

Improving VDOF and S&W Relationships around Virginia

Peaks of Otter Soil & Water Conservation District – Success Story

- Project started as a way to conserve treated water out of fire hydrants which was being used to fill large tankers, engines, etc.
- Project installed in an area of Bedford County where water sources (such as dry hydrants, fire hydrants) were limited
- Completed project provides 7500 gallons of water storage (3 tanks, 2500 gallons each)
- Water is captured off downspouts from the fire house roof and used to top off and/or fill up fire apparatus (instead of from the hydrant)
- The project cost was 100% funded by Peaks of Otter Soil & Water District with the labor and installation provided by the fire department and the overall cost came in at \$5,619.
- Cost to treat 7500 gallons of water, approximately \$85 (does not take into account connection fees, deposits, etc.)
- Pays for itself after 66 fill ups (at which time it has utilized 495,000 gallons of rain water)
- Translates to a \$16.04 savings for every inch of rain (while providing a water source to the local VFD)





Discussion on certification of Conservation Activity Plans (106 plans)

The Conservation Activity Plans written by Technical Service Providers currently have no option to have the plan certified, as a member of this committee, I feel that we need to come up with a recommendation to how we can get these properties certified.

A brief back round on CAP 106 plans:

- These plans are the federal equivalent to the VDOF's Stewardship Plan, making the property eligible for the same tax credits and cost incentive plans.
- The CAP 106 plan is one of the reason's VDOF now charges for their stewardship plans
- VDOF has to approve all CAP 106 plans before the incentive payment can be made

Possibilities to discuss:

- Who needs to certify the CAP 106 plans? VDOF? NRCS?
- Should the certification of Stewardship Plans include Conservation Activity Plans?
- Who would audit the certifications? VDOF, NRCS, TSP's, etc.?

Soil & Water Invasive Species Cost Share Opportunities

I have discussed with the staff at Peaks of Otter about possible options on how to integrate invasive species control into the current cost share setup. There was one option that seems very reasonable:

- Include invasive species control in the current cost share program as a form of "buffer maintenance". This would help keep the cost share buffers from being overgrown with undesirable/invasive species while providing some motivation to the landowner to get the work done
- Thoughts/Other Opportunities?

Certification process for contractors who provide service work on the various program areas

This one is a stretch, but worth a discussion. On more occasions than I can remember, I have heard of contractors/companies doing work on projects funded under various programs (or doing the work on their own property) and either doing a terrible job (or failing miserably). Is there a way we can certify operators who understand the programs, do outstanding work, ext.? NRCS has Technical Service Providers (TSP's) that are the only ones who can write CAP 106 plans, so it is not totally out of the question. Some thoughts to discuss:

- Certification by qualifications, licenses, certificates (Commercial Applicator, Technical Service Provider, etc.)
- "Angie's List" for work under the various programs
- How do you encourage the use of some contractors, while steering the landowner away from a notoriously poor contractor?
- Other thoughts?