

**State Technical Committee
Richmond, Virginia
October 27, 2009**

Wade Biddix, NRCS ASTC-Programs, welcomed group and opened meeting at 10:04 a.m. He introduced himself to committee as new Chair.

Attendance: Wade Biddix (*NRCS*), Kelly Shenk (*EPA Chesapeake Bay Program*), Betsy Bowles (*DEQ*), Mary Elfner (*National Audubon*), E.J. Fanning (*NRCS*), Dan Solomon (*NRCS*), Barry Harris (*NRCS*), Gary Moore (*DCR*), Ed Zimmer and Dean Cumbia (*VDOF*), Libby Norris (*CBF*), Seth Coffman (*Trout Unlimited*), Kevin Schmidt (*VDACS*), Hobey Bauhann (*VPF*), Suzy Friedman (*EDF*), Jim Baird (*AFT*), Dale Gardner (*Water Stewardship*), Larry Mohn (*VDGIF*), Sarah Richardson (*DCR*), Wilmer Stoneman (*VFBF*), Maribeth Pettigrew (*NRCS*). Julie Hawkins (*NRCS*) came in at 11:18. Jack Bricker (*State Conservationist -NRCS*) came in at 11:19.

Wade distributed his business cards to group members and requested copies of theirs.

CRP - Emily Horsley (*FSA*) - distributed report re: enrollment. Reported continuous progress. She has been working with Mary Elfner of National Audubon on SAFE. Also working to get money out for rental acres through St. Louis. A meeting with Forestry after the last STC meeting resulted in a new policy (re: dollars per acre) that is now in effect.

DCR - Gary CP-22 - CREP practices; should know more by next meeting.

National Audubon – Mary Elfner: Culpeper Basin; trying to get CP-38 landowners to sign-up to enhance bird habitat for these grassland species; no sign-ups yet; has had calls, but some of the current requirements seem to be limiting sign-up; looking at changing minimums for i.e. hectare requirement; she's doing research re: adequate habitat for those species; she's preparing a letter to send out; has a list generated by FSA.

DOF – Ed Zimmer - Virginia Forestlands Assessment – Main driver is the new Farm Bill; we are hoping to get good information as a result. Identified 10 issues that fell under 3 themes: protecting forests from harm, conserving working forest lands and enhancing public benefits from trees and forests. Ten broad issues identified; next issue was a survey; ended yesterday; asked for feedback on strategies and 10 issues; have contractor who is processing the data and will produce document; another meeting is scheduled for Jan. 6th, 2010, in Charlottesville; invitations will go out to everyone on stakeholder list. Rest of timeline: by Feb.- all GIS products to be completed; by 3/15 - complete strategies and have draft document. Meeting with stakeholders by April 1 . May 15th deadline to submit all suggestions and changes. June 18th is current projected deadline. Fast timeline, but a lot of info is already in place.

NRCS – Wade Biddix - Summarized Farm Bill and Water Resources progress for year – went over NRCS FY-09 Programs Summary Report handout (attached to minutes).

Q: (Libby Norris) – WRP - why has the focus been on Caroline County?

A: Looked for a county where we could start small; if there was a potential for PC; used data from soil survey and identified potential parcels of land; used common land unit database to send letters; Wade stated we tried to do a pilot to help us identify where potential sights are; Still, application is going statewide. Time of focus was during harvest; probably not good timing; no applications yet.

Q: (Kelly Shenk) re: Chesapeake Bay Watershed

A: NRCS can provide background and detail to anyone interested. Limited suite of practices; did not get great sign-up in FY-09. Often farmers sign up for both programs (Chesapeake Bay and EQIP) and we assist them where they should go.

Q: re: absorbing funds and distributing.

Transitioned into EQIP Funds. Dan Solomon (NRCS) introduced handout (attached) and reviewed. We do have sign ups we were not able to fund; somewhere in the 12 million dollar range; a lot of people waiting for next year's funding. A lot of choices made it a bit troublesome to manage, but that gives lots of choices to farmers, so it's a good thing. Most of backlog is in animal waste and grazing; some in cropland. We are expecting to get more money for EQIP, probably several million dollars more.

Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative allocation was 5.6 million; not so many sign-ups to bring forward to next year. Expecting 11 million for this program in FY-10.

Q: Will backlogged requests be first or will they be put back in the mix?

A: Per new Chief of NRCS, Dave White, we cannot just roll over and take off the top. There is a ranking process for both programs. A new change is being mandated: four sections – 1) practices they pick, 2) what they cost, 3) their lifespan, and 4) what issues they address- worth 25% of ranking points. Nat'l priorities – there are 7 – not finalized yet; worth 25% of ranking points; state issues – buffers etc.= 25%; then 25% to local issues. Never had local consideration previously, but now ranking process and fund tools need to rest at the local level. Local means County, Region or Area where there are common resource issues. We are hoping to aggregate to area or region rather than by county or SWCD. Some new questions, new ranking criteria and new funding pools are going to have to be developed in a short period of time.

Q: How does Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative work with all this?

A: We're working on this now. Does it apply to CB? We have used same rules as EQIP, so far. As money ratchets up, it will have to be decided if rules and included practices are the same for both.

Q: Air Quality project? What was that?

A: Fairfax County, Loudoun and Prince William Counties are the only eligible areas in VA – has to be in abatement area, spent money to ameliorate greenhouse gases – tree planting, animal waste, odor issues, etc. All money had to be spent within that area.

Q: Who qualifies as a socially disadvantaged farmer?

A: Statute with this Farm Bill designates 10% of monies must go to these groups - socially disadvantaged groups are those who have not historically worked a lot with NRCS – Hispanics,

African Americans, Native Americans, Alaskans, etc. Financially disadvantaged is the other part – annual income compared to other income levels within county. To qualify as a New and Beginning farmer, can be anybody who has not farmed for 10 consecutive years prior to applying. These people get 90% cost share. If it's more than one person in a "business" farm, all participants have to meet qualifications. If they don't own the land, they have to have written permission to apply contracts, etc. They can self-certify on USDA website.

EQIP subcommittee to be set up, meeting November 24th at 10 a.m. Subset of this group will help work through details; work group, what state and local criteria would be considered? How many points assigned? Gets down to the nitty-gritty re. how it should work in the field.

(ANYONE FROM STC WHO IS INTERESTED IN SERVING ON THIS SUBCOMMITTEE SHOULD CONTACT WADE PRIOR TO THE 11/24 MEETING).

(Participants signed up at STC meeting: Jim Baird, Hobey Bauhan, Wade Biddix, Seth Coffman, Dean Cumbia, Katie Frazier, Suzy Friedman, Dale Gardner, Todd Groh, Larry Mohn, Gary Moore, Libby Norris, Marc Puckett, Kelly Shenk, Dan Solomon and Wilmer Stoneman.). Katie Frazier was added later.

We'd like to roll this committee together with Chesapeake Bay issues.

Chesapeake Bay

Wade discussed potential changes to the priority watersheds map for the Ches. Bay. Last year (see map handout) light green areas were TMDL priority watersheds; we were directed to limit our involvement in those areas so we wouldn't compete with DCR for funding. Dark green areas we identified as NRCS priority areas made up about 17% of Bay Drainage in the state as priority areas. Looked at expansion potential to cover more area. Blue areas on map are additional areas identified as expansion priority watersheds. So now a little over 30% of the Chesapeake Bay drainage area is identified. Now state is thinking maybe we should piggyback with TMDL. Working with DCR; trying to work out details of complementing each other. Trying to anticipate usage on monies coming in; it's going higher for FY11 than for FY10. We are trying to focus efforts on priority practices and priority watersheds. TMDL areas now have TMDL implementation plans in effect. Goal is to have more practices on the ground.

Clarification: the areas indicated are proposed areas of priority, but anyone in the state CAN apply; as long as they are using priority practices they are eligible for funding.

“Proposed Priority Practices for 2010 CBWI” handout – Dan Solomon (NRCS) – We are trying to identify what people are willing to do; a lot of programs out there are good programs but aren't implemented a lot. First page lists identified priority practices for funding; next page groups those practices into land use/resource concerns. Idea is to have three fund pools and three ranking processes, one for each area. We are trying to compare “apples to apples” in the ranking process. The third page explains part of the ranking process in terms of how points can be attained. This may be a moot point if adequate money is there for all applicants, but there has to be a ranking process in place in case there's not adequate funding for all.

Q: (Wilmer Stoneman) Are points given re: appropriate practices within specific areas?

