**Chesapeake Bay Program Update**

**Management Board Meeting**

**Thursday, August 2, 2012**

**CBPO Calendar**

Sep 6-7 Citizens Advisory Committee meeting
Sep 11 Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee meeting (Annapolis, Md.)
Sep 13 Management Board meeting (Annapolis, Md.)
Sep 27-28 Local Government Advisory Committee meeting (Shepherdstown, WV)
Sep 28-30 2012 Chesapeake Watershed Forum (Shepherdstown, WV)
Oct (TBD) Principals’ Staff Committee meeting
Oct 10 CBP Management Board Conference Call

Oct 8-10 Center for Watershed Protection conference (Baltimore, Md.)
Oct 20-25 Restore America’s Estuaries conference (Tampa, Fl.)

**Updates**

**Comments Sought on Draft Chesapeake Forest Restoration Strategy**
Comments on a draft Chesapeake Forest Restoration Strategy are sought by the federal-state group that developed it. The Strategy is aimed at restoring forest cover in targeted areas to improve ecosystem function and provide community benefits in targeted areas of the landscape such as urban forests, mine lands, contaminated lands, agro-forestry, and fish and wildlife habitat. Forests are a critical ecosystem component that supports major Chesapeake Bay goals: clean water, healthy watersheds, wildlife habitat, fisheries, land conservation, citizen stewardship, and climate change response.

Accelerating forest restoration in the Chesapeake will require collaboration among partners in a broad network—Federal and State agencies, local governments, watershed and community organizations, and private partners. A companion Working Lands Conservation Strategy is being developed in 2012, which will address forest and farmland conservation priorities. The draft Restoration Strategy is part of the Recover Habitat goal of the Strategy for Protecting and Restoring the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, pursuant to Executive Order 13508 and is available for viewing at <http://executiveorder.chesapeakebay.net/>. Public comments will be accepted through August 6, 2012. Comments should be sent to Sally Claggett at sclaggett@fs.fed.us.

**Letter of Support for Land Conservation Funding**

Pursuant to discussions at the 2012 Executive Council meeting, the Chesapeake Bay Commission drafted and circulated to the jurisdictions (via Principals’ Staff Committee members) a letter for EC members to consider signing urging Secretary Salazar to designate the Chesapeake region for FY14 Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Landscape Collaborative funding support. Jurisdictions have been asked to respond to the request by Friday, August 3.

**Un-liquidated Grant Funds**

On June 6, CBP Director Nick DiPasquale sent emails to the Jurisdictions reminding them about EPA’s 2011 policy on un-liquidated obligations (ULOs). The policy requires EPA program offices to annually review active grants and cooperative agreements to determine where ULOs exist and to assess whether such ULOs are unnecessary or unwarranted. Potential ULO related questions and information may be raised by CBPO Project Officers in their review of funding requests and at the time of their six month monitoring reviews for grants and cooperative agreements, including the Chesapeake Bay Implementation Grants (CBIG) and/or the Chesapeake Bay Regulatory and Accountability Program Grants (CBRAP). EPA will be contacting Jurisdictions in the coming weeks to discuss any significant unresolved ULOs.

**Chesapeake Bay Program’s BMP Verification Program Development Update**

BMP Verification Principles Drafted

The Water Quality Goal Implementation Team’s BMP Verification Committee has drafted a set of BMP Verification Principles currently being used by the source sector and habitat restoration workgroup as guidance as they develop their verification protocols. They will be reviewing and refining the principles during their August 16th conference call prior to sending the draft principles up to the Water Quality Goal Implementation Team (WQGIT) for review and approval to share with the Management Board.

