

SWCD Summer Study Project Plan

The project plan is an agreement among the project team, the project sponsor and key stakeholders. It represents a common understanding of the project for the purpose of facilitating communication among the stakeholders and for setting authorities and limits for the project manager and team. The scope statement defines the boundaries of the project in multiple dimensions including approach, deliverables, and milestones.

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A. Requirements

1. Examine funding needs for administration and operation of the soil and water conservation districts and the technical assistance they provide for implementation of agricultural best management practices needed to meet Virginia's Watershed Implementation Plan as well as the Southern Rivers Total Maximum Daily Load limits including a review of the following:
 - a. The historical distribution of funding for administration and operations of all soil and water conservation districts and a projection of future funding needs and any recommended changes to the methodology for distribution of these funds;
 - b. The historical distribution of funding for technical assistance for agricultural best management practices and a projection of the future funding and staffing needs necessary for districts to provide efficient and effective technical assistance to farmers (this should include the quantification of technical assistance needs for all district activities, not just the agricultural cost share program);
 - c. Operational and technical assistance needs in relation to the amount of agricultural best management practices cost-share dollars allocated to the districts, and;
 - d. The process, timing and methodology for distribution of agricultural best management practices cost-share funds to be provided to farmers by the Department of Conservation and Recreation through the districts.
2. Develop recommendations for any suggested division, merger, modification, or relocation of district boundaries.
3. Make recommendations to the Governor and the Chairmen of the Senate Finance and the House Appropriations Committees no later than October 1, 2012.
4. Determine an annual funding amount, for each year of the ensuing biennial period, for effective Soil and Water Conservation District technical assistance and implementation of agricultural best management practices.

B. Objectives

1. Recognize the full range of SWCD conservation mandates and authorities, with consideration to the variations among districts with their geographic size, land use, distribution, and communities served. Determine the relationship between these actions and the implementation of agricultural BMPs.
2. Evaluate the range of current and potential funding partners and sources that support the SWCD mission. Consider potential mechanisms for stable, predictable funding in the future.
3. Consider new and emerging SWCD responsibilities including those associated with Resource Management Plans and voluntary BMP data collection and tracking.
4. Create a SWCD funding structure that promotes transparency of purpose and priorities among all interested parties, beginning with the appropriation of state funds, to the priorities for funding disbursements and ending with the outcomes of performance.
5. Develop a funding formula for the future that is equitable, predictable and understandable, with components designed to reward high performance.
6. Identify adequate measures of district performance and associated standards.

7. Consider the need for any new authorities to allow for districts to transform in order to maximize operational capacity or performance.
8. Utilize future funding needs as inputs to inform the annual Agricultural Needs Assessment.
9. Consider any other objectives deemed necessary by the majority of the panel to inform the project requirements.

C. Project Scope

Examine SWCD mandates and authorities

- ◆ Process for Implementation of Cost-Share BMPs
 - Range of Effort Required

Review of historical distribution of funding:

- ◆ Operations
- ◆ Administration
- ◆ Technical Assistance
 - Agricultural Cost Share
 - Other District programs
 - Staffing
- ◆ Cost Share
- ◆ Operational Capacity
 - Operational and technical assistance needs in relation to the amount of agricultural best management practices cost-share dollars allocated

Evaluate District funding needs:

- ◆ Operations
- ◆ Administration
- ◆ Technical Assistance
 - Agricultural Cost Share
 - Other District programs
 - Staffing
- ◆ Cost Share
- ◆ Operational Capacity
 - Operational and technical assistance needs in relation to the amount of agricultural best management practices cost-share dollars allocated

Develop recommendations

- ◆ Methodology for distribution of District funds
 - Operations
 - Administration
 - Technical Assistance
 - Cost Share
- ◆ Process for distribution of District funds
 - General Funds
 - Natural Resources Commitment Fund
 - Dedicated, Stable, and Predictable Sources
- ◆ Timing for distribution of District funds
- ◆ Suggestions for District performance
 - Measures
 - Standards
 - District boundaries
 - Authorities for change

D. Project Schedule

Project Milestones	Tentative Completion Date
Project Start	05/25/2012
Project Scope	06/01/2012
Historical Funding Data	06/08/2012
Meeting 1 – Scope, SWCD Mission, Historic Funding	Week of 06/18/2012
Meeting 2 – Future Funding Needs, Staffing Needs	Week of 07/06/2012
Meeting 3 – Funding Needs, Funding Methodology, Timing	Week of 07/27/2012
Agricultural Needs Assessment	08/10/2012
Draft Proposals	08/10/2012
Meeting 4 – Build Consensus, Finalize Proposals	Week of 08/17/2012
Finalize Recommendations	08/31/2012
Submit Recommendations to SNR	09/07/2012
Submit Recommendations to Governor and Committee Chairmen	10/01/2012
Project Completion	10/01/2012

E. Project Team

Stakeholders
Anthony Moore, Deputy Secretary for Chesapeake Bay Restoration
Travis Hill, Department of Agriculture and Forestry Deputy Secretary
David A. Johnson, DCR Director
Darrell Marshall, VDACS
Ed Overton, VASWCD
Don Wells, VASWCD
Martha Moore, Virginia Farm Bureau Federation
Katie Frazier, Virginia Agribusiness Council
Jack Frye, Chesapeake Bay Commission
Ann Jennings, Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Bill Street, James River Association
Larry Land, Virginia Association of Counties
Joe Lerch, Virginia Municipal League
Leith Campbell, representing IT systems, retired USDA
Jack Bricker, NRCS
Herb Dunford, Soil and Water Conservation Board and Henricopolis SWCD
Jerry L. Ingle, Soil and Water Conservation Board and Daniel Boone SWCD
Jerry Edwards, Virginia Department of Planning and Budget
Clyde Cristman, Va Senate Finance Committee staff
Paul Van Lenten, Jr., Va House Appropriations Committee staff
Megen Dalton, Shenandoah Valley SWCD
Alyson Sappington, Thomas Jefferson SWCD
Meaghann Terrien, Three Rivers SWCD
Deanna Fehrer, Piedmont SWCD
Support Staff
Reese Peck, DCR Stormwater Division Director
Mike Foreman, DCR Stormwater Division
Robbie Gargiulo, DCR Stormwater Division
Stephanie Martin, DCR Stormwater Division
James Davis-Martin, DCR Stormwater Division
Mark Meador, DCR Stormwater Division
Rick Hill, DCR Stormwater Division