

Chapters 735 and 736 Stakeholder Advisory Group

Monday, April 14, 2025

Patrick Henry Building, Richmond, Virginia

STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERS PRESENT

The Honorable Stefanie Taillon, Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources, Co-Chair

The Honorable Matthew J. Lohr, Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry, Co-Chair

Matthew Wells, Director, Department of Conservation and Recreation

Tom Dunlap, James River Association

Jay C. Ford, Chesapeake Bay Foundation

Mark Frondorf, Shenandoah Riverkeeper

Dan Goerlich, Virginia Cooperative Extension

Adrienne Kotula, Chesapeake Bay Commission

Martha Moore, Virginia Farm Bureau Federation

Lindsay Reames, Virginia Agribusiness Council

Jim Riddell, Virginia Cattlemen's Association

Jim Timberlake, Virginia Association of the Commissioners of the Revenue

Dr. Kendall Tyree, Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

STATE AGENCY STAFF PRESENT

Darryl Glover, DCR

James Martin, DCR

Lisa McGee, DCR

Matt Sabas, DCR

Christine Watlington Jones, DCR

Darrell Marshall VDACS

Andrew Smith

OTHER ATTENDEES

Trey Davis, Virginia Agribusiness Council

Katelyn Jordan, Virginia Farm Bureau Federation

Charlie Paullin, Inside Climate

Kendall Shifflett, SFAC

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Secretary Taillon called the meeting to order, welcomed the attendees and requested group member introductions.

PRESENTATION: James Martin, Director, Division of Soil and Water Conservation, DCR

Review of 2024 Progress

- BMPs submitted, including the TMDL critical period, are updated. This update impacts multiple estimates including the BMPs credited through 2017 land use (except for forest buffers, tree and forest planting,

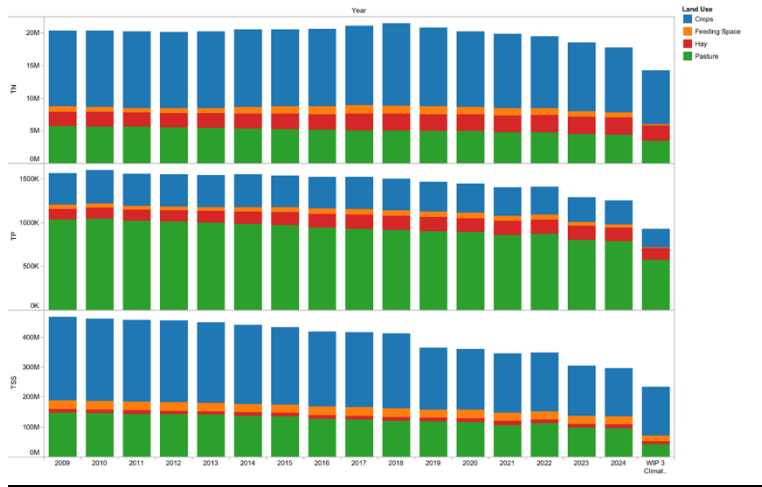
which is 2002), the amount of nutrients applied to meet crop needs, and the historic manure transport of total phosphorus through 2016.

- The agricultural land use total acres are now determined by the Land Data Team's change product from 2013 rather than the USDA Agricultural Census total acres.
- Agricultural and urban fertilizer sales data are updated to include data reported to American Plant Food Control Officials (AAPFCO) through 2016. The missing fertilizer for 2013 and 2014 was corrected. State-supplied fertilizer data is utilized for 2017-2020.
- The 2013-2025 land use acres, septic systems, and sewer service areas are updated. Base conditions are newly available through 2030.
- The amount credited for tree BMPs that are credited in the land use rather than credited in the submitted BMPs is changed. The tree BMPs are now credited 15 years prior to the date of the aerial imagery in the land use. These BMPs include forest buffers, tree planting, and forest planting.
- The credit duration of RI-9: Forest Nutrient Exclusion Area and RI-10: Forest Buffer on Watercourse is extended from 10 to 15 years.
- Changes to nutrient application eligibility in Phase 6 CAST. This change allows all crop nutrient applications to be both manure and fertilizer eligible if that crop/land use allows it.