The BMP Verification Committee met on June 19, 2012 and covered the following topics:

* Draft BMP Verification Protocols Drafted and Reviewed – The five source sector workgroups—Agriculture, Forestry, Urban Stormwater, and Wastewater Treatment—and the two habitat restoration workgroups—Streams and Wetlands—presented their draft BMP verification protocols to the Committee for initial review and feedback. The June 19 meeting summary, briefing materials, and presentations, which are accessible on-line on the CBP partnership’s website at <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/calendar/event/18404/>, provide excellent overviews of how each workgroup is approaching verification of its practices, treatments, and technologies and the BMP Verification Committee’s reactions and direction back to each workgroup.
* Approaches to Full Access to Federal Cost Shared Data and Double Counting Outlined - Dean Hively, USGS/USDA ARS, presented the proposed approaches to ensuring all six jurisdictions will have access to the full array of USDA NRCS and FSA federal cost shared agricultural conservation practices and accounting for any possible double counting. Dean recommended a five-point approach to ensuring these two objectives—full access and prevention of double counting—could be achieved in tandem through procedures developed working with and tailored to each of the six jurisdictions.
* Options for Cleaning up Historical BMP Databases Presented – Jeff Sweeney presented three options to the BMP Verification Committee for how the partnership and the individual jurisdictions could proceed forward with cleaning up their historical BMP databases. At the WQGIT’s July 16 conference call, the BMP Verification Committee requested the WQGIT charge the Watershed Technical Workgroup with responsibility for further pursuing these historical database clean-up options as this work it outside of the original charge to the BMP Verification Committee.

Seeking Nominations for the BMP Verification Review Panel – Following its June 19 meeting, the BMP Verification Committee sent out formal requests for nominations for members on the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership's BMP Verification Review Panel on June 21. The request included the draft charge and recommended types, expertise and proficiencies of members for the BMP Verification Review Panel. The requests for nomination were sent to CBP Advisory Committees, members of the Water Quality and Habitat GITs and targeted workgroups. Nominations were due July 23; the BMP Verification Committee will discuss nominees during August 16th conference call.

Upcoming Schedule and Next Steps

This schedule is subject to change, based on the BMP Verification Committee’s September 12th meeting review of the entire BMP verification framework and progress by the workgroups on their source sector/habitat restoration specific verification protocols.

* August 16th BMP Verification Committee Conference Call
* Review of the revised draft June 5th BMP verification principles
* Review of BMP Verification Review Panel nominations
* Review of the BMP Verification Review Panel’s operations and schedule
* Preparation for the September 12th face to face meeting
* September 12th BMP Verification Committee Meeting
* Review of the entire BMP verification program framework
* Are we ready to seek partnership approval of the entire framework or is more time needed to fully develop all the framework’s elements
* Institutionalizing the application of life spans into our tracking, verification, and reporting systems
* October:
* Presentation to the Water Quality Goal Implementation Team
* Briefings for Habitat and other Goal Implementation Teams
* Briefings for the CBP partnership’s advisory committees (CAC, LGAC, STAC)
* November:
* Presentation to the Management Board
* Briefings for the CBP partnership’s advisory committees (continued)
* January:
* Presentation to the Principals’ Staff Committee
* Winter 2012/2013:
* PSC communication of the Partnership’s BMP Verification Program to partners/stakeholders through some formal agreement mechanism
* Spring 2013:
* BMP Verification Review Panel reviews states’ proposed verification programs

For more information, visit the BMP Verification Committee’s web page at: <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/groups/group/best_management_practices_bmp_verification_committee>.

**Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail Opened**

The Nation Park Service (NPS) announced on July 31 the opening of a new Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail. The 560-mile land and water route connects historic sites in Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia while telling the story of the War of 1812 in the Chesapeake Bay region.  One of 19 national historic trails administered by NPS, the [Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail](http://www.starspangledtrail.net/) allows visitors to explore the region's unique landscapes and waterways while experiencing the places that bring to life the nation's Second War of Independence. Part of the nation's bicentennial celebration of the War of 1812, the trail traces American and British troop movements and introduces visitors to regional communities--Bladensburg, Baltimore, Washington, D.C.--affected by war. Visitor centers, wayside signs and road markers connect the hundreds of sites located along the trail, some of which are accessible by bike or even boat. The trail [website](http://starspangledtrail.net/) offers a number of services to help visitors explore the trail, from an [adventure planner](http://starspangledtrail.net/things-to-do/adventure-planner/) to a Junior Ranger [activity book](http://starspangledtrail.net/pdfs/STSP_Junior_Ranger.pdf).  For more information: http://www.starspangledtrail.net/

