

How CBP Will Be Accountable and Communicate Assessment Information to the Public in 2012
(draft version 11/28/2011)

WHAT IS BEING PROPOSED?

This document attempts to address a major challenge for the upcoming year (2012):

- How will the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) be accountable and communicate assessment information to the public in 2012?

BACKGROUND

It has been six years since the CBP [Indicators Framework](#), the [Strategy for Communicating the State of the Bay and the State of Bay Restoration](#), and the [Annual Communication Cycle](#) were established to influence communication tools and strategies for the program. During those years the program has undergone dramatic changes. Communications tools and strategies must also change.

The communication tools and strategies for the program were developed in consideration of the [Chesapeake 2000 agreement](#), which no longer guides the work of most CBP Goal Implementation Teams (GITs). Most GITs are now driven by a [federal TMDL process](#) and/or a [Presidential Executive Order Strategy](#) (and resulting [Action Plan](#)). Products and strategies used to assess and report progress must now reflect new program drivers.

Recognizing this needed change, the CBP has created an iterative process to guide the program through the next few years. This four-stage process is described in [Coordinating Chesapeake Bay Program and Federal Leadership Committee Goals, Outcomes and Action](#). During the first stage of this process GITs identify and align their interests, priorities, and efforts using a decision-making framework, further described in [Enabling Effective Adaptive Management in the Chesapeake Bay Program](#).

On [September 22, 2011 the Scientific and Technical Analysis and Reporting \(STAR\) Team convened a meeting](#) to assist the CBP in planning for assessments, accountability and outreach during 2012. The meeting was attended by GIT, Communication Workgroup (CWG), Management Board (MB) and STAR leadership, members of the Federal Office Directors (FOD), the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) and the EcoCheck Report Card Team. The attendees agreed on [immediate next steps for the CBP](#), a portion of which are described in the Guiding Principles and Process described below. Additional action items from the meeting are addressed in a separate document (refer to new sections in the above mentioned document, [Enabling Effective Adaptive Management in the Chesapeake Bay Program](#)).

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- There are no more embargoes associated with a once-a-year release of data. Key information and data related to assessments and accountability will be communicated appropriately for key audiences throughout the year, including an end-of-year summary of content released that year.

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- The CBP Communications Office uses the work of each of the GITs in communicating the partnership's work with the interested public. All GITs are asked to keep in mind this use of their information.

PROCESS

GIT Roles

- GITs support the update/revision of measures and information included in the CBP State of the Program Report provided annually to the EC.
- GITs identify assessment and accountability metrics that will be used by the GITs and reported to external audiences in 2012.
 - Work with CWG to determine schedule and content for communication needs.
 - Identify which indicators from 2010 Bay Barometer will no longer be used.
 - Interact with STAR, CWG and MB on provided metrics and changes.
- GITs coordinate with CWG, STAR and MB regarding any changes to measures previously reported to the public via CBP assessments.
 - If a measure previously reported in the CBP Bay Barometer is no longer relevant or is being revised, GITs communicate this to the CWG, STAR and MB (note: there is no expectation that STAR or MB need to approve; this is an FYI).
 - If a new measure is being developed and will be made available to the public via the ChesapeakeBay.net website (as opposed to simply developed for the ChesapeakeStat website), GITs communicate this to the CWG, STAR and MB (note: there is no expectation that STAR or MB need to approve; this is an FYI).
 - If a new measure needs to be developed and the GIT needs support from the STAR, they communicate this to the CWG, STAR and MB. The STAR and the MB need to weigh needs of the collective CBP and determine if/when resources of STAR will be utilized to support the needs of the GIT (esp. if new monitoring, modeling, data analysis is required).
- In order to facilitate the above items, GITs work with the CWG to establish a mutually-agreed upon individual to act as liaison between the GIT and the CWG. The CWG works with the GITs to establish criteria for selecting liaisons, including liaison roles/responsibilities.
- GITs take advantage of data and info being generated for:
 - Periodic releases of data/info throughout the year by the CBP Communications Office (via press materials and outreach/websites/social media/other mechanisms)

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- State of the Chesapeake Bay Program Reports (provided to EC)
- E.O. Annual Progress Reports (provided to FLC)
- Bay Report Card (EcoCheck)
- CBP Watershed Model Annual Progress Runs
- 2-year Milestone Assessments
- River and Watershed Report Cards
- NOAA Blue Crab Reports
- etc.