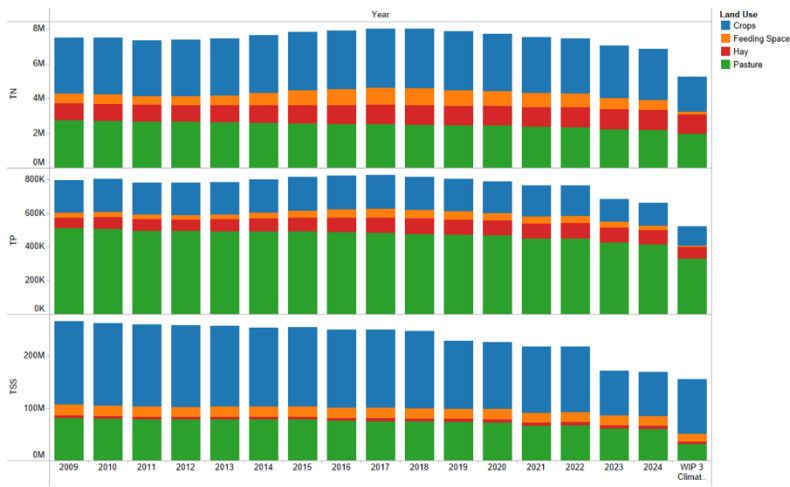
Updated BMP history (as of February 2024)

- BMPs that were approved for planning will become available for annual reporting:
 - The credit duration for tree planting, forest planting, and forest buffers was changed from 10 to 15 years. The credit duration indicates the time frame that a BMP is considered valid without inspection. With inspection, a BMP is credited indefinitely.
 - The wetland BMPs creation and rehabilitation are updated per the expert panel report. The wetland enhancement BMP is removed.
 - Wetland BMPs have no credit duration.
 - Animal mortality BMPs are available.
 - The agricultural ditch BMPs are available for annual reporting. The water control structures BMP efficiency is updated to be zero now that the ditch BMPs are available.