**2012 Chesapeake Bay Blue Crab Advisory Report**

A new report on the Chesapeake Bay's [blue crab](http://www.chesapeakebay.net/fieldguide/critter/blue_crab) population reveals a blue crab stock that has reached sustainable levels and is not overfished. The report, developed by the [Chesapeake Bay Stock Assessment Committee](http://www.chesapeakebay.net/groups/group/chesapeake_bay_stock_assessment_committee) (CBSAC) and released on July 20, by the Chesapeake Bay Program's [Sustainable Fisheries Goal Implementation Team](http://www.chesapeakebay.net/groups/group/sustainable_fisheries), highlights the health of a blue crab population with results showing a sustainable number of adult females and more juveniles than have been counted in the past two decades.

According to the report, overfishing of blue crabs is not occurring in the Bay. Indeed, 2011 represents the fourth consecutive year that harvest levels have been at or below target level. This is likely due to more stringent harvesting regulations that work to preserve the female blue crab population. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources, for instance, has placed limits on the commercial harvest of female blue crabs and banned the recreational harvest of females altogether. Virginia regulators have banned the winter dredging of blue crabs for the past four years, notable because mature female crabs often overwinter in the saltier, warmer waters of the lower Bay.

To maintain a sustainable blue crab fishery, CBSAC recommends better accounting for both commercial and recreational catches and taking a precautionary approach to harvesting young crabs this fall in hopes of generating a healthy harvest next spring. For a copy of the report see: <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/documents/CBSAC_Final_Advisory_Report_2012_July_20th_2012.pdf>

**USGS Releases Long Term Monitoring Trends Report**

The USGS recently released a report about the nutrient and sediment trends in the Bay watershed. Overall, there was improvement in long-term nutrient trends (1985-2010) at the majority of the sites in the Bay watershed. However, improvement was less significant over the past 10 years.

Since 1985, nitrogen concentrations have decreased at about two thirds of the monitoring stations. Over the past 10 years, however, improvements occurred at less than half of the sites with the majority of the sites having no significant change. Similarly, over the long-term, phosphorus concentrations have improved at most monitoring sites and worsened at only a handful. However, in looking at just the last 10 years, phosphorus concentrations improved only at one-third of the sites with a majority having no significant change.

In general, sediment concentrations have shown less improvement overall than nutrients. Over the long-term, sediment trends have improved at about one third of the sites, but they have only improved at a handful of sites over the past 10 years. Sediment trends worsened at about a quarter of the sites both over the long term and past 10 years. For more information:
<http://www.usgs.gov/blogs/features/usgs_top_story/monitoring-the-chesapeake-bay-watershed/?from=title>

**Chesapeake Executive Council's Annual Meeting**

The Chesapeake Executive Council held its 2012 annual meeting on July 9 at historic Gunston Hall near Lorton, Virginia. The theme of the meeting was "Step by Step, Stream by Stream, Restoring our Waters" with a focus on local watershed implementation. The members of the Executive Council listened to presentations on the state of the program, progress on reducing pollution and restoring water quality focused on the 2-year Milestones, and reports from the CBP’s Citizens, Local Government, and Scientific and Technical Advisory Committees. The Executive Council nominated and confirmed District of Columbia’s Mayor Vincent Gray as its new chair.

Outgoing EC Chair and EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson also announced 14 local governments from across the watershed that will receive technical assistance from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’s (NFWF’s) Local Government Green Infrastructure Initiative. Twenty-three additional localities have been awarded similar assistance through NFWF’s rolling grant process, for a total of 37 localities receiving support valued at $2.3 million. The program, funded by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), offers local governments much-needed assistance to make progressive infrastructure changes to improve nearby water quality.

