

State Technical Committee
April 17, 2012
Minutes

Welcome: Denise Coleman, PA NRCS State Conservationist, welcomed all 45 in attendance.

- 12:30 p.m. meeting start time set for the afternoon.
- Agenda notices and handouts provided in advance to allow early review by members prior to the meeting. They are available and should be considered part of these minutes.

Working Lands for Wildlife- Barry Frantz, NRCS

- PowerPoint (handout attached)
- Working Lands for Wildlife are a national partnership between NRCS and USFWS to restore 7 declining wildlife species. Bog Turtle and Golden Winged Warbler species are located in the focal area highlighted counties in Pennsylvania.
- Using WHIP national and local money and asking for \$900,000 FA allocation.
- No minimum acreage or existing easement and you do not have to be a farmer to participate in WHIP for Bog Turtle projects and WHIP does not require turtle presence to be confirmed. For WRP easements confirmation of turtle presence or history is needed.
- Accepting application deadline is 04/20/12 first cycle, 5/30/12 second cycle, and money obligated by 07/02/12.
- Screening criteria with payment schedules up to 90% of average cost for at least 15 year contracts with monitoring to make sure species are recovered.
- Managed grazing cattle in bogs can help keep brush under control and help maintain bogs and hummocks that are favored by Bog Turtle.

Barry Frantz

Working Lands for Wildlife

Working Lands for Wildlife is a partnership between NRCS and USFWS that will demonstrate that productive working lands are compatible with the needs of at-risk wildlife species.

\$33 million nationwide in 2012 for WHIP

WLFW – Objectives

- Restore populations of declining wildlife species
- Provide regulatory predictability
- Restore and protect the productive capacity of working lands

WORKING LANDS FOR WILDLIFE – 2012 Species

Species	Status	Focal Area Locations
Bog Turtle	Threatened	Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania
Gopher Tortoise <i>Western Population:</i> <i>Eastern Population:</i>	Threatened Candidate	Louisiana, Mississippi Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina
Golden-Winged Warbler	At-Risk	Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania , Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia
Greater Sage Grouse	Candidate	California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, South Dakota, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming
Lesser Prairie Chicken	Candidate	Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Texas
New England Cottontail	Candidate	Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island
Southwestern Willow Flycatcher	Endangered	Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah

WLFW – Timeline

- 04-12-12 – STCs Collaborate w/State Wildlife Agencies, State Tech Committee/Subcommittee
- 04-30-12 – Application Deadline First Cycle
- 05-30-12 – Application Deadline Second Cycle
- 07-02-12 – Obligation Deadline
- July – August – Obligate additional funds?

Screening

Screening Criteria

- High: Applications for Core practices in the Focal Areas.
- Medium: Core practices outside the Focal Area. (considered second round only)
- Low:
 - No Core Practice planned
 - Any other application

Payment Schedules

- Can use existing payment schedules
- Additional option for Essential Habitat
 - 90% of average cost
 - Must use 15 year agreement
- Can add Practices with concurrence from headquarters

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Wildlife Key Performance Measures (KPM) will capture acres and location of habitat meeting quality criteria (core practices applied – acres of 645, for example)
- USFWS and partners will contribute to additional monitoring efforts

Certainty

- Lessens confusion and conflict around a species with legal (Endangered Species Act) protection
- Increases landowner confidence
- Bog Turtle = Threatened = certainty a consideration
- Golden Winged Warbler = not T&E = certainty is not an issue



Bog Turtle

Bog Turtle Preliminary Focal Area Map



Bog Turtle

Core Practices

643 - Restoration & Management of Rare & Declining Habitats

644 - Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management

645 - Upland Wildlife Habitat Management

647 - Early Successional Habitat Development/Management

Bog Turtle

Supporting Practices
314 - Brush Management
315 - Herbaceous Weed Control
327 - Conservation Cover
327 - Conservation Cover
338 - Prescribed Burning
382 - Fence
390 - Riparian Herbaceous Cover
391 - Riparian Forest Buffer
393 - Filter Strip
395 - Stream Habitat Improvement
410 - Grade Stabilization
472 - Access Control
528 - Prescribed Grazing
578 - Stream Crossing
580 - Streambank and Shoreline Protection
587 - Structure for Water Control
614 - Watering Facility
657 - Wetland Restoration
659 - Wetland Enhancement

