

**Falling River TMDL Implementation Plan  
Agricultural Working Group Meeting  
Campbell County Extension Office Building: January 15, 2008**

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**Attendees**

Krystal Coxon, VA Department of Conservation  
James Puckett, Jr., Farmer and Robert E Lee Soil and Water Conservation District (RELSWCD)  
Dave Sandman, RELSWCD  
Don Yancey, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)  
Amanda Gray, VA Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)  
Paula Nash, DEQ  
Arthur Turner, Farmer  
Jim O'Hara, Resident  
Brandon Schmitt, Farmer  
Kelly Hitchcock, Local Government Council

**Meeting Summary**

1. Introductions

Krystal Coxon welcomed everyone and provided an opportunity for introductions. Coxon noted that she was the new DCR representative for the Falling River project.

2. Review Falling River Implementation Plan development

Coxon provided a general overview of the IP plan, the primary goal, the role of the working groups, and lastly a summation of actions to date. Coxon noted that this meeting would provide the bulk of information that would be summarized and transmitted to the Steering Committee for consideration and inclusion into the final draft that would be presented to the public for comment.

3. Review of September 25, 2007 meeting

Kelly Hitchcock reviewed the minutes of the September 25, 2007 meeting. Key points of the meeting highlighted included the concern of loss of control over land under the 10 year life of the cost share practice; the possibility of increased interest if, as with the EQUIP program, the cost-share program could assist with reseeding on slopes outside of the fenced areas in draught condition years; and the question of intermittent streams.

4. Discussion of Agricultural Best Management Practices

**Review of handout and Discussion of Practices and Costs**

The Working Group reviewed the Falling River TMDL IP Stage I and Stage II BMP Tables, provided by Rod Bodkin, MapTech. Coxon noted that comments about each of the elements noted on the handout were important to discuss and consider as these would represent the practices submitted to the Steering Committee for inclusion into the IP.

Table I – Fencing Requirements:

To assist in understanding the handout and practice reference, Don Yancey provided an overview of the various practices including:

- SL-6 – this practice is to enhance vegetated cover to pasture land and provide stream exclusion. Within this practice there can be fencing along a stream or pond, there can be cross-fencing, there can be installation of pressurized water systems. The fence must be at least 35 feet from the stream or water source. Must have a stream or pond

that is accessible by cattle to qualify for this cost share program. There is no minimum amount of fencing along a stream necessary to allow for incorporation of other practices included.

- WP-2T – this practice is essentially the SL-6 program without the inclusion of a water system. Don and Dave noted that this practice is not used as much in this watershed because the SL-6 is most often applicable.

Hitchcock referred the group to the email that was provided by Bodkin relating to the justification for the cost estimates. The email from Rod noted that the cost estimates were based on a combination of cost estimates provided by Dave Sandman and a DCR database cost estimate. It was also noted that the average fence length was based on the realization that current SL-6 practices in the Falling River watershed included considerable cross-fencing and that for the purposes of the TMDL – stream side exclusion was the practice focus.

Sandman noted that he could provide the feed of stream exclusion fencing if it was needed. It was agreed that Dave would provide Rod with the current stream exclusion fencing primarily as a means to confirm Rod’s method for coming up with the total of 304 total fencing projects.

**ACTION:** Dave Sandman provides Bodkin with the total feet of stream exclusion fencing within Falling River. It was felt that any changes from the provided Table I estimates would be needed only if the stream side exclusion estimates varied greatly from the numbers that Dave provides Rod.

Other than this one item, the group in general was comfortable with the Table I, Stage I Fencing Estimates.

#### Table I – Agricultural Land Based Requirements

When viewing this section of Table I there were few table elements that needed further explanation before a definitive response to the information. Namely, it was noted that more information on the type of practices included under “Improved Pasture Management” was needed. Primary Questions generated were:

1. To what does the “system” unit of Grazing Land Protection System (SL-6) refer?

**ACTION:** Ask Bodkin to explain what is referred to as “system” in the grazing land protection system.

2. What specific practices are included within Improved Pasture Management?
  - It appeared to the group that the cost would imply that reseeding was included within the general “Improved Pasture Management”. Further, if reseeding was included within this practice, it was felt that \$108 per unit (being an acre) was a bit low. It was noted that currently EQUIP was providing \$120/acre to reseed. It was also noted that if you consider lime/fertilizer/ and reseeding the cost could be low; especially if you included herbicide cost of approximately \$25/acre for weeds.
  - Lastly it was noted that for hay and pasture land the current fertilizer rate for medium and low rates was between \$75 and \$100/acre.

**ACTION:** Request from Bodkin what practices are included within Improved Pasture Management. If the practice includes reseeding, consider increasing the per unit cost to match current EQUIP rates.

