

Communications Workgroup –Annual Meeting Minutes – 3/14/2013

I. Attendance

Margaret Enloe (Coordinator), CBP Comm.
Mike Land (Chair), NPS
Tom Wenz, EPA
Nita Sylvester, EPA
Catherine Krikstan, CBP Comm. Office
Steve Droter, CBP Comm. Office
Kathy Boomer (phone), SERC/USGS
Gary Waugh (phone)
Jay Apperson (phone), MDE
Nita Sylvester, EPA

Jenna Valente, CRC
Donnelle Keech (phone), The Nature Conservancy
Cindy Chance, NPS
Deb Kleiner (phone), CCWC
Carol Riggs (phone) (Chair), DNREC
Donnelle Keech (phone), The Nature Conservancy
Leila Mitchell (phone), NY
Jessica Blackburn (phone), CAC / Interim LGAC
Pat Buckley (phone), DEP

I. New Communications Staffer: Jenna Valente!

- Introduction: I am a graduate of the University of Maine's Communication department. I am also from Maine. I have living the region for roughly a year, mostly working at Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge on Assateague Island, Virginia. While I was at Chincoteague I did a mix of Biology and Visitor Services work, first as an intern and eventually as a park ranger (in full uniform). Chincoteague employed me for as long as they could but eventually had to let me go once my temporary position expired. My work at Chincoteague led me to the CRC and CBP where I am now, happily, the new Communications Staffer and look forward to working with all of you.

II. Round Robin:

Catherine Krikstan:

- Mid winter waterfowl survey story is up from DNR – Thank you Josh!
- Josh put the communications office in contact with individuals who are researching Largemouth bass habitat- we hope to get material from them for a story in April.

Steve Droter:

- Harris Creek oyster restoration project year long video will be out next week on Tuesday. We are hoping it will draw a lot of attention.
- Working with Jennifer Greener and GIT 2 on a follow up to the trout video which has been doing well (over 2,000 views).
- Working with Larry Hinman from Maryland DNR to shoot a video on black ducks.
- Winter dredge survey was done with DNR needs to be shot and edited.
- Going to try to release a West Virginia story that was shot last fall next week.
- USFWS story with Dr. Pinkney is being worked on. Catherine and Steve went out yesterday to try and catch Yellow Perch spawn but they did not get enough so they will have to go out again. However, they did get to go back to the lab to dissect and examine the Perch. They dissect them and save the pieces in order to age the fish but need more funding to complete chemical analysis on them.

Tom Wenz:

- Missed last GIT 3 meeting but as far as he knows, BMP verification is still priority.
- No definitive answer on communication other than they say they do not want communication included but they are still communicating me message. We are confused by their message so stand by for more information about that issue.

- Regional agriculture advisor from EPA sent an interesting e-mail letting us know that Sarah Bittleman is the new EPA Senior Agricultural Councilor to the administrator – significant because she was a senior advisor to Tom Vilsack of USDA where she specialized in energy and EPA issues. She used to be the USDA advisor for all things EPA and now she is the EPA advisor for all things USDA. Maybe she will provide us with better insight into the mind of USDA.

Cindy Chance:

- GIT 5: public access action team conference call coming up. They are updating metrics now with 2012 data.
- Land conservation Land scope Chesapeake is the interactive mapping tool, rolling out an analysis this spring.
- Nothing to report on about education.
- Progress report is out for public comment and has been moved up the chain to regional office for approval from regional director – the progress report is the federal partner's summary of what everyone did in 2012. It is up on the Executive Order website and should be final by the end of the month.
- The office is currently reviewing applications for financial assistance to finance public access projects as a part of the Executive Order.
- Working for John Smith, Star Spangled, Potomac Heritage National Scenic trail on the Potomac River to come up with segment plan to allow recreational opportunities and visitor experiences.
- Star spangled has a slew of Chesapeake campaign events coming up through Maryland Office of Tourism and Development.
- Researchers at University of Maryland working on furthering the criteria and methodology for the concept of indigenous cultural landscapes. Dove tails in with land conservation, protection measures to benefit the John Smith Trail.
- Year in review for 2012 being published now.
- Superintendent is retiring – The replacement process will take months. Jonathan is the acting superintendent. Aiming to have a new superintendent by July.
- Position is not advertised yet and no positions are being filled because of sequester
Steve comment: Communications would like to do some spotlights on recreation this summer. We would like things that could be turned around quickly so that they are relevant and timely. Just wanted to plant the seed and get GIT 5 thinking about topics.

Margaret Enloe:

- We track videos by the number of views, so let Steve know if you're using them so we can track the view counts. We are funded through the alliance and present these numbers to them.
- Gone all next week for vacation.
- Working on procurement approval. One is for a new CBP brochure which has been approved, the old one is from 2003, looks dated and we are almost out of stock. Hopefully a designer will be working on that next week as we are trying to get that out the door.
- EC planning team meetings are every two weeks on Friday mornings. No date or location has been decided on at this time but we do know that it will take place in the D.C/Northern Virginia area but we need to hear from the Mayor about his preferences before moving forward.
- Focus of the EC is on governance and/or a new agreement between the partners and the EC representatives.
- Procurement approved for MPT sponsorship of Chesapeake Bay Week which is good because ad in the program guide is already out and done. April issue of MPT sponsorship includes 3 weeks of on air messages + program ad and logo on their website as a hot link.
- Working on SAV release for indicator data.