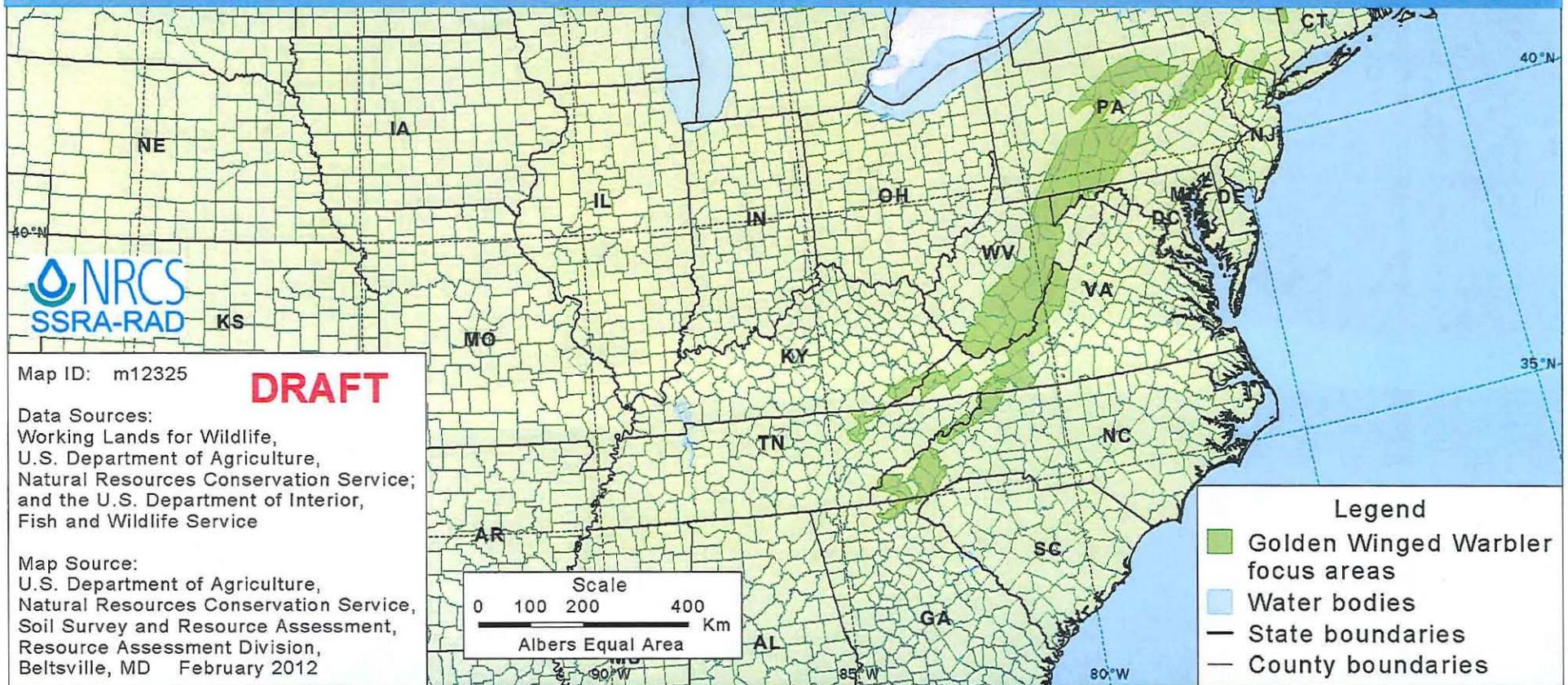
Bog Turtle – Preferred Projects

- Known sites
- Hydrologically connected
- Perennial streams
- Less than 1,000 feet in elevation



Golden-Winged Warbler

Golden-Winged Warbler Preliminary Focal Area Map



Specific provisions at landscape scale

Forested Landscape >70%, Elevation >950 feet



Specific provisions at landscape scale

Proximity to other Suitable Habitats

Cluster stands
within 0.5 – 1 mile



Habitat Management: BMP recommendations

WITHIN THE STAND



Too old



Too young



Golden-Winged Warbler

Core Practices

643 - Restoration & Management of Rare & Declining Habitats

645 - Upland Wildlife Habitat Management

647 - Early Successional Habitat Development/Management

Golden-Winged Warbler

Supporting Practices

314 - Brush Management

315 - Herbaceous Weed Control

324 - Deep Tillage

327 - Conservation Cover

338 - Prescribed Burning

342 - Critical Area Planting

382 - Fence

386 - Field Borders

472 - Access Control

484 - Mulching

490 - Tree Shrub Site Preparation

511 - Forage Harvest Management

512 - Forage & Biomass Plantings

528 - Prescribed Grazing

612 - Tree / Shrub Establishment

655 - Forest Harvest Trails & Landings

666 - Forest Stand Improvement

Assistance from Partners

- Technical Support
 - Verification of site suitability
 - Assistance with development of habitat management plans
 - Practice Implementation

Outreach

NRCS National Water Quality Initiative – Barry Frantz, NRCS

- PowerPoint (handout attached)
- EQIP Water Quality Initiative (handout attached)

- NWQI Target is Kishacoquillas Creek Watershed in Mifflin County and Upper Maiden and Saucony Creeks in Berks and Lehigh Counties.
- Enhance outreach to the Amish population in the agriculture community.
- Money available is 5% of EQIP funds.
- Screening applications and ranking with high, medium and low.
- Application period 1 ends 5/18/12, period 2 ends 06/15/12, and obligation deadline 07/02/12.

