

**SWCD Summer Study
Stakeholder Advisory Group
Wednesday, August 15, 2012
Patrick Henry Building, Richmond, Virginia**

Stakeholder Advisory Group Members Present

Anthony Moore, Deputy Secretary of Natural Resources, SAG Chair
Travis Hill, Deputy Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry, SAC Vice Chair
David Johnson, DCR
John Bricker, NRCS
Kathy Clarke, Northern Neck SWCD
Clyde Cristman, Senate Finance
Megan Dalton, Shenandoah Valley SWCD
James Davis-Martin, DCR
Herbert L. Dunford, Jr. VASWCB
Deana Fehrer, Piedmont SWCD
Katie Frazier, Virginia Agribusiness Council
Jack Frye, Chesapeake Bay Commission
Jerry Ingle, VASWCB
Andrea Keefer, DPB
Ann Jennings, Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Larry Land, VACO
Joe Lerch, VML
Darrell Marshall, VDACS
Martha Moore, Virginia Farm Bureau
Ed Overton, VASWCD
Ricky Rash, Piedmont SWCD
Alyson Sappington, Thomas Jefferson SWCD
Bill Street, James River Association
Don Wells, VASWCD

Staff Present

Jeb Wilkinson
Michael Fletcher
Rick Hill
Robert Bennett
John Moore
Michelle Vucci

Others

George Land, Northern Virginia SWCD
Kendall Tyree, VASWCD

Greg Wilchens, Culpeper SWCD

Call to Order

Deputy Secretary Moore called the meeting to order and thanked members for coming.

Mr. Davis-Martin reviewed the agenda

Supporting documents for this meeting are available at:

http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/stormwater_management/swcdsag.shtml

Sample District Budgets

Mr. Davis-Martin referred to the document showing projected budgets for three Soil and Water Conservation Districts. He noted that the draft budgets provided a significant amount of detail. He said that on the electronic version, categories could be further broken down to show additional information.

Mr. Davis-Martin thanked the three districts who had put together this information. He called on the district representatives to discuss their budgets.

Thomas Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District

Ms. Sappington reviewed the projected budget for the Thomas Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District. She noted that in the exercise the districts were not given and did not develop guidelines. She said that in the actual budget process that would be necessary.

Ms. Sappington noted that in recent years, the economic climate had allowed the District to cover program areas with local staff. She said that because the funding was not available for local programs, the staff could be diverted to work on district projects. She said that when the economy recovers, the district will lose that option. Because of that for the projected year, she used the number of 24% local funding anticipating that staff will return to local programs.

Ms. Sappington said that the current budget did not reflect vehicle costs, fuel, insurance and repairs.

Mr. Davis-Martin said the intent of this diagram was to show base General Assembly funds which form the base funding for districts.

Mr. Bricker said that before a district could address capacity to do various projects that the priorities needed to be determined. Consistency and quality assurance need to be addressed.

Piedmont SWCD

Ms. Fehrer reviewed the projections for Piedmont Soil and Water Conservation District.

Ms. Fehrer said that the Piedmont district serves three localities but is a smaller district than the Thomas Jefferson district.

Mr. Davis-Martin said that no conclusions regarding district budgets should be drawn from the template. The intent of the template was to validate the formula.

Ms. Fehrer said that this was a helpful exercise in determining the actual costs for staff and programs.

Shenandoah Soil and Water Conservation District

Ms. Dalton reviewed the projected budget for the Shenandoah Soil and Water Conservation District.

Ms. Dalton said that the Shenandoah SWCD also has three localities. She said that she did not budget a vehicle reserve in the current year, but projected for the future year.

Ms. Dalton said that in looking to ramp up the cost-share program, the need for a working vehicle was a big concern.

Ms. Dalton said that the Shenandoah SWCD was currently using local money to support staff for dam management. She said that the District had historically been losing local funding on an annual basis.

Mr. Davis-Martin said that this exercise had been very helpful.

Mr. Cristman said that if the information was available from all 47 districts, DCR could develop and average and predict per district costs accordingly.

Mr. Overton noted that consideration needed to be given to information technology. He said that what happens in that regard with DCR also affects the districts.

VASWCD IT Input to Summer Study – SWCD Resources and Projected Need

Mr. George Land from the Northern Virginia SWCD and Chair of the VASWCD IT Committee gave the following presentation.

