

## **2013 Summer Study**

### **Stakeholder Advisory Group - District and Programmatic Performance Measures and Standards Subcommittee Meeting - May 30, 2013**

**Piedmont Regional Office – Department of Environmental Quality - 4949-A Cox Road, Glen Allen, VA**

**11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**

#### Members Present:

Darryl Glover – Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) - subcommittee chair

Herb Dunford – Chair, Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board

Deanna Fehrer - Piedmont Soil and Water Conservation District

Jack Frye - Chesapeake Bay Commission

Darrell Marshall- Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS)

Martha Moore- Virginia Farm Bureau

Bill Street - James River Association

Kendall Tyree – Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District Association

Michelle Vucci – Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)

The chair began the meeting by discussing possible dates for future meetings of the subcommittee. It was decided that the subcommittee would meet on June 10 (from 9 am to 11 am) and on July 8 (from 2pm to 4pm). The locations of these meetings would be determined.

The subcommittee agreed that tracking practices beyond cost share needed to be examined and also subcommittee members expressed interest in examining the eight percent allocation for technical assistance funding (as determined by the Appropriation Act as a portion of the appropriation from the Virginia Natural Resources Commitment Fund) at a future meeting once an approved cost share and technical assistance agreement for fiscal year 2014 is available. Subcommittee members also discussed the concept of market saturation and agreed that this issue also needed to be addressed with the cost share/technical assistance performance measures.

The subcommittee chair provided the members with a copy of the model contract for administrative and operations funding to soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs), based upon the policy approved by the Board in May. The chair directed members to review Attachment C, which lists the performance deliverables for the Fiscal Year 2014 Grant Agreements. Members asked clarifying questions regarding the deliverables, including the following:

- Deliverables - For the ninth deliverable (employee position descriptions) – what is meant by having an evaluation process that is “current and/or complete”? Also, should this deliverable specify that there is an annual review? Should this deliverable be broken into separate categories?
- Expanding deliverables – Are more performance measures needed? Should the role of the Soil and Water Conservation Board (Board) be considered?
- Prioritization – Where are funds better spent based on local needs? Secondary considerations need to be examined.
- Reporting – What standards are used for reporting?

Following this discussion, each of the deliverables in Attachment C was reviewed by the subcommittee.

*Deliverable #1 – Administer and provide technical assistance with nonpoint source pollution reduction.*

- Does the mission statement need to be more specific?
- Does this deliverable need to be pulled apart into separate sections? Should Cost-Share, WQIF, and tax credits be deliverables solely related to the cost-share policy or should these deliverables stay in the administrative and operations policy?
- There needs to be more clarity with this deliverable. For instance, how is an effective program determined?
- Further clarity regarding TMDL development and implementation processes is needed.
- There is recognition that technical assistance funded through the administrative and operations policy also overlaps into the cost-share policy and funds are commingled.

*Deliverable #2 – Support and foster partnerships to deliver natural resource conservation programs.*

- There needs to be more specific criteria regarding the partnerships.
- More clarity is needed regarding the measurement of partnerships and how they are scored as a deliverable.

*Deliverable #3 – Hold monthly meetings with a quorum of District board members present.*

- The subcommittee agreed that having a quorum is important because funding cannot be distributed locally until approved by the District board.

*Deliverable #4 – Develop and maintain a long-term plan that enhances District capabilities.*

- More information is needed regarding the term of a long-term plan. A timeframe could be defined.

- Should the reference to a “4-year cycle consistent with the election cycle of District Directors” be modified to remove the wording “election cycle”?
- Should this deliverable be modified to address annual long-term plan reviews? Is it possible to have a long-term plan or do you have an annual plan?

*Deliverable #5* – Prepare and follow an annual plan of work that connects to the District’s long-term plan.

- Should the Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) cleanup goals and basic elements be included?

*Deliverable #6* – Submit meeting minutes from all routine and special meetings of the District Board.

- No comments/suggested changes.

*Deliverable #7* – Submit a completed District Budget Request Form by July 15, 2013.

- No comments/suggested changes.

*Deliverable #8* – Submit quarterly financial reports to the District’s assigned Conservation District Coordinators (CDC) utilizing the Fiscal Year 2014 financial report.

- No comments/suggested changes.

*Deliverable #9* – Maintain employee position descriptions, performance expectations, and the District personnel policy.

- Should this deliverable be tied to an annual review?

*Deliverable #10* – Provide data and other information needed for the preparation of legislative studies.

- No comments/suggested changes.

*Deliverable #11* – Ensure staff implementing the Virginia Agricultural BMP Cost-Share Program, and other agricultural related programs, obtain USDA NRCS conservation planning certification.

- The time frame for this certification has changed from 18 to 14 months.

Other Issues Identified:

- Is eight (8) percent for technical assistance funding as determined by the Appropriation Act sufficient to meet certain functions? It is difficult to justify changing this percentage when there is not enough differentiation. Should marketing and market saturation be addressed in cost-share?

- The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a factor when examining the cost-share program.
- The value of the essential funding (approximately \$124,000) that is identified in the Administrative and Operations policy covers a broad capacity of services provided by Districts.
- How do you differentiate agricultural BMPs?

Data Needs:

- Prioritization Information – Primary and Secondary Considerations. This information will be provided by DCR.
- Evaluation points (used by CDCs). This information will be provided by DCR.
- Annual/Strategic Plans – examples with CDC criteria. This information will be provided by DCR and possibly by the Soil and Water Conservation District Association.