A: New “Local” factor may take care of spreading the money around based on usage needs.

There are other practices that will be available, but they are not priority in terms of ranking. Right now, for instance, forestry and other common practices will probably be kept under EQIP. Those aren’t being addressed by CBWI.

Discussion branched off into waste distribution issues with discussion between Gary Moore of DCR and Dale Gardner re: poultry issue transfer and phosphorus issue.

Q: Capacity issue? Decision to move on to more acres? Why?

A: A lot of changes that might come depending on how we deal with these issues. Seems like a window of opportunity - how to structure the ranking “to have more, sooner”. Points are added if contract completion agreement is shorter time. System does reward efficiency as set-up.

Clarification: Jack Bricker (NRCS State Conservationist) – re: blue areas; last year process was hurried up. Green was based on anticipation of much less money than we actually got; that’s why we had to expand. Another reason to expand to blue is we know where willing participants are. Also, we now have more field staff, so we don’t have to spread ourselves as thin as we’d worried we might have to.

Q: (Wilmer Stoneman) Will designated areas change?

A: Jack doesn’t anticipate changes for this program; this is what they will be as far as the info we now have. No political process is involved in decision making beyond Jack’s approval. Because of monies anticipated in EQIP and with CBWI, projection is that any reasonable project should be funded.

Q: re: Smith Creek Watershed

A: Offered up as “showcase” along with some from other states. Looking at areas where partnerships are in place. Need to have more dialogue on this. Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative now being considered for CBWI, not just EQIP.

EPA - Kelly Shenk – funded Smith Creek – EPA has an additional 3 million to put toward project funding; very much want to help fill in gaps with watershed; have been holding off to write RFP – would like to have more detailed description of needs to know if we need to put more money into Smith Creek or move toward blue areas. They want to target resources; can fund outreach and technical assistance and staff on the ground; would like to have discussions soon so they can fill in as needed. Gary commented re: state budget concerns. Last cut in VA did cut funds to SWCD; they are considered target for any future cuts; from local delivery level, as much technical assistance as can be made available would be helpful and EPA should be aware of that need. EPA is trying to focus their monies more effectively.

Q: In-house composting - would this fall under EQIP or does this fall under sub committee? When is the appropriate time?

A: Litter management and composting – this is probably something we need to consider on subcommittee level. Explained windrowing of poultry waste – recycling process. Delaware is

using now. Projected widespread interest. Ammonia levels may be higher than acceptable if appropriate measures aren't taken to deal with that concern.

CSP – WadeBiddix/Dan Solomon (NRCS) – sign up is continual; up to 188 signups; 176 for first evaluation period; Nov. 16 is deadline to score current applications. This program rewards people for what they have done previously and then offers money as an incentive to do more. Cropland and pastureland applications, but also forestland applications. DOF people are supporting by spreading the word to farmers with forestland. Good opportunity for VA farmers. Acres are allocated - pot of money in Washington will be distributed according to how much sign-up we get. There's a range designated for each kind of land. Each state has only been given acre allocation thus far; no specifics on actual monies until analysis of applications. Points will be assigned and monies will be given accordingly. Not a cost share program. Referred to Directive with supplement information regarding guidance for CSP.

WHIP - handout – reviewed (see attached) – E.J. Fanning (NRCS)
State public lands are no longer eligible for WHIP; we actually turned back funds this past FY. We anticipate getting about the same amount as last year.

Idea is being considered of putting the Wildlife categories that are under EQIP under WHIP so that we can use the funds allotted to WHIP and not have to give them back. The pros and cons of that are being considered. Some practices are not currently under WHIP as under EQIP so the set-up would need adjustment. There IS a national priority that concerns wildlife practices under EQIP, and that has to be addressed. True farmers are better assisted currently under EQIP. Much consideration is needed before changes are made. Libby Norris commented that as it is now, the EQIP wildlife categories function as a gateway; then farmers have been encouraged to take it further by going over to WHIP.

EASEMENTS – Barry Harris (NRCS) –Handout - Questions on potential funding for FY2010 – re: when the next sign-up will come. FRPP dollars are supposed to be increased each year. Actual allocation has not yet been announced, but sign-up is continuous. Discussion of application process, some tweaking has taken place and website has been updated.

Chesapeake Bay Executive Order – Jack Bricker (NRCS State Conservationist) - Handout (Copies of PowerPoint presentation slides); discussed, specifically Section 202 reports. USDA was affected by 202b. Five key areas of focus – one slide for each. We want to work with state partners in a complimentary fashion; want to cut down on competition for federal and state dollars, and hopefully, that also reduces confusion for clients. Again, the need to set priorities came up.

Strategies developed in 203 reports set for publication of draft on Nov.9. Group was encouraged to note public comment dates. It was emphasized that it is key to get your voices heard through this process. Next page gives website address to access for information and comment.

Per Kelly Shenk, there is a state meeting on Thursday 10/29 in Gettysburg, PA re: 202. There is a conference call access line for anyone interested so participation is available without requiring travel.

Healthy Forests Reserve (handout) – Wade Biddix (NRCS)

Right now there are only 8 states with this kind of program. NRCS has met with DOF. It's open for discussion as to whether we have some watersheds in VA that might benefit. In-depth consideration of endangered species needs to be part of the consideration given to this.

Participation in survey for State Technical Committee members on survey-monkey -
handout distributed.

Partner UPDATES

VDOF - Dean Cumbia – Just finished collecting cones, acorns. In conjunction with NRCS; working to get technical and service providers set up for forest management planning. Big paper mill shut down last week in Franklin. Tree planting – some started this fall; improvement.

FSA – BCAP - Emily Horsley – update 7 to 8 Biomass facilities have put in applications; 5 have achieved qualification status. Still have not received funding to make matching payments, but are accepting applications for suppliers to these facilities. There has been a lot of interest in this program; still waiting for interim final rules to be published; they are expected in the spring.

CBF Libby Norris – Fall field trip coming up. CSP comments have been submitted as of yesterday; have been working with landowners in Augusta County. Hopefully all of this will be ramped up and completed by spring. NFWF Grant – almost 800 thousand dollars – focused in Augusta, Rockingham, Page and Shenandoah Counties. There is a feed management section and an enhanced nutrient management section; it is a comprehensive grant. We are hiring 2 more staff members to work in that four county area. Another grant was given to another agency so a third person will be hired, and Libby will be the 4th person working on this project. Announced part-time opportunity 25 hours a week looking for local valley people – producers who are conservation minded to work with other producers.

PDR programs – Kevin Schmidt-VDACS - Limited funds for projects, but trying to get monies out the door by Jan. 1st. Franklin County program was added. Have done three joint projects with NRCS.

VDGIF – Larry Mohn- Fisheries is hiring 5 biologists – good number of applicants.

Trout Unlimited – Seth Coffman - Plugging away to try to get people involved in cost share programs. One CREP project will definitely be located in Rockingham County.

Q: Do we know what kind of allocation for CCPI?

A: 6% of EQIP funding.

AFT – Jim Baird - CIG grant working in PA and MD - nutrient use efficiency project; trying to look at barriers; working with risk; doing a check strip – risk management – guarantee program; not like a cost share, but compensates people if they lose production. Five farmers in Maryland

participated last year; expanding to VA for last two years of project, working with DCR. Doesn't necessarily fit with EQIP. See some potential for connecting with NRCS programs - needs to be examined. Would like to scale it up. Looking for 5 farmers in VA with an average of about 100 acres each. With Executive order, trying to play a useful role by getting dialogue going with EPA, etc. Had a meeting with 25 producers with Chuck Fox – got a pretty good cross section of sectors. Ag. and environment agency meeting in September. Seems important to get cross conservation action going, so they're trying to do that. Trying to get info to other states. Good for communications with EPA. Again, trying to scale up – stream fencing, etc. – projects that could benefit from cross state communication . Have been in touch with Ag. groups; would like to connect with environmental groups, etc. Have tried to combine TMDL timeline with Executive Order timeline for information purposes and to get cross conversations going.

By first of year will be engaged in PAL program, poultry 40-50 “growers”??

Betsy Bowles - For last two years she has been working on poultry waste project. Happy to say amendments were adopted yesterday and will now be published in the Virginia Register; will become effective about the end of the year. Working on changes that will have to conform with language in place already. When it's published , this will be on VA regulatory town hall website.

Next meeting was not indicated on agenda because some of the things coming up may require a meeting sooner than would be normally scheduled because of needed quick turnarounds. Group agreed to have next meeting on **December 1st at 10 a.m.** The subcommittee meeting on 24th of Nov. probably will be longer than 2 hours; plan on bringing working lunch.

