



**Meeting Notes: GWRC Regional Environmental Managers Technical Committee
Tuesday March 16, 2021, 1:00PM-3:00PM
Prepared by Luke Peters**

In attendance:

Andy Holden
Benjamin Leach (Spotsylvania County),
Marta Perry (Tri-County/City SWCD),
Michael Crocker (DEQ),
Sharon Conner (Hanover-Caroline SWCD),
Liz Adams
Nicholas Meade
David Nunnally (Caroline County),
Chris Clarke (King George County),
Scott Rae and Tyler Gelles (Fredericksburg),
John Saunders and Christopher M. Stevens (Stafford County),
Brent Hunsinger and Adam Lynch (FOR),
Bryant Bays (VDOF),
Pat Coady and Matt Gerhart (Northern Virginia Conservation Trust),
Les Johnson (UMW),
Kevin Byrnes (Consultant),
Mark Killgore, and Jennifer Wampler (DCR),
Jeff Flood (DEQ CZM),
Kate Gibson (GWRC), and
Denise Nelson, Luke Peters, and Rebecca Acland (Berkley Group)

Meeting Notes

- Denise and Luke will be presenting on the GWRC Environmental Services Strategic Plan on APA's next webinar.
- Denise sent out a list of grants for stream mitigation and improvement projects which all have deadlines in April. Let Berkley Group/GWRC know if they need support.
- CBPA update to include trees and climate mitigation.

Agenda: CZM TA

- TA grant revolves heavily around providing support to localities.

Training: Mike Crocker, DEQ Project Oversight Team Leader in Water Project Financing Group, michael.crocker@deq.virginia.gov, (804) 698-4012

- 3 Main Projects:
 - Water Quality Improvement Fund (WQIF)
 - Stormwater Local Assistance Fund (SLAF)
 - Virginia Clean Water Revolving Loan Fund (VCWRLF)
- Who is eligible?
 - Any local government: town, county, districts, municipal corporation, etc.
- Eligible Costs:
 - Reasonable and necessary costs associated with Clearinghouse approved BMPs, Stream Restoration Projects, Non-Point Source Nutrient Credits
- Not Eligible:
 - Labor, admin, anything not directly related.
- Most projects fall where larger municipalities are.
- Majority of projects have been stream restoration, until recently with more green infrastructure.
- Important to completing the project application: only provide support for the questions asked. They're ranked by:
 - Readiness to proceed,
 - Pollution reduction,
 - "Cost effectiveness" (getting harder to scrutinize),
 - Impaired waters,
 - Fiscal stress, and
 - Phase II MS4
- Section A) Give the project a unique identifying name and include contact for applicant and the engineer. DEQ will usually reach out to the applicant themselves unless there's a technical question.
- Section B) Be as specific as possible about where funding is coming from with back-up documentation (general funds, other non-state grants, loans/bonds, etc.).
- Section C) Double check coordinates for stream restorations.
- Section D) Opportunity to sell the project. Be specific as to what you are building and why, including limitations, constraints, and benefits. For stream restorations include photos and plans if available.
- Section E) Pollution – few issues on this section. Engineer usually handles it. Be mindful of cost/lb/TP – this is the variable that's ranked.
- Section F) Readiness to proceed is a big deal. Make sure the dates are realistic, and consider public participation, easement acquisition, etc. in that time.
- Section G) Project Budget Information – most important is to be consistent through the application and making sure the figures match what was listed in other sections. Contingency can only be 5% of the BMP.
- **Program Requirements**
- All engineers/professional services must adhere to Virginia Procurement Act (VPPA)
- Need pollutant reduction calculations, BMP certification, and environmental permits (from the Corps, etc.).

- **Local Match:** 50% match can come from general fund, bonds/loans, public private partnerships (P3s), stormwater utility funds, or grants (NFWF), etc. Also the VCWRLF and SLAF.
- Solicitation will run through June and July running concurrently with loan solicitations.
- *A loan application is not a commitment to borrow funds* (unlike a bond).
- **Q&A:**
 - Loan solicitations go out in June, they make tentative offers in September, there's public input, and then the Water Board signs off in December. Loan could close in January of next year. Could be held up by EPA's principal forgiveness schedule.

Training: John Saunders: Experience with Erosion and Sediment Control Program with DEQ

- They provide DEQ with a list of projects and they work together to choose a mixture of residential and commercial sites.
- Worked with DEQ on 10 sites.
- DEQ looks at admin, inspections, plan review, and enforcement.
- Provided them with all the comments from the plan review process, all documents such as work order items, and basically just filling out checklist. Uploaded to FTP site 30-60 days in advance of field visit.
- No surprises in the field visit – knew where DEQ was going, so they brushed up on inspections and made sure sites were in tip-top shape.
- Spent the first half of the day letting DEQ know about all their processes, how plans get reviewed, etc. Next few days were physical site visits.
- Not viewed as adversarial (us vs. DEQ), but just a way to show them issues that are concerning. Staff already knew what their weaknesses were.
- Stafford County had about 10 corrective actions, which needs to be signed by a county administrator to begin a formal agreement with DEQ.
- One of the biggest asks from DEQ and the administration is enforcement.

