**DRAFT GIT 4 STRATEGY**

**12/4/2012**

Purposes of this document:

1. to inform a GIT 4 strategy and 2013 work plan discussion using the CBP’s adaptive management approach;
2. to articulate specific, measurable outcomes with which to manage and account for progress toward the GIT’s overarching goal;
3. to provide a draft 2013 action plan for GIT 4 discussion, including:
   1. specific actions that GIT 4 member agencies will take *separately* in 2013 toward achievement of the GIT’s overarching goal and specific outcomes;
   2. specific actions that GIT 4 will take *collectively* toward achievement of the GIT’s goal and outcomes.

Suggested guiding principles:

1. manage adaptively: reflect on the GIT 4 goal, identified key factors affecting achievement of the goal, selected strategies, and progress toward desired outcomes; consider lessons learned from prior-year activities;
2. proceed incrementally; this is not intended to be a comprehensive or perfect strategy;
3. include *both* the key actions that individual partner agencies (state, federal and NGO) will take separately *and* the key actions that the GIT will take together, collectively;
4. the emphasis of collective actions should be to support and enhance partner (primarily *state*) healthy watershed identification and protection programs;
5. partners differ from each other in terms of program priorities, needs and resource constraints on participation in the listed collective activities, therefore inclusion of a collective action in this strategy does not assume that all partners will necessarily dedicate staff or other resources to every listed collective activity;
6. measurable outcomes and activities should not create new, expensive monitoring demands;
7. partners should creatively apply existing, available programmatic tools and resources toward the GIT’s goal.

Consensus overarching goal:

***Maintain local watersheds at optimum health across a range of landscape contexts.***

Key factors affecting achievement of the goal:

1. landscape condition, including forest cover, impervious surface, and connectivity between terrestrial and aquatic habitats;
2. flow regimes and channel stability;
3. land conservation;
4. private sector land use practices, including forest and stream corridor protection and stormwater runoff management;
5. government program implementation, including Clean Water Act anti-degradation, local code and ordinance enforcement, and land protection;
6. accountability, including use of metrics for tracking and reporting stream and watershed health, threats, and protection status.

Consensus GIT 4 key strategies:

* **Strategy 1: provide a forum** for mutual learning and exploration of scientific and management issues;
* **Strategy 2: develop information resources**, including health and protection status tracking capabilities, and otherwise **support communications** about healthy watershed identification and protection;
* **Strategy 3: promote the science** that supports better characterization and protection of healthy watersheds.

**REFLECTION ON 2012 ACTIVITIES**

Discussion Questions:

* Did we do what we said we wanted to do in 2012?
* Did our actions have the expected outcomes?
* Have we discovered reasons to change our key strategies?
* **Strategy 1: Provide a forum** 
  + Quarterly GIT meeting agendas in 2012 included discussion of CBP partners’ and other healthy watershed identification and protection programs, including:
    - Fairfax County, VA
    - Lancaster County Planning Commission, PA
    - Watershed Assessment Program, NOAA
    - Mattawoman Creek watershed, MD
    - Deer Creek in Harford County, MD
    - Vermont Healthy Watershed Assessment
  + Other GIT 4 agenda topics in 2012
    - State anti-degradation program reviews
    - STAC Workshop on “crediting conservation”
    - Healthy Watershed tracking project development
    - Communications Strategy
    - Decision Framework for adaptive management of GIT 4 activities
    - Chesapeake STAT for public accountability
    - Watershed Health Indicators
* **Strategy 2: Develop information resources/Support communications**
  + VA, PA, MD and NY in 2012 contributed to a first-draft collective mapping of state-identified healthy watersheds
  + GIT 4 leaders in 2012 communicated the GIT 4 mission, strategies and work plan to the CBP Management Board, Citizens Advisory Committee, Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee
  + GIT 4 Communications Workgroup led a Healthy Watersheds session at the 2012 Chesapeake Watershed Forum. Session participants rated the session a 4.2 on scale of 1 – 5, and said the session raised their subject matter knowledge level from 3.0 to 4.0 also on a scale of 1 – 5.
  + GIT 4 staff distributed key publications from EPA Healthy Watershed Initiative:
    - “Identifying and Protecting Healthy Watersheds”
    - “Economic Benefits of Protecting Healthy Watersheds: A Literature Review”
* **Strategy 3: Promote the science**
  + GIT 4 collaborated in 2012 with the CBP STAC to hold a workshop that generated recommendations for improvements to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model to better reflect the differential nutrient and sediment processing/retention rates of natural landscape features, including wetlands, streams and riparian forests.

