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COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

MEMORANDUM

TO: SWCD Chairpersons

FROM: Darryl M. Glover,
Acting Deputy Director of Soil and Water Conservation, and Dam Safety and Floodplain
Management

DATE: January 22, 2018

DCR is pleased to announce the upcoming release of a Request for Applications (RFA) for Resource Management Plan (RMP) certification and development in the Chesapeake Bay watershed region of Virginia. The FY2019 Virginia Chesapeake Bay Agricultural Resource Management Plan Certification and Development Request for Applications (RFA) will be released on February 1, 2018, and will be posted at www.dcr.virginia.gov/soil-and-water/rmp. Any certified Resource Management Plan (RMP) developer is eligible to apply to receive a contract to perform these duties.

This contract project will implement many of the suggestions that were included in the RMP Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) legislative report. This SAG discussed ways to encourage increased implementation and certification of RMPs to examine funding, training and resource needs, and to look into new program incentives. The SAG submitted their report (found at www.dcr.virginia.gov/soil-and-water/rmp) on October 1, 2017.

Specific language has been added to the contract to encourage RMP developers to remain involved with the RMP participant throughout the lifespan of the RMP. Ideally, RMP developers work with the RMP participant to write the RMP, assist with implementation, make any necessary revisions to the RMP, conduct certification inspections, and also offer support to continue to implement the RMP and maintain implementation throughout the entire 9-year lifespan of an RMP certificate.

The contract project start date is June 1, 2018. The timeline for this contract is relatively short. Contractors will be required to submit plans for review and requests for certification inspections allowing enough time for Districts to conduct these reviews and inspections. Likewise, Districts are requested to review submitted plans and conduct inspections in a timely manner, keeping in mind that the RMP participant does not receive the benefit of certification until the entire certification process is completed.

Emphasis of the upcoming contract will be placed on RMP certifications. A minimum of 60% of an applicant's funding request should be applicable to certification activity (versus new RMP development) if the applicant has existing approved RMPs.

The SAG expressed concerns that certification funding was primarily available to the RMP developer, but not the RMP participant. The RMP-2 practice specification will be modified in FY19 so that payments may no longer be assigned to the RMP developer. Instead, the contract will include a payment rate, directly from DCR of \$2.50/acre for RMP developers whose activity results in issuance of an RMP certificate. The RMP participant may apply for the RMP-2 Implementation cost-share practice via Soil and Water Conservation Districts, at a higher payment rate of \$5.00/acre.

DCR recognizes that certification of RMPs involves workload for Districts. Accordingly, DCR is now providing RMP Operational Support for one inspection per RMP that is ready for certification in both the Chesapeake Bay watershed and Outside of the Chesapeake Bay watershed regions of the state. This Operational Support will be available on a reimbursable basis, similar to RMP Operational Support for initial review of RMP plans. Reimbursements will be provided to Districts in their quarterly financial disbursements. These new support funds will be provided at a rate of \$100/plan plus \$.50/acre.

RMP program staff are available to work with District Boards or staff at any time to help address any specific program questions. Please contact RMP Program Manager Scott Ambler scott.ambler@dcr.virginia.gov with any questions or concerns.

cc: SWCD Administrators (electronically)
DCR Conservation District Coordinators (electronically)