NRCS National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI)

Pennsylvania Update
April 17, 2012

NWQI Focus

GOAL –

Remove streams and other water-bodies from 303d list, from threatened status, from contributing to impairments, or adequately addresses a TMDL plan

NWQI Focus

Watershed Selection Criteria

- 303d listed, threatened, TMDL Plan, and/or critical stream segments and water-bodies
- 12-digit HUC watersheds
- Impairments that NRCS can effectively address through voluntary action
- Agricultural sources (nutrients/sediment)
- State Water Quality Agency input, then State Technical Committee input



Upper Kishacoquillas Creek – Mifflin County
On 303d list.
Does have a watershed plan.



Maiden Creek

Upper Maiden and Saucony Creeks – Berks and Lehigh Counties

Upper Maiden on 303d list.
Saucony Creek is not listed as impaired. Upstream from impaired Lower Maiden Creek, and has significant ag. Drain to Lake Ontelaunee, water supply for Reading.

NWQI Funding

Tracking

- \$691,870 in 2012 PA EQIP Financial Assistance
 - may add additional EQIP > original 5%
 - Will use existing 2012 Payment Rates

NWQI Resource Concerns

<p>Priority Pollutants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrients <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Low Dissolved Oxygen – Ammonia – Algal Growth • Sediment/Turbidity 	<p>Other Eligible Pollutants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pesticides • Temperature • Salinity • Habitat Alteration • Cause Unknown – Impaired Biota
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NWQI Focus - Practices

Conservation Practices

- Core and Supporting Practices
- Partnerships/Leveraging

– Conservation Activity Plans

NWQI Focus - Practices

Conservation Practices and "ACT"

The initiative emphasizes a "systems approach" to address priority natural resource concerns. A cornerstone of this approach is to encourage producers to implement a system of practices that has been determined to address specific, high-priority resource concerns in selected watersheds as well as incorporate selection of practices which address the concept for Avoiding, Controlling, or Trapping pollutants or ACT. The concept of ACT is defined as:



Core Conservation Practices Required to be Offered in NWQI – FY 2012

States must offer all of the following core practices to support NWQI during FY 2012.

Core Practices	Code	Avoiding	Controlling	Trapping
Conservation Cover	327	X		
Conservation Crop Rotation	328	X		
Residue and Tillage Management, No Till/Strip Till/Direct Seed	329		X	
Contour Farming	330		X	
Contour Orchard and Other Perennial Crops	331		X	
Contour Buffer Strips	332			X
Cover Crop	340	X		
Critical Area Planting	342		X	X
Residue Management, Seasonal	344		X	
Residue and Tillage Management, Mulch Till	345		X	

NWQI Focus

Ranking Criteria

- Screen Applications (High, Medium, Low)
- National Program Questions for Consistency
- State Questions for Specific NWQI Objectives
- Local Questions from State Technical Committee Input

NWQI Focus

Attachment D
Required National Water Quality Initiative Screening Criteria Worksheet
NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Fiscal Year 2012
www.nrcs.gov/equipscreeningcriteria

INTRODUCTION
This screening worksheet must be completed for each eligible practice applying for EQIP National Water Quality Initiative assistance. Applications will be accepted on a continuous basis; however, application periods are established for purposes of reduction, ranking, and funding practices. The goal of this screening tool is to ensure that conservation technical assistance and EQIP program benefits are managed efficiently to address priority conservation needs relative to the national interest.
Completion of this worksheet and documentation does not constitute a guarantee or approval of the EQIP program benefits or approval of a program contract. The final funding worksheet should be filed with the program contract for EQIP program funding and when the application is determined to be eligible, the screening priority (high, medium, and low) must be recorded in Practice Type Report. A copy of this completed worksheet will be provided to the applicant.

QUESTIONS CONCERNING WATER QUALITY INITIATIVE APPLICATIONS

Applicant Name:	County:
Application No.:	Field Office:
Evaluator Name:	Date:

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PRACTICES

Eligible Practices: The EQIP application is considered eligible and will be located within the boundaries of the approved watershed for the Water Quality Initiative (Water application in Practice, but do not rank, other otherwise program activities).

High Priority Practices: All of the conservation practices requested in the application will be implemented on land physically located within the NWQI watershed. **High Priority** status is determined by the application including "high" conservation practices identified for the protection of the eligible water quality watershed. **High Priority** status is determined on more than 20 acres of the eligible water quality watershed. **High Priority** status is determined on more than 20 acres of the eligible water quality watershed.

Application Status: High Priority Status is "High Priority".

NWQI Timeline

Schedule

MP1

- 04-20-12 – State WQ Agency/Tech Committee Input
- 04-24-12 – Selected Watersheds to RCs Office

NWQI Timeline

Schedule (Cont'd)

- 04-27-12 – ProTracts Sub-Accounts for Tracking Established & AERT Ranking Tool
- 05-18-12 – Application Period-1 Ends
- 06-15-12 – Application Period-2 Ends
- 07-02-12 – Obligation Deadline
- 07-30-12 – Outcome Training Completed