Meeting closed at 12:31 pm.

State Technical Committee
Agenda

October 27, 2009 - 10:00 a.m.
Richmond NRCS State Office
1606 Santa Rosa Road, Ste. 209

Welcome and Introduction	NRCS
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP&CREP) SAFE Program Amendments	FSA/DCR Virginia Audubon - Elfner
Virginia Forest Assessment (20 minutes)	DOF – Zimmer
NRCS FY-09 Program Progress Report	NRCS - Biddix
Program Development FY 2010 - EQIP, CBWI, WHIP, and CSP Easements	NRCS – Biddix, Solomon, and Fanning Harris
Chesapeake Bay Executive Order	NRCS – Biddix
Healthy Forest Reserve Program	NRCS – Biddix, Cumbia
Ongoing RCA Survey	NRCS – Biddix
Agency Updates	All

Set Next Meeting – Group

NRCS FY-09 Programs Summary Report
October 27, 2009

EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentives Program)

- 1036 applications received for \$29,015,264 on 99,597 acres
- 322 contracts signed for \$10,419,329 on 30,922 acres
- 31.1% of applications funded

CBWI (Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative)

- 313 applications received for \$7,024,004 on 61,623 acres
- 237 contracts signed for \$5,662,434 on 46,868 acres
- 75.7% of applications funded

WHIP (Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program)

- 133 applications received for \$1,047,216 on 7,256 acres
- 89 contracts signed for \$673,128 on 4,939 acres
- 66.9% of applications funded

CSP (Conservation Stewardship Program)

- 176 applications received (106 agricultural and 70 forestry applications)

FRPP Farm and Ranchland Protection Program)

- Closed 5 easements on 756 acres in Frederick, Clark, Northampton and Rockingham
- Federal Cost was \$1,473,471

GRP (Grassland Reserve Program)

- Closed one easement for 40 acres for \$380,000
- Allocated \$568,705 for two easements for 159 acres
- Allocated \$2,250 for one rental agreement on 25 acres
- Eight applications on file for funding in FY-10

WRP (Wetland Reserve Program)

- Closed four easements on 69 acres for \$238,201
- Allocated \$268,868 for three easements on 101.93 acres
- Allocated \$84,642 for the restoration of two sites
- Letters sent to 130 landowners in Caroline County on outreach effort

Watershed Programs

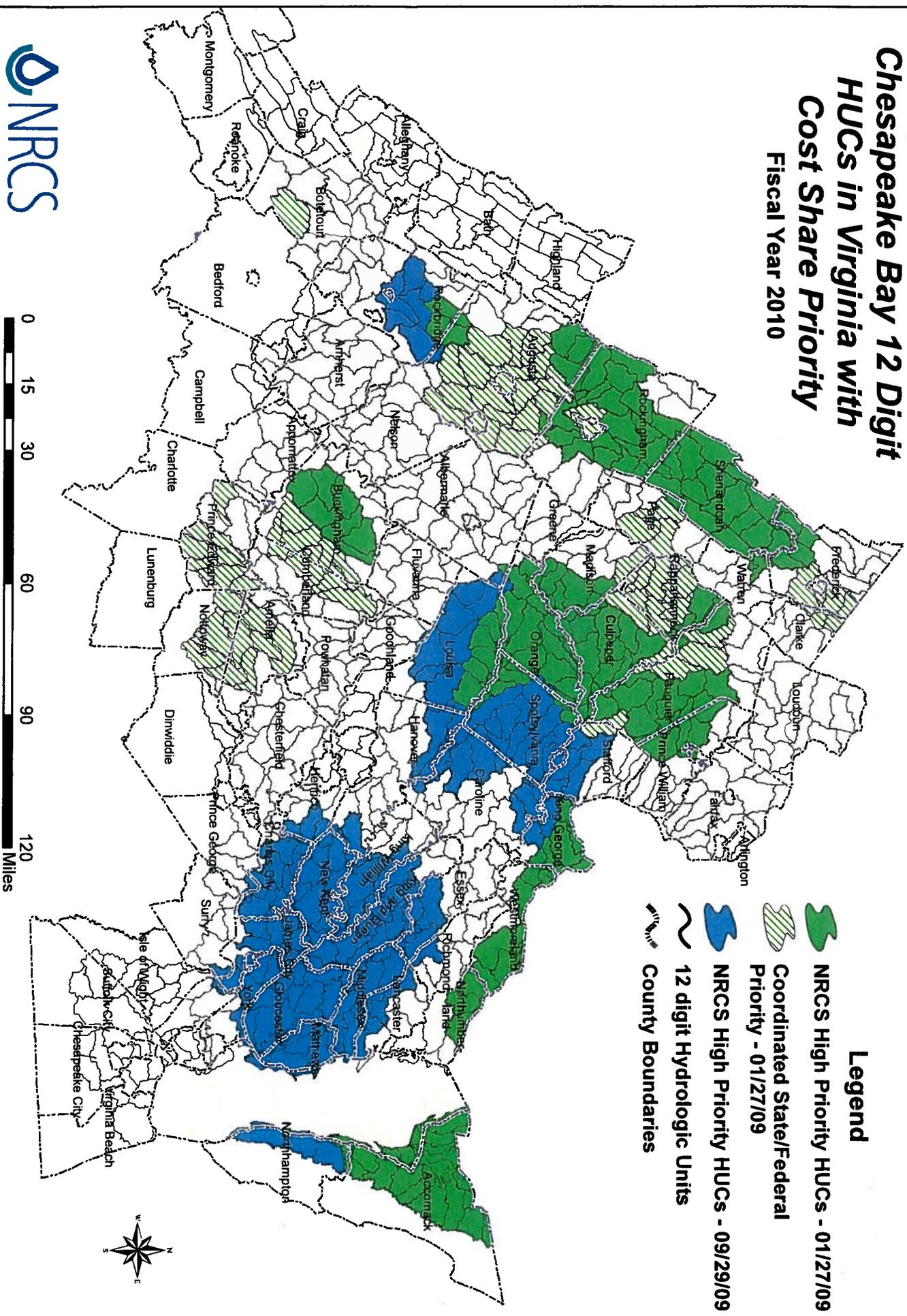
- Rapid Watershed Assessment – Completed assessment on Lower Shenandoah River
- Completed Pohick Creek 2 dam rehabilitation plan in Fairfax County.
- Completed Pohick Creek 3 design in Fairfax County.
- Construction ongoing on South River 25 dam rehabilitation in Augusta County.
- Dam rehabilitation plan initiated for South River 10A in Augusta County.
- Contract awarded to complete 9 dam assessments.
- Design contract underway for Buena Vista channel modification.
- House in floodplain was purchased for demolition in Buena Vista.
- Designs ongoing for 5 acid mine drainage sites in North Fork Powell River in Lee Co.
- 3 new long term contracts developed in Chestnut Creek and Little Reed Island Creek.

EQIP Fund Pools and Allocations

Account Name	Allocated	Obligated	Unobligated	Contracts
All Sub Funds	\$10,298,503.56	\$10,298,503.56	\$0.00	322
Animal Waste-Christiansburg	\$881,465.00	\$881,465.00	\$0.00	9
Animal Waste-Farmville	\$805,111.00	\$805,111.00	\$0.00	6
Animal Waste-Harrisonburg	\$1,071,706.12	\$1,071,706.12	\$0.00	20
Animal Waste-Smithfield	\$444,340.00	\$444,340.00	\$0.00	9
CCPI-Ches Bay Foundation	\$44,682.25	\$44,682.25	\$0.00	4
CCPI-Fish America	\$242,050.00	\$242,050.00	\$0.00	10
CCPI-VDGIF	\$59,834.00	\$59,834.00	\$0.00	2
Cropland-Christiansburg	\$19,787.20	\$19,787.20	\$0.00	2
Cropland-Farmville	\$213,211.10	\$213,211.10	\$0.00	11
Cropland-Harrisonburg	\$68,737.80	\$68,737.80	\$0.00	8
Cropland-Smithfield	\$337,604.50	\$337,604.50	\$0.00	6
EQIP-Air Quality	\$110,336.00	\$110,336.00	\$0.00	1
Forestry-Statewide	\$575,381.30	\$575,381.30	\$0.00	53
Grazing-Christiansburg	\$1,819,357.80	\$1,819,357.80	\$0.00	29
Grazing-Farmville	\$889,811.38	\$889,811.38	\$0.00	32
Grazing-Harrisonburg	\$363,085.75	\$363,085.75	\$0.00	26
Grazing-Smithfield	\$24,940.40	\$24,940.40	\$0.00	3
Groundwater Conservation-Statewide	\$199,585.40	\$199,585.40	\$0.00	5
New and Beginning Farmers	\$573,572.00	\$573,572.00	\$0.00	13
Orchard-Pest Management	\$133,650.00	\$133,650.00	\$0.00	7
Organic - Certified	\$140,131.00	\$140,131.00	\$0.00	4
Organic - Transition	\$152,591.00	\$152,591.00	\$0.00	4
Poultry Litter Transfer	\$222,797.00	\$222,797.00	\$0.00	22
Socially Disadvantaged Farmers	\$603,368.06	\$603,368.06	\$0.00	15
Speicalty Crops I&D	\$90,828.00	\$90,828.00	\$0.00	8
Wildlife Habitat Improvement-Statewide	\$210,539.50	\$210,539.50	\$0.00	13
2009 76F Cost Overrun	\$210,637.89	\$6,222.20	\$204,415.69	7
FY09 EQIP Reserve	\$147,383.97	\$147,383.97	\$0.00	17