Jenna Valente:

- Working on new Chesapeake Currents, Bay Brief and Bay News banners and redesign.

- Working through MailChimp for the new design.
- Welcomes any suggestions, ideas or comments about new innovative ways to design the page. Feel free to send an e-mail or call.
- Goal is to align all of our e-newsletters with the look and feel of our webpage.

Deb Kleiner:

- Working on planning a conference for June 4-5.
- Figuring out programming for conference - does anyone have ideas for speakers or conferences?
- Have panels on everything from financing on the federal and state levels, industry and grassroots organizing, ect.
- They will do a Susquehanna River update in one session but need to add another agriculture related panel.
- Conference is in Baltimore and will include field trips that highlight what neighborhoods are doing to create greener structures/ behind the scenes tour at the port. The aquarium will be doing a tour at Fort McHenry about the work they have been doing with wetlands.
- Working with members in Charlottesville and Petersburg, Va about a session that communicates why storm utilities are important.
- Charlottesville has come around and passed a storm water utility and Petersburg is moving forward on one right now.

Comment: NPS Urban Waters Initiative could be good for this conference.

230 member organizations will be attending.

Visit choosecleanwater.org to find a draft about what they are thinking about for topics for the conference, there are still holes in it so they are happy to hear suggestions.

Gary Waugh:

- Mostly working on state park advertising and Freedom of Information Act requests.
- Public hearing on the 22nd about Arlington county MS4 permits which will be the first of 11 permits. They hope this will serve as template for other 10.

Jay Apperson:

- Letter to editor in today's Frederick News Post from Secretary Summers that might be of interest to everyone about storm water utility fees.
- Event going on today at Sandy Point State Park for ground water awareness week about issues of ground water and how they relate to issues in the Bay.
- There is also an event today on well water maintenance.
- EMDE quarterly e-newsletter went out 2 weeks ago, feel free to subscribe to it.
- Reclaim the Bay campaign is going on. The webpage is set up on the website which is used to promote events. Anyone is welcome to e-mail event ideas that need promoting.
- Relating to the letter to the editor - there was a Maryland storm water symposium in Annapolis last week that ties into Bay restoration.
- Gearing up for Earth Week – one event has to do with green schools, poster competition coming out, maybe an event related to composting.
- Howard county eco fest is coming up.

Carol Riggs:

- A new communications marketing person was just hired, Phil Miller, he has put together a communications team that meets quarterly. Feel free to contact him at phillipmiller@state.de.us
- Working on a new campaign to get 3,000 pledges from residents to reduce nutrient and sediment pollution through following BMPs. So far this plan has been a success.
- Social media launch has been successful.
- Using social media press releases.
- Have a series of videos that they are working on and having success with. The videos are posted on website and youtube

- Just had a major all day workshop on funding for municipalities to help them meet their goals under the watershed implementation plan.
- Pondering about an “on the water tour” to get more people out on the Nanticoke to get the public to relate to their environment
- Rain barrel painting contest with the local schools and Chesapeake Bay Watershed is coming up this spring.

Donnelle Keech:

- Maintain Healthy Watersheds GIT– Anna Stuart is working with Margaret on a conservation success story about brook trout habitat in New York.
- *Margaret: Has shared idea with Steve and Catherine. The challenge is that it's similar to the West Virginia brook trout video. It is on docket for us to work on but now is not ideal to film.*
- Getting healthy watershed themes and stories out of the communications office is an explicit goal for GIT4.
- Biggest focus for Donnelle right now is preparing proposals for a couple of sessions at the Chesapeake Watershed Forum in the fall.
- Plan on building on their successful general information session from last year but want to include a second, more interactive, session that will allow local watershed representatives to get hands on and work with information that we have compiled about the local benefits from protecting and restoring local watersheds. Proposals are due at the end of this month so stay tuned for more information about those.
- Another big emphasis for GIT4 is compiling state generated data to give an idea of the status and trends of the Bay wide watershed. Now we need to start thinking about how to do we get that data out.
- Next meeting for GIT4 is being scheduled for sometime in April. If anyone is interested in attending, let Anna Stuart know.
- Nature conservancy staff in western Maryland and the eastern shore are working with county governance that are testing tools to improve the targeting of BMP that are specifically focused on meeting the TMDL.
- Kathy Boomer is a river hydrologist and the brains behind a lot of this work. She recently presented to EPA about this subject so keep your ears open because you might start hearing about it around the office.
- Nature conservancy's Maryland/DC chapter is on the verge of launching a public relations campaign called One for the Bay. If you Google Nature Conservancy One for the Bay, it should be the first thing that pops up. It is a joint project between the Oyster Recovery Partnership and the Nature Conservancy with high-end seafood restaurants around the Maryland/DC area. McCormick and Schmick's will hold the first two events including the launch event on April 3rd.