4. Loafing Management

It was noted that this estimate was based on the fact that there was not too much use of this practice within the watershed. The use of a hardened loaf or feed area was not very typical for the practices in Falling River. It was felt the estimate provided in the table was sufficient.

5. Manure Incorporation

Most crop land where incorporation was used is associated with dairy farming. It was felt that the cost was sufficient and was close to the \$14/acre for disking shown through the FSA, if this estimate was for dairy only. However the following summarized concerns and questions for the numbers if bio-solids or poultry are a component of the estimates:

- Are these 7,092 units from within included cost share programs and if so, what are the cost share programs.
- For manure incorporation is this just an estimate for dairy farmer or does this include chicken and potential bio-solid incorporation.
- Who are we talking about utilizing this practice?
- If numbers shown do include bio-solids and chicken, the \$18/unit may be too low. This concern on the \$18 for this method is based on the cost associated with recycling, applying and hauling of bio-solids that had an estimate by a participant at \$20/acre.
- If you are just directing this estimate to dairy within falling river the cost is good but acreage may be too high.

**ACTION:** Ask Bodkin to explain what is defined within the acreage number. What practices are assumed?

6. Vegetated Buffer

Dave indicated that current programs that provide for vegetated buffer include EQUIP and the BMP program. There was another question from the table in this area related again to the unit component. The question was:

- Does the unit number refer to acres just around cropland and not around streams? The answer to this question would determine what program this practice would be associated with.
- Example would be Woodland Buffer Practice – FR3 of planting trees in creek bottoms and streams. Depending on the practice the cost can have a high variation. It was noted that Hardwood Trees could be as much as \$700 to \$800 per acre versus pine at approximately \$75 to \$100 per acre.

**ACTION:** Request Bodkin to better define the practices and cost associated with Vegetated Buffer.

Table 2 – Stage II preliminary agricultural cost for falling River

There was discussion about the cost and practices associated with Table 2. It was noted by Paula Nash that in work on another TMDL the use of Retention Ponds within the rural areas was seen as a last resort practice and not generally received well. Both Nash and Amanda Gray of DEQ noted that those items shown within Table 2 referred to the Stage II measures and thus were those practices that resulted in zero violations of the TMDL and in effect was a plan requirement. It was noted that Stage II were those practices that represent implemented in the final five years of plan implementation.

Participants noted that this was not a practical solution with the Falling River watershed except under very steep slopes and very special circumstances.

This table and the total cost generated discussion by Jim O'Hara, local resident, on the cost of all the practices and concern of where the money to implement the practices.

It was also noted by Gray that she questioned the clarity of the unit designation. She questioned if the table could show the number of ponds necessary to build versus the number of acres treated by the ponds.

**ACTION:** Ask Bodkin to review Table 2 to consider the unit designation for the retention ponds or to better define the unit numbers.

### **Additional Ideas for IP by Agricultural Group**

Coxon asked the Agricultural Working Group if there were any other practices or observations that should be added to or articulated in the Falling River IP.

The following summarizes items that it was felt should be addressed in the plan:

- It was noted that there is some concern for the smaller farmers that the 35 feet distance on the sides of streams, especially intermittent streams, is sometimes a hard sale;
- Incorporate within the plan the suggestion that reseeding be included as allowable cost within the cost share during draught conditions; Yancey noted that the inclusion of this practice within the Table I – Pasture Management was part of this question. Did those numbers assume this.
- Show education examples to overcome some of the cultural constraints on utilizing these BMPs. Coxon mentioned providing copies of the BMP manual that was developed by DCR.

It was noted that Hitchcock will develop the meeting minutes and provide Rod a summation of the questions generated from the meeting. A final summation of what will be presented to the Steering Committee will be provided to all Agricultural Group Members for review and comment.

**ACTION:** Hitchcock develops meeting minutes and distribute all correspondences to the Agricultural Working Group members.

#### 5. Representation on the Steering Committee

Coxon noted that it was important to have a representative from the Agricultural Group on the Steering Committee to be able to respond to any generated questions that would arise from the practice suggestions. It was agreed that James Puckett, Jr would serve as the Agricultural Working Group Steering Committee representative.

**ACTION:** James Puckett attends and represent the Agricultural Working Group at the Falling River IP Steering Committee meeting.

#### 6. Steering Committee Meeting

It was noted that the Steering Committee meeting would be held in the later part of February. An exact meeting location and time would be provided to the group.

#### 7. Falling River IP Public Meeting

Coxon reminded the group that the draft plan and public meeting would be held in the first week of April. The public meeting would begin the 30 day comment period for the plan.

**ACTION:** Hitchcock provides members information on all upcoming dates.