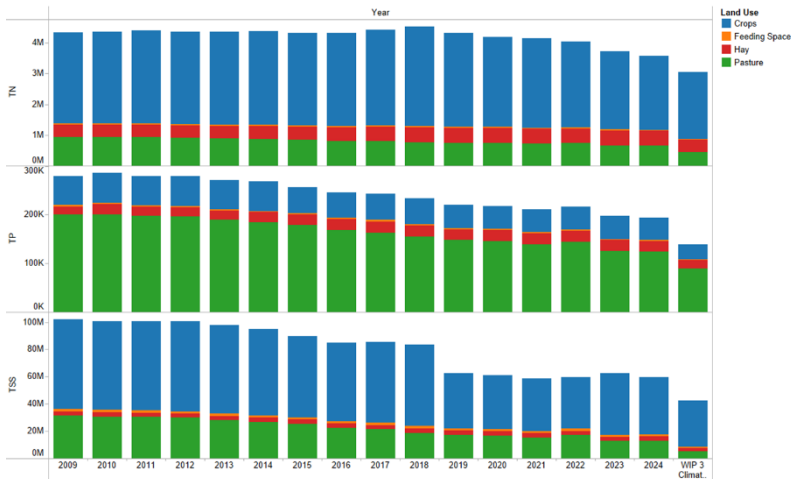
VA Chesapeake Bay Agricultural Loads



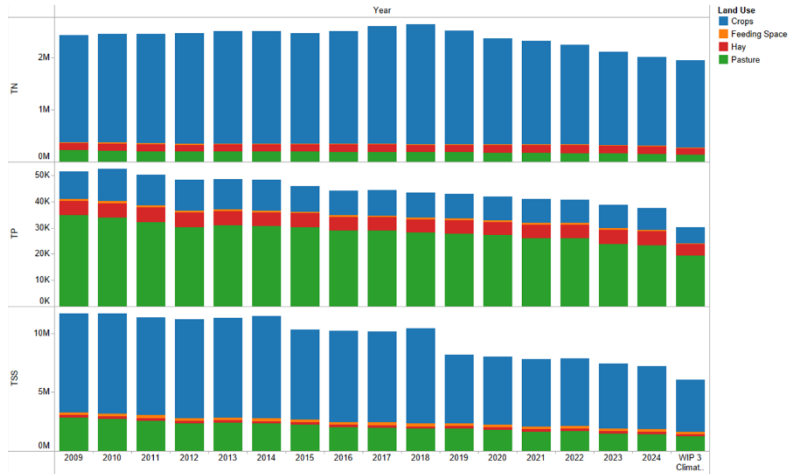
Potomac Basin Agricultural Loads



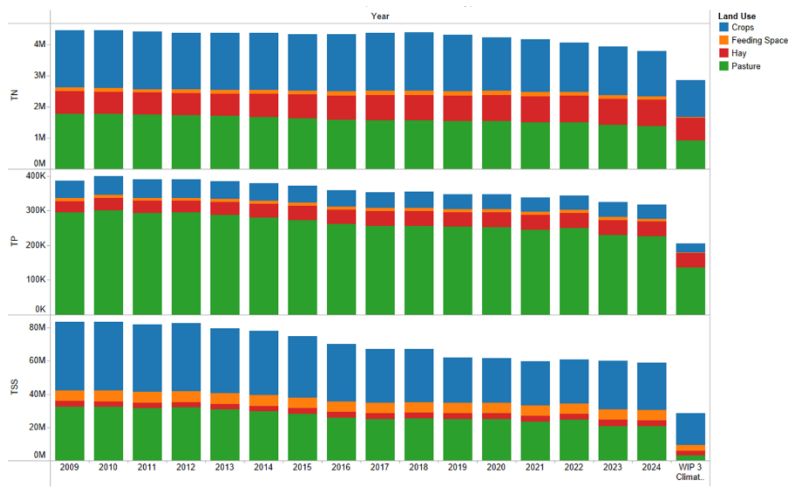
Rappahannock Basin Agricultural Loads



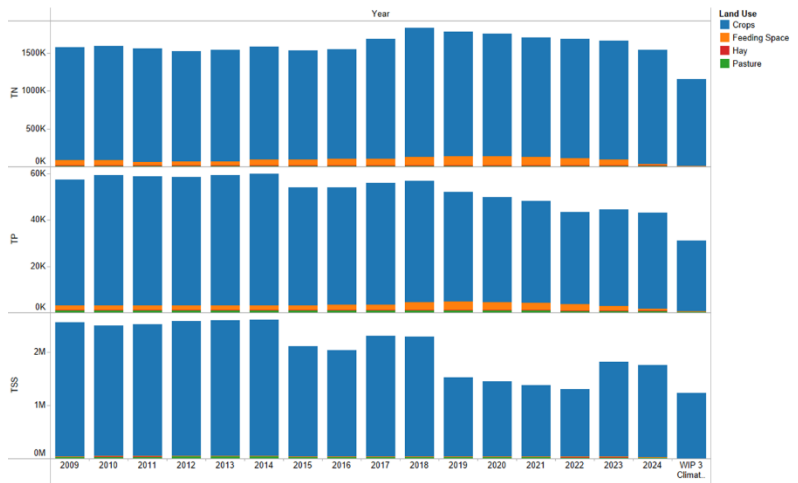
York Basin Agricultural Loads



James Basin Agricultural Loads



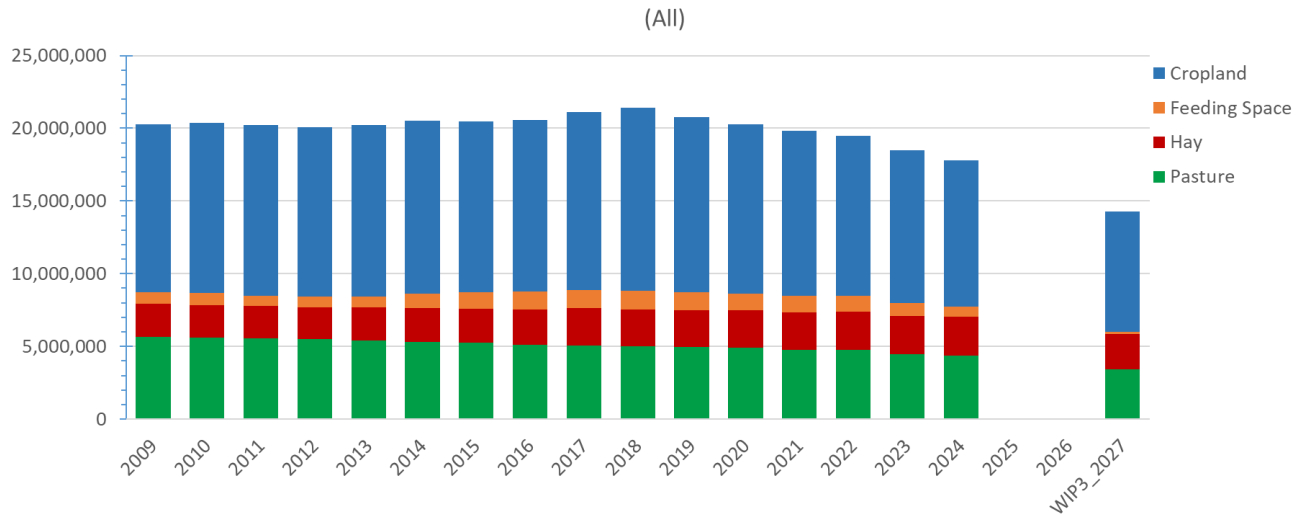
Eastern Shore Agricultural Loads



Top 10 WIP III Agricultural BMPS

| Row Labels | 2017 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | WIP3 Official |
|---|---------|---------|---------|-----------|---------------|
| Commodity + Cover Crop | 160,068 | 303,565 | 352,081 | 400,692 | 443,557 |
| Nutrient Management Core N | 595,633 | 640,850 | 710,440 | 693,512 | 951,395 |