Chesapeake Bay 12 Digit HUCs in Virginia with Cost Share Priority

Fiscal Year 2010



Legend

-  NRCS High Priority HUCs - 01/27/09
-  Coordinated State/Federal Priority - 01/27/09
-  NRCS High Priority HUCs - 09/29/09
-  12 digit Hydrologic Units
-  County Boundaries



Map Date: 10/26/09



Natural Resources Conservation Service
1606 Santa Rosa Road, Suite 209
Richmond, VA 23229-5014

Telephone: 804/287-1691
Fax: 804/287-1737

State Supplement to Conservation Stewardship Program Guidance

October 22, 2009

Subject: Virginia minimum area and size limits for Nonindustrial Private Forestland

Purpose: To issue guidance regarding the definition, minimum area and size limits for Nonindustrial Private Forestland (NIPF) used in the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) for Virginia.

Effective Date: Supplement is effective upon receipt. File with CSP manual.

Explanation: The following guidance is provided to assist in the designation of NIPF for CSP. This supplement provides the Virginia specific minimum area and size limits required for NIPF designation.

General Guidance: Participants will designate the land use(s) to be considered for enrollment into the CSP. Each acre of land can only have one land use designation applied for application and contracting purposes. Definitions of each eligible land use will be made available to participants to aid them in their land use designation decision.

Land uses will be verified for preapproved applicants as part of the field verification process. Offered acres that fail to meet the land use description will be considered inaccurate and adjustments will be made to the Conservation Measurement Tool (CMT).

The following criteria will be used in the designation of Non-Industrial Private Forest Land (NIPF):

1. NIPF is a land cover/use category that is at least 10 percent stocked by single stemmed woody species of any size that will be at least 4 meters (13 feet) tall at maturity. Also included is land-bearing evidence of natural regeneration of tree cover (cut over forest or abandoned farmland) and not currently developed for non-forest use. Ten percent stocked, when viewed from a vertical direction, equates to an areal canopy cover of leaves and branches of 25 percent or greater. The minimum area for classification as forestland in Virginia is 10 contiguous acres.
2. Forest openings and incidental areas of non-forest land cover (e.g. wetlands or rock outcrops) within the forest, are eligible for inclusions in the NIPF acreage, provided any one opening does not exceed 10 percent of the total offered acres, not to exceed 10 acres.
3. Wetlands and non-wooded areas that exceed the size limits designated by states as forest openings should be excluded from the offered acreage, unless the participant can provide documentation of forest management activities that have been conducted on these acres within the past 10 years. Documentation could be copies of forest management plans



Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program – WHIP
State Technical Committee Meeting – 10/27/09

- **In FY09, we received 133 WHIP applications for \$1,047,216.21 in funding on 7,255.68 acres; 89 contracts were obligated for \$673,127.77 on 4,938.70 acres, or 66.917% of the applications received. Most of the applications that were not funded were due to applicant withdrawals and some ineligible applications.**
- **New WHIP manual has been received; No substantive changes from FY2009. National WHIP funding for FY2010 has been approved by Congress at 85,000,000.**
- **The “s” has been taken off the “Incentives” part of the program name.**
- **The Resource Concerns will be the same as FY09:**
 - **Early Successional**
 - **Oak-Harwood Restoration**
 - **Wetland Habitat**
 - **Stream Riparian**
 - **Declining Habitat**
 - **Invasive Species**

**Virginia State Technical Committee
Easement Programs Report
October 27, 2009**

FRPP:

FRPP Closing:

Entity: Clarke County
Location: Clarke County
Size: 216 acers
Amount:\$585,601

Upcoming Closings:

Entity: Clarke County
Location: Clarke County
Size: 204 acres
Amount:\$358,250

GRP:

Upcoming Closings:

Location: Frederick County
Size:57.682 acres
Amount:\$220,345
Permanent Easement

Location: King George County
Size: 101 acres
Amount:\$284,799
Permanent Easement

WRP:

Closings:

Location: Greene County
Size: 25 acres
Amount:\$114,000
Permanent Easement

Location: Southampton County
Size: 20.4 acres
Amount:\$59,363
Permanent Easement

Upcoming WRP Closings:

Location: Fluvanna County
Size: 12 acres
Amount:\$20,475
30 Year Easement

Location: Frederick County
Size: 4.3 acres
Amount:\$12,043
Permanent Easement

Pettigrew, Maribeth - Richmond, VA

From: Mark Schonbeck [mark@abundantdawn.org]
Sent: Tuesday, October 27, 2009 9:49 AM
To: Pettigrew, Maribeth - Richmond, VA; Biddix, Wade - Richmond, VA; Boyd, Keith - Smithfield, VA; Bricker, Jack - Richmond, VA; Daniel, J.B - Farmville, VA; Dearborn, Candy - Richmond, VA; Fanning, EJ - Richmond, VA; Hall, Galon - Richmond, VA; Harris, Barry - Richmond, VA; Hawkins, Julie - Farmville, VA; Heidel, Louis - Harrisonburg, VA; Lawrence, Chris - Richmond, VA; Moser, Greg - Richmond, VA; Paul, Pat - Richmond, VA; Pettigrew, Maribeth - Richmond, VA; Phelps, Alvin - Christiansburg, VA; Solomon, Dan - Richmond, VA; 'Arey, Maxine'; 'Atkinson, Dick AND Haller, Susan'; 'Baird, J'; 'Batiuk, Rich'; 'Bauhan, Hobey'; 'Bennett, Mark'; 'Bowles, Betsy'; Bricker, Jack - Richmond, VA; 'Brown, Tim'; 'Brubaker, Tony'; 'Bruton, David'; 'Byrd, David'; 'Capel, Stephen'; 'Carpenter, Mike'; 'Clarke, Paul'; 'Cocker, Tod'; 'Coffman, Seth'; 'Costanzo, Bridgett'; 'Cotton, Thomas'; 'Cumbia, Dean'; 'DeGive, Josephine'; 'Delach, Aimee'; 'Dubin, Mark'; 'Duncan, Bob'; 'Elfner, Mary'; 'Ellis, Bob'; 'Essel, Albert'; 'Finley, Charles'; 'Fiske, David'; 'Fox, Dick'; 'Frazier, Katie'; 'Frazier, William'; 'Friedman, Suzy'; 'Frye, Jack'; 'Gallier, Van'; 'Gardner, Dale'; 'Garrett, E. N.'; 'Garrison, Carl'; 'Gillespie, Nat'; 'Groh, Todd'; 'Haley, Scott'; 'Havens, Kirk'; 'Hickerson, Henry'; 'Hickman, Phil'; 'Hodges, Steven'; 'Hoffman, Bill'; 'Holnback, Roger'; Horsley, Emily - Richmond, VA; 'Howe, Paul'; 'Jamison, Austin'; 'Jennings, Ann'; 'Johnson, Donna'; 'Jones, David'; 'Kendall, Tyree'; 'Kilpatrick, Kathleen'; 'Kovacs, David'; 'Land, Larry'; 'Landgraf, Ken'; Link, Nelson - Richmond, VA; 'Lott, Nathan'; 'MacQuilliam, Maggi'; 'Maier, Patricia'; 'Malette, Stephen'; 'Mantay, Kirk'; 'Maroon, Joe'; 'Marshall, Darrell'; 'Martin, Steve'; 'Mauger, Matt'; 'McKinnon, Bill AND Oliver, Bill'; 'McMunigal, Callie'; 'Meador, Mark'; 'Miller, Jeff'; 'Mohn, Larry'; 'Moore, Gary'; 'Moore, Martha'; 'Moss, Bob'; 'Myers, Rick'; 'Neale, Spencer'; 'Norman, Gary'; 'Norris, David'; 'Norris, Libby'; 'Parker, John'; 'Passwaters, Jim'; 'Patterson, Steve'; 'Paylor, David'; 'Perkinson, Russ'; 'Peters, John'; 'Pheimister, David'; 'Phillips, Angela'; 'Portlock, William'; 'Puckett, Marc'; 'Puryear, Brad'; 'Rash, Ricky'; 'Richardson, Anne'; 'Richardson, Sarah'; 'Robins, Buck'; 'Robishaw, Dave'; 'Rogers, Berran'; 'Schmidt, Kevin'; 'Seamans, Larry'; 'Shenk, Kelly'; 'Smith, Bob'; 'Smith, Previn'; 'Smith, Thomas'; 'Smith, William'; 'Stiles, Skip'; 'Stone, Jeremy'; 'Stoneman, Wilmer'; 'Suffian, Fred'; 'Teutsch, Chris'; 'Tippett, John'; 'Toler, Keith'; 'Tucker, Bill'; 'Turner, Clinton'; 'Turner, Eric'; 'van Soestbergen, Jon'; 'Versen, Stephen'; 'Waldon, Jeff'; 'Whitehurst, David'; 'Zahradka, Neil'; 'Zygmunt, Hank'; 'Butch Johns'; 'Edward Epp'; 'Jay Howell'; 'Paul Verbella'; 'Suan Bulbulkaya'; 'Susan Bulbulkaya'

