

USC Retreat Notes – Day 1-

1/31/23

NYS DEC Chesapeake Monitoring & Trend Analysis and New Funding Opportunities – Lauren Townley and Cassandra Davis

Progress

-1.27 million lbs left to go for Nitrogen to meet 2025 goal

Conowingo WIP – Loads will be addressed separate from the CB WIP – not by 2025

164,681 acres of NM Core N Goal

110,000 in 2022

37,731 tillage

26,000 2022

49 mile of stream restoration for Conowingo and 2025 goal

Currently at 6 miles

Manure Incorporation – under reported!!!! If you're doing NM you should be incorporating manure and it should be reported!!!

- Putting load numbers in context – focusing on the local water quality benefits then the TMDL targets – CAST can be used for BMP loading but it is not easy for a farmer
- Map with different sized bubbles show improving vs. Degrading the easiest for local water quality.
- Only 1 or 2 sites showing stressed for macroinvertebrates in the USC Watershed
- Towanda is the only long-term monitoring station, and is improving for nitrogen, no trend for phosphorus.
- Developed area is the reason for the water quality trends degrading? (Amanda)
 - Feels we should revisit other sectors to figure out what they are doing to help.
 - DEC is behind on non-ag reporting. Just starting to report point source bmps
- Unaccounted model loads – then climate change and Conowingo
 - Conversations happening regarding how to handle them and what the timeline looks like to meet additional loads
 - "Try to meet as much as you can"
 - EPA is doing major overhaul in 2028 of Watershed model (Phase 7)
 - Messaging is "keep doing what we are doing"
 - Typical BMPs for nutrient reductions – not new BMPs.
- Binghamton – Johnson City Treatment Plant – malfunction in 2021 caused spike in nutrient load.

Funding – DEC

- CBIG – \$7,367,000 Ends 8/31/2025
- EPF – Ocean and Great Lakes
 - \$1,000,000 CB WIP 3
 - Will just be added to CBIG
- NY Rural Water Association – WWTP Optimization funding
- Cover Crops – combined into CBIG
- State Buffer Program – Ag and Markets
- Tetra Tech – Urban NM Guidance
 - Verification – Mobile App

- CB Infrastructure Investment Job Act
 - \$1,289,000
 - First \$500k will be Conowingo WIP
 - \$525k will be Buffer Program
 - MEB \$409,000 to support additional cover crops
- Environmental Bond Act – 4.2 M
 - WQ and Resilient Infrastructure – 650 M
 - Open Space Cons and Rec – 650 M
 - Rest and Flood Risk Reduction – 1.1 B
 - Climate Change – 1.5 B
 - 300 M on other Projects
 - Not sure how any of this will roll out, but hoping for existing programs
 - Lauren would push for contracting with the USC – not sure if that will be acceptable or not.
 - Money could be split between DEC and other State Agencies
 - Do not believe we will see anything come through in 2023 – may fall/winter or 2024.
- CLCPA – could potentially get wrapped into the Bond Act Funding. - More to come from Ag and Markets

NYSDAM Climate Leadership Action Plan and Climate Resiliency Opportunities – Brian Steinmuller

- CLCPA
 - Monitoring, reporting and verification of emission reduction
 - Practices to focus on for AG
 - NM – reducing N2O emissions
 - Alternative MM – reducing methane emissions
 - Precision Feed and Herd Management – Methane and N2O emissions
 - Carbon Sequestration Practices
 - Avoided conversion of forest and farmland
 - Soil Health
 - Agroforestry
 - Forest Management
 - Reforestation/Afforestation
 - Climate Focused Bio-economy
MORE TREES!!!!!!
 - CRF for Round 7 - \$15 Million available RFP will be out early 2023
 - Beyond Round 7 looking at
 - Carbon Farm Plan
 - Climate Smart Commodities
 - Improves ways to incentivize implementation, maintenance and operation costs
 - Quantification Tools – Data Management System to track results
- NYS is relying on Voluntary/Incentive based approach
 - Will not see mandates (as of now)
- Relying on SWCD – how do we work within the more broad landscape of practices (eg. NRCS Practice Standards)
 - Pulling individual practices standards and incorporating them into the systems approach.

- Ecosystem Services payments – pasture system vs. Confinement. Are we going to pay someone to pasture their animals? Who verifies that is happening? Does it have to meet the NRCS standard to pay on that?
 - Public payments has to have a measure impact before payments can be made
- Manure Management quantification modeling tools?
- Solar Fields?
 - Focuses on renewable energy
 - However conflicts with agricultural and forestry land uses.
- Where is the Ag Sector going to get funding for the Industry side of things? Electrification, etc.
- Food/Dairy Processors decisions trickle down to the farmers and will put farms out of business, driven by NetZero standards.
- Maintaining Farm viability has to be a priority!
- Steve- we do not want to be regulators. It may go that way, there needs to be representation in Albany regarding us being partners and not regulators.
- Pilot farms needed.