| Animal Waste Management System | 255,380 | 580,040 | 939,938 | 1,222,534 | 2,228,900 |
| Livestock Exclusion | 12,251 | 19,108 | 33,442 | 37,999 | 72,156 |
| Tillage Composite | 638,797 | 606,149 | 643,575 | 638,905 | 608,044 |
| Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plans | | 7,262 | 117,918 | 229,966 | 1,183,460 |
| Forest Buffer | 16,095 | 14,561 | 13,940 | 12,806 | 21,965 |
| Land Retirement to Ag Open Space | 36,683 | 25,805 | 25,428 | 26,166 | 50,451 |
| Grass Buffer | 2,867 | 5,115 | 4,890 | 5,008 | 24,058 |
| Pasture Management Composite | 524,023 | 498,412 | 587,085 | 598,067 | 523,551 |

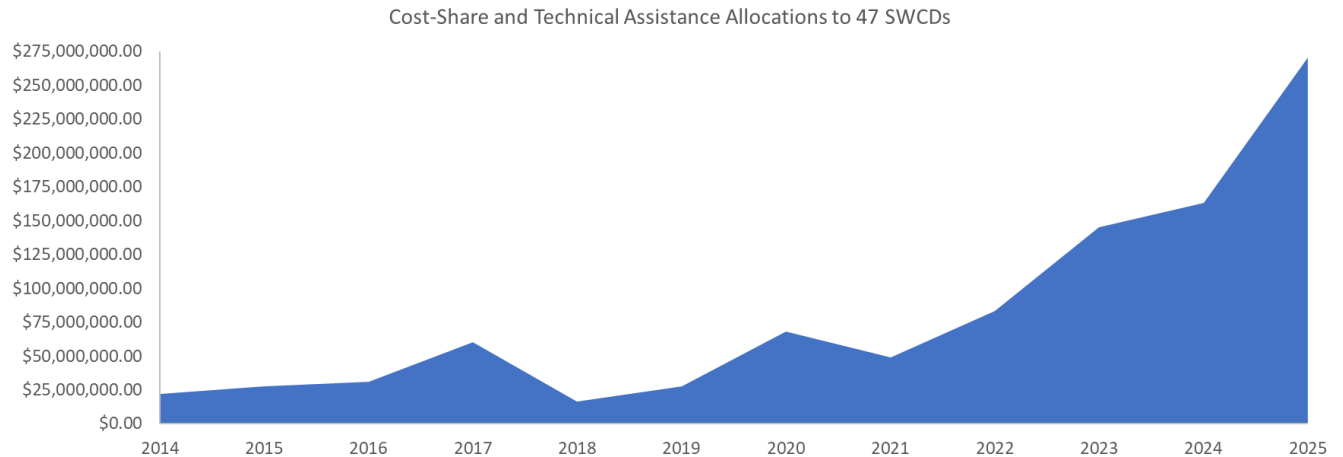
VA Bay Agricultural Nitrogen Loads (CAST23, delivered)