Subject: Re: Draft State Technical Committee Meeting Agenda

Dear VA State Tech Committee,

I am not attending today's meeting - too much on my plate these days.

I do want to let you all know about some upcoming conferences in sustainable agriculture in Virginia and around the region:

Nov. 9-10 7th Annual Small Farm Family Conference. 1 pm Monday through about 4 pm Tuesday, Sheraton Richmond West Hotel, Richmond, VA., few details, Contact: Carol Streetman, 804-524-5960, cststreetman@vsu.edu. Registration deadline is Friday November 6.

Nov. 13-14 American Livestock Breeds Conservancy's 27th Annual Conference, Raleigh, NC. Theme: Crucial Cuisine; Putting Rare Breeds Back on the Table. Contact: 919-542-5704, www.albc-usa.org.

Dec. 4-6 Carolina Farm Stewardship Association's 24th Annual Sustainable Agriculture Conference, Black Mountain, NC. Contact: www.carolinafarmstewards.org/SAC09.shtml.

Jan. 20-23 19th Annual Practical Tools and Solutions for Sustaining Family Farms Conference (Southern SAWG) will be held once again at the Chattanooga Convention Center in Chattanooga, TN. www.ssawg.org.

This event includes a pre-conference (Jan 20-21) meeting of USDA program managers with leaders

of organizations working with farmers, and a pre-conference training for agricultural professionals in Organic Horticulture (1.5 days - also Jan 20-21). The latter is funded through a SARE Professional Development Program grant to Southern SAWG.

Feb. 19-20 11th Annual Virginia Biological Farming Conference, Institute for Advanced Learning and Research in Danville, VA. Details will be posted at www.vabf.org as the program and logistics are finalized.

I also want to mention that a SARE-PDP training (same project that will offer the training on Jan 20-21 mentioned above) took place in eastern VA on Sept 14-15. Following are paragraphs

SARE PDP Organic Training:

The first of five training events for agricultural professionals, funded through a SARE-PDP grant to Southern SAWG, *Developing Successful Organic Horticulture Farms*, was held on September 14-15. The workshop attracted over 20 Extension, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Farm Services Agency (FSA) personnel. The training began with a full day of classroom instruction by Alex Hitt of Peregrine Farm in North Carolina, and Mark Schonbeck, at the Hampton Inn in Gloucester. VABF members Charlie and Miriam Maloney hosted the second day at their Dayspring Farm, including a farm tour that featured their CSA during a distribution day.

Project coordinator Jesse Strassburg of Southern SAWG worked with Extension Specialist Andy Hankins of Virginia State University to organize and produce the workshop, and Andy provided invaluable on-site logistical support. Trainees seemed well engaged in the topics addressed, and overall, the event was successful. The project team will review evaluations and meet by teleconference to fine tune training content and approach in preparation for additional trainings at the 2010 Southern SAWG Conference, one other conference in the southern region, and at two additional locations in Virginia next year.

See you at next meeting.

Mark Schonbeck
VA Association for Biological Farming

At 01:54 PM 10/22/2009, Pettigrew, Maribeth - Richmond, VA wrote:

Dear Committee Members:

Attached is a copy of the Draft Agenda for the State Technical Committee meeting on Tuesday, October 27th. If you have additional agenda items that need to be added, please send them to me by Monday, October 26th, COB. We look forward to seeing you this coming Tuesday.

Maribeth Pettigrew
Recorder - State Technical Committee
USDA NRCS Virginia State Office
1606 Santa Rosa Road, Suite 209
Richmond, VA 23229-5014
Phone: 804-287-1691
Fax: 804-287-1737

10/27/2009

**Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
Sign-up Progress**

As of 10/27/09

Chesapeake Bay - 1,637 contracts approved
15,196.2 acres
AVAILABLE ACRES: 9,803.8
Current Allocation: 25,000

Southern Rivers - 2109 contracts approved
12,738.6 acres
AVAILABLE ACRES: 2,261.4
Current Allocation: 15,000

CP-33 - 221 contracts approved
Habitat Buffer
For Upland Birds **1,604.2 acres**
AVAILABLE ACRES: 1,995.8
Current Allocation: 3,600

CP-36 17 contracts approved
Longleaf Pines 293.3 acres
AVAILABLE ACRES: 3,456.7
Current Allocation: 3,750

SAFE

Culpeper Basin Bird Habitat Restoration
CP-38A – (Forested Riparian Areas) *AVAILABLE ACRES: 1000*
CP-38E – (Native Grass Areas)

CP-38C *AVAILABLE ACRES: 500*
Restoration and Management of
Eastern Shore Migratory Bird
Tree/Shrub Habitat

CP-38C *AVAILABLE ACRES: 1,800*
Statewide Tree Planting

CP-38D 2 contracts approved
Longleaf Pine 75.8 acres
AVAILABLE ACRES: 924.2
Current Allocation: 1,000

Proposed Priority Practices for 2010 CBWI

The listed proposed practices will have two effects on a CBWI application.

1. Applicants will need to apply one or more of the priority practices to be eligible for CBWI funds
2. Applications using priority practices will receive extra points.

Additional practices will be available to complete the conservation plan but would not receive additional points

327 Conservation Cover
328 Conservation Crop Rotation
340 Cover Crop
342 Critical Area Planting
362 Diversion
561 Heavy Use Area Protection
590 Nutrient Management
512 Pasture & Hay Planting
528 Prescribed Grazing
575 Animal Trails and Walkways
578 Stream Crossing
591 Amendments for treatment of Agricultural Waste
412 Grassed Waterway

329 Residue & Tillage Management No-Till
345 Residue & Tillage Management, Mulch Till
391 Riparian Forest Buffer
390 Riparian Herbaceous Cover
382 Fencing – Livestock Exclusion
612 Tree Planting
393 Filter Strips
313 Waste Storage Facility
633 Waste Utilization

Priority Practices Sorted by Land Use/Resource Concern

Cropland

**393 Filter Strip
327 Conservation Cover
328 Conservation Crop Rotation
340 Cover Crop
342 Critical Area Planting
362 Diversion
590 Nutrient Management
412 Grassed Waterway
329 Residue & Tillage Management – No Till
345 Residue & Tillage Management – Mulch Till
390 Riparian Herbaceous Cover
391 Riparian Forest Buffer
612 Tree/Shrub Establishment – Land Conversion**

Pasture/Grazing

**327 Conservation Cover
342 Critical Area Planting
561 Heavy Use Area Protection
512 Pasture & Hay Planting
528 Prescribed Grazing
575 Animal Trails and Walkways
578 Stream Crossing
390 Riparian Herbaceous Cover
391 Riparian Forest Buffer
382 Fencing – Livestock Exclusion
612 Tree/Shrub Establishment**

Animal Waste

**342 Critical Area Planting
362 Diversion
591 Amendment for Treatment of Animal Waste
382 Fencing
392 Filter Strip
313 Waste Storage Facility
359 Waste Treatment Lagoon
633 Waste Utilization
316 Animal Mortality Facility**

Portion of the Ranking Process

Applications will receive additional points for being located in priority watersheds and addressing resource concerns.

