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COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

MEMORANDUM

TO: SWCD Chairpersons

FROM: Darryl Glover, Director, Division of Soil and Water Conservation

DATE: August 8, 2017

SUBJECT: RMP Implementation and Development Funding for FY2018

Over the course of the next five months, we encourage Districts to sign-up producers for RMP-1 and RMP-2 practices and to develop a list of those producers that they understand have implemented their plans and that need assistance completing the certification process. The goal of this process is to collectively advance further plan development with producers that have signed up with Districts and to bring those plans already in place through to certification.

While we would welcome Districts applying their VACS allocation to fund RMP-1 and 2 practices, it is the purpose of this communication to note that after January 1, 2018, DCR will utilize this sign-up to help inform the Department as to how federal grant funds and any remaining state funding may be best used to provide additional support towards the continuing advancement of this important voluntary partnership program. We envision that based on these sign-up lists, federal funding may be applied to contracts with RMP developers to further plan development and to advance existing plans to final certification.

The remaining state set-aside may be primarily applied to RMP-2 for payment to the producer who has attained certification. The Department is continuing to disburse payments for requested RMP-2 cost-share upon issuance of certification for as long as funds remain available.

RMP-1 sign-up will utilize a new ranking process the Department has developed in response to District requests for a procedure to prioritize RMPs for funding. Additional measures have been added to the RMP-1 cost-share practice to assist with project ranking. These measures must be completed in order for a participant to be considered for either RMP contractual or set-aside funding. Districts need to plot a point for the RMP, determine the level of farm participation (whole farm, tract, field-by-field), measure distance to stream, and input the percentage of USDA Highly Erodible Land (HEL) acreage. Specific measure descriptions are as follows:

Plot the Point: It is not necessary to map individual fields or list Farm, Tract, and Field information within the RMP-1 instance, but staff should choose a central representative point. This will allow the Department to obtain HUC ranking and water quality

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impairment information as part of our ranking process.

Farm Participation: Select whether the RMP(s) includes the participant's whole farm, whole tract, or only specific fields within the operation.

Stream or River Proximity: Using a map provided by the participant, measure the distance of the closest field border to any stream or river. If the measurement is less than 100', enter "yes". For any greater measurement, enter "no". If any field contains a stream or river, enter "yes". For this purpose, a stream or river can be considered a dashed or solid blue line on a USGS topographic "quad" sheet.

HEL acreage: Using USDA maps or 1026-A forms provided by the participant, identify the percentage of the total RMP acreage designated as Highly Erodible Land (HEL). If none are available, enter less than 30%.

The Department will take the tracking program information inputted by Districts and develop an RMP-1 project rank in accordance with the following table:

Farm participation	Stream or river proximity	HEL acreage	HUC Ranking	Bacteria or Nutrient Impairment
Whole farm = 3 Whole tract = 1 Field-by-field = 0	Yes = 2 No = 0	30%-100% = 3 <30% = 1	High = 3 Medium = 2 Low = 1	Yes = 2 No = 0

We also encourage Districts to work with their participants to help them implement cost-share practices that have been previously identified in approved RMPs. Together we can advance the RMP Program and effectuate refinements that will allow it to become a key vehicle in meeting our water quality goals as an important component of our agricultural cost-share program.

Should you or your staff have any questions related to this update, please contact Barbara McGarry at 804-371-0297.

cc: David C. Dowling, Deputy Director