# Vermont Payment for Ecosystem Services and Soil Health Working Group

DRAFT Summary of Meeting #17: December 7, 2021

More detailed information, including presentation slides and the meeting recording can be found at <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/pes>

## Introduction

The Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) and Soil Health Working Group held its seventeenth meeting on December 7, 2021. The objectives of the meeting were for the group to hear an update on work from the technical service provider to the Working Group and give input to inform some of their research tasks, and to hear two ideas about PES program design from farmers (one of whom is a working group member.)

## Summary of discussion

The UVM technical services team provided an update on several tasks. More detail is available in the slides posted at the website above.

* Alissa White provided an update on the Task 2: Soil Health Scenarios. She shared the purpose of this task:
  + Build scenarios to illustrate how Vermont farm management influences soil health performance at the field scale.
  + Focus these scenarios on the soil health metrics identified by the PES Soil Health Task Group
* Noah El-Naboulsi provided an update on Task 3, the development of the farmer “willingness to accept” survey development and stakeholder engagement
* Ben Dube provided a preview of findings from Task 5, the ecosystem services valuation study, the report for which is projected to be submitted by end of year.
* Chris Bonasia, Lindsey Ruhl, and Noah El-Naboulsi shared the outcomes of their review of PES programs (Task 6), along with some recommendations for Vermont’s program based on learnings from these other programs.

The Working Group then heard two program concepts from Working Group member Scott Magnan and Stephen Leslie. Scott’s presentation focused on observeable metrics that farmers could measure and report, as well as a proposed scoring system to calculate payments. Stephen’s presentation focused on the need to build a healthy soils policy as the foundation for efforts to achieve clean air and water. He proposed “soil health management systems” based on nutrient management plan models to improve soil health.

The draft products of the UVM technical team and these proposals can be viewed in more detail in the slides at <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/pes>.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:05 PM.