Applications will be pre-sorted into High, Medium or Low Priority and then scored based on something like the following:

(High Priority applications will be funded as a group first)

High Priority

The application will result in the implementation of at least two of the listed priority practices applied as new practices.

Or

The application will result in the completion of a suite of three or more priority practices when additional priority practice(s) are newly established.

Medium Priority

The application will result in the implementation of at least one priority practice not already established.

Low Priority

The application will not result in the application of a priority practice.

Selected Local Working Group Comments on the NRCS FY2010 Program
State Technical Committee Meeting – 10/27/09

Easement Programs:

What can NRCS and the conservation partnership do at both the state and local levels to increase interest and participation in easement programs (FRPP, GRP, WRP)?

Comments:

- **Easements are not very popular in Southwest Virginia; enrolling takes away some landowner control; suggest developing an information brochure.**
- **Approval process is too complicated and time consuming to encourage participation.**
- **Take a targeted approach by identifying interested landowners.**
- **Reduce the paperwork; I have heard it said that the benefits are not worth the efforts of the paperwork.**
- **Grassland Reserve Program – The annual rental rates for term easements need to be reviewed and adjusted upward. This will entail the increasing of the county rental rates for pasture.**
- **Local control of program funds – distribute program funds to field or area offices.**
- **Economic value is not there to encourage participation; if we pay more, we will get more participation. Approval process is too complicated and time consuming to encourage participation.**

The new Farm Bill rules instruct NRCS to pay the lower of three amounts for an easement: the price derived from a market analysis of the region, a geographic rate cap for the region or the landowners bid. How can we make this more understandable or “user friendly” to landowners?

Comments:

- **Pay the highest rate possible – not the lower rate.**
- **OK as is.**
- **Be sure the staff has a clear understanding of the guidelines so that they can convey the rules to potential clients.**
- **NRCS in Richmond should develop a list of appraisers for local use; use one value rather than three.**

NRCS in Virginia does not fully utilize all of the funds available to us to restore wetlands under the WRP program. What practices, information material, or outreach efforts would be needed in your area to restore more wetlands?

Comments:

- **More money and less complicated process would get more participation.**
- **More efforts to identify potentially eligible landowners and areas.**

- **More communication between local, state and federal agencies about programs and practices that are available to restore wetlands.**

Stewardship

The Farm Bill modified the former Conservation Security Program (CSP) into the new Conservation Stewardship Program. The intent remains the same, to reward outstanding natural resource stewards with financial assistance payments to maintain current conservation practices and to implement even greater levels of treatment. The new program will be administered statewide rather than on a watershed –by-watershed basis. Program guidelines call for the identification of a minimum of three resource concerns and a maximum of five that direct conservation treatment within a state. Under the former program, the State Technical Committee identified Water Quality, Soil Quality, and the loss of on-farm wildlife habitat as our three major resource concerns. Do you agree with these? What additional resource concerns would you recommend for statewide implementation?

Comments:

- **The Local Working Group’s major concern was the rating system for this statewide program. Would farms in Southwest Virginia be on the same playing level as farms in the Chesapeake Bay area?**
- **Agricultural Sustainability – ability to maintain the farm for farming.**
- **Also include forest fragmentation.**
- **Agree with current concerns –Forestry.**
- **Need to reduce the fragmentation of forest land; somehow incorporate this into the resource concerns.**

Environmental Improvement

WHIP: NRCS, working through the Wildlife subcommittee of the State Technical Committee, has identified the following resource concerns for Virginia: Loss of early successional habitat; declining habitats; oak/hardwood restoration; stream, riparian, and estuarine habitat,; and invasive species control. Are there any others that should be added? Should any be removed, and why?

Comments:

- **The Local Working Group would like to add “Acid Mine Drainage” as a concern so that WHIP funds could be utilized for the restoration of abandoned mine land for wildlife habitat and wetland areas on stripmined land.**
- **No additional concerns need to be added.**
- **Add in a practice for promotion of select cut of hardwoods instead of total clear cuts.**

- Hedgerow and buffers promote wildlife, yes, but it also promotes damage to crops by the wildlife; it's a "Catch-22" situation.

In support of the VDGIF master state wildlife plan and specific Quail Action Plan (QAP), 50% of total funding has been directed to establishing early successional habitat for smaller species such as quail, rabbits, song birds, and beneficial pollinator insect species. Each of the other resource concerns receives 10% of the total funding. This breakdown replicates historical trends in the requests from landowners. Does this breakdown appear reasonable to you? What wildlife practices are needed in your area that are not currently offered?

Comments:

- The Local Working Group thought that this breakdown is reasonable. The wildlife practices offered in the plan are satisfactory.
- Canadian goose control, or deer overpopulation control.
- Not good for our area; need to focus less on quail and more on grouse.
- Agree with 50% or even more could be added to support QAP.

EQIP: For the last several years we have identified the following priority as concerns in Virginia: Water Quality degradation from improper grazing, animal waste cropland, and forest land; the need for more on-farm wildlife habitat, ground and irrigation water use concerns, IPM for orchards, and poultry litter transfer. What other concerns does the Group feel needs to be addressed? What specific practices are needed?

Comments:

- The Local Working Group would like karst areas and sinkholes to be listed as resource concerns. Specific practices needed are sinkhole cleanouts and bat gates for caves.
- Forestry practices and all wildlife practices should be moved to WHIP.
- Focus on forestry is good. Basic conservation for small and organic farms needs to be added (terraces, water conservation, etc.)
- Maybe add a silvo-pasture incentive payment (Ex. Hay field planted to trees, after 5-6 years rotational graze).
- Poultry litter transfer – consider changing the source counties. Buckingham and Cumberland are source counties, but there is no surplus.

The Farm Bill also placed greater emphasis on organic agriculture. NRCS specifically charged with conservation practices to aid organic production. What cropland or grazing land practices do you feel are needed in your area for organic producers?

Comments:

- Local Working Group would like to see assistance with customizing nutrient management plans specifically for organic farming.
- IPM, small hoop structures for pest control.
- Basic conservation practices to prevent soil erosion.

The New Farm Bill also allows producers to receive financial assistance to develop a conservation activity plan with a private Technical Service Provider (TSP). These specific plans would be Forest Management, Grazing Management, Integrated Pest Management, Irrigation Water Management, Agricultural Energy, Comprehensive Air Quality, Drainage Water Management, Transition to Organic, and Fish and Wildlife Habitat Management. Which of these would be high priorities of your area? What priority should be given in terms of funding plans over practice installation?

Comments:

- Forest management – fund practices, not plans.
- High priority for Forestry, IPM and grazing.

Farm Bill rules still direct 60% of total EQIP funding to livestock agriculture. What additional needs of livestock in your area are not being addressed by the EQIP program? What additional practices or changes to practices are needed?

Comments:

- Livestock handling facilities as a Ag. Sustainability issue.

Virginia has the ability to fund small-scale applied research projects to test new innovative practices under a state Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) program. What specific items do you see as a priority and need in your area that could be evaluated and considered for funding?

CBWI

The new Farm Bill authorized NRCS a new initiative called the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative to support cleanup efforts in the Bay. Many of the stakeholders that were active in the development process stressed the need to fund practices in high priority watersheds only. With the increase in federal as well as state funding, we are working to utilize these funds effectively. Please provide any suggestions on which priority watersheds should be targeted for this program initiative.

Comments:

- **Too much money and focus on TMDL area, unable to spend it all and others in the Bay have gone unfunded.**

During the development process, we also heard stakeholders ask for accelerated efforts on key practices and not “more of the same” with our traditional practice offerings. We have tried to add specific practices such as aerial seeding of cover crops, 10-foot stream exclusion and nutrient management implementation to try to encourage adoption of new techniques. What additional efforts would you recommend for an accelerated approach within the Chesapeake Bay watershed?

Comments:

- **Coordinate approach with state agencies such VDOT and urban programs.**

Our traditional financial assistance program efforts have been very closely aligned with the Virginia Agricultural Cost Share Program so that state and federal offerings were not in competition or in conflict. What practices, cooperative efforts, or suggestions can you offer to make both programs work more efficiently together or separately? Would you have any specific suggestions for cooperative efforts on cover crops, conservation tillage and nutrient management?