EQIP Water Quality Initiative
PA Eligible and Proposed Practices

Code	Practice	Units	Lifespan	Core	Supporting	Comments
102	Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan - Written	no	1			Request as core
104	Nutrient Management Plan - Written	no	1			
309	Agrichemical Handling Facility	no	15			
311	Alley Cropping	ac	15		x	do not use
313	Waste Storage Facility	no	15		x	
314	Brush Management	ac	10		x	
315	Herbaceous Weed Control	ac	5			
316	Animal Mortality Facility	no	15		x	
317	Composting Facility	no	15		x	
324	Deep Tillage	ac	1			
327	Conservation Cover	ac	5	c		
328	Conservation Crop Rotation	ac	1	c	x	core for nutrients
329	Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till/Strip Till/Direct Seed	ac	1	c		
330	Contour Farming	ac	5	c		
331	Contour Orchard and Other Perennial Crops	ac	10	c		
332	Contour Buffer Strips	ac	5	c		
338	Prescribed Burning	ac	1		x	supporting for pesticides
340	Cover Crop	ac	1	c		
342	Critical Area Planting	ac	10	c	x	core for habitat, water temp.
344	Residue Management, Seasonal	ac	1	c		request to delete
345	Residue and Tillage Management, Mulch Till	ac	1	c		request to delete
346	Residue and Tillage Management, Ridge Till	ac	1	c		request to delete
350	Sediment Basin	no	20			
351	Water Well Decommissioning	no	20			
355	Well Water Testing	no	1		x	
356	Dike	ft	20		x	
359	Waste Treatment Lagoon	no	15		x	
360	Waste Facility Closure	no	15			Request to add as supporting
362	Diversion	ft	10		x	
366	Anaerobic Digestor	no	25			
367	Roofs and Covers	no	10		x	
378	Pond	no	20		x	
380	Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment	ft	15		x	

Barney Trumbly

EQIP Water Quality Initiative
PA Eligible and Proposed Practices

381	Silvopasture Establishment	ac	15		x	
382	Fence	ft	20		x	
386	Field Border	ac	10	c		
390	Riparian Herbaceous Cover	ac	5	c		
391	Riparian Forest Buffer	ac	15	c		
393	Filter Strip	ac	10	c		
395	Stream Habitat Improvement and Management	ac	5	c	x	core for habitat
396	Aquatic Organism Passage	mi	5			
402	Dam	ac-ft	15		x	
410	Grade Stabilization Structure	no	15	c		
412	Grassed Waterway	ac	10	c		
422	Hedgerow Planting	ft	15		x	
423	Hillside Ditch				x	not in Pa FOTG
428A	Irrigation Water Conveyance, Ditch and Canal Lining, Nonreinforced Concrete	ft	20		x	do not use
428B	Irrigation Water Conveyance, Ditch and Canal Lining, Flexible Membrane	ft	20		x	do not use
428C	Irrigation Water Conveyance, Ditch and Canal Lining, Galvanized Steel	ft	20		x	do not use
441	Irrigation System, Microirrigation	ac	15		x	do not use
442	Irrigation System, Sprinkler	ac	15		x	do not use
443	Irrigation System, Surface and Subsurface	ac	15		x	do not use
447	Irrigation System, Tailwater Recovery				x	not in Pa FOTG
449	Irrigation Water Management	ac	1	c	x	core for salinity, supporting for excess nutrients
453	Land Reclamation, Landslide Treatment	ac	15		x	
464	Irrigation Land Leveling				x	not in Pa FOTG
468	Lined Waterway or Outlet	ft	15		x	
472	Access Control	ac	10	c		
484	Mulching	ac	1		x	
500	Obstruction Removal	ac	10			request supporting for sediment, excess nutrients
511	Forage Harvest Management	ac	1		x	do not use
512	Forage and Biomass Planting	ac	5		x	
516	Pipeline	ft	20			request supporting for excess nutrients
521A	Pond Sealing or Lining, Flexible Membrane	no	20			request supporting for excess nutrients

April 17 2012

CIG (Conservation Innovation Grant) Activities – Sara Fitzsimmons

- The American Chestnut Foundation's (TACF) – (handout)
- Email for Sara Fitzsimmons: <http://sfr.psu.edu/public/chestnut>
- Four goals of the project:
 1. Identify 12 sites across 5 states including KY, OH, PA, VA, and WV and plant 30 acres of American Chestnut Trees on these sites selected.
 - a. First site in Schuylkill County only verified for now and it is at Tremont, PA with the planting 4/27/12.
 2. Monitor and maintain those 12 sites with trained local volunteers.
 3. Create a technical manual of Chestnut Restoration and reclaimed mine lands.
 4. Improve on line databases that will track TACF plantings.

Q. How long to see the work of this project?

A. Seedlings and saplings, growth rate is 2 to 4 feet and it is site- dependent.

The plan is to try to offer to private landowners in the future.

