

Virginia Agricultural BMP Technical Advisory Committee
 Meeting 9:30 AM, November 29, 2016
 Approved Summary

Attendance:

Member	Representing	Member	Representing
Tom Turner	CB, SWCD staff	Margie Davis	VASWCD Area VI
Matt Kowalski	CBF	Mark Hollberg	DCR, CB CDC
Wayne Webb	VASWCD Area I (proxy)	Pete Farmer	VASWCD Area IV
Robert Bradford	VASWCD Area II (proxy)	Scott Baker	VCE
Tim Sexton	DCR, Nut. Man.	Scott Ambler	DCR, RMP
Chris Barbour	SR, SWCD staff	Charlie Wootton	VACDE
Stephanie Martin	DCR, Dist. Liaison	Stacy Horton	DCR, SR CDC
Todd Groh	DOF	Amanda Pennington	DCR, Engineering
Ricky Rash	VASWCD Area V	Ben Rowe	VA Grain Prod. Assn.
Tim Higgs	VDACS (proxy)	Darryl Glover	DCR DSWC

Other Participants: Brandon Dillistin, NNSWCD; Emily Nelson, DCR Eng.; Joe Wood, CBF; Bob Waring, DCR; Leslie Ann Hinton, Three Rivers SWCD, Kristal Evens, Tidewater SWCD, Art Kirkby, DCR, Bobby Long, DCR, Amy Walker, DCR, James Martin, DCR, Sarah Kammer, DOF, Sue Morris, Chowan Basin SWCD, Chelsea Taylor, Chowan Basin SWCD, Max Comerford, Three Rivers SWCD, Richard Street, SWCB & Tri County City SWCD

- ◆ Review of TAC Agreements and Guiding Principles:
 - One new Guiding Principal was agreed upon: “TAC recommendations shall reflect scientifically based approaches that provide the greatest water quality benefits (that reduce contaminates to surface and ground water) at the least cost to the tax payer.”
 - An existing principal was edited to read: Invite appropriate personnel to present current research that may have an impact upon best management practices and guidelines.

The draft summary of the August 18, 2016 TAC meeting was reviewed and approved with no changes noted. The approved summary will be posted on the DCR webpage and distributed via all-district e-mail list-serve.

A summary of discussion topics, action items, and significant conclusions are as follows:

Old Business:

- ◆ **Report from Nutrient Management subcommittee:** *Tim Sexton and Gary Moore*
 - Change NM-1A language to allow participants to simultaneously receive cost-share from NM-1A (Nutrient Management Plan Writing and Revisions (Annual)) and RMP-1 (Resource Management Plan Development); fully supported by TAC

- § Discussion included questions about why more financial input was needed to promote the RMP program.
- § This changes allows cost-share to assist in writing NMPs and RMP simultaneously.
- Split NM-5 into two separate precision nutrient management practices one for nitrogen (NM-5N?) and one for phosphorous (NM-5P?).
 - § The Chesapeake Bay Program Office (CBPO) phase 6 watershed model will provide nutrient reductions for both BMPs and they can be stacked on row cropland. This approach would allow for greater flexibility and use of NM-3C and NM-4 in conjunction with NM-5P; this approach was supported by the TAC.
- During extensive discussions every recommendation that was forwarded by the NM subcommittee was determined to be appropriate to include in one, both or neither of the conceptually separated practices. Ultimately the TAC requested that the NM subcommittee develop language, and bring a draft NM-5N specification to the next TAC the that would include:
 - § Edit section B. 2. as appropriate to nutrient of concern;
 - § plant tissue sampling;
 - § multiple split applications of nitrogen;
 - § Cropland and managed hay land eligible. Need to define managed hayland in glossary (assigned to Gary Moore with TAC members assistance)
 - § Must implement 2 components;
 - § Results of soil and tissue testing must be used to develop a prescription of variable rate nitrogen application and the prescription must be followed;
 - § Supply as applied map before payment is issued;
 - § Apply for cost-share before April 1st and provide SWCD verification of bill or work order within 45 days of sample analysis; and
 - § Fields that have received Biosolids applications within previous 24 months are not eligible.
- Ultimately the TAC requested that the NM subcommittee develop language, and bring a draft NM-5P specification to the next TAC the that would include:
 - § Edit section B. 2. as appropriate to nutrient of concern;
 - § plant tissue sampling only;
 - § Only row crops eligible;
 - § Implement one component;
 - § Results of soil and tissue testing must be used to develop a prescription of variable rate Phosphorus application and the prescription must be followed;
 - § Supply as applied map before payment is issued; (leave B. 2. ii. in NM-5P)
 - § Remove section B. 8. from NM-5P
 - § Fields that have received Biosolids applications within previous 24 months not eligible.

- **Report from Stream Protection subcommittee:** *Emily Nelson*,
 - § The subcommittee did not recommend modifying the SL-6 BMP to allow a hardened winter feeding pad to be cost-shared in a field that already had stream exclusion fencing.
 - § A draft SL-11B (Farm Road, Animal Travel Lane, Heavy Use Area Stabilization) specification was reviewed in which the subcommittee recommended that a hardened winter feeding pad receive a tax credit for implementation in a field with existing stream exclusion fencing. The TAC suggested that the subcommittee edit the submitted specification to:
 - Change inefficacy to inefficiency, remove ground water recharge area (to generic or better define) in two places, might be replaced with environmentally sensitive areas, or other language.
 - Allow more than one feeding pad per tract, maybe one per field?
 - Insert language requiring feeding pad be sized to accommodate the existing herd only and according to NRCS standard 561(Heavy Use Area Protection)

- ◆ **Report from Cover Crop Subcommittee:** *Ben Rowe*,
 - § A draft SL-15A specification was reviewed during the discussion the TAC suggested that the 60% minimum coverage language be inserted into the purpose statement and insert Virginia certified in front of nutrient management planner in two places, use participant in B. 3. And remove the reference to NRCS standard 590.
 - § Additional time should be spent identifying all BMP specifications that refer to NRCS 590, it should be removed from the referenced standards list and “Virginia certified nutrient management planner” be used where appropriate to keep consistent language from practice to practice.