Comments:

- **Disallow “ double-dipping” with federal and state programs.**

Much of our historical cropland efforts have been directed to grain production systems. We are hoping to expand the emphasis to address the conservation needs for specific crops such as tobacco, cotton, vegetables, nursery crops, etc. What practices do you feel need to be emphasized that would benefit your area?

Comments:

- **The Local Working Group discussed how more producers in Southwest Virginia have been growing corn the past two years than in previous years. They would like to have more emphasis on corn production.**
- **Clarify or add to EQIP that producers receiving the \$100/acre payment 3 years in a row for planting a perennial in rotation on cropland can allow the perennial to grow through its life expectancy (Ex. Alfalfa 4-5years). The producer would only receive the payment for 3 years but allow them the flexibility to harvest the perennial through its normal life expectancy**

\Innovative Projects:

The Local Working Group was asked to share any ideas for innovative projects.

Comments:

- **The Local Working Group discussed the possibility of funding for grazing projects on lands that were formerly strip mined, similar to the work by the Powell River Project. Russell County has a couple of sites that would be willing to participate in such a program.**

Other Comments:

- **Instead of utilizing a statewide Average Cost List, the state should revert back to region and/or area cost lists.**

Overview

The Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP) is a voluntary program established for the purpose of restoring and enhancing forest ecosystems to: 1) promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species, 2) improve biodiversity; and 3) enhance carbon sequestration.

The HFRP was signed into law as part of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003. The program is authorized to be carried out from 2004 through 2008.

Benefits

Restoring and protecting forests contributes positively to the economy of our nation, provides biodiversity of plant and animal populations, and improves environmental quality.

Landowner Protections will be made available to landowners enrolled in the HFRP who agree, for a specified period, to restore or improve their land for threatened or endangered species habitat. In exchange, they avoid future regulatory restrictions on the use of that land protected under the Endangered Species Act.

Enrollment Options

The Program offers three enrollment options:

- 1) A 10-year cost-share agreement; for which the landowner may

receive 50 percent of the average cost of the approved conservation practices,

- 2) A 30-year easement, for which the landowner may receive 75 percent of the easement value of the enrolled land plus 75 percent of the average cost of the approved conservation practices, or
- 3) An easement of not more than 99-years, for which landowners may receive 100 percent of the easement value of the enrolled land plus 100 percent of the average cost of the approved conservation practices.

Eligibility

To be eligible for enrollment, land must be private land or Tribal lands which will restore, enhance, or measurably increase the likelihood of recovery of a threatened or endangered species, must improve biological diversity, or increase carbon sequestration.

For More Information

If you need more information about HFRP, please contact your local USDA Service Center, listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture, or your local conservation district. Information is available on the Internet at:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs>

Dear State Technical Committee Member:

As part of the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act (RCA), the Natural Resources Conservation Service would like to obtain State Technical Committee feedback about pressing natural resource concerns in your State and the effectiveness of existing conservation program approaches. Below is a hyperlink that will take you to a survey that will also provide you an opportunity to prioritize issues and assess alternate ways of delivering conservation programs. This survey is part of an overall process to gather information about conservation from a variety of sources.

This survey is limited to State Technical Committee members. Your input is important to future conservation efforts and will be totally confidential. It will take between 8 to 12 minutes to complete the survey.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=kb0535ZV0DrVR6_2b8zItk6A_3d_3d

The deadline for your response is October 30, 2009.

Thank you in advance for your participation!

Sincerely,

Patty Lawrence

RCA Team

Natural Resources Conservation Service

202-720-3074

patty.lawrence@osec.usda.gov

Landowners in Culpeper, Fauquier and Orange Counties Can Help Conserve Bird Habitat and Get Paid for Doing It!



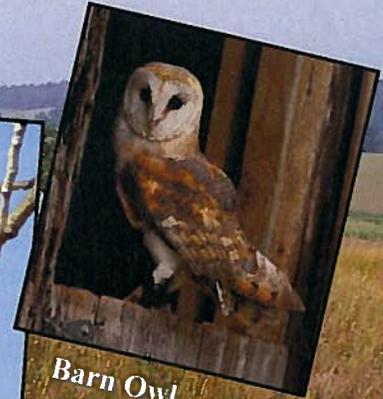
Bobwhite Quail



Eastern Meadowlark



Loggerhead Shrike



Barn Owl

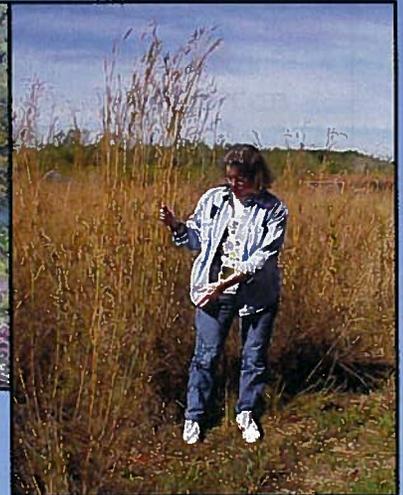
Here's What You Can Do:



Prescribed Burn



Remove Invasive Species



Plant Warm Season Grasses

For more information, please contact *The National Audubon Society* at (804) 788-7660, melfner@audubon.org, *The Piedmont Environmental Council*, (540) 347-2334 x29, mmacquillium@pecva.org, or *The Farm Service Agency* at (804) 287-1546, www.fsa.usda.gov





Executive Order 13508



Chesapeake Bay Protection and Restoration

President Obama signed the EO on May 12, 2009



- Recognizes the Chesapeake Bay as a national treasure
- Calls on the federal government to lead efforts to restore and protect the nation's largest estuary and its watershed
- Establishes a Federal Leadership Committee chaired by the EPA



Required Section 202 Reports



202a	202b	202c	202d	202e	202f	202g
<p>Water Quality</p> <p>Define the next generation of tools and actions to restore water quality... and describe the changes to be made to regulations, programs, and policies.</p>	<p>Targeting Resources</p> <p>Target resources ... including resources under the Food Security Act of 1985 as amended, the Clean Water Act, and other laws.</p>	<p>Storm-water & Federal Facilities</p> <p>Strengthen storm water management practices at Federal facilities and on Federal lands and develop storm water best practices guidance.</p>	<p>Climate Change</p> <p>Assess the impacts of a changing climate ...and develop a strategy for adapting natural resource programs and public infrastructure.</p>	<p>Public Access & Conservation</p> <p>Expand public access to waters and open spaces ... and conserve landscapes and ecosystems.</p>	<p>Monitoring & Decision Support</p> <p>Strengthen scientific support for decision-making ... including expanded environmental research and monitoring and observing systems.</p>	<p>Habitat & Research for Living Resources</p> <p>Develop focused and coordinated habitat and research activities that protect and restore living resources and water quality.</p>



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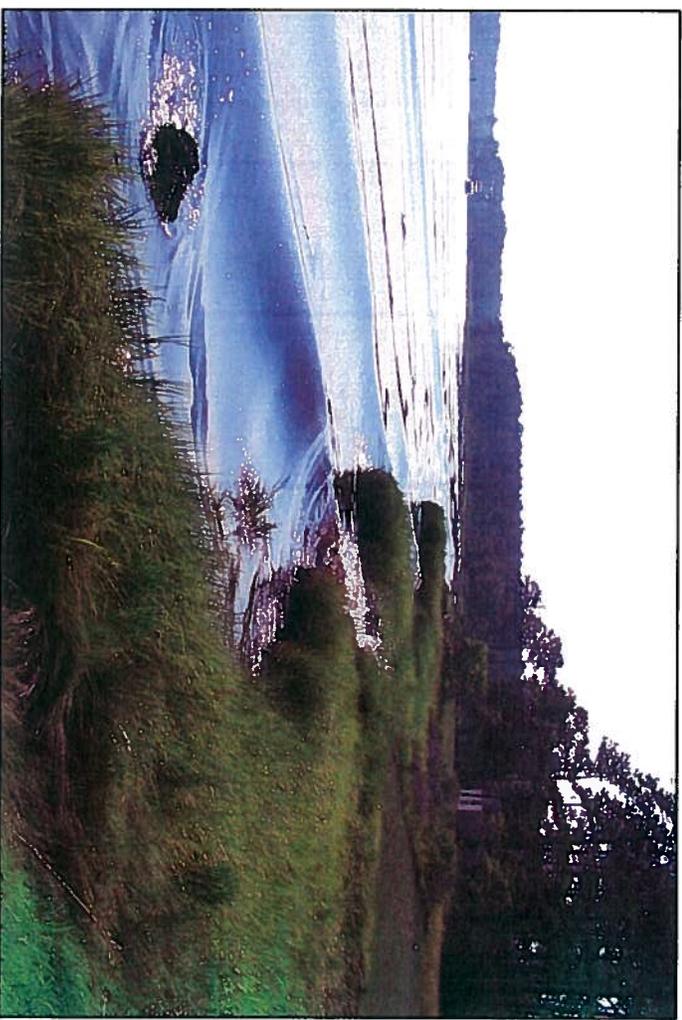
202b Key Recommendations