**DRAFT MEASURABLE OUTCOMES FOR GIT 4**

Draft measurable outcomes for discussion (Management Board expects GIT to provide these in early December):

* **Overarching Goal Outcome Options: (keeping healthy watersheds healthy)**

**[Need to discuss alternative language]**

* + **OUTCOME 1:** No reduction in stream health for the 50% of sampled streams that rate fair, good or excellent as measured by the Index of Biotic Integrity.
  + **OUTCOME 2:** No reduction in water quality in state-identified healthy waters (i.e., keep state-identified healthy waters off the 303(d) impaired waters list).
* **Strategy 1 - Provide a forum**
  + **OUTCOME 3:** Quarterly GIT 4 meetings to share learning and collaborate on collective GIT 4 activities
* **Strategy 2 - Develop information resources/Support communications**
  + **OUTCOME 4:** A healthy watershed tracking framework developed and maintained to publicly and transparently account for healthy watershed identification and protection
  + **OUTCOME 5:** Local government incorporation of state-identified healthy watersheds in local land use plans
* **Strategy 3 - Promote the science**
  + **OUTCOME 6:** Coordinate with the Water Quality Goal Implementation Team to follow up on the 2012 STAC Workshop Report recommendations.
  + **Alternative 6A: Water Quality Goal Implementation Team’s response to the 2012 STAC Workshop report recommendations.**
* **Question: Are we missing any key strategies?**
* **Question: Include a watershed management plan outcome? (re: C2K goal)**

**DRAFT STATE, FEDERAL, AND NGO INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES FOR DISCUSSION:**

**Commonwealth of Pennsylvania:**

1. Publish a community watershed health metric (looking at ordinances, staff, and forestry plans, etc.)
2. Propose targeting NRCS forest protection funding to healthy watersheds
3. Propose use of open space funding to protect healthy watersheds
4. Explore use of Growing Greener funding for healthy watershed protection
5. Implement the Forest Conservation Easement Program to protect healthy watersheds with SRF funding: WWTP upgrades get more loan money with a lower interest rate for including forest protection easements into their plans

**State of Maryland:**

1. Explore potential for use of healthy watershed protection action as a growth offset
2. Update the Watershed Resource Registry to improve protection of Healthy Watershed values through regulatory and non-regulatory decisions.
3. Document the connections between healthy watershed protection and source-water protection
4. Determine if a refined healthy watershed identification map would benefit state agency program implementation and coordination.
5. Develop a plan for updating the “Surf Your Watershed” website as a way to improve public communication of healthy watershed condition, management needs and protection status.
6. Develop and implement communications to local communities:
   1. guidelines to support integration of healthy watershed protection into local comprehensive plans
   2. focus on what localities will lose if they develop healthy watershed “X”
   3. focus on economic argument (protection is cheaper than restoration)
7. Initiate interagency coordination to discuss the development of a Tier III antidegradation designation for highest quality waters and watersheds
8. Collaborate with NGOs, such as The Nature Conservancy, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, and others, to coordinate protection and communication efforts.
9. Continue interagency coordination for further development of the Biological Recovery Initiative, in partnership with EPA, to evaluate restoration priorities based on measures of recovery potential.
10. Refine Maryland’s land conservation tracking system in support of the NPS Landscope initiative.
11. Issue a report through the Marcellus Shale Safe Drilling Initiative Advisory Commission that documents Best Practices needed for avoiding unacceptable risks to public health, safety, the environment and natural resources.

**Commonwealth of Virginia:**

1. Resolve healthy watershed identification map for use in public communications
   1. Qualify identification as “ecologically healthy waters” to avoid confusion over persistent impairments in identified waters
2. VCU: complete a classification of VA healthy waters as a function of development threat and provide those data to the CBPO for use in public communications
3. Integrate a designation of “healthy streams” within the VA ProbMon assessment database
4. Explore (in Chowan pilot) how to use CWA 319 for healthy watershed protection
5. Collaborate with EPA Region 3 to guide healthy watershed protection in the Rappahannock basin

**Federal Agencies:**

* EPA Region 3:

