**DRCN Agricultural Land and Forestry Management Operating Committee**

**of the DRCN (Ag and Forest -- Working Lands Committee Meeting)**

February 22, 23 via Zoom 1 – 2:15 pm

Attending:

* Kate Patton - Executive Dir., LSLT
* Jared Parks - Chair, Lands Manager, LSLT
* Beth Sheppard - Co-chair, Agricultural Outreach, LSLT
* Dan Small - NLP, Washington College
* Brigham Whitman – Delaware Wildlands, New Castle County
* Emily Thorpe – JBO Conservation, Chesapeake Sentinel Landscape
* Lisa Wool - Executive Dir., Nanticoke Watershed Alliance
* Sophia Seufert – DRCN Coordinator
* Christina Whiteman - DNREC / focus on habitat restoration
* Erin McNally – EA Engineering, Science and Technology, Coastal resiliency group
* Sara Pique – Ecotone (filling in for Justin)
* Daniel Sweeney - TNC
* Sarah Hilderbrand – DNR – Watershed and ecological research
* Matt Hurd – MD Forest Service
* Ed Farley – Regional biologist for DU
* Colin McAllister – MDA Resource Conservation
* Kacie Larson – CCC, LSLT

1:02 pm-- Meeting opened by Jared Parks, Attendee introductions.

1:10 – GRANT REWARDS and APPLICATIONS

Jared gave an update on LSLT’s grants. - 2 NFWF-SWG grants one of which is nearing completion but is in need of more riparian forest plantings and the other with NLP for quail habitat as well as an NFWF-INSR grant applied for with Shore Rivers and NLP.

Jared then asked the committee for project updates and any grant information.

NFWF Small Watershed Grant – Dan Small – predicts this grant will be finishing up next spring 2024 for final seed planting with cost share programs.

Also Dan Small noted NLP has a forestation and more meadow creations within 4 state parks/properties. Dan said momentum for quail habitat is strong. The new NLP project working with State Parks includes Tuckahoe SP, Cypress Branch SP, Wye Island NRMA, North County Park (Caroline Co. park) and Conquest Preserve (QA Co. park) and Sassafras NRMA

INSR Grant for Sediment reduction is a new application partnering with Shore Rivers, Dan Small/NLP and Envision Choptank.

Kate Patton noted LSLT is also partnering with ESLC applying for a Cornell grant in Coastal Bays for more quail work. This will allow LSLT to continue working for quail habitat in a watershed other than the Chesapeake.

Kate Patton also noted recent receiving of the Project Wild and Green Fin Consulting is providing resources.

Daniel Sweeney of TNC and Shore Rivers are finishing up an upland trust fund grant and another with trust fund grant w/ DU.

Brigham in New Castle with grant from DFWS – reforesting ag land, 4 more acres of Coastal Plain seasonal ponds (Delmarva Bays), and other freshwater wetland ecosystem including meadow planting.

Section 319 funding – Brigham trying to work on a water structure, flood water retention

through the state of Delaware (CBAY WATERSHED).

Chrstina Whiteman wants to work on soil research for soil. She said “we are starting a soil microbiome project as part of the restoration project in our NFWF DWCF funding. Main goal is to compare soil microbiomes among different restoration and habitat stages. We will be testing out our SOPs we are developing this summer.”

Another member mentioned a new workgroup with Envision Choptank has a large-scale restoration project.

Lisa Wool – announced their new Restoration Manager hire.

Sophia Seufert -- mentioned America the Beautiful grant and coastal bays potential grant partner (These links can be published in Sophia’s upcoming DRCN newsletter.)

Erin – new job with EA – an engineering firm – says it’s about adding partnerships and technical support.

Ed Farley – working lands, DU has listing for engineering design technician position opened.

Matthew Hurd noted Jim Harris has retired, Scott in currently managing the Master Logger/Delmarva Woodland Stewardship program and says it is a good mix. Nature and bird Conservancy is the area he is trying to target.

Chesapeake mapping component, long term naturalist, want to find landowners to expand on grant areas and future LSR grants. Matt said they currently don’t have contractual 5 million Trees on the lower shore.

1:45 – Jared asks about a better means to review overall grant deliverables.

Erin suggests adding a **Message Board on the DRCN website**. Lisa offers to share with Sophia her outdated list of grants and their timelines. Sophia thinks that she can expand on this for the DRCN website.

Kate says it’s not just the funding. Kate suggests that it would be good to show how the funding was awarded and how it tracks and measures our progress...

1:55 – Jared added Audubon was awarded the Coastal Resilience Grant across the Coastal Bays. Audubon wants to have a joint meeting and maybe include Ag & Forest could be part of the grant partnerships.

Jared suggests the next DRCN Working Lands meeting to have a presentation with David Curson & Eric Myers to lead a meeting as a longer joint venture.

Jared says Bob Long could still potentially give a talk on the role of Forest management on the edges of coastal waterways.

2:05 -- Jared asks for topic ideas for future meetings.

Kate suggests more engagement with Virginia...

Matt Hurd shared Robbie Lewis is the VDOF Forester for the eastern shore. He is very well connected and could provide some potential contacts. Robbie.Lewis@dof.virginia.gov

Brigham with Delaware Wild Lands suggests a future discussion of using State-funding cost share programs and the changing rules and restrictions. Jared agrees this could be valuable with a comparison across the 3 states.

Lisa Wool suggests a future talk on Bioreactors in the ditches...

**Shared Resources from the Zoom chat:**

<https://www.nfwf.org/programs/chesapeake-bay-stewardship-fund/chesapeake-wild>

<https://dnrec.alpha.delaware.gov/watershed-stewardship/nps/chesapeake-grants/>

<https://extension.umd.edu/news-events/news/delmarva-woodland-steward-program-ushers-first-crop-volunteers>

<https://dnr.maryland.gov/ccs/pages/funding/trust-fund.aspx> 'Trust Fund' typically due mid December

<https://dnrec.alpha.delaware.gov/tedi/> Last minute (March 3,2023 deadline) small funding source for communities and non-profit organizations that support tree planting projects in Delaware.

USDA Forest Service LSR Grants are due every November but need to be sponsored by the State Forester. We usually ask for the proposal in late August/early September. Here is the link to last year's grant. <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=341034>

2:12 pm - MEETING ADJOURNED by Jared Parks