

Resource Management Plan Program

Highlights Report | Sept. 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021



What's New in 2021

A Virginia Resource Management Plan, or RMP, is a comprehensive conservation plan that includes proven agricultural best management practices to ensure the farm is meeting a conservation farming standard. A farmer's decision to have an RMP written, or to implement the plan, is completely voluntary. The plans are written by certified RMP developers and are specific to the farm operation.

The RMP provides a list of agricultural BMPs for the farmer to implement, including practices that will address onsite erosion issues, measures to protect perennial streams and recommendations for effective nutrient management.

RMPs are approved by local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs).

Once all required BMPs are implemented, the RMP can be certified. In addition to the environmental benefit to the operation and the community, RMP certification means several things for the farmer, including "certainty" that they are considered environmentally compliant. Should more stringent state regulations be adopted, the certified RMP farm operation is considered already compliant with any nutrient and sediment water quality measures needed to meet the state's water quality goals for both the Chesapeake Bay and local waters. The certification is valid for nine years provided the farmer continues to implement the RMP.

Program requirements are laid out in state regulations, which were adopted by the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board, and became effective in 2014.

Whole Farm Approach Project on Eastern Shore

Whole Farm Approach, or WFA, was introduced as a pilot project in 2019. It allows a farmer to submit a single cost-share application for a bundle of agricultural BMPs, including their choice of nutrient management and cover crop practices. WFA has been successfully implemented in the counties of Essex, King and Queen, and King William and is now available in the Chesapeake Bay watershed of the Eastern Shore to farmers who have, or are willing to obtain, an RMP. Of those participating on the Eastern Shore, it is anticipated that nearly 900 acres of existing RMPs will be certified, and new RMPs will be written on more than 4,100 acres.

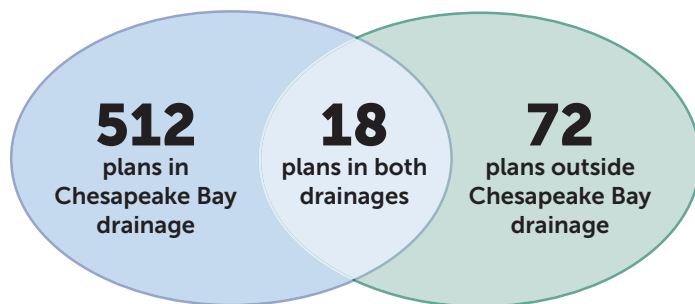
Enhanced Tax Credit

New state legislation (HB 1763 and SB1162) in 2021 created an enhanced tax credit for the implementation of agricultural best management practices that are part of an approved RMP. The enhanced credit is retroactive to January 2021. The credit allows for 50% tax credit (up to \$50,000 cap) per entity for agricultural BMPs implemented on acreage included in a SWCD-approved RMP. There is an annual cap on these credits of \$2 million for all participants that is administered by the Virginia Department of Taxation.

Verified Nutrient Management Plans

RMP certification requires full implementation of the associated nutrient management plan and other minimally required BMPs. Implementation of the nutrient management plan is verified during the RMP certification process. Over the course of this reporting period, 8,586 acres of nutrient management plans have been verified as fully implemented as part of an RMP certification process.

RMP Program Results (as of June 30, 2021)



A single RMP may be included in multiple categories.

- 582 plans covering 130,779 acres
- 35 plans covering just over 8,300 have been certified in this reporting period
- Average plan size is 225 acres

10,800 acres pasture
8,398 acres hayland

111,581 acres cropland

Status of RMPs (as of June 30, 2021)

582 plans have been developed through the RMP Program

55

plans are being finalized and will be submitted to the appropriate soil and water conservation district (SWCD) for approval.

370

plans have been approved but not yet certified.

157

RMPs have received a certificate of implementation.

All Best Management Practices Included in RMPs

3,757 total BMPs implemented or proposed.

1,944

BMPs implemented or proposed *with* public funding.

1,813

BMPs implemented or proposed *without* public funding.



For more information

Scott Ambler

Scott.Ambler@dcv.virginia.gov

540-416-5347

Barbara McGarry

Barbara.McGarry@dcv.virginia.gov

804-371-0297

www.dcr.virginia.gov/rmp

The Process

Assessment – A certified RMP developer visits the operation, meets with the farmer, evaluates the land and BMPs in place, and begins development of options to meet the RMP requirements.

Plan Development – The certified RMP developer meets with the farmer and discusses options. Once the farmer agrees to the particular BMPs and a schedule for implementation, the RMP may be submitted to the review authority, which is usually the local district but could be the department, for review and approval.

Plan Implementation – Once the required BMPs have been implemented or installed, the farmer may request that the review authority visit the farm to verify RMP implementation.

Verification – The plan developer and Technical Review Committee each conduct an inspection to verify that the RMP has been fully implemented.

Certification – A certificate of RMP implementation is issued once the review authority verifies implementation. "Certainty" begins at the date of issuance of the certificate. Continued verification visits are conducted at least once every three years throughout the nine-year certainty period to ensure the continued proper functioning and maintenance of all required BMPs.

**CERTIFIED
ENVIRONMENTALLY
FRIENDLY**

**Resource
Management
Plan Program**



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