NRCS State Technical Committee
The American Chestnut Foundation's (TACF)
Report on CIG activities to date

April 17, 2012

Sara Fitzsimmons with assistance from Michael French



Four goals of the project:

1. Plant 12 sites across 5 states including KY, OH, PA, VA, and WV.
 - a. These sites will all be part of the reclamation efforts on mine lands
 - b. Sites will comprise an average of 30 acres
 - i. One acre will be fenced in and contain approximately 300 "Restoration Chestnuts", TACF's most advanced breeding stock.
 - ii. The surrounding acres will contain many other high-value hardwoods with some additional TACF advanced breeding stock.
2. For each planting site, hold a day-long educational workshop that will train local volunteers to maintain and monitor the sites.
3. <https://sfr.psu.edu/public/chestnut/meetings/FOREST/upcoming-training-nrcs-cig>
4. Create a technical manual of chestnut restoration that includes restoration on reclaimed mine lands.
5. Improve an on-line database that will track these and all other TACF plantings:
http://acf.herokuapp.com/users/sign_in

Activities to Date

- TACF hired a Forester, Michael French, for the project: Fall 2011
- We are closely looking into 20 potential producers for the 12 CIG plantings. We've evaluated more than that, but some could immediately be ruled out because of EQIP constraints.
 - The 20 sites include potential producers in all 5 of the states listed in the project description (KY, OH, PA, VA, WV)
 - The size of available land in these 20 sites ranges from around 30 to 700 acres.
- Significant outreach efforts
 - NRCS EQIP project in Tennessee:
 - http://www.tn.nrcs.usda.gov/news/News_releases/20120105_Chestnuts.html
 - NY TIMES:
 - <http://green.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/04/10/coaxing-american-chestnuts-back-to-appalachia/?src=twrhp>
 - Michael French has given seven presentations to various audiences, including students, environmentalists, regulatory agencies and industry professionals, to inform them about NRCS's Conservation Innovation Grant that was awarded to TACF and why we feel that targeting surface mines may aid our restoration strategy.

- Michael has reached out to NRCS in numerous states as questions arise (Barry Frantz in PA), and other agencies to make them aware of the CIG, including:
 - Office of Surface Mining-ARRI
 - Green Forests Work
 - Kentucky Division of Forestry
 - Kentucky Division of Mine Reclamation and Enforcement
 - Ohio Division of Forestry
 - Ohio Division of Mineral Resources Management
 - Virginia Department of Forestry
 - Virginia Department of Mines Minerals and Energy
 - Pennsylvania DEP
- Our 1st planting will occur on April 27 in Schuylkill County.

Contacts for this project:

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**Farm Manure to Energy Initiative – Jane Carson Lassiter, FPPC
Dan Bugler, University of MD
Donald R. McNutt, Lancaster CD**

- Using Excess Manure to Generate Farm Income in Chesapeake's Phosphorus Hotspot (handout)
- Demonstrate technology that may work to convert manure to energy. Technologies will be demonstrated in the Chesapeake Bay region to include Delmarva Peninsula, the Shenandoah Valley (VA), the Western Potomac River (WVA) and Lancaster County (PA).
 1. Monitoring technical environmental and economic performance.
 2. Creating a network local and web-based data and resources to help farmers.
 3. Developing of byproducts from energy production to generate revenue for farmers.
 4. Improving access to public and private funding or innovative approaches for private financing.
- Convert poultry litter for uses as heat/electricity for poultry house and produce ash. Ash is a marketable product as a phosphorous fertilizer replacement. Takes 6500btus/lb dry waste to sustain combustion.
- Cost benefit analysis decreases as it matures.
- Don McNutt presented
 1. Lancaster County Tour Ready Facility and second one they want to have multiple partnerships.
 2. Grant for Poultry Litter Burner on the Zimmerman Farm.
 3. 3rd project another Poultry Litter Burner.
- 1,000,000 lbs in Lancaster County of poultry manure goes to mushroom farms.



Farm Manure to Energy Initiative

Using Excess Manure to Generate Farm Income in the Chesapeake's Phosphorus Hotspots

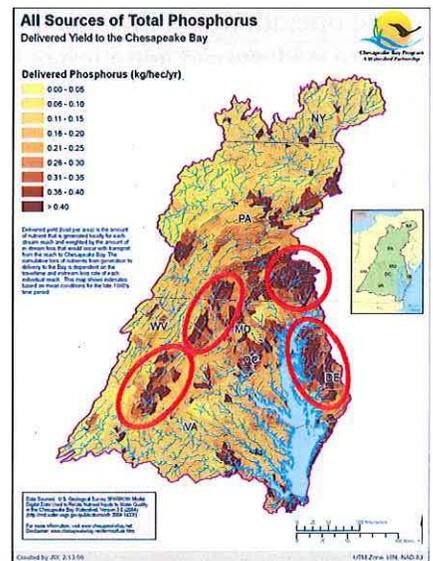
Organization: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Project Partners: Chesapeake Bay Funders Network, Farm Pilot Project, Inc., University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, University of Maryland Finance Center, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Lancaster County Conservation District, and Sustainable Chesapeake.

