**Communications Workgroup Monthly Meeting –Minutes**

**April 11th, 2013**

**Attendees:**

Mike Land (Chair), NPS
Samantha Kappalman (Vice-Chair), MDE

Tom Wenz, EPA

Nita Sylvester, EPA
Cindy Chance, NPS
Kim Couranz, NOAA

Catherine Krikstan, CBP Comm./Alliance
Jenna Valente, CRC
Matt Ellis, STAC, CRC

Leila Mitchell (phone), NY DEC

Gary Waugh (phone) VA-DCR

Jessica Blackburn (phone), CAC / Interim LGAC

1. Indicator releases from CBP – SAV & Reducing Pollution
* Benthic data: No press release for the benthic data but it was uploaded as an indicator to the website at Chesapeakebay.net; it shows up on the homepage.
* SAV data release: There is updated data for SAV and it is on our communications calendar for this year. A press release and a press conference call are planned for the morning of 4/17/2013.
	+ Bob Orth and Lee Carr will be answering questions from the press related to that release.
	+ During the conference call the press will be alerted to the most recent survey results and the new visualization that we have for the data on our website at <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/visualization/>.
	+ The data for SAV is not good so we are expecting a lot of press coverage in the upcoming weeks.
	+ Based on the VIMS data being released, grasses continued to decline as the scientists expected due to previous weather events over the past two years. However, we are reporting the lowest acreage since 1986 which is going to be something that we will need to manage communications wise for our messaging.
	+ Margaret has been working with Bob on the press release
	+ This release will be first social media news release; it’s exciting to have a new design.
* Reducing Pollution data release – end of April
	+ Information comes from the 2012 progress run showing the efforts from the states to reduce nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment.

*Tom*: I have been going back and forth with Margaret with edits on formatting and verbiage of the press release. Once it’s finalized Margaret will send it around to the group.

1. Round Robin/GIT Updates

Cindy Chance:

* Everything is on track. Public access has meeting on May 6th with the state representatives.
* NPS Chesapeake Bay office – Chesapeake campaign events are coming up for Star Spangled Banner National Historic Trail.

Tom Wenz:

* The president’s proposed budget calls for 15.7 million dollar increase to the budget we received this year, so the Chesapeake Bay Program looks like it will remain healthy.
* Furloughs for EPA are as follows: The CBPO office will be closed the Friday before Memorial Day; expected to be closed July 5th and August 30th but those dates are subject to change.
* EPA is scheduled to have 10 mandatory furloughed days for every employee.

Nita Sylvester:

* Nothing to report at this time.

Mike Land:

* As of July 1st, will be assuming full time duties with NPS Chesapeake Bay office and will not be doing CBP work any longer, but will remain as Communications Workgroup chair.
* Bay program is in the process of sorting out what the web team will be comprised of and what the focus will be once the shift is made.

Catherine Krikstan:

* Updating news stories and getting ready for the SAV release next week.
* Steve put up the Living Shoreline photo essay: <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/blog/post/photo_essay_living_shorelines_protect_habitat_and_human_property>
* DNR just released news about their oyster survey results and were able to put a positive spin on them so we will most likely put up a post about that this week.
* Will also be promoting Chesapeake Bay Week (4/22/2013) on our website and Bay Backpack.
* Winter dredge survey results will be released this month and Steve is working on a video for a From the Field that will be accompanied by a blog post about how that survey works. Trying to time the release of the video and blog post with the release of the actual numbers.

Jenna Valente:

* Working on the redesign of the Chesapeake Currents.
* Finished closed captioning the majority of our YouTube videos.

Gary Waugh:

* Nothing to report at this time.

Samantha Kappalman:

* Release of final green house grass plan.
* Various Earth Day and Earth Week activities coming up, including a big event for the poster winner of the Reclaim the Bay poster contest. Contest was really successful with about 1,600 contestants.
* Spring regional workshops on the WIPs are starting soon
* In May there will be a Bike to Work Day
* In June there will be a Scoop the Poop event about picking up after your pets and how it affects the Bay.
* Maryland Green Registry Leadership award will be coming up as well.

Leila Mitchell:

* Nothing to report but is wondering if NFWF grants are going to be announced soon?
* *Tom*- They could be announced as early as tomorrow but they do not have their final funding levels from EPA yet. They may announce it anyway and start awarding a range of grants based on the anticipated levels. So, be looking for it as soon as tomorrow.

Kim Couranz:

* NOAA, the field team and computer modeling team are developing a work plan primarily for Little Choptank this summer and into the future of some enhanced monitoring and analysis of pre and post oyster restoration work.
* This summer modeling for fin fish sampling will be done.
* Fisheries GIT is focusing on winter dredge survey. The results will be released in the very near future.

Matt Ellis:

* STAC has multiple reports that are in different phases of editing that should be released shortly.
* Sustainable Wastewater report is going through first edit and is now with STAC membership for edits and will be returned to Kevin Sellner for final approval
* Two other upcoming reports - One is the Environmental Education Best Practices.
* Marcellus fact sheet is being edited with revised data hopefully will be sent out soon.
* Multiple Management Models Fact Sheet will also come out soon.
* Lag times should be moving forward and the report is in progress right now.
1. E-Communications products changes – Jenna & Catherine
* CBP Communication office have been working together to redesign all E-Newsletters, starting with Chesapeake Currents which is a monthly newsletter.
	+ In final stages and is ready for feedback, comments, and constructive criticism. If anyone has any suggestions for improvements please e-mail Jenna Valente at Jvalente@chesapeakebay.net.
	+ The new version will include a monthly letter from EPA leadership.
	+ The first updated version of Chesapeake Currents will be released on May 1st
1. Video: Harris Creek Oyster Restoration
* Jenna showed video to the group with closed captioning on.
* The majority of the videos on the CBP YouTube channel have now been closed captioned.
* Anyone interested in CCing their YouTube videos, please contact Jenna - Jvalente@chesapeakebay.net.
* In order for closed captioning to be enabled, the videos have to be watched through YouTube. They will not work on Vimeo or any other style of video player.
**Action**: Put directions on Chesapeakebay.net about how to access CC videos.
1. Other
* Thinking of tying the 30th year celebration in with the EC meeting.
* EC meeting will likely be in the fall but no date has been set yet - stay tuned.
- Executive Order Progress Report is out and on the website at [www.executiveorder.chesapeakebay.net](http://www.executiveorder.chesapeakebay.net) .