VASWCD IT Committee Timeline and Plan

The plan covers the 2012 calendar year, and goals are:

Collecting data and insight

IT committee discussions and survey creation, understanding what we have and use.

Sharing and informing

Use our background and the survey information to create a report and recommendations.

Integrating into VASWCD

Apply recommendations into actions. Align with other committees to enhance IT utilization and new exemptions.

Observations from an Urban Director

- Districts have many personalities
 - Urban, Rural, Mixed
 - Co-located with URDA, Co-located with County, Separate
 - Agriculture focused, Animal Intensive, Homeowner support
 - Tech Savvy: From geeks and gurus to muggles and managers
- Districts are resilient
 - Understand changes that are happening and preparing
 - Have adapted sources of income based on future expectations
- VASWCD has many skilled professionals spread across districts and directors

Survey Overview

- 37 districts responded
- Average \$2,918 spent per district on IT (Range \$100 - \$14,950)

Some specific requests:

- One comprehensive database linked to GIS, for ALL work that Districts do, with flexibility for creating our own queries based on local reporting needs.
- Our II is doing just fine right now
- My main need is technical support
- The tracking program as it is now, really is NOT what we wanted

Summary

- Districts vary widely
 - Co-located with USDA, co-located with county, separate
 - Conservation Applications – agronomic, animal intensive, urban, educational
 - Staffing (2-11) and government bodies served

- Expanding mission and staffing needs
 - Chesapeake Bay Watershed improvement program
 - Additional voluntary practices, new BMPs, TMDL expertise
- Changing relationships with federal and state agencies
 - Technical, IT, staffing, space
- IT Funding has 2 components
 - Individual districts
 - § Hardware, Software, Network (internal and internet), Tech support, Training
 - Common (shared) resources
 - § Applications and IT architecture for data analysis and sharing
 - § Development/modification/upgrade of applications
 - § Hosting web-based applications and data base
 - § Data management and project management

Projections

- Projected district IT funding needs

○ Projected staff (estimated at)	200
○ Projected yearly IT cost per staff member	\$1,750
○ Projected total yearly cost for districts category	\$350k
- Common (share) resource needs

○ Architecture development	\$100k
○ Software development/modification	\$300k / yr.
○ Web/data base hosting	\$50k / yr.
○ Project and data management	\$150k / yr.
○ Projected total yearly cost for shared	\$600k

Mr. Davis- Martin thanked Mr. Land and said that the work group looked forward to the final outcomes.

A full copy of Mr. Land's presentation is available from DCR.

Agricultural Needs Assessment Results

Mr. Davis-Martin presented the Agricultural Needs Assessment Results. A copy of this document is available on the DCR website.

The model presented three alternatives. Mr. Davis-Martin reviewed those alternatives with the study group.

Mr. Davis-Martin reviewed the last page of the document which showed the unit costs for BMPs. This information was derived from the cost-share tracking system. He said that

using the total cost it was determined that 61% of these BMPs were paid for through cost-share dollars.

Mr. Johnson said that he would like to distinguish between the terms “costs” and “needs.” He said that in a number of cases these practices were being implemented without cost-share funds. He said that should be accounted for in the model.

Mr. Cristman said that the issue was trying to address what would happen after 2017. He noted that in 2017 the WIP would have to be reevaluated. He suggested using Alternative C but noting that this would need to be reassessed in the future.

Deputy Secretary Moore said that the budget worked with two year milestones and that this process should be focused on that accordingly.

Ms. Jennings said that it would be helpful for the needs assessment subcommittee to meet again in order to come to a consensus and bring that forward to the larger group.

Mr. Davis-Martin agreed to schedule another meeting of the agricultural needs assessment group to look at alternatives to present at the next meeting

Mr. Johnson said that the next meeting should include a discussion of the TA implementation.

Interim proposal for 2014

Mr. Davis-Martin reviewed the interim proposal for 2014. He said the group needed to address what should be included to report to the General Assembly and the Governor regarding funding needs for 2014.

Ms. Sappington said that she was not comfortable with generalization for every district. She said that what district needs depends in part on how much cost-share they receive.

Ms. Moore said that at a minimum existing funding should be maintained.

Mr. Davis-Martin said that this was the first attempt at a proposal and that he would look at the numbers again. He said that he would present a proposal at the next meeting for moving forward on 2014 funding.

Mr. Davis-Martin said that he would poll members for a meeting date for the agricultural needs assessment group and for another meeting of the full committee.

The meeting was adjourned.