CWG Roles

- Ensure cohesive messaging to external audiences from all GITs in order to reinforce the CBP brand.
- Assist GITs with their needs related to external communication of accountability and assessment information in order to support public understanding and encourage necessary behavior changes.
- Develop questions and guidance to help GITs as they identify assessment and accountability metrics for public reporting in 2012.
 - Please refer to Appendix A of this document for an initial draft.
- Assess key audiences and develop assessment and accountability products that meet both the audiences' needs and the CBP's communications needs.
- Work with STAR and GITs to develop a timeline of assessment and accountability information that will be made available to the public in 2012, including how the info will be conveyed (e.g. press release, web story, etc.).
 - Data and information will be released throughout the year via press releases/websites/social media/other mechanisms, including an end-of-year summary of content released throughout the year.
 - The value of CBP-branded assessment and accountability products will be evaluated in relation to other reports being made available to the public.
 - The products and tools list will also reflect how to 'evolve' from the current Bay Barometer to newer products and what to do during this transition period. This is needed particularly in 2012 while we go through this transition.

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- Please refer to Appendix B of this document for an initial draft schedule for information to be featured monthly and for suggested summary “reports”.
- In order to facilitate the above items, the CWG will work with liaisons for each GIT.
 - The CWG will draft criteria and share with the GITs to assist in the collaborative process of selecting GIT/CWG liaisons, including liaison roles/responsibilities.
 - The CWG will develop a will determine the most effective way to interact structure for efficient use of the with the liaisons, to be discussed with the GITs - (e.g. GIT liaisons may be added to the membership of the CWG and they may be asked to participate in CWG meeting, OR the interaction may be only via e-mail OR both, OR another way.)
- Work with the ChesapeakeStat Development Team (CSDT) to determine how to categorize data geographically, across the GITs to represent information by subwatersheds. This will be needed in order to geographically target the provision/release of geographically specific data/information. This is a longer term goal, recognizing it may be a huge challenge to align our work this way however, it could make us infinitely more relevant to stakeholders and the public.

STAR Roles

- Ensure scientific and technical integrity of assessment and accountability information being used by GITs and being communicated to external audiences.
- Assess monitoring, modeling, data analysis and data interpretation needs of GITs; assist in coordinated provision of resources to meet these needs; advise MB if additional resources are needed.

Appendix A: Guidance for GITs as They Identify Assessment and Accountability Metrics for Public Reporting in 2012 (draft version 11/28/2011)

As mentioned previously in this proposal, a role of the Goal Implementation Teams (GITs) is to identify assessment and accountability metrics that will be used by the GITs and reported to external audiences in 2012. Please see below for key questions GITs should consider to assist in deciding what needs to be reported to external audiences (in contrast to those metrics that will only be used by GITs and/or reported to internal audiences via the *ChesapeakeStat* website).

1. How does this metric tie to larger Bay Program goals (reducing pollution, restoring habitat, managing fisheries, protecting local watersheds or fostering stewardship)?
2. How can we connect this metric to something people are familiar with and support?
3. Is this metric related to something that external audiences already care about?
4. Is this metric related to something people should care about? If so, why should people care about this metric?
5. Who needs to know about this metric? Identify the specific audience(s). For example, watershed organizations, media, interested public, students, teachers, local governments.
6. Is it newsworthy? If so, is there a subject matter expert who can speak well about this topic to the media?
7. What could the average person do to help improve conditions related to this metric? Are there specific actions people can take to help make a difference?
8. When do we expect to see significant progress being made related to this metric?
 - a. We need to let the public know how long to expect before we see significant measurable progress. Exactly how long will it take before we see measurable progress?
 - b. Is that too long to expect the public to envision progress and therefore, care about this metric?

Appendix B: Assessment and Accountability Information to be Made Available to the Public in 2012 (draft version 11/28/2011)

As mentioned previously in this proposal, a role of the Communications Workgroup (CWG) is to work with the Scientific and Technical Analysis and Reporting (STAR) Team and the Goal Implementation Teams (GITs) to develop a timeline of assessment and accountability information that will be made available to the public in 2012, including how the info will be conveyed (e.g. press release, web story, etc.). The tables below reflect an initial structure developed by the CWG. After review by STAR and GITs, the information in the tables will change to reflect the needs of the GITs related to external reporting of assessment and accountability information in 2012.

NOTE: Communications products and the timing of public release thereof are influenced by a wide variety of factors and are *therefore always fluid and changeable*. As such this table should be read as a suggestive structure for the release of CBP information, rather than a rigid timetable of specific products.

