

# 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

| <b>Stakeholders</b>   |
|---|
| 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 Fehrler, Piedmont SWCD   |
| <b>Support Staff</b>  |
| 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                                      |