Progress toward Virginia’s Nitrogen reduction goals for the agriculture sector. The TMDL was established in 2010 with 2009 as the baseline. According to the current Bay model, since 2009 Virginia has reduced agricultural nitrogen loads by 2.4 million pounds, with all of that happening since 2017. In 2022-2023 alone we made nearly 1 million pounds of reductions. To reach the WIP three loads, an additional 4.6 million pounds of reductions are needed from the 2023 levels.

It is important to note that completion of many of the structural BMPs that drive the nitrogen reductions can lag two years behind the practice being funded and contracted with a producer. Which means the reductions we see in 2023 can be attributed to the funding provided in 2021 or 2022.

Virginia Agricultural Cost-Share Funding



The VACS funding provided to the 47 SWCDs in Virginia has been increasing exponentially.

The recent Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and USDA's 3-billion-dollar Climate Smart Commodities grants are also pouring significant new funding into Virginia. NRCS has announced they expect their investment in Ag Practices to double next year from \$50 to \$100 million with additional increases likely over the next four years. The 29 Climate Smart Commodity projects funded with a footprint in VA could bring an additional 50 million or more over the next several years. All of this suggests we should expect our loads to continue decreasing at an accelerating pace.

Nutrient Management Initiatives

Direct Pay Nutrient Management Plans

- DCR pays private sector NM planners to write plans for producers
- Payments made directly to planners on per acre per year basis
- Currently 28 planners participating across the state
- Exclusively on cropland, unless associated with an RMP or PLTIP
- Currently funded from WQIF Special Non-point Source Projects funds

Poultry Litter Transport Incentive Program

- Pays producer to ship poultry litter out of high production counties
- Rockingham, Page and Accomack are source counties
- In 2024 program paid to move almost 60,000 Tons
- Currently funded from WQIF Special Non-point Source Projects funds

Notable Dates:

- Full Committee Meetings: August 23, October 4, October 31, December 2
- Subcommittee Meetings: September 13, October 15, November 13, December 20
- January 6 through 20: Beta testing with clientele
- February 12: Training Recording
- March through April 3: Presentations at VASWCD Area Meetings
- March 25 through April 1: Survey Pilot Test

Project Website: <https://vaswcd.org/virginia-farm-voluntary-agricultural-bmp-inventory/>

VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION POLICY

Christine Watlington-Jones presented a Virtual Participation Policy to the group members for adoption. The policy is in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act governing remote participation in board meetings and requires annual adoption. The policy was adopted unanimously.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Following the presentations, Secretary Taillon invited feedback from advisory group members. The key issues raised included:

- A request for a more substantive response from the Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources and the Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry following their review of the annual progress report. Members expressed interest in receiving insights or recommendations that reflect the Secretaries' assessments of progress, identification of objectives being met, and priority areas for future focus.
- The need to increase producer participation in the program and accelerate the implementation of conservation practices. Members emphasized the importance of focusing programs on measurable outcomes and understanding how NRCS practices align with Virginia Agricultural Cost-Share (VACS) practices.
- A concern about addressing expired practices and ensuring continuity and effectiveness in implementation.
- The potential impacts of changes in federal funding on conservation efforts.
- Ongoing challenges related to the loss of data in recent years.
- The importance of obtaining information on geographic "hot spots" to better target conservation efforts.

ADJOURNMENT:

The group was advised that agency staff would notify the members once the next meeting date and location were determined. With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned.