

# Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission WIP III Local Engagement Meeting

July 13, 2018

Summary: On July 13, in Culpeper, the Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission (RRRC) hosted a local coordination meeting to engage and communicate DEQ's WIP III planning expectations with local stakeholders. Twenty six participants represented local governments, NGOs, SWCDs, state agencies, and private developers. RRRC plans two additional meetings to develop proposed BMPs for developed lands, septic, and urban forests and then will hold a joint meeting with the Soil and Water Conservation Districts to assess the synergy of developed and agricultural/forest land BMPs.

## Notes:

Michelle Edwards, RRRC, provided an opening presentation that explained the WIP III planning process and timeframe, which included much substantive information on what will be included in the plan. She facilitated a thorough discussion of questions and comments from meeting participants. Key points discussed were:

- The WIP II targets (originally) satisfied the Ches Bay 2025 pollutant reduction goals. They now are compared with projected 2025 land use, and can also be assessed for viability in light of what BMPs have been installed to date. (James agrees this is an accurate summary.) Meeting participants were encouraged to look at new BMPs, especially those with the highest cost-effectiveness ratings (recognizing the ratios are State averages). It was noted that Land Conservation is a new BMP for the Ches Bay model. A request was made for GIS data denoting the most effective areas of the region to place BMPs to reduce nutrient loading in the Bay. Mark Bennett, USGS, was suggested as a possible contact.
- Questions were posed about how Agricultural Conservation, Forest Conservation, and Growth Management Policies are credited. Michelle shared the BMP definition information, but participants are seeking more detail on what is required to satisfy this BMP, and how environmental improvements are credited. The Healthy Watershed Forest Initiative is potentially a big consideration in RRBC's planning area. Including these practices in local area planning targets should reflect an intension to seriously/actively pursue them – DEQ recognizes the uncertainties that exist with their final adoption. Growth management policies include such specific elements as in-fill (> 10% reduction in new land consumption), increased urban area density, cluster development, etc. Growth management can pertain to selected jurisdictions, and can report both jurisdictions that have already adopted growth management, and those that are expected to. Model credit for growth management is linked to projected levels of development for the specific jurisdictions included.

- Another question arose as to how the activities of Nutrient Banks (and relatedly Wetlands Mitigation Banks) are credited in the Bay Model. Is it the location of the bank or the construction project that determines the locality/watershed that receives the credits? If the bank is located in the planning area, but credits are purchased outside the area or vice versa, what credits are attributed locally? **The Ches Bay Model provides no credit for Nutrient Banks and Wetlands Mitigation Banks located within a given local planning area. The reason for their exclusion is that they are expressly created for the purpose of satisfying (some entity's) permit requirements, and therefore are accounted for elsewhere.**
- Final question for DEQ follow-up pertained to Stormwater BMPs. At the GWRC meeting with PDCs (July 10), it was noted that the Stormwater Performance Standard could be identified as a BMP. What are the relative merits of broadly identifying the Standard as a BMP vs. identifying more specific BMPs? **Either the Stormwater Performance Standard, or individual Stormwater BMPs may be applied to the projected new development for 2025, but not both for a given unit of projected development. The SW Performance Standard provides a Phosphorus credit of .41, while individual SW BMPs have different credit values, and many may provide greater credit. DEQ would be entirely supportive of having the Stormwater Standard be applied to all projected 2025 growth (5,600 acres in case of RRRRC). As development occurs, actual BMPs would be reported and they would be used to calculate actual pollutant reduction accomplishments.**
- Michelle asked participants to consider the data needs for developing proposed planning area targets. The VDH representative said they have the best data on residential septic systems, and estimates of failing septic systems by jurisdiction. All participants were asked to inform Michelle of data needs they identify, and also to bring relevant data to upcoming meetings.
- There was discussion amongst participants regarding the allocation of BMP acreage regionally in both the PDC-led process and in the Soil and Water Conservation Area process for agricultural BMPs.
- Participants discussed the need to identify metrics to measure performance for programmatic actions that may be more suited to local strategies and/or implementation, such as ordinance development. Localities generally prefer to take a regional approach to development of programmatic actions for this process rather than committing to individual locality actions. Locality-specific metrics would likely require approval of the Board of Supervisors.

The next meeting will be held on August 17 at 1:00-3:00pm in the Culpeper County Library.