

PWP Information Exchange Presentation Summaries

Edinburg, VA - June 17, 2008

Chesapeake Forest Conservation Summit Summary

Sally Clagget, *USFS Chesapeake Bay Program Coordinator*

Directive:

- Protect 700,000 acres of high value forest
- Expand number of UTC beyond 2010 goals, accelerate riparian forest buffer restoration
- Financing mechanisms, and “put the bay on the ballot”
- Tracking and assessing information for local governments

Summit Goal:

- To gather a non-traditional group (people usually not targeted or whom convene) of people from local governments, land trusts, land owners, etc. to discuss directive using various case studies, keynote speakers, and group brainstorming (“popcorn” style) sessions over a two and a half day summit.

Workgroups envisioned:

- The summit produced the following 6 “workgroups”, or broad ideas that should be focused on in the future.

1. Building a regional forum

- ✓ To create one entity to lead effort, and to elevate and broaden forest conservation dialogue.

2. Building a forest conservation campaign

- ✓ To unify various audiences.

3. Develop a plan to *dramatically* expand financing for forest conservation

- ✓ Develop create financing options, targeting federal, local, state, and private levels.

4. Develop further planning and infrastructure

- ✓ Create green infrastructure.

5. Enhance increased networking between various organizations and groups

- ✓ More active learning. Example of networking is Chesapeake NEMO, used to do projects.

6. Developing a regional plan, and priorities.

- ✓ Become more official with green infrastructure.
- ✓ Encourage working lands aspect.
- ✓ Create a sense of individual work- through guidance- to achieve larger goal, in order to fit smaller jobs into big picture.

Final Goals:

- Reconvene at annual watershed forum, and hold another summit after one year to report back on progress and workgroups.

Smith Creek Restoration Project: A Model for Stream Restoration and Brook Trout Population Re-establishment

Mark Hudy, *USDA Forest Service National Aquatic Ecologist*

Brad Fink, *James Madison University Graduate Student/ Research Technician*

Background:

The Smith Creek Restoration Project resulted in actual and modeled effects that riparian buffer establishments and stream fencing have had on Smith Creek in Rockingham County, VA.

Smith Creek was an area abused by two centuries of agriculture that resulted in the removal of riparian vegetation, rising stream temperatures, extirpated Brook Trout populations, and reductions in other species' populations. Project participants worked on 65 acres of land, planting about 12,000 trees along the stream and throughout area, as well as removing all cattle from the vicinity. The trees were planted 10 feet apart for the first 60 feet from the creek, and 20 feet apart beyond that. The total cost was approximated at \$100,000, with about 65% covered by CREP.

Experiments and Findings:

Shading:

- **Created** a cloth covering to simulate riparian canopy shade for approximately the first third of the restoration area to see effects on both brook trout population, as well as white sucker population by tracking both populations.
- **Found:**
 - ~1-2 degrees C reductions in the water temperature over 50 days from 2006 to 2007 samples that shade created a 700 meter thermal refuge downstream.
 - reductions in white sucker density in the restoration area that may improve brook trout reintroduction possibility.
 - this type of shading may be a possibility to offset future climate change (however, very premature).

Removal of Cattle:

- **Removed** all cattle from restoration area and surrounding area, which therefore removed problems dealing with erosion, cattle crossing, and sediment build up.
- **Found** large reductions in E. Coli concentrations throughout creek, as well as farther down the stream. Also concluded that riparian buffer did much to remove other nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorous.

Emerging Issue: Wind Energy on National Forest Properties

Jim Smalls, *District Ranger for the Lee Ranger District*

Mr. Smalls discussed the impacts and possibilities of the soon to be proposed wind farm in the George Washington National Forest. Private wind farm company FreedomWorks, LLC is in the planning stage of proposing the construction of 131, 440 foot turbines stretching 18 miles along the Virginia / West Virginia border. This project is monumental because it would mark the first ever wind farm constructed on U.S. National forest land, however two other projects in Michigan and Vermont on national forest land are in planning as well.

There were many questions posed towards this project, not only during the meeting, but that Jim had experienced elsewhere. Many of the issues dealt with the feasibility of constructing 18 miles of giant turbines along a ridgeline, which would need many access roads, and take up lots of land- all affecting the local environment. In addition, a large topic of discussion was the affect that the turbines would have on the bat and bird populations, as turbines have been known to affect these two populations- however, not much information is known for the specific area.

Improving Stormwater Management through Innovative Policy

Anne Merwin, *Potomac Conservancy's Senior Director of Policy*

Alana Hartman, Potomac Basin Coordinator, WV Dept. of Environmental Protection

Montgomery County's "Green Streets" Road Code

Potomac Conservancy and a coalition of stormwater advocates have been working with Montgomery County for the past year and a half to green the county's road building practices. "Green Streets" is a technique where roadway stormwater runoff is treated using bioretention (i.e. raingardens) and other vegetated techniques. Vegetated stormwater solutions provide a wider variety of benefits, including improved pollution, temperature, and runoff reduction performance, than traditional roadway stormwater management practices.

When the county reexamined its road code - the standards by which it builds all roads - in winter 2007, Potomac Conservancy successfully included a statement mandating green streets in the law. To implement this policy, Potomac Conservancy has spent the last year working with a stakeholder group to develop the necessary technical regulations. Preliminary draft regulations require capture and treatment of a minimum volume of stormwater within the road right-of-way using green streets techniques.

For more information, contact Anne Merwin, Senior Director of Policy for the Potomac Conservancy (Merwin@potomac.org)

WV/ VA Stormwater Workshop

Alana Hartman spoke about the recent Stormwater Workshop held in Sheperdstown, WV- a collaborative effort between partners in West Virginia and Virginia.

More than 70 ridge and valley folks attended this workshop. The key theme of the workshop was the need to adapt stormwater practices to work in the demanding karst terrain that is so common in this fast growing landscape. The major conclusion was that traditional stormwater practices, such as ponds, are prone to failure, and that LID practices such as bioretention, dry swales and rain tanks are a superior alternative (although they still require careful design). One of the outcomes was a decision to develop draft karst guidelines for this region by the end of the year. To access presentations from this workshop, please visit: <http://www.chesapeakestormwater.net/west-virginia2/>