Ben Leach (Spotsylvania, formerly DEQ): Observations

- Got their audit results in March and failed all 4 categories.
- Updated their ordinance last week (board approved).
- Updated inspection reporting system. They do up to 2,000 inspections a month including single family homes.
- One of the key items, as John said, is enforcement. Last year they gave out maybe 1 or 2 NOVs – this year already up to over 70 notice of violations and stop work orders.
- Wants to update the site to reach out to developers and stakeholders from all backgrounds and why they would incur a fee for NOVs.
- Plan reviews now average 10-day turnout with 3-5 reviews per project.
- **Q&A:**
 - David Nunnally: *when it comes to single family residences, DEQ was formerly flippant. What does DEQ expect in terms of family site inspections?*

- DEQ realizes it's impossible to meet the every-two-week inspection period, and to basically just come up with a strong alternative inspection program that will spot check sites and alert you to any issues. Ben Leach actually is making it out to sites every 2 weeks, but not 24 hours after every measurable rain event.

Agenda: CZM Special Project: Flood Risk Communication Plan

- Print and digital content with links to toolkits and a schedule for coordinating the messaging between all localities as well as links to additional staff training materials.
- Draft exists; will be sent out soon.
- Localities are usually good at advertising Flood Awareness Week.

Agenda: Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Program

- Engage stakeholders with meetings and trainings, focused on implementing WQ and stormwater BMPs.
- Denise will send out link to Water Quality Standards Academy

Training: Nicholas Meade, CZM Program GIS Coordinator

- Demoing version 4 of Coastal Geospatial and Educational Mapping System (GEMS).
- Water and land-based natural resources, conservation planning tools, etc.
- Coastal VEVA also exists as a mixture of conservation databases.
- Feature allows you to pick up where you left off with layers turned on, etc.
- Feature that lets you drag a swipe tool to see newer satellite imagery juxtaposed with older images.
- Can open Fact-sheet tab in the background.
- Version 4 has an attribute table which shows all the open data layers and applicable filters, like "Filter by map extent" which lets you look at datapoints you're zoomed in on. Can also filter by any other variable.
- "What's Near Me" function – you can place a point on the map and look at all the layers within a given radius.
- Add Data function – you can add shapefiles from your own computer or from online with an ArcGIS account.
- New markup options – different colored pins and stickers and polygons which will automatically give you the number of acres.
- Can create a PDF of the area you're looking at.
- **Q&A:**
 - Denise Nelson: *Compare and contrast this tool with Environmental Data Mapper and others?*
 - They're built on the same platform, they just have slightly different tools. The data, however, is almost completely different. DEQ's mapper is built to house regulatory data, whereas Coastal GEMS is conservation planning and natural resource data.

- *For any datasets contained in both, do they come from the same source and are they updated frequently so there's no best place to get it?*
- If pulled from a map service, the data should be from the same source. For other data it should show when it was last updated. Some datasets are updated monthly, quarterly, annually, etc. while others are one-offs that exist just because they're the best source.
- Luke Peters: *Are impaired waterways included?*
- 303d waterways are there but not sure exactly where IWs are.

Training: FOR Brent Hunsinger and Adam Works (?) Updates

- **King George County**
 - Litter cleanups with King George County staff – roadsides, parks, and rivers.
 - Tree Giveaway at Cedell Brooks Park March 20th
 - Maintain Hop Yard Landing and Wilmont Landing
 - Maintain 234 trees planted Fall 2020
- **Caroline County**
 - Living shoreline at Portobago Bay
 - VCAP projects – MOU with HCSWCD to administer program in Caroline
 - Tree planting with Caroline High School
 - Port Royal canoe access
- **Spotsylvania County**
 - Parks and Rec tree planting April 17th
 - Community cleanup day with 150 youth
 - Maintain Hunting Run and Elys Ford
- **Stafford County**
 - 5 acre riparian buffer at Snowden Farm, partnered with NVCT and County BOS
 - Replanting flood areas at historic Port of Falmouth
 - Pet waste stations at Leeland Station
- **Fredericksburg**
 - Stream and trail cleanups
 - Small-scale urban stormwater BMPs
- Future goals:
 - Costshare/Incentives for septic pumpouts, BMPs, reforestation, IPs for Rapp TMDL, outreach, etc.
 - River Ambassador Program – May to September 2021, address several issues: safety, cleanups, and access issues. Hiring 2 full-time ambassadors.
- Legislation:
 - Many extra millions for water quality programs: SLAF, conservation Assistance Program, agriculture BMPs, etc.
 - Tree canopy ordinance laws
- CBPA Regulations comments due May 3rd
- Tidal Wetlands due March 31st
- Please let FOR know thoughts

Agenda: Locality Roundtable

- **Caroline County**
- Ordinance for preserving mature trees – recognize that some are a maintenance problem.
- **King George**
- FOR are a huge partner. 400 trees already given out.
- **Spotsylvania**
- Currently in the process of updated stormwater and ChesBay ordinances.
- **Fredericksburg**
- Pursuing NFWF grants for stream restoration.
- **DOF Bryant Bays**
- Emerald Ash Borer cost share program for treating healthy Ash trees – will be the last year it's available.
- **Patrick Coady**
- Interest in sorting out all GIS databases – Luke Peters will pull that info together.
- **Les Johnson**
- Look into harvesting urban trees as a resource