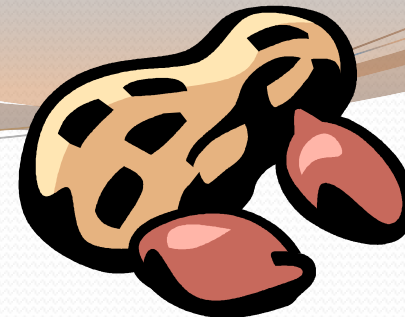


# University Collaboration to Support Expert Review of Best Management Practices for Chesapeake Bay Water Quality Improvements

Brian Benham

Biological Systems Engineering, Virginia Tech

June 2014 STAC Meeting



# In a nut shell...

- Six year cooperative agreement between VT and EPA, renewable annually
- Overall objective: *to effectively and efficiently manage the CBP partnership's process of developing or revising BMP effectiveness estimates for use in the watershed model*
- Agreement funds full-time Project Coordinator
- Provides incentives for leading/participating in Expert Panel process
- Provides \$1.02M over six years in funding for Expert Panels
- Expert Panel funding awarded via competitive proposal process – proposals review by university faculty and CBP

# Background

- Expert Panel University Collaboration grew out of regional Mid-Atlantic Water Program (MAWP)
- MAWP partnership of Land-Grant Universities funded by USDA
- Mission: *create and disseminate knowledge that insures a safe and reliable source of water*
- In 2013 USDA defunded all eight (8) regional projects
- MAWP funded needs assessment in 2013



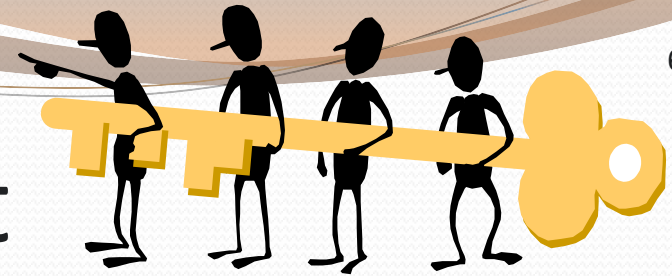
# Needs assessment

- Key informant interviews and focus groups identified potential roles for a regional university partnership: ***Chesapeake Bay Watershed Research and Outreach Collaborative (CBW-ROC). Resulted in 6 “findings:”***
  1. Urgent needs are waiting to be met by a regional university partnership focused on research and science-based outreach connected to the Chesapeake Bay.
  2. Best management practices (BMPs) should be a central focus of the university partnership.
  3. The regional university partnership should contribute to initiatives to integrate social scientists into a wide array of activities related to the Chesapeake Bay.
  4. There is a need for a new research initiative on nutrient and sediment cycling lag time in the Bay watershed.
  5. There is a need for outreach to local jurisdictions within the Bay watershed regarding the intricacies of the Chesapeake Bay Program Watershed Model.
  6. The identified needs justify a significant commitment of budgetary resources at a larger scale than achieved by the Mid-Atlantic Water Program.

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# Cooperative Agreement



6

- Six year cooperative agreement, renewable annually
- Three Objectives
  1. Implement BMP protocol (revision in progress)
  2. Assist expert panels with verification role
  3. Convene expert panels for modeling topics
- Agreement funds full-time Project Coordinator
- Provides incentives for leading/participating in Expert Panel process
- Provides \$1.02M over six years in funding for Expert Panels
- Expert Panel funding awarded via competitive proposal process

# Agreement Objectives

1. Implement BMP protocol – Develop a process by which experts interested in chairing an Expert Panel (EP) can apply for funding. Applies only to EPs managed under VT/EPA Cooperative Agreement. (\$15 to \$30K depending on complexity)
  - RFP developed by CBW-ROC and CBP
  - Proposals reviewed by CBW-ROC Steering Committee

Jurisdiction	Team Member	Institution
Delaware	Jenn Volk	University of Delaware
Maryland	Frank Coale	University of Maryland
New York	Quirine Ketterings	Cornell University
Pennsylvania	Charlie Abdalla	Penn State University
Virginia	Brian Benham (Chair)	Virginia Tech
Washington, D.C.	Tolessa Dekissa	University of the District of Columbia
West Virginia	Tom Basden	West Virginia University



Action	Responsibility
1. Identify/Prioritize BMPs	Chesapeake Bay Program/ Water Quality Goal Implementation Team (WQGIT)/WQGIT Workgroups
2. Perform BMP-specific literature review. Conduct interviews with experts to solicit additional information. Prepare literature package for Expert Panel	Project Coordinator
3. Develop Expert Panel request for proposals	Project Lead, GIT Chair, and appropriate GIT Workgroup with input from the CBW-ROC Advisory Board
4. Solicit Expert Panel proposals/ recruit panel chairs	Project Lead and GIT WGs, with input from GIT and CBW-ROC Advisory Board
5. Evaluate, select and award Expert Panel proposals	CBW-ROC Advisory Board with support from Project Lead and input from GIT and appropriate GIT Workgroup
6. Convene Expert Panel, evaluate/synthesize/ summarize relevant data/information	Expert Panel Chair and membership with support from Project Coordinator
7. Generate Expert Panel report that conforms in form and content with CBP BMP Protocol	Expert Panel Chair and membership with support from Project Coordinator
8. Submit to EP report to CBP for review and approval Source Sector Workgroup → Watershed Technical Workgroup → WQGIT	Project Coordinator and Project Lead with support from Expert Panel Chair

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2. Assist expert panels with verification role – Assist EPs in including options for performing BMP-specific verification in EP report.
3. Convene expert panels for modeling topics – Similar to Obj. 1 modeling focus.

# Project Coordinator

- Coordinate logistics for Expert Panels (EPs) conference calls/meetings
- Participate in EP conference calls/meetings
- Perform initial literature search
- Screen, preliminarily rank and compile literature for applicability, usefulness, and quality
- Seek additional, relevant information not readily accessible in the public record by conducting interviews with pertinent authorities/experts
- Consult with the relevant CBP workgroups for information on the technical/modeling issues pertaining to each BMP
- Draft preliminary literature review summaries and submit to EP Chairs
- Assist EP Chair in drafting preliminary EP report, ensuring that it complies with CBP protocol
- Provide editorial assistance as EP finalizes report
- Serve as project liaison with GITs and the various workgroups
- Present EP findings to appropriate workgroup
- Support Workgroup Chair as they present EP recommendations to the appropriate GIT

# Timeline...

- Aug 2013 EPA releases RFP
  - Sep 2013 CBW-ROC develops proposal
  - Nov 2013 Notified of award (after govt. shutdown ends)
  - Apr 2014 Agreement signed by VT and EPA
  - May 2014 Project Coord. position approved and advertised
  - Jun 2014 Interviews for Project Coord. on-going
  - Jul 2014 Project Coord. starts mid month
  - Sep 2014 First Expert Panel managed under new agreement convenes
- Expert Panel reports approved thru CBP structure 8 to 10 months later.



# Challenges and Opportunities



## Challenges:

1. New process of managing Expert Panels.  
There will be hiccups, and growing and transition pains.
2. MUST manage expectations. This new approach will not make all happy.  
The proposal outlines specific tasks and deliverables. Must stay on task.
3. Role of Project Coordinator critical.

## Opportunities:

1. Incentive may make recruiting EPs easier. Could expand EP pool.
2. Dedicated Project Coordinator will improve process, for example better communication between EPs and CBP (workgroups and GITs).
3. More efficient EP process – more active panels producing more reports that make it through approval process quicker.
4. Role of Project Coordinator critical.

# Questions?

