

# CCMP Implementation Committee

## Meeting Agenda



DELAWARE CENTER FOR THE  
**INLAND BAYS**  
Research. Educate. Restore.

DATE & TIME: 07 February, 2020

10:00-11:00AM

LOCATION: Zoom Conference Call

*Attendance: Megan Mackey, Kelly Sommers, Jaime Argo, Chris Brosch, Chris Bason, Michelle Schmidt, Marianne Walch, Natasha Wetzel, Kasey Taylor, Ted Becker, Bryan Jones, Aaron Givens, Steve Williams, Jules Bruck, Todd Pryor, Hans Medlarz, Jenn Volk*

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### AGENDA ITEMS

I. Call to order C. Bason

*Introductions of new Committee Members:*

*Cathy Magliochetti - State and Watershed Partnership branch. Will help to drive directional decisions that folks are looking at for the implementation plan supported by Megan Mackey and Kelly Sommers.*

*Natasha Wetzel with The Nature Conservancy - TNC just recently merged with PA Chapter about a month ago so she now works for the PA/DE Chapter as the Land Steward. Expertise is habitat restoration.*

II. Meeting agenda review C. Bason

III. Review of goal setting exercise and outcomes M. Schmidt

*Michelle provided an overview of the goal setting exercise and outcomes. Details can be found in meeting minutes from 12/11/2019 meeting.*

IV. Accomplishing goals M. Schmidt

*1. Strengthen Partnerships:*

*This goal is cross cutting and can be applied to every goal we set for our group. However, there is also value in having this as a stand alone goal. Michelle provided an example of how the Center and NRCS met to discuss how we can better partner together to increase involvement in the NRCS programs. Conversation was about what the Center's role could be in increasing enrollment in programs, how can we involve ourselves, etc.*

*Kasey Taylor - We are looking to expand our collaboration to see where we have additional opportunities to expand out voluntary conservation here in the State and really make sure that we are making some lasting impacts on the resource base here in the State. So when we look at those collaborations and that partnering we now go into a deeper dive above and beyond what we have done traditionally and now think about how we can expand that out*

*Chris suggested that this goal can be nebulous, so we should revisit this goal after we have talked about the others. Since this is a cross cutting goal, it is valuable to think about what this goal does look like and*

*think about individual and group partnerships and what does strengthening partnerships look like in 3 months, 6 months, one year.*

## *2. Preserve Open Space*

*Bryan - SCD has a partnership with NRCS to do outreach and advertising for the WRE (Wetland Reserve Easements) program. So far they have put together a commercial with one landowner to spotlight his success in the program. It is currently running on WBOC and local stations. They are also in the process of doing a longer segment that will play on Outdoor Delmarva that highlights the landowner's reason for participating in the program and the positive outcomes. Should be coming out in the beginning of March. They are taking steps to get the info out to landowners who aren't normal cooperators in these programs.*

*Natasha - TNC used to be more bucks for acres but they now need to be more strategic in their landholding. They have designed a mapping layer for resilient lands that focuses on protecting open space in the areas that will have the biggest impact on climate corridors, habitat corridors, and for resilience. TNC mapping tool can be found here: <http://maps.tnc.org/resilientland/>*

*Michelle - The Center has been interested in land protection and looking at how the Center can play a bigger role as well as how we can develop a strategy for land conservation in the Inland Bays watershed. The Center would like to convene a working group that focuses on land conservation and focuses on developing a strategy for key areas, for example Piney Neck.*

*Jules - From the UD perspective, the Landscape Architect program will be teaching about regional/large scale issues and this idea would be great to have students explore and if we wanted to have some mapping help or otherwise develop a strategy it could be great to have the Landscape Architecture students work on.*

*Cathy - Asked the local reps on the call if there is an appetite to talk about local land preservation and doing things at the local level such as issuing bonds or those types of things? For ex: local tax bases will use bonds to do local land preservation at the small level like municipal or county level.*

