

Moving Water  
An Update on the  
Report by the  
Public Drainage Task Force

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# Task Force History

- Formed in June of 1999
- Charged by the Chesapeake Bay Cabinet
- Response to a request by the Choptank Tributary Team
- Consider drainage with environmental enhancement
- Membership to be diverse

# Membership

- U.S. Geological Survey
- Maryland Department of the Environment
- Sussex Conservation District, Delaware
- Maryland Department of Natural Resources
- Caroline County Public Works
- Public Drainage Association Managers
- Nanticoke Watershed Alliance
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation

# Membership cont'd

- Maryland Cooperative Extension Service
- Maryland Department of Agriculture
- Wicomico County Council
- USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service
- U.S. Army Corp of Engineers
- Maryland Geological Survey
- University of Maryland, Wye Research & Education Center
- Maryland State Highway Association

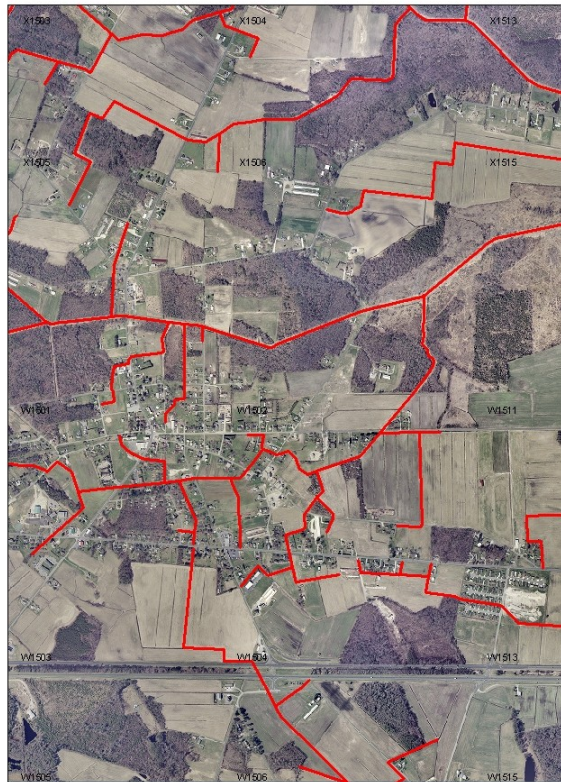
# Charge to the Task Force

- Convene a group of interested parties to discuss the issues.
- Provide for an exchange of information and ideas that would lead to greater buy-in of proposed solutions.
- Develop recommendations for PDA BMPs that reflect the need to maintain proper drainage and provide environmental benefit.

# Public Drainage Task Force Mission Statement

- The mission of the Public Drainage Task Force is to attempt to identify ways and means of protecting the well-being of people who depend on effective public drainage - farmers, residential property owners, highway users, and others - while at the same time attempting to project and enhance the environment that is affected by public ditches.

# Aydelotte PDA in the Town of Pittsville, Maryland



# Recommendation #1

Acknowledge the need to protect the economic well-being of people who depend on effective land drainage while at the same time protect and enhance the environment that is affected by public ditches.

## Recommendation #2

The “on-the-ground” balance of objectives should reflect site-specific conditions as well as overall watershed management goals.

# Birch Branch PDA Worcester County



# Birch Branch PDA Worcester County



# Collier Farm, Caroline County MD Long Marsh PDA



# Collier Farm, Caroline County MD

## Long Marsh PDA



# Recommendation #3

Implementation of the recommended objectives should involve the application of best management practices (BMPs) that are based on the most recent results of scientific research.

# Recommendation #3 cont'd

- A need exist for more research on nutrient reduction, sediment transport, and aquatic habitat improvement in Delmarva ditches.
- Field testing is necessary to verify the effectiveness of BMPs on nutrient reduction and sediment trapping.
- Studies are needed on improved ditch design for stormwater impact from development.

# Recommendation #4

The State should create an interagency public drainage coordinating group, to be chaired by a designee of the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture with representatives from Public Drainage Associations (PDAs) and Public Watershed Associations (PWAs) and from each of the Governor's Chesapeake Bay Cabinet agencies.

# Interagency Public Drainage Coordinating Group Mission

- Review existing state guidelines and practices to ensure consistency with recommendations made by the Public Drainage Task Force;
- Identify needed research, development, demonstration, funding and technical assistance related to the general implementation of BMPs for public drainage;
- Establish guidelines which incorporate BMPs for use in the redesign and maintenance of public drainage systems;
- Cooperate with federal agencies to support State of Maryland objectives; and
- Coordinate across State of Maryland and federal agencies, the effective and timely review of permits from drainage redesign and maintenance efforts.

# Interagency Public Drainage Coordinating Group Activities

- Quarterly meetings were held from 2000-2001
- Group had broad membership with as many as 15 members similar to the Task Force.
- Topics discussed included funding sources, changes in routine maintenance, permitting procedures legislative changes, etc..
- A central point of agreement was that we need to focus our nutrient efforts in the field before they reach the ditch systems.
- Field tours were conducted to show member agencies the type of work that was being done on the systems.

# Recommendation #5

In recognition of the potential public benefits of reliable maintenance efforts that are based on BMPs, State and Federal funds should be provided to augment local revenue for maintenance for PDA and PWA ditches, to incorporate into their maintenance and redesign efforts progressive outcomes such as reducing nutrient transport, reducing flow, and habitat improvement.

# Recommendation #5 cont'd

- NPS-319 funds have been used for ditch operation and maintenance for BMP implementation.
- Other sources of State and Federal funding should be made available.
- Funding can include matching revenues from PDAs/PWAs and local jurisdictions.

# Recommendation #6

In keeping with the State of Maryland vision for Smart Growth, the State should place the burden of cost required for altering public drainage, such as increased costs of maintenance, on to the developers of property to be drained.

# Recommendation #7

Watershed management goals must be consistent with the goals of non-point source nutrient load reduction efforts.

- Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) under the Federal Clean Water Act
- Maryland Water Quality Improvement Act of 1998 (Nutrient Management)
- Prioritizing funds for Wetland Reserve, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Land Preservation is important.

Questions ?