

## Woods Creek TMDL Implementation Plan: Agricultural Working Group Meeting #2

Natural Bridge Soil & Water Conservation District Office

December 11, 2018

### Participants

Sandra Stuart

Chris Wise

Robert Hickman

Karen Kline

Sara Bottenfield (DEQ)

Tara Wyrick (DEQ)

### Meeting Summary

Sara Bottenfield briefly summarized the group's first meeting for the participants who were not able to attend. Karen Kline provided a handout with information on potential BMP implementation scenarios to meet bacteria reductions needed for both Stage 1 (Delisting) and Stage 2 (TMDL) goals. She explained that the reduction goals for Stage 1 would be sufficient to remove Woods Creek from the impaired waters list, while the Stage 2 goals would meet a more stringent water quality standard.

Karen reviewed the list of potential BMPs and explained that the associated costs are estimated using data from other projects and tools such as CAST. Staff from NBSWCD questioned the difference in cost between the SL-6 and LE-2 practices. The LE-2 allows for a narrower buffer, but typically this does not significantly change the total amount of fence needed and they recommended the same cost be used for both practices. The group felt that most of the other costs seemed reasonable. The participants agreed that due to the small size of the watershed, one staff person would probably be sufficient to implement the proposed BMPs.

Karen referred the group to the map of potential fencing areas. Many of the streams identified for potential exclusion are designated as intermittent. There was some discussion of how intermittent vs. perennial designations are determined, and NBSWCD staff shared their observation that what they find in the field often doesn't match what is indicated on the map. Because of this uncertainty, participants agreed that it would be a good idea to consider all of the identified streambanks in the plan for potential fencing. Karen noted that during the Working Group's first meeting NBSWCD staff mentioned projects that are already underway in the watershed. Any exclusion fencing installed as part of those projects will be subtracted from the available footages.

As discussed during the Working Group's first meeting, the needed exclusion (70%) is split between 35-foot and 10-foot buffer widths at a 60/40 ratio. NBSWCD staff suggested using the same average fence footage (2,500') for both SL-6 and LE-2 projects. NBSWCD staff also observed that the area designated as pasture and included in available fencing likely has the potential to be grazed, but it is unlikely that livestock are currently present on all of the available acres. Since the Woods Creek watershed is small, Karen suggested that land use could be looked at more closely along streams. The group felt that the total number of proposed livestock exclusion practices was reasonable. There was some discussion of the limitations of the state cost share program in dealing with equine operations since they often do not meet eligibility requirements. Sara suggested that this may be an opportunity to look beyond the state cost share program for alternative funding sources.

The group moved on to discuss pasture management BMPs. Karen explained that due to the effectiveness factor of these BMPs, achieving the needed 70% reduction requires treatment of almost all pasture acres. Since some of these acres will be horse pasture, the same limitations with state cost share programs will apply. NBSWCD staff observed that BMPs for pasture management are limited in the state cost share program, but technical assistance can always be provided and NRCS offers cost share on clover overseeding. This may be another opportunity to look for other funding sources, both for equine operations and others.

Pasture BMPs also include Permanent Vegetative Cover on Critical Areas (SL-11) and Afforestation of Erodible Pasture (FR-1). NBSWCD staff stated that there is likely to be limited demand for these practices, but felt they should be included as potential BMPs because they are very effective.

Karen reviewed the changes she plans to make in response to the group's input. She noted that the costs associated with the proposed agricultural BMPs are much higher than the costs for urban BMPs, because the bacteria load from agricultural land is much higher. NBSWCD staff requested that it be made clear in the plan that state cost share is generally not available to equine operations. There was some discussion of potential changes to the state cost share program as a result of the Phase III WIP that would expand cost share opportunities for equine operations.

Karen asked for the group's input on a time frame for implementation. Five years for each stage has been a common timeline for past plans, with an assessment after the first five years. The group felt this was realistic for Woods Creek as well.

Sara thanked the group for their time and attendance, and explained that the Working Groups will no longer meet separately but will transition to a combined Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will likely meet in late January or early February to provide input on a draft of the Implementation Plan.