*Kasey - NRCS partners with DDA for the Agland Preservation Program where they preserve agland for either 30 years or permanently. Last year there was a large amount of money available for that program. The County has submitted at least \$1mill as matching/leveraging funds. NRCS works with any entity in the State that wants to create either a standalone program or partner in with the existing State programs to move Agland preservation forward.*

*Cathy - Asked if there is any targeting for the \$18mill*

*Kasey - No, what they are looking at is specific criteria for the ranking and evaluation and then once that is assessed they will go in and look at that funding. So far NRCS has been able to purchase about 44 parcels and now they are looking at what the remaining amount of money can purchase.*

*Chris Bason - Asked if she means purchasing development rights?*

*Kasey - answer is Yes.*

*Chris Bason - Asked if that also includes silviculture?*

Chris Brosch - The answer is yes for silviculture but doesn't know if offering up just a parcel of silviculture will be as competitive.

Hans - Asked why from a water quality standpoint a parcel of silviculture not be equal to an agricultural operation?

Chris Brosch - Clarified that it would be equivalent to an ag land use but he is not familiar with the ranking that the Commission uses for the selection process. It just may not be as competitive as the other parcels offered during that round. But it is eligible.

Chris Bason - Thinks that something really important to discuss in a Sussex County Conservation working group are values and criteria we might use to protect open space because this likely will be different than from a state level. Asked Chris Brosch if he is referring to the criteria for the State program.

Chris Brosch - Yes that is what he is referring to and says that he really isn't familiar with what that ranking criteria is. The person to contact in that regard is Austin Short.

Chris Bason - asked Natasha in terms of TNC changing priorities for protection, how has those changes in priorities interfaced with the more static criteria for Open Space whether that is ag or traditional open space in Delaware?

Natasha - One key thing for TNC is building on already protected lands. A lot of what the resilient mapping is showing is where there is the most connectivity and where they can focus in to connect that more. A lot of those areas are around riparian or stream corridors because those are the areas that haven't been logged or disturbed as much.

Michelle - There is a lot of work already being done individually that the Committee can build upon. Perhaps we should have someone from DDA come to discuss the Agland preservation with our Committee. The Center will let everyone know about the Sussex County Conservation working group.

### 3. Focus BMPs on stream networks

The idea for this goal from the goal setting exercise is to focus on the drainage network as an area where BMP implementation could be increased.

Bryan - the CRP program signup has increased with a new coordinator working heavily on outreach. One thing to consider is the planning grant for the upper Nanticoke which is not in this watershed but could be modeled off of for our watershed. This planning grant helps to focus in on projects. Funding is a challenge for accomplishing some of their goals such as bank stabilization and ditch maintenance but he would like to try to secure funding for a more comprehensive project.

Michelle - asked if those tax ditch projects are already planned out?

Bryan - It depends, some are already in the planning stage and already exist in the 21st Century list. But there are other places that have an identified issue but no planning yet.

Michelle - Offered that the sites that have not been planned out yet, that those can be included in the RAPP so we can develop some of those plans through that project.

Chris Bason - Asked Steve to talk about DNREC's focus in terms of BMPs on stream networks

Steve - Chesapeake Bay Implementation grant is a strong component of implementing plans similar to the Upper Nanticoke Plan. The State Revolving Fund has low interest loan and loan forgiveness programs that Terry Deputy can really speak to. Could make an application if you have the right applicant to support such things. There is also the Water Trust Fund. These are some avenues that could be worth pursuing. Not sure of other types of funding out there right now for this kind of work.

Marianne - Asked to clarify the goal - is it focusing on stream restoration, tax ditch restoration or focusing BMPs more intentionally on small sub watersheds that flow towards particular stream segments

Michelle - answered that it is the latter

Kasey - With that clarification, it sounds like this is more of individual landowner projects and they are working through EQIP where if there is necessary structural activity whether its grading/shaping, embankment, etc. they can use EQIP funding to address those landowners needs. EQIP is also a ranked, competitive program.

