

Resource Management Plans

***A Voluntary Approach
to Agricultural Certainty***



***Environment Virginia
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Resource Management Plans (RMPs)

The plans are designed to encourage farmers to use a high level of conservation best management practices to reduce runoff pollution to state waters and the Chesapeake Bay.



How Did We Get Here?

The agricultural industry wanted a way to demonstrate to environmental groups, state environmental agencies and EPA the level of conservation practices being implemented by the agricultural sector. The agricultural groups lobbied the Virginia General Assembly who passed HB 1830 in 2011. Regulations will become effective July 2014.

Watershed Implementation Plan Agriculture Proposals

- Extensive implementation of resource management plans on agricultural acres could result in implementation of these practices:
 - ❖ nutrient management plans
 - ❖ livestock exclusion from streams
 - ❖ 35' stream buffers
 - ❖ soil conservation
 - ❖ other practices accepted by the Bay model
- Vastly improved accounting of voluntary practices



Resource Management Plans (RMPs)

In return for full implementation of the RMP plan, farmers are ensured “**Certainty**” from new state nutrient, sediment and bacterial-related water quality requirements. Plans are effective for nine years with compliance inspections every three.

What is “Certainty”?

Agricultural landowners or operators who fully implement and maintain the applicable components of their resource management plan shall be deemed to be in full compliance with any new state regulations for nutrients, sediment, benthic, or bacteria to address:

- Any new requirements of the Virginia Chesapeake Bay TMDL Watershed Implementation Plan; or
- Any new load allocation contained in a local total maximum daily load (TMDL)

Certainty does not protect from:

- Federal permits
- Changes to federal regulations or requirements
- Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act requirements
- Pre-existing TMDLs
- VPA&VPDES permits
- Some local ordinances

Resource Management Plans (RMPs)

- RMPs will be written for a land management unit which can include a single field, tract, farm or whole operation .
- The plan can be written for either the owner or the farm operator.
- The RMP program is completely voluntary – a participant may opt out at any time without penalty.

Other Benefits

- Certainty from new Chesapeake Bay WIP and local TMDL requirements
- Farmers can receive credit or recognition for practices already installed or implemented
- Agricultural industry representatives can speak with confidence about existing conservation practices
- Long-term farm planning will help cost-share program leaders to assess future funding needs to maintain existing practices and to install or implement planned practices
- If desired, the farmer may advertise or promote their status of having implemented a RMP

What are the requirements of a RMP?

Crop and hay lands need a 35-foot buffer to perennial streams. Pasture needs to have livestock excluded from perennial streams, hardened stream crossings and alternative watering systems. All fields need a soil conservation plan to “T” and a nutrient management plan. Cover crops where required.

RMP Process



- Certification of RMP Developer - DCR
- Plan development - RMP developer
- Plan review and approval - District or DCR
- Implementation - Owner
- Verification of implementation - District or DCR
- Certificate of RMP implementation issued - DCR
- Inspections every 3 years (minimum) - District or DCR

Plan Developer Certification

❖ Certified Nutrient Management Planner (DCR)

and

❖ Certified Conservation Planner (NRCS)

or

through a demonstration of
academic/applied proficiencies

Additional Information on RMPs

➤ RMP Regulation Development

- http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/laws_and_regulations/lr7.shtml

➤ RMP Program Development

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