Grant Award: \$848,000 (USDA Conservation Innovation Grant) and \$650,000 (National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and EPA)

Matching Funds: \$625,000 (Chesapeake Bay Funders Network) and \$873,000 (participating farmers and vendors)

Project Description. Giving farmers choices – choices for handling excess dairy and poultry manure, choices for reducing energy costs, and choices for new revenue streams, all while lowering pollution to local waters and the Chesapeake Bay – is the goal of the Farm Manure to Energy Initiative. To achieve this goal, project partners will work to identify, demonstrate and evaluate innovative technologies capable of converting excess manure and poultry litter to energy, while also providing alternatives to land application and additional revenue streams for farms. Technologies will be demonstrated on farms located in manure “hotspots” in the Chesapeake Bay region including: the Delmarva Peninsula, the Shenandoah Valley (VA), the Western Potomac River (WVA), and Lancaster County (PA). Partners will also work to increase technical assistance, information, and financing options available to farmers. Specific project objectives are to:



- Demonstrate showcase manure-to-energy technologies on working farms in nutrient hotspots in the Bay watershed. These projects will be monitored to document technical, environmental and economic performance.
- Create a network of local independent manure to energy experts as well as a web-based clearinghouse of data and resources that can help farmers and technical service providers compare differing technologies.
- Stimulate the development of markets for byproducts from energy production that generate additional revenue for farmers.
- Improve access to both public and private funding by developing state-specific financing templates that identify existing funding options as well as innovative approaches for private financing.

Goals and Outcomes. The overarching goals of the Farm Manure to Energy Initiative are five-fold: 1) reduce the land application of manure in the Chesapeake Bay's nutrient hotspots, 2) displace imported fertilizer products with products derived from locally grown manure, 3) reduce phosphorus and nitrogen runoff to the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, 4) strengthen the viability of animal agriculture in the region by supporting the development of new revenue streams for excess manure and poultry litter, and 5) expand financing options for manure-to-energy technology deployment in the region. Anticipated outcomes include: an annual reduction of 3,280 tons of land-applied manure, an annual reduction of 100,800 pounds of phosphorus runoff, and an annual reduction of 200,000 pounds of nitrogen runoff.

Status. The project is in the initial start-up phase. The partnership is focusing early efforts on identifying technologies that can convert poultry and other livestock manure to energy (and other valuable products), and reduce fertilizer loss to surface waters, that are suitable for demonstration on farms in the region. In addition, project partners are in the process of identifying appropriate demonstration farm sites where these technologies may fit best. Two technologies have already been selected for demonstration on two poultry farms – one on the Eastern Shore and the other in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia (see figures 1 and 2 below). We are currently in the process of finalizing plans for additional technology demonstrations on three other host farms in the Chesapeake Bay region.

Next Steps. Manure to energy technologies that will be demonstrated by this project are ready for farm scale operation, but they need to be demonstrated on working farms in the Chesapeake Bay watershed before widespread adoption is likely to occur. Field days where farmers can see the technologies operational in familiar settings, as well as objective, third-party economic analysis, environmental monitoring and performance evaluation will provide farmers, conservation professionals, and funders with information necessary to identify technologies that are appropriate for widespread deployment. In addition to on-farm demonstration and technology evaluation, development of information resources, including a network of experts that can meet one-on-one with farmers and a web-based information clearinghouse, will help farmers select appropriate technologies for their operations. Efforts to identify and expand options for financing resources will increase the likelihood that farmers interested in adopting these technologies will have the financial resources necessary to proceed with implementation.



Figure 1. Davel Lovell farm in Melfa, VA. Eleven poultry houses producing 1.8 million birds and 2,200 tons of litter annually.

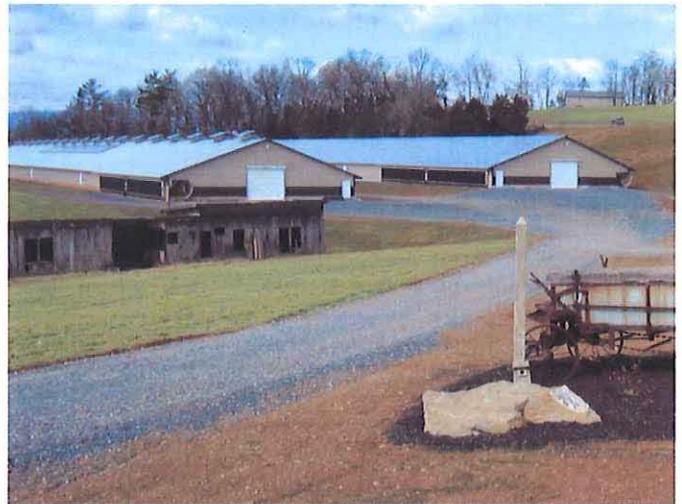


Figure 2. Oren Heatwole farm in Dayton, VA. Two broiler houses producing 422,000 broilers and 814 tons of litter annually.

For more information, contact:

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Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program –Hosea Latshaw, NRCS

- EWP handout
- Projects that rank as acceptable are projects with houses, business or public utilities within 50 feet of the stream.
- NRCS provides 75% of construction cost and in addition to the technical assistance to rank, inventory, design and inspect the projects.
- PADEP is funding the 25% local match of the construction funds.
- The sites are spread over 18 counties. The hardest hit counties are Bradford, Wyoming, Columbia, Lycoming, and Montgomery.
- The objective of our work is to put the steams back to pre- storm conditions.
- We are still taking applications, however few are expected as the storm did occur over 7 months ago, and we would expect most of the problem areas would already have been identified.