I. Focus on the highest priority watershed.

Actions:

- Identify high priority watersheds for immediate conservation action
- Identify the most critical acres





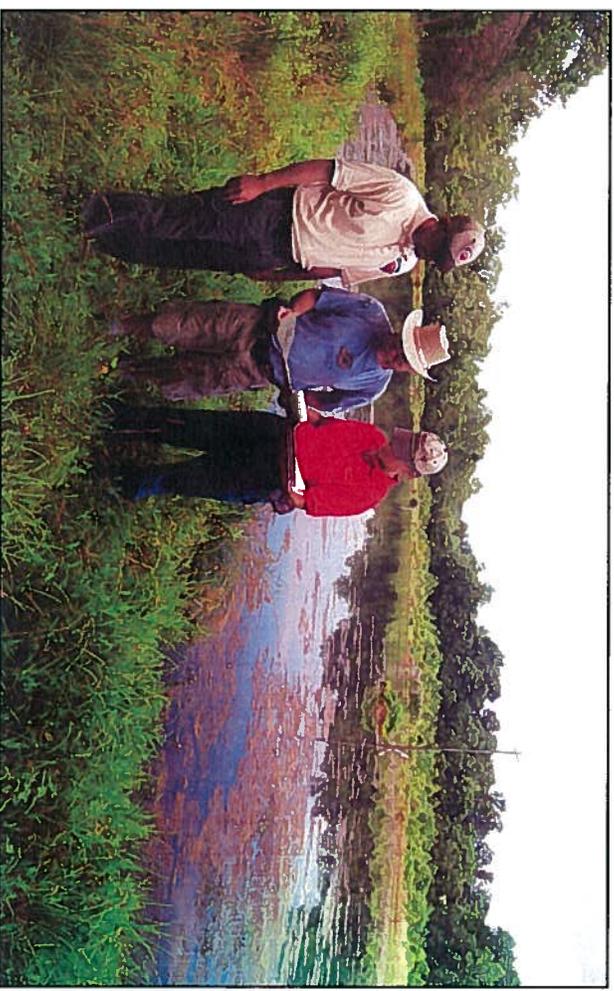
202b Key Recommendations



II. Focus and integrate Federal and State programs.

Actions:

- Focus conservation programs on priority practices
- Coordinate USDA – EPA voluntary programs and resources
- Deliver the programs more effectively





202b Key Recommendations



III. Accelerate conservation adoption.

Actions:

- Increase incentives
- Simplify program participation
- Build markets for ecosystem services





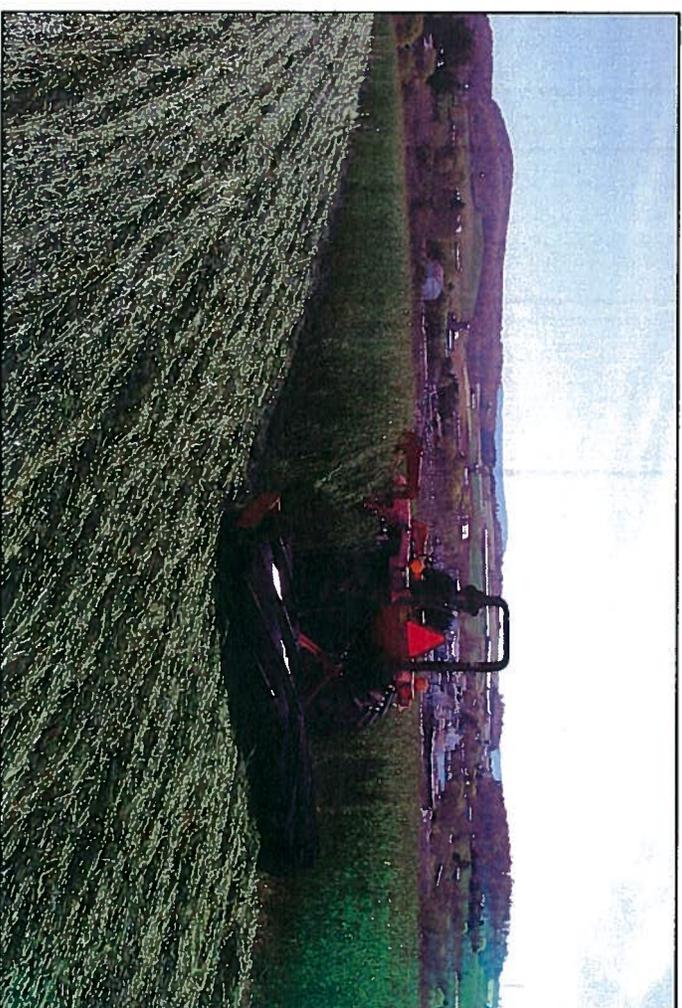
202b Key Recommendations



IV. Accelerate development of new conservation technologies.

Actions:

- Increase public-private research partnerships
- Foster and promote innovation





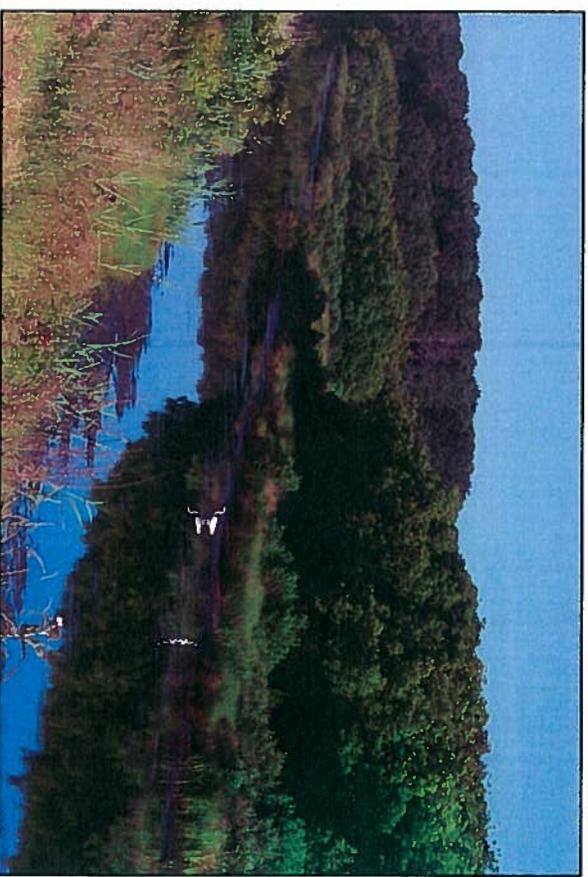
202b Key Recommendations



V. Implement a sound system of accountability.

Actions:

- Develop environmental outcome measures
- Create a conservation implementation database
- Monitor and assess progress in priority watersheds
- Use science to adapt the strategy





Chesapeake Bay Executive Order Key Dates



Date	Task/Event
Sep 2, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CEQ/OMB Meeting
Sep 9, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agencies submit draft sec. 202 reports to FLC• Reports released to public
Sep – Oct 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• FLC extensively consults with states to provide report comments to lead agencies• FLC develops coordinated implementation strategy (sec. 203) in consultation with states• Lead agencies revise sec. 202 reports
Nov 9, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• FLC publishes draft 203 strategy and 202 reports for comment
Nov 9, 2009 – Jan 9, 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public comment period and public involvement efforts
Jan – April 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respond to public comment and revise strategy (& 202 reports)
May 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• FLC publishes final overall strategy (203)
Summer 2010 +	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual action plans and progress reports (link to Presidential Budget)



Public Comments



- Federal agency draft reports will be published on the website <http://executiveorder.chesapeakebay.net> for public comment from Nov. 9, 2009 to Jan. 9, 2010.
- By Nov. 12, the Federal Leadership Committee will integrate these reports into a coordinated strategy for restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay.
- This draft strategy will be available for public comment and a final strategy will be completed by May 12, 2010.