Proposed Communications Products/Tools for 2012

REGULAR FEATURES	E-Communications	News/Blog	Description	Video/Photo*	Social Media
Daily	Bay News (public)				Social media "strategic plan" under development for implementation in 2012. We currently use Twitter to market all products in this & following sections.
Weekly	Bay Brief (partners/stakeholders)	Bay Backpack Blog		Photo Fridays (new)	
Biweekly		W'shed Wednesdays News/Blog (new)	Feature on specific w'shed group & their work/initiatives	Videos may be linking to any of the News/Blog features as opportunities arise	
		Tributary Tuesdays News/Blog (new)	Feature specific trib: uses, flora, fauna, interesting info		
		Bay Lists	IE: NY resolutions for the Bay, 10 Creepy Bay Places		
Monthly	Chesapeake Currents (E-pub to public)	Critter of the Month	Builds online Field Guide. IE: Jan, Bay Scallop; Feb, Redhead	Bay 101 (IE: Forests, SAV)	
		Ask a Scientist	Discussion of scientific info or relevant to envir. events		
		From the Field	Report on relevant activity from around w'shed (IE: World Water Day)	How To's (new)	

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		Bay Backpack Newsletter			
Quarterly				Chesapeake Unscripted (IE: Future piece - Helping Bay in the new year?)	
Seasonal/Special Days		News/Blog: varies based on season/holiday (See below)	IE: Black History Month, Mother's day, Thanksgiving,	Seasonally relevant videos (IE: Fall - Importance of Bay Forests)	
* Topics/direction for video to be further described when new Multimedia Specialist Steve Droter, is up to speed. He starts 11/21/11.					

TRADITIONAL PRODUCTS	Seasonal/Holiday Topics for E-News/Blog	Press Releases/ Events/Articles	Public Reports	Internal Reports/ Assessments	GIT Work/Products for News	EO/TMDL Related Products/Reports
January	New Years Day, Snowfall	2011 Oyster metrics/data		Public Access Plan	GIT 1: Blue Catfish policy	EO Progress Report
		Bay Journal Article: CAC			GIT 5	EO Annual Action Plan
						Federal 2 yr Milestones
February	Black History Month; World Wetlands Day	2011 SAV data		Ches Cons Corps Strategy		
		2011 Wetlands Restoration data				
March	Women's History Month; World Water Day, World Forestry Day	2011 Fish Passage data		Crediting Conservation Rpt	GIT 1: Linking Land/Water/Fish/Econ	

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		Bay Journal Article: STAC			GIT 2	
					GIT 4	
April	National Park Wk, Earth Day, Arbor Day, Internat'l Migr. Bird Day	2011 Shad data?	Oyster Restoration Progress		GIT 3: Final Ph 2 WIPs due	
		Bay Journal Article: LGAC			GIT 1	
May	Springtime/Rainy season	CBSAC report	CBSAC Crab Targets and Advisory Rpt		GIT 1	
		Exec Council mtg	Restoration Progress Report	Most recent health data re-packaged for EC		
		2009-11 Milestones: Final Assess	State of the Program Report			
June	Great Outdoors Month, Father's Day, Rockfish Season opens, Nat'l Trails Day, World Envir. Day, World Oceans Day	Striped Bass				
		Bay Journal Article: TBD				
		2011 Nutrient/SedTrends				
July	Independence Day, World Population Day, Summer heat/travel	INSR Grant Announce w/ NFWF				

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		Fisheries Health			GIT 1: Fisheries Health/Status overall	
August	Nat'l Wilderness Month	Bay Dead Zone (2011 DO & Clarity data)				
September	Nat'l Energy Awareness Month, Nat'l Wildlife Day, World Car Free Day	Forestry				
		Bay Journal Article: TBD				
October	Halloween, Nat'l Refuge week, Fall harvest, tropical storms, rainfall	Small W'shed Grant Announce w/ NFWF				
November	Nat'l Amer. Indian Heritage Month, Thanksgiving	Toxic Contaminants	Toxics Cont. Rpt.			
		Bay Journal Article: CBP at Restore Amer Est. Conf.				
December	Christmas, Hannukah, winter, snow	Stream Health	end-of-year summary rpt (including restoration efforts and most recent health data)		GIT 2	
		Brook Trout			GIT 1	
		Oyster metrics/data				

Relevant Topics by Month/Year

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RELEVANCE BY MONTH/SEASON	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Agriculture			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Air Pollution				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Bay Grasses				X	X	X	X	X	X			
Blue Crabs				X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Brook Trout			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Chemical Contaminants	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Climate Change						X	X	X				
Development/Land Preservation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Education								X	X			
Forests			X	X	X				X	X	X	
Forest Buffers			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Groundwater			X	X								
Life at the Bottom/Benthos			X	X	X					X		
Menhaden	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Nutrient Pollution			X	X	X	X	X	X				
Oysters	X	X	X	X					X	X	X	X
Population Growth	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Rivers and Streams		X	X	X	X							
Sediment/Erosion		X	X	X	X							