Natural Resources Conservation Service

Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program

PENNSYLVANIA

Congressional District	County	# Projects	Local Sponsor		DSR Estimated \$
10	Bradford	22		PA DEP Waterway Funds	\$718,200
16	Chester	2	PA DEP		\$101,895
5	Clinton	2		PA DEP Waterway Funds	\$150,230
11	Columbia	31	PA DEP		\$1,464,200
17	Dauphin	2	PA DEP		\$38,892
10	Lackawanna	1	PA DEP		\$15,956
16	Lancaster	2	PA DEP		\$151,800
17	Lebanon	2	PA DEP		\$114,000
11	Luzerne	6		Growing Greener	\$329,477
10	Lycoming	18	PA DEP		\$1,221,443
6	Montgomery	11	PA DEP		\$540,095
11	Montour	1	PA DEP		\$37,500
15	Northampton	2	PA DEP		\$63,800
10	Pike	1	PA DEP		\$56,979
17	Schuylkill	3	PA DEP		\$140,850
10	Snyder	3	PA DEP		\$58,440
10	Susquehanna	9	PA DEP		\$370,688
10	Wyoming	20		Growing Greener / PA DEP Waterway Funds	\$1,124,788
TOTALS					
7	18	138	17	2	\$6,699,233

The table above summarizes the total EWP construction costs and number of sites by county. To date, our engineering team has conducted damage survey reports on over 200 sites. The sites listed above have been determined to be eligible (stream is within 50 feet of house or business).



Typical Stream Damage before EWP Assistance



Stabilized Stream Bank after EWP Assistance

Easement Program Overview – Hathaway Jones, NRCS

- Easement Program Updates
 1. GRP – Easement enrolled \$357,000. Not enough funding for 2nd easement.
 2. WRP – Obligated \$1.75 million, \$1.6 million restoration obligated just to do restoration that was enrolled in 2010 and 2011.
 3. FRPP - \$2,000,000 left for more applications.
 4. HFRP – Bat Funding getting enrolled approve who allied in 2010 finalized.
WRP – New initiative Massasauga Rattlesnake Initiative – NHQ approves to wave hydrology for rattlesnake and wave buffer more acres's than normal for WRP.
 5. FRPP and WRP partner with PA State Department of Agriculture establish Bog Turtle habitat with farmers.

Q: Will NRCS partner with State on FRPP?

A: As long as funding is available.

CREP Re-Enrollment – Chrystal Fetzer, FSA Barry Isaacs, NRCS

- State Acres for Wildlife Enhancements (SAFW) has 2600 acres allocated for PA since it began.
- 3 PA SAFE Practices: Vernal Pool for Wildlife; Early Successional Trees/Shrubs; Native Grassland.
- Currently no acreage is signed up in SAFE in PA.
- Based on instructions from National Office, we have no reason to request additional SAFE acres.
- 34 Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts expire with 768 acres on 9/30/12.
- 1,296 CREP contract expire with 26,567 acres on 9/30/12.
- Every expiring contract got a notification letter from KC FSA in February, which requested that they contact FSA by August 1 for re-enrollment.
- FSA & NRCS are making a joint agency effort to contact all interested parties for re-enrollment – mailed a postcard to all landowners with contracts expiring 9/30/12, for a total of 1039 postcards.
- NRCS deserves a big thank you for covering the cost of the postcards for re-enrollment this year. Hopefully some of the CREP partners or other agencies concerned about the future of CREP will step up in this capacity next year.
- CREP buffers expiring in 2012 – 2015 will receive a postcard from NRCS/FSA in the near future. Joint effort to make contact prior to final year to assist with maintenance and compliance issues.

3 Subcommittee Reports

Air Quality Task force

No report at this time.

Bioenergy - Ryan Koch, NRCS (handout)

- Grass Energy Cooperative

A cooperative has been formed called the Grass Energy Cooperative in the Columbia, Luzerne, and Montour County area. The Cooperative has formed to promote the use of native grasses for energy. This group was born out of the efforts and projects of many groups and individuals including the Pocono Northeast Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Council. The group has been meeting for several months and has officially adopted By-Laws and elected officers. They submitted and were awarded the grass fuel contract to supply the Benton Area School District (Columbia County) with the required fuel for the 2012-2013 heating season. The members have over 140 tons of native grasses committed for the project, and are in process of working with producers to acquire the remaining amounts needed. There are several avenues that are being committed and researched for the densification of the grasses in pellets and briquettes.