1. Clarify outcome expectations of healthy watershed protection programs in EPA R3
2. Publish a list of EPA programs and resources that are available to the states to support healthy watershed protection (could include guidance on how to use resources and programs)
3. Lead an effort among federal agencies to identify programs and resources that can be used to protect state-identified healthy watersheds
4. Provide technical assistance to PA and WV to complete landscape-scale green infrastructure assessments
5. Provide technical assistance to Frederick County, MD, to complete a green infrastructure assessment
6. If funding is available, use Potomac Highlands Implementation Grants to fund conservation easements and restoration projects through collaboration with EBTJV and others
7. Integrate healthy watershed protection into EPA water programs
   1. Integrate healthy watershed protection into mitigation banking and CWA Section 404 program
   2. Explore potential to strengthen antidegradation implementation
   3. Explore potential integration of healthy watersheds into source water protection programs (under way within the Potomac Partnership)
8. Explore potential to use CWA programs to protect flow in healthy watersheds
   1. Consider SRBC evaluation of shale gas development impacts on flow

* EPA HQ: Propose and implement a grant program for implementation of the Healthy Watershed Initiative
* NPS @ CBPO: incorporate map layer of state-identified healthy watersheds into Landscope Chesapeake

NGOs

TNC

1. Provide GIT 4 leadership as the GIT 4 Chair
2. Provide GIT 4 leadership as the GIT 4 Communications Workgroup Chair
3. Complete pilot assessment of healthy watershed protection provisions in sampled Virginia counties

CBF?

TPL?

AFT?

Chesapeake Conservancy?

TU?

**DRAFT GIT 4 *COLLECTIVE* 2013 ACTIVITIES FOR DISCUSSION:**

**Strategy 1 - Provide a forum:**

1. Convene four quarterly GIT 4 meetings in 2013 to collaborate on GIT 4 projects and share learning

**Question:** Are there particular areas of emphasis for which we want outside speakers in 2013? Case studies or example programs?

**Strategy 2 - Develop information resources/Support communications:**

1. Complete the collection of state-identified healthy watershed data layers and publish them on the CBP web site and through Landscope Chesapeake
2. Develop a working definition for practical models of “protection” that assures sustainable local watershed health
3. Develop threat assessment tools for use at state and local levels (STAR support)
   1. Consider Peter Claggett’s threat analysis for use here
4. Develop practical metrics for assessing adequacy of protection (STAR support)
   1. Consider William and Mary pilot project assessing local land use zoning and ordinances
   2. Consider index development for application to individual watersheds
   3. Consider report card development for individual healthy watershds

**Question:** Would the EBTJV be a good opportunity to do some pilot-level work on threat assessment and definition and measurement of protection? Collaborate with GIT2.

**The following communications activities are proposed by the GIT 4 Communications Workgroup for consideration in the GIT 4 2013 Workplan.**

1. Host a session or workshop on healthy watershed themes at Chesapeake Watershed Forum, building on success at 2012 Forum
2. GIT 4 Chair give presentation to LGAC (consider timing, reference success story from the CAC)
3. Provide messages and resources to CPB Communications staff as part of their “emergency” communications strategy (media placements on/ in reaction to weather or other situations that make CBP’s work particularly relevant in the moment)
4. Share presentations, slides, pictures, graphics, to help ***partner agency staff*** prepare presentations, reports, etc. with effective healthy watersheds messages. This primarily/initially involves gathering and making available existing materials.
5. Develop a HW “toolkit” for local champions, with focus on local benefits (drinking water, backstop for pollution reduction, cost avoidance, tourism, brook trout, etc.)
   1. Need inventory of need and existing efforts -- look for opportunities to supplement or piggyback, avoid duplication (MD DNR, MDE mentioned). Distribute through LGAC, state-wide associations of counties?
   2. Idea is to support local champions with information and materials they can use to figure out and make compelling case for local protection of healthy watersheds
   3. Feasibility question: where is capacity to accomplish this?

**Strategy 2 continued; other activities:**

1. Explore and report on the potential to integrate healthy watersheds into the State-EPA 303(d) assessment and reporting process:
   1. Identify gaps in monitoring to support healthy watershed inclusion
   2. Explore measures to close gaps
2. Develop a proposal to make healthy watershed protection initiatives eligible for NFWF grants
3. Collaborate with the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture (EBTJV) to:
   1. Explore the development of healthy watershed protection metrics that are relevant to sustaining brook trout habitat health at the local watershed scale
   2. Provide local models of healthy watershed protection to EBTJV constituents
   3. Amplify public communications to raise local awareness of the existence of and protections for healthy watersheds inhabited by brook trout
4. Collaborate with EPA Region 3 for mutual (EPA- State – NGO) support on healthy watershed communications

**Strategy 3 - Promote the science:**

1. Coordinate with the Water Quality Goal Team to follow up on the 2012 STAC Workshop Report recommendations.
2. Collaborate with the Chesapeake Bay Commission to evaluate the potential to incorporate protected land values into Bay TMDL accounting.