

## **Follow Up Actions from July 12, 2012 EPA and West Virginia State Agencies Meeting with Local West Virginia Partners**

**Romney, West Virginia**

### **Key Actions & Commitments Based on Participant Feedback**

#### **Supporting Expanding Local Engagement**

##### ***Supporting and Expanding Local Watershed Organizations***

- EPA will facilitate the development of a mentoring organization/system to assist in the process of establishing new watershed organizations and to provide existing watershed organizations direct professional local/state/federal agency staff involvement and technical expertise. Coordinating with established groups such as Maryland's Watershed Assistance Collaborative, a partnership that provides services and technical assistance to communities to advance restoration activities and projects, might be beneficial in creating such a mentoring system.
- EPA will work with West Virginia partners to identify a funding mechanism to create training opportunities for watershed organizations on how to best work effectively with local governments.
- The West Virginia state agriculture agencies have developed a CAFO fact sheet to distribute to the watershed organizations and the larger agriculture community with a focus on what constitutes a CAFO.
  - Existing CAFO brochure will be updated and made available at USDA offices.
  - WVU Extension is working on making electronic fact sheets more readily available by PDF and also will be conducting a series of small producer trainings through a SARE grant to help producers identify discharges for the fall of 2012.
  - The WVDA Poultry Specialist is working with US Egg & Poultry on CAFO training modules.

##### ***Funding Needs and Flexibilities***

- EPA, in coordination with the Region 3 Environmental Finance Center and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, will explore the possibility of establishing a funding clearing house that will inventory the multitude of funding sources that are available.
- EPA will explore what flexibilities are available in using state and federal grants (e.g. moving funding between grants, maintenance of existing levels of program dollars, using 319 funds across the state) to ensure the funded organization can carry out the work it needs to do on the ground.
- The West Virginia state agriculture agencies feel that priority should be placed on getting credit for those BMPs that do serve a water quality purpose but don't necessarily meet NRCS standards. NRCS has existing funding to apply towards bringing nonfunctioning BMPs up to spec or to replace the practice itself. EPA and the West Virginia state agriculture agencies will work together to identify those priority agricultural conservation practices which are not functionally equivalent with NRCS standards.

##### ***Training Opportunities***

- EPA will assist West Virginia state agencies in identifying what resources (e.g. contractor and funding) are necessary and available to support training in the following areas (in priority order):
  - o Training directed towards engineers, developers, contractors, municipal managers, and inspectors in terms of green-oriented development and stormwater management practices and systems.

- Interagency training on tracking, verification, and reporting on BMPs, including the WV University cooperative extension service.
- Training for both the regulatory agencies and technical assistance/implementation agencies on addressing CAFO permit needs when working with producers. [West Virginia state agencies are currently looking at training opportunities for both regulatory and state and federal agricultural agencies' field staff in the fall of 2012. Any funding towards these trainings could prove helpful.]
- Training directed towards producers to educate them about the CAFO regulations and what the implications are for their animal production operations.

### ***Communications Support / Increased EPA Visibility***

- The Chesapeake Bay Program Communication Office's videographer will meet with West Virginia state agencies and local partners to determine a path forward for showcasing West Virginia's local restoration success stories.
- West Virginia local partners and EPA will continue to work together to identify those opportunities where EPA can stand in support of local officials who are moving forward with WIP implementation actions.
- West Virginia's state and local communications specialists and the Chesapeake Bay Program Office communications team will develop a strategy to promote West Virginia messages and success stories to other Chesapeake Bay Program jurisdictions and partners.
- EPA will take the lead in exploring opportunities for West Virginia to work with and learn from the members of the Upper Susquehanna Coalition.
- The Chesapeake Bay Program's Communications Workgroup will explore the broader establishment of some type of communication system so Bay jurisdictions can share lessons learned and success stories from their implementation efforts.

### **Helping Support Tracking, Reporting and Verifying of Implemented Practices/Treatments**

- The Chesapeake Bay Program partnership's BMP Tracking, Reporting, and Verification Committee will consider the following areas of focus as they work to refine the verification principles and protocols for the Bay jurisdictions and source sectors:
  - Focus on how we can streamline the BMP data collection, verification, and reporting efforts and build on other ongoing activities;
  - Reach out to the other Chesapeake Bay watershed jurisdictions and learn about the different approaches to BMP verification that have been tried and what worked/did not work, and then select what would work in West Virginia, tailor it, and adopt it; and
  - Recommend the development of an integrated set of consistent messages and mechanisms for communicating the tracking, verifying and reporting processes, using existing newsletters (e.g., extension service, FSA) and other similar means, to the agricultural community.
- West Virginia's Department of Agriculture and Conservation Agency will explore drafting a comprehensive funding proposal to establish its farm by farm baseline of conservation practices in place as a one-time, intensive survey across all eight counties with the commitment to then work with West Virginia partners to market the proposal to potential funders (e.g., Bay Funders Network).
- EPA will work with NRCS and FSA to resolve the identified reporting issues regarding the cross walk between NRCS standards/codes and Chesapeake Bay Program partnership's BMP definitions, as well as ensuring NRCS captures and reports the additional data needed to ensure jurisdictions can report and get credit for a larger number of cost shared practices using a common set of units.

### **Setting the Agenda for Expanding Monitoring in West Virginia's Potomac River Watershed**

- The Chesapeake Bay Program and the West Virginia state agencies will work together to identify: (1) those watershed organizations, municipalities, and others with existing monitoring networks and data; and (2) a process for bringing this monitoring data into the state's monitoring network so these local data are directly used in water quality decision making.
- Through expanded monitoring networks and stations, West Virginia and the Chesapeake Bay Program will continue to measure the quality of the waters coming out of Virginia into West Virginia.
- West Virginia state agencies will further explore the following prioritized list of new monitoring stations— (1) Opequon Creek station on the border with Virginia; (2) station on the lower Opequon Creek; (3) Sleepy Creek station; and (4) a Shenandoah River station on the border with Virginia.
- EPA will work to identify what additional funding resources are available to support West Virginia's expanding monitoring network in the Potomac River watershed.