Michelle - Offered that it sounds like a big component of this goal is planning: Where are the targeted areas, who are those landowners, what does the landscape look like, etc. before we can really think about BMPs. Perhaps this is something that the Landscape Architect program can help with?

Chris - Agrees that a planning exercise is the first step. The RAPP does include some of that but we recognize that we need some significantly increased resources to conduct that type of planning. Some questions he had was to EPA and what type of resources might be available to the Region and Steve are there pots of money or resources available for that type of planning effort?

Cathy - In terms of resources, she believes they can work in house in terms of GIS mapping but not sure about additional funding resources.

Megan - Confirmed that EPA could certainly work in house on GIS mapping to identify priority areas.

Steve - Jim Sullivan - planning and implementation grants (SWMPG, CWQIG, 319)

Chris - Lot of those grants are matching grants from the State. Does DNREC have any funds that they could put towards helping with some of the match? Often it is difficult to put the match together for those planning efforts.

Steve - agrees that it is difficult to get that match, suggest talking to Jim Sullivan who can help better with answering these questions.

#### 4. Watershed modeling, planning, and tracking

Broad goal that should be broken down slightly.

Michelle asked Steve about DAST (Delaware Assessment Scenario Tool). They are still trying to get that funded but he doesn't think that it will get funded with the other projects on the table. They did meet this week with Olivia Devero about cost, timeline, etc to build the model. They may be able to use some EPA money to get it started but they aren't certain yet. The idea is that you can look at areas and identify BMPs and what would be the most cost effective BMPs to get your reduction.

Chris - That is right at the center of our Management Plan. Chris asked how the Center and Committee can partner on the initiative to get it over the hill.

Steve replied that Chris can come to the future meetings. They are trying to flush out the idea before Hassan retires on April 1st. This project will take years to complete.

Chris asked EPA if they have anything they can bring to bear on this project.

Kelly - The STAC is working on the hydrodynamic model and the white paper has been sent out for final review and comment. After this, Kelly can reach out to folks in-house to see what they can help with. She thinks we have to refine the ask so that it isn't so broad. They don't have too many folks in-house at the region working on models but they could find someone within the agency to provide technical input.

Chris - Sounds like there is some agreement that we could work some more on that to align some resources.

Kelly - Chris Maine from DNREC at one point was talking about a contractor who had done the original model and asked if we are trying to avoid using a contractor at DNREC or what we think our plan or goal is?

Marianne - The white paper outlines that there are several components needed to get a fully functional, updated water quality and hydrodynamic model and the nutrient loading model is an important part of that. The nutrient loading model is the first step so its important that STAC provide input on the DAST tool if we go that route to ensure we not only meet DNREC's goals but any future bigger modeling effort.

Chris - asked Steve who the DNREC liaison for STAC is?

Steve - Hassan. Asked for clarification on what modeling we are talking about.

Chris - There are two models we are talking about. The most important is the nutrient loading model that we can use to prioritize BMPs

The goal at the beginning of the call was to narrow down some actions relative to our goals. Some actions that have come out of this meeting are:

1. Strengthening partnerships will be cross cutting across all goals.
2. We will meet as a group to discuss conservation of open space in Sussex Council. Michelle will take lead in setting that group up
3. If we can begin our assessment planning within the next 3 months, that would be a success and help towards focusing BMPs on stream networks. SCD and DNREC would be great partners. We could potentially get a new site for implementation.
4. In the next 3 months we should be meeting on the next steps for modeling. We should see what we can do to advance the idea of a Delaware specific land use loading model. Chris asked Marianne and Jenn if STAC could take the lead on setting up a meeting and advancing the outputs of the whitepaper.

Notes from the Chat feature in Zoom:

*Chris Brosch : Checking here in the office about Silviculture, there is a Forest preservation program separate from Ag lands and Austin Short is the best contact for both.*

*Natasha Whetzel : TNC's online resilient lands mapping tool.<http://maps.tnc.org/resilientland/>*

*Chris Brosch : EPA R3 has access to Olivia as a subcontractor.*