District Presentations

- **Bradford County CD – Utilization of USC Funds**
- **Chenango County SWCD – Wylie Brook Stream Restoration Project**
- **Cortland County SWCD – Filling Gaps and Maximizing our Program Reach by Utilizing Resources from USC Partnerships**

Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay Overview and Partnership Opportunities

- Companies vs. Districts
 - Deep engagement with companies to get work completed and on the ground
- Agriculture
 - Focusing on the plain sect – underserved
 - Private sector is a much higher interested by farmers than public sector is.
 - Engaging the companies gives better success
 - Solutions that are built into the ag. Supply chain
 - Turkey Hill – asked how many farms that are supply product for turkey hill ice cream have nutrient management/conservation plans.
 - Questions created additional program from Turkey Hill and required planning work for all farms providing product for turkey hill.
- Workflow & Organic Valley
 - Very boots on the ground oriented...
 - Dairy Coop will identify potential farms/projects
 - AFB and Coop then visit the farm
 - AFB and TSP then visit farm
 - TSP and Farmer complete plans, engineering, design, contracting, construction
 - 124 Organic Valley farms in NYS
- Organic Valley is interested in bringing additional resources into the partnership model
- OV has carbon goals to meet by 2050
- OV is focused on Insetting vs. Offsetting
 - EXAMPLES
 - Insetting is on member farms
 - Offsetting is in South America
- Farm Level Engagement
- Forest Program Mission
 - Forest Buffers are required

- Alliance doesn't like to take credit for anything because everyone is doing these things
- Reforestation is a huge focus
- PA gaps – not a lot of capacity
 - Flexible funding to get trees in the ground
 - Alliance does the grant administration in PA due to lack of capacity
 - Paying costs directly to the contractor instead of the landowner
 - No reimbursement aspect, just goes directly to the contractor

How to make this work in NY – Q&A

- Intermittent streams and ponds are not required to be buffered
- How to work with the plain sect communities because they often refuse government funding
 - Bringing the partner (coop's) to the farm brings more trust with the plain sect community
 - Much more receptive and willing to discuss
 - Private donors from corporations are even more willing
 - Funding doesn't go to the landowner – its goes directly to the contractor
 - Being a non-profit is beneficial
 - Troy shared that Plain Sect communities are just starting their conversation with Organic Valley, and that no decisions have been made on how the incentive payments will be viewed in their communities. They need time to figure that out.
 - Community members wondered if OV can just pay more for milk, allowing them to do their own practices
 - SWCD/USC can help facilitate a meeting with the communities if needed.
 - Concerned about funding context and how to explain to the farms
- Rented Land – Landowner has to agree to implement the practices, but then the OV member is eligible for the payment for insetting.
- TSPs & Engineering – required to meet NRCS Standard and have As-Builts etc.
 - NFWF SWG through AFB can help to cover those costs
 - OV can help to cover engineering costs as well
 - Engineering costs should be covered or handled already in NY by AgNP, CRF, EQIP, etc.
 - USC can provide buffer planning assistance
- If an OV farm decides not to participate in funding – It's okay. Everything is a voluntary basis right now. Will not lose their milk market if they say no.
 - E&O will continue with those farms to hopefully get a project implemented eventually.
 - OV has not expressed interest regarding pushing this on farmers or requiring anything
 - AFB focuses on making the farm happy when it comes to practice implementation.
 - Prioritizing practices for all farm sizes so that small farms are not lost
 - Funding for Solid Separation – OV Carbon Insetting Program
 - Flexible due to WQ benefits
- Outreach and communication
 - Who handles communication to the farms for the opportunity?
 - How is the direct contact with the farmer who is interested in moving forward with the project?
 - Can take a different workflow model than what they usually do in other states if needed.
 - Database management for CB – Need to capture practices in the database – communication is a must!
 - Do not want to re-invent the wheel
 - Being able to report the practices is Key!

- Buffer requirements
 - Minimum 35' from top of bank – no longer an average minimum unless and obstruction
 - Livestock exclusion – length would be determined by who holds the contract
 - AFB will follow whatever we are already doing
 - Up to \$60k for any size buffer per farm
 - Wetlands – potential for discussion to have with OV
 - Can definitely pay to buffer wetlands
 - Potential for wider buffers to bring more funding from the AFB program to the farmers – up to \$80k instead of \$60
- Program is not being implemented in NY YET
 - Working on figuring out the program details for the region
 - Working on figuring out the program details specific for NY
- OV is aware that the AFB is working with the USC.
- Bonus points within AgNP and CRF for Buffers – State Funding

District Presentations

- **Delaware County SWCD – Working Together as Members of the Upper Susquehanna Coalition**
- **Madison County SWCD – USC/ Madison County SWCD Projects**
- **Tioga County SWCD – Filling gaps with USC Personnel, Programs and Funding**

Mentimeter – Day 1 recap and brainstorming questions