- ◆ **Report from Animal Waste Subcommittee:**
 - § While considering editing WP-4 specification to clarify that end user (only) participants should not be able to receive cost-share for litter storage sheds. A letter from the Peter Francisco SWCD to the TAC was distributed that questioned the procedure for sizing litter storage sheds. PFSWCD requested additional clarity about the ability to require a producer that had received cost-share for a litter storage shed more than 10 years ago (now out of lifespan), and when the producer has expanded his flock and is now asking for cost-share to build a bigger litter storage shed. While possibly the old shed is being used as an equipment shed. Can a District require that an out of lifespan structure be used for its originally intended purpose? OR can a producer request additional cost-share every 10 years to build bigger litter storage sheds while diverting the out of lifespan structure to another use.
 - Several suggested approaches and perspectives were discussed including:
 - 1) Do not cost-share on litter storage sheds where space is needed due to expanded flocks, after all flock expansion a management decision and the program is not about putting people into business

or assisting in the expansion of a business, only addressing water quality issues.

- 2) Raise the lifespan of the WP-4 to 15 years, then the same question arises during year 16.
 - 3) Require that the volume of the original shed be considered as storage space during the calculation of the size of the litter shed and only cost-share on the needed expanded volume (Shen. Valley SWCD uses this approach).
 - 4) Could a District by District determination of how to size requests for additional animal waste storage facilities be supported by the TAC?
 - 5) It was decided that both Districts and DCR should inquire to their OAGs representative as to the legality of requiring specific usage of a structure after the expiration of its life span. And if providing cost-share on environmental issues related to expansion of an animal operation is in conflict with permit requirements to not create environmental pollution/degradation due to a permitted operation. Ricky Rash and Stephanie Martin will follow up with OAGs inquiry.
- The subcommittee did not think that the WQ-12 specification language should be changed dramatically, but recommended that “erosion be replaced with “bacteria” in the purpose statement.
 - A draft of WP-4 specification was reviewed, the TAC supported modifying the language to clearly state that end users only could not receive cost-share for a litter storage shed (B. 4. Viii. Should stay in WP-4 specification in 2018.
- ◆ The TAC supported utilizing the Virginia Veterinarian’s language for Biosecurity concerns.
 - ◆ Emily Nelson brought the TAC up to date with the proposed review of all engineering practice specifications to assure that the proper NRCS standards are included and up to date. *Referred to the Engineering workgroup to discuss and provide recommendations back to the TAC.*
 - ◆ **Agency Updates**
 - **Dept. Of Forestry (DOF):**
 - § A new Chesapeake Bay Riparian Buffer Coordinator Sarah Kammer has been hired and participated in this TAC meeting. She will coordinate with two existing specialist in the Shenandoah Valley area to focus on increasing the implementation of RFBs throughout the CB basin.
 - § New Riparian Forest Buffer brochures are available for distribution.
 - § DOF has over 50 staff fighting fires, this year, there have been 525 wild fires, that have damaged 13,395 acres of forest 80 structures have been damaged while 247 homes have been protected from fire damage.

- § Pocket and wall calendars were available for TAC attendees.

- **Wayne Webb of Lord Fairfax SWCD:**
 - § This was the driest October in 10 years and maybe the driest November in history in his area of the Shenandoah Valley.
 - § SWCDE Directors are not eligible to receive Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP cost-share).

- **DCR RMP:**
 - § Scott Ambler related that \$360 K was requested for developing RMPs while only \$120K was available for contractors to write them.
 - § A RMP sign to advertise that a farm has implemented a RMP is now available, a 36" x 30" aluminum sign cost \$125.

- **VA Grain Producers Assn.:**
 - Grain and Soybean Growers Conference at Richmond, Westin Hotel Feb. 21, & 22, 2017

- **DCR Nutrient Management:**
 - § 1,018,114 crop land acres under Nutrient Management Planning
 - § 185,128 acres of hayland
 - § 90,438 acres of pasture land
 - § Phase 6.0 reporting starts 7/1/2016, and will provide double the nitrogen reduction credit for an acre of NMP

- **VA Cooperative Extension (VCE):**
 - Cooperative Extension is offering an alternative retirement policy to meet required budget reductions, those taking the alternative will be gone by March 1, 2017

- **Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (VASWCD):**
 - Annual meeting starts December 4, 2016, 9 AM, at the Hotel Roanoke

- **Soil and Water Conservation Board meeting dates for spring 2017:**
 - § March 9, 2017
 - § April 20, 2016
 - § May 23, 2016
 - Locations TBD

Concerns from the Floor:

Kristal Evens from Tidewater SWCD relayed that her District Board would like to have the must be killed by no later than May 15th date removed from the SL-8B specification, as they believe that kill down is already part of the

cover crop sequence and some participants have trouble meeting the 5/15/2016 required date.

The TAC discussed and thought that the two month window provided in the SL-8B specification provided adequate time to spray & kill the cover crop, and the TAC thought that the requirement to kill the cover crop should stay in the specification.

Tom Turner of John Marshall SWCD discussed his research into a methodology to estimate stream bank erosion as part of the SL-6/WP-2 erosion estimating process. He did not find a generalized formula to easily calculate stream bank erosion that could be used on any stream in VA. Erosion calculators are too specific to the stream, topography and soils of the area to be used generically.

Next TAC meeting: Tuesday January 17, 2017 9:30 AM at the DOF training room