**Nominations for Chesapeake Forest Champion**

Nominations are sought for the 2012 Chesapeake Forest Champion. Both individuals and groups are eligible, whether they are professionals or volunteers, non profits or agencies, businesses or private landowners. Nomination forms may be completed on line by Monday, August 6.

To help promote their importance and celebrate those who work hard to conserve them, the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, the U.S. Forest Service and partners launched this new, annual contest to recognize Forest Champions throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Winners will be recognized at the annual [Chesapeake Watershed Forum](https://allianceforthebay.org/initiatives/connecting-people/chesapeake-watershed-forum/) on September 28-30, 2012, in Shepherdstown, WV (fees for registration and accommodation will be waived for Champions). DEADLINE for nominations is Monday, August 6. For more information visit, [www.forestryforthebay.org](http://www.forestryforthebay.org/)

**Chesapeake Bay Program Federal Office Directors host OMB Officials**

The Chesapeake Bay Federal Office Directors hosted examiners from the Office of Management and Budget for a field outing and briefing on federal agency progress toward the President’s Chesapeake Bay Executive Order. The briefing was held on June 26 in Havre De Grace, Md. Department of Interior (US Geological Survey, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, and Bureau of Land Management) served as host, with input from other federal agencies, including National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Defense and the Environmental Protection Agency. Discussion focused on items from each agency in the 2012 Executive Order Action Plan in support of the goals to Restore Clean Water, Recover Habitats, Sustain Fish and Wildlife, and Conserve Land and Increase Public Access.

**New Resource on LID Ordinance Provisions**

On July 24, the James River Association, Potomac Conservancy and Friends of the Rappahannock released a report: *Promoting Low Impact Development in Virginia*. The report summarizes findings of a year-long analysis of local development codes and ordinances in Virginia’s nontidal Chesapeake Bay watershed for their incorporation of low impact development (LID) practices.  The Project Team rated the localities on 76 LID principles grouped in categories such as minimizing land disturbance, preserving vegetation, minimizing impervious cover, protecting general water quality and nontidal locality supplement. To help localities that would like to improve their score and encourage conservation, the Project Team assembled a database of LID ordinance provisions from across Virginia’s Bay watershed, and developed recommendations, based on implemented ordinances from a reviewed locality, for each focus area of the checklist. For more information: <http://jrava.org/what-we-do/va-scorecard>

**Advisory Committee Updates**

**Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC)**

STAC is currently planning a number of workshops for the upcoming months.  These workshops include:

1) *Research-Based Best Practices for Environmental Education* – This workshop will be held on August 27th and 28th at the O’Callaghan Hotel in Annapolis, MD.  The workshop will identify characteristics of effective environmental education programs from around the region and nation, and discuss metrics for assessing programs within the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

2) *Lag Times in the Watershed and their influence on Chesapeake Bay Restoration* – This workshop will be held on October 16th and 17th in a location yet to be determined.  The workshop will investigate how lag times between implementation practices and nutrient reductions in water bodies are simulated in the current Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model.  Participants will develop a set of recommendations that will guide the Chesapeake Bay Program’s future consideration of lag times.

3) *Multiple Management Models in a Regulatory Setting –* This workshop will be held during the fall of 2012 at a location yet to be determined.  The purpose of the workshop will be to gather stakeholders, modeling experts and regulatory experts to discuss how multiple models have been applied in management situations around the nation, and analyze whether the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort may benefit from multiple models in the future.

For additional information about the workshops, contact Natalie Gardner at gardnern@si.edu.

In addition, STAC recently released a workshop report titled, “Adapting to Climate Change in the Chesapeake Bay.”  This report summarizes a March, 2011 STAC workshop in which participants identified a number of ways the Chesapeake Bay Program could begin to consider future climate changes in day-to-day operations and restoration programs.  STAC recently asked the Management Board to respond to the report’s specific recommendations by October 1, 2012.  You can find the report at: <http://www.chesapeake.org/pubs/287_Pyke2012.pdf> and the letter to the Management Board at: <http://www.chesapeake.org/pubs/288_C.Pyke2012.pdf>.