- PA Biomass Energy Association

The PA Biomass Energy Association (PBEA) is an outgrowth of the PA Biomass Working Group and the PA Fuels for Schools programs. Both of these programs were an informal coalition of businesses, organizations, and individuals that shared a common vision that biomass is an abundant, affordable natural resource that should be used in an environmental responsible manner for thermal applications. The group has been meeting regularly and is doing various outreach activities including a tour to current biomass heated facilities. The tour included three school districts-Penns Valley, East Lycoming, and Sullivan County – all of which have successfully implemented different types of biomass technology, leading to safe, efficient, cost saving heat and power. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.supportingpabiomass.org/>

- Ernst Biomass

Ernst Biomass continues to move forward on the construction and operation of their biomass processing facility focusing on having material ready for the 2012-2013 heating season. The material will include native gasses as a large component to the heating fuel. More information can be found at: <http://www.ernstbiomass.com/>

Feed – Dan Ludwig, NRCS

- Customer survey of current feed management contract holders was developed by Penn State Extension Dairy Team and mailed to the 57 participants, 33 participants responded back that is over a 50% response rate.
- Gave a Feed Management presentation at the general session of the Mid-Atlantic Nutrition Conference. Relayed that Feed Management and how rations are balances can have an active role to clean watersheds. Industry professionals and researchers were in attendance.
- Will be participating in a national Feed Management webinar for NRCS and partners on May 9. The webinar is geared towards awareness to have more states implement Feed Management. Across all states, feed management was applied on less than 10,000 animal units in FY2011. Of all of the NRCS contracts in FY2011, approximately one third of them were contracted in PA.
- Will be traveling with Ginny Ishler and Rebecca White from the PSU Extension Dairy Team to the National Water Conference in Portland, OR to give an oral and poster presentation. Focus of the presentation will be on the training program for the nutritionists and results from the first year of implementation of the FY2011 contracts in PA. Presentation will represent partial data, since not all of the plans have been started or submitted.

- From initial data crunching, we are able to determine some net reductions of phosphorous excreted in the manure however the information will need to be standardized as excretion amounts will vary with actual dry matter intakes of the animals.

Q: Track plans and contract and use in Chesapeake Bay implementation reports?

A: Best track yearend on a yearly basis and share for example one farm had an approximate 300 pound net reduction of phosphorous excreted, but it was after increases and decreases were tracked over the year.

In regards to the Water Quality Initiative for the Upper Kish Watershed, there is NFWF Grant through Penn State to look at phosphorous removal in liquid manure and feed management is a part of the grant. Dan Ludwig gave a presentation on Feed Management and the NRCS program and some follow up revealed there was not much interest in Feed Management. The Penn State grant is also being implemented in the West Branch of the Little Conestoga Creek in Lancaster County. The same presentation was given and it was well received at that meeting.

Wildlife & Fisheries

No report at this time

Nutrient - Dean Collamer

Mark Goodson, NRCS

- Subcommittee membership will be increased to include broad stakeholder representation. Twenty potential members identified.
- Next subcommittee meeting May 25 at state office.
- 590 Standard revision is taking place in PA. Nutrient Management partners, DEP, PA Conservation Commission, Penn State and PDA working together.
- Subcommittee will collaborate to develop consistent messaging for nutrient strategies and nutrient stewardship campaign.
- PA campaign will be based on 4R Nutrient Stewardship program developed by International Plant Nutrient Institute and The Fertilizer Institute.

Q: How will the revised 590 affect Pennsylvania's various nutrient management regulation efforts?

A: The goal is to apply the best agronomic science available in the revision process and to maintain consistency with the Pennsylvania Nutrient Management Program's planning criteria. Currently, all acres receiving nutrient application an Act 38 nutrient management plan (required for CAO and CAFO operations and NRCS CNMP planning) meet the 590 standard. The goal is to keep this consistency in the revised 590.

Organics – Ed Rajotte

- The Specialty Crop community is appreciative to the interest NRCS has shown working with specialty crop growers.

- IPM initiative and new pollination strips in southern and central PA, with Penn State, NRCS and Xerces.
- To incorporate ecosystem considerations with crop production to expand the initiative.

Specialty – Gwendolyn Crews, NRCS

- Requested the additional of “beneficial insects” to any practices or scenarios addressing pollinators.
- There is currently no wood species planting list for pollinators. Is it possible to develop a planting list for woody species?
- There is a lot of interest in adding a water collection system to capture runoff from high tunnel. Possibly incorporated this into the existing roof runoff structure practice with appropriate payment scenario.
- There is increasing concern regarding herbicide and insecticide resistant pests in current agronomic crops. Begin promoting crop rotation as a method to reduce pest pressure and to reduce the reliance on herbicide/insecticide for treatment.
- High tunnel very well received in the specialty crop community.

GLCI

No report at this time.

Denise Coleman

- Ag Progress Days August 14-16, 2012 and scheduled attendance by Congressmen Holden, Thompson and Chief White. Display CIG at Ag Progress Days with a sign to point about CIG innovation or Conservation Practices in the Chesapeake Bay. Let Noel, Molly or Denise know and highlight funding with a large poster and brochure at info tent.
- Hoping to see kickoff in PA for new innovation in Agriculture and Forestry.
- Date for the CREP follow up meeting to pick a date through a survey.

Upcoming State Technical Committee Meeting Dates with start time of 12:30 –

July 18, 2012

October 25, 2012