Good job Suchith and Jeff!

*From Matt Kowalski- CBF to Everyone: 10:39 AM*

Congrats, Jeremy

*From Jeremy Daubert to Everyone: 10:40 AM*

no worries! Glad to be here!

*From Scott Phillips to Everyone: 10:47 AM*

Additional USGS resources for nutrient and sediment trends, including a story map,

...[https://www.usgs.gov/centers/cba/science/usgs-develops-tool-further-examine-nutrient-and-sediment-trends-chesapeake-bay?qt-science\\_center\\_objects=0#qt-science\\_center\\_objects](https://www.usgs.gov/centers/cba/science/usgs-develops-tool-further-examine-nutrient-and-sediment-trends-chesapeake-bay?qt-science_center_objects=0#qt-science_center_objects)

*From Kristen Saacke Blunk to Everyone: 10:49 AM*

Loretta - really terrific overview! This is something that is so helpful to do periodically - so THANK YOU.

*From Kelly Shenk to Everyone: 10:49 AM*

And EPA's "How's my Waterway" is a great resource for consolidated WQ monitoring data.

<https://www.epa.gov/waterdata/how-s-my-waterway>

*From Me to Everyone: 10:57 AM*

I will also make sure the links in the chat are included in the meeting minutes!

*From kstaver to Everyone: 10:58 AM*

What was the time frame on that last pie chart?

*From Kristen Hughes Evans to Everyone: 10:59 AM*

Very interesting!

*From Kelly Shenk to Everyone: 11:00 AM*

And Manure is #3 in word cloud. Always a popular subject!

*From Scott Phillips to Everyone: 11:02 AM*

Nice presentation Loretta. What occurs on agricultural lands is also important to several other CBP goals including reducing toxic contaminants, recovering habitats, and protecting lands.

*From Kelly Shenk to Everyone: 11:06 AM*

Great overview presentation, Loretta! And I loved the video! Ha Ha!

*From Olivia Devereux to Everyone: 11:07 AM*

Hint: It is a cross between wheat and rye. Use the Latin plant name and you have your answer for the correct pronunciation.

*From Marel King, CBC to Everyone: 11:08 AM*

Thanks for the video, Loretta! Glad I'm not the only one who's been confused. :)

*From Dean Hively USGS to Everyone: 11:09 AM*

assuming that you have a definitive pronunciation for cereale... :)

*From Olivia Devereux to Everyone: 11:10 AM*

Dean, that is when you have beer for breakfast.

wheat (Triticum) and rye (Secale), tri-tuh-kei-lee

*From Greg Albrecht to Everyone: 11:15 AM*

Fancy.

Stellar coordination!

*From Kristen Hughes Evans to Everyone: 11:18 AM*

Loretta, that was a fantastic presentation! Thank you. I'm hoping it will be posted. It's a great resource.

*From Dave Graybill to Everyone: 11:20 AM*

very helpful review, thanks

*From Me to Everyone: 11:23 AM*

Yes, Loretta's presentation is posted on the Calendar page

*From Kelly Shenk to Everyone: 11:34 AM*

Members of Ag Conservation Funding Team and Sub-Groups:

NRCS

Denise Coleman, State Conservationist (PA);  
Susan Marquart, ASTC-Partnerships (PA);  
Mark Defley, Conservation Initiatives Team (NHQ);  
David Mortenson, Area Conservationist (NY);  
Stacey Bradshaw (VA)

EPA Region 3: Water Division  
Kelly Shenk, Agriculture Advisor  
Renee Bryant, Source Water Protection  
Jim Bennett, Source Water Protection  
Joe Schulingkamp, Clean Water State Revolving Fund  
Diana (Saintignon) Vedula, 319 Nonpoint Source Program  
Suzanne Trevena, Chesapeake Bay Regulatory Coordinator

EPA Region 3: CBPO

Jim Edward, Deputy Director  
Bo Williams

*From Kelly Shenk to Everyone: 11:42 AM*

Here is the diversity commitment:

*From Loretta Mae Collins to Everyone: 11:42 AM*

CAST Issues Tracker is on the AgWG Homepage:

[https://www.chesapeakebay.net/who/group/agriculture\\_workgroup](https://www.chesapeakebay.net/who/group/agriculture_workgroup)

*From Kelly Shenk to Everyone: 11:43 AM*

Diversity in Ag Conservation Grants:

EPA and NRCS will assess opportunities to support historically under-served farmers and ranchers through outreach, ranking, match adjustment options, and the selection process associated with agricultural conservation practice grants in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

*From Amanda Barber to Everyone: 11:48 AM*

Could FSA be added to the coordination team?

*From Loretta Mae Collins to Everyone: 11:54 AM*

@ Ken Staver: I assume you are talking about the "Ag is a Big Part of the Solution." Can't remember. Probably 2018. The message is that we are relying on Ag for a great deal of our reductions.

*From Amanda Barber to Everyone: 11:57 AM*

CRP/CREP is a key implementation program

*From Kelly Shenk to Everyone: 11:57 AM*

Yes, Amanda. Agree! K

*From Kristen Hughes Evans to Everyone: 11:59 AM*

Just FYI, speaking of diversity in agriculture, Kristen Saacke Blunk and I are participating in the 21-Day Racial Equity Habitat Building Challenge. Kristen is willing to host once-a-week lunch discussions. See attached and link: <https://foodsolutionsne.org/21-day-racial-equity-habit-building-challenge/>  
And following up on NFWF Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund Small Watershed Grant RFP in agenda, here is the link. Please feel free to reach out to myself ([kristen@susches.org](mailto:kristen@susches.org)) and Kristen Saacke Blunk if you would like to discuss further: <https://www.nfwf.org/programs/chesapeake-bay-stewardship-fund/small-watershed-grants>

*From Scott Phillips to Everyone: 11:59 AM*

For water-quality monitoring follow up, looking forward to have continued interaction with Elliott Kellner, Ken Staver, and Kristin SB, in addition to others.