For questions about the report or the letter, contact Matt Johnston at johnstonma@si.edu.

**Citizens Advisory Committee**

The next quarterly meeting of the Citizens Advisory Committee will be in Harrisburg, PA on September 6-7, 2012.

**Local Government Advisory Committee**

The next quarterly meeting of the Local Government Advisory Committee will be in Shepherdstown, WV on September 27-28.

**CBP Goal Implementation Team Updates**

GIT 5 – Foster Stewardship

*The Fostering Stewardship GIT promotes individual stewardship, supports environmental education for all ages, and assists citizens, communities and local governments in undertaking initiatives to achieve restoration and conservation in the Chesapeake region. It aims to build public support of restoration efforts and increase citizen engagement and active stewardship.*

Public Comment Period for the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Public Access Plan*

Providing adequate public access to the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries is important for quality of life, the economy, and for long-term conservation of the region’s treasured natural and cultural resources. Despite this, physical access to the Bay and its tributaries—the very re-sources that form the basis for the Chesapeake’s unique identity—is limited. To address the need for additional public access to these waterways, the National Park Service and GIT 5’s Public Access Planning Action Team have drafted a *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Public Access Plan*. As called for in the *Strategy for Protecting and Restoring the Chesapeake Bay Watershed*, which was issued in response to President Obama’s Executive Order 13508, this plan was designed to assess the demand for public access; describe (inventory) the existing public access facilities; assess barriers to public access; determine gaps in the public access system; identify opportunities for new access sites; and help direct federal, state, and local funding toward public access opportunities.

 A public comment period for the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Public Access Plan* opened on July 24th and will last until August 24th. During this time period the public is invited to provide general feedback on the draft plan, suggest existing access sites that may have been missed in the plan, and recommend potential new access sites not included in the current inventory.

Environmental Literacy Best Practices and Metrics Workshop

On August 27 and 28, the Education Workgroup with support from STAC, NOAA, and the Chesapeake Bay Trust will host an Environmental Literacy Best Practices Workshop. The purpose of the workshop is to provide a forum for Workgroup members and leading national experts to discuss key aspects of environmental education research in the context of student environmental literacy and meaningful watershed educational experiences (MWEEs) specifically. The resulting information will be used to refine and enhance the working definition of the MWEE and ultimately to develop revised metrics to track progress towards the MWEE commitment of the Chesapeake Bay Program. The new metrics will be piloted during the 2012-2013 school year.

LandScope Chesapeake

The federal *Strategy for the Protecting and Restoring the Chesapeake Bay Watershed* developed under Executive Order 13508 (E.O.), called for USGS and NPS to develop a watershed-wide strategic, publicly accessible land conservation geographic information and priority system to support sound conservation planning and decision making. With the support of GIT 5’s Land Conservation Action Team, the National Park Service, U.S. Geological Survey and NatureServe jointly executed a memorandum of understanding in 2012 to collaborate on the development of this prioritization system: LandScope Chesapeake.

By leveraging an existing interactive platform and map viewer developed by NatureServe that brings together maps, photos, and stories, LandScope Chesapeake will serve as a tool to foster collaborative, strategic land conservation priority setting and implementation, including leveraging partner resources and capabilities to achieve mutual conservation goals. The prioritization system will incorporate multiple land conservation values, including those of ecological, cultural, historic, scenic viewshed, recreational, and working importance to the Chesapeake landscape.  Initial development of LandScope Chesapeake will be completed by mid- to late August, with the build-out of additional content and capabilities continuing through the fall.

**Recent Events**

Jun 19-20 CBP Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) meeting (Annapolis)

Jun 26 OMB and Federal offices “Day on the Bay”

Jul 9 Executive Council meeting (Lorton, Virginia)