Leila Mitchell:

- Watershed implementation plan is up on website now if anyone is interested in linking to it.
- Weekly newsletter has highlights from each week. The format will be changing because of a shift to a new listserv format.
- Water Week is coming up in May; they will be using the new listserv to get the word out.

Jessica Blackburn:

- Citizen's advisory committee had a meeting in February and is going to continue to participate with the work from the BMP verification committee.
- Local Government Advisory Committee is working on rescheduling their quarterly meeting to sometime in April; it had to be postponed due of inclement weather in early March. They will be working on a strategic plan and outline ideas to bring to EC for recommendation. Will hear about local strategies for implementation and financing.

Pat Buckley:

- Nothing to report from the DEP at this time.

Tom Wenz Comment: keep an eye on the budget around the end of this month because the Farm Bill has not been renewed so the CDWI grant funding will continue on last year's level until a new budget comes out.

Mike Land:

- Bay Journal and Bay Journeys are now live at www.bayjournal.com and www.bayjourneys.com everyone is encouraged to take a look at them.

III. 30 year anniversary/communications:

Executive Council: How do we highlight CBP partnership progress over 30 years?

- The 30 year anniversary will be a part of EC: we want ideas on how to be promoting the anniversary. How should we visually manifest this? Needs to incorporate messages into the presentation, not just a visual. Please contact Margaret with any ideas.
- *Nita comment: Indicators: SAV has been around for a long time. What if we show how the program has been monitoring SAV for 30 years? We can link to many things because we can connect habitat, communication and science.*

ACTION: Contact Margaret with ideas for visualization for the EC.

IV. Pending Indicator releases from CBP (SAV & Reducing Pollution)

- SAV grasses data will be expected from VIMS at the end of March. We are proposing to do a press conference within two weeks of that release. We ideally would like the press conference to take place around April 15th.
- SAV is a complicated release for us to put together so we're not sure if we're going to go the conventional route but we have been discussing taking the social media route.
- Will call on Jay and Samantha to help us figure it out - Jay "contact Samantha".
- Regan Communications is offering a training seminar for social media press releases next Thursday. We are ordering a CD of the webinar so interested parties can look into that.
- Reducing pollutions data are estimated to be ready around early April.
- It has been proposed that a piece about this data comes at the end of April because we have already committed to doing SAV for the beginning of April.
- Hope to do our first social media release on reducing pollution indicator data.
- When reducing pollution data is released everyone should be aware that this is only the data that everyone has collected and assembled in a visual, so different states can compare and contrast their numbers. It will not be an assessment of the data.
- *Nita: Tidal water benthic health indicators will be ready for release within a week or so and will be up on our website soon even if we do not do a communication piece on it. Maybe we can communicate it through a news post.*
- *Margaret: when data is ready it will be posted online but we might not promote it until a more publicly relevant time. Reducing pollution indicators will be promoted as soon as it is up online because they are of great importance to all of the states. If we don't promote the issue right away someone else will.*
- *Nita: slew of indicators will be available to us shortly in conjunction with Executive Order progress report. Waiting for final public comment before it's released. We will have a lot of new reducing pollution indicator data on the website but might not be promoted right away. Opportunities throughout the year to promote those numbers.*
- *Margaret: encourage anyone to contact Margaret or Nita if need be but use that information for your own promotions.*
- *Jay: is there a different date for reducing pollution indicators?*
- *Margaret: approximately two weeks later.*
- *Pat Buckley: are we considering something different than releasing the data around EC meeting?*
- *Margaret: yes, since we don't have a set date for EC meeting yet we still want to honor states hard work. The EC will revolve around governance and goals since this is an off year. Our*

thought is to link the numbers to the EC every other year.

- *Nita: Some of the indicators for Bay health will be updated on the website, we will be providing updated information on the Bay report card. Keep in mind that other things drive when people release information to us.*
- *Margaret: Nita, let's talk about indicator releases.*
- *Pat: There is no guarantee that we will be successful with reaching an agreement for the EC. Maybe we should keep the pollution reduction numbers in our back pocket until then in case there is no agreement reached.*
- *Margaret: Will bring that up with leadership around here but we can't hold on to the information for too long if EC planning is continuously being delayed.*

ACTION: Contact Margaret if interested in the social media press release webinar.

ACTION: Collaborate with Jay and Samantha about taking the social media release route.

V. BMP Verification: communication strategy update:

- *Margaret: our original goal was to have something included about communications in the strategy that will be shown to the PSC.*
- *PSC decided that decision was premature and communications should not be included in the strategy at all.*
- *They don't think that they need a strategy, yet, everyone is still communicating about a communication strategy.*
- *Tom and Margaret will keep trying to help people communicate about BMP verification without an official part of it being in their strategy.*
- *Pat: the states will be at different stages of readiness before going out to the public- before we can accept BMP data from other groups we can't communicate it to the public. We don't think we are going to get a unified message on that because states aren't thrilled about process.*
- *Tom: We will be keeping an eye on the media and the releases that come out in order to stay on top of what messages are being conveyed just in case we have to go back and edit them.*
- *Margaret: we will have to fix things once they get out...a reactive strategy.*