

Stream Health Workgroup Update

The Stream Health Workgroup is one of four workgroups under the Habitat Goal Implementation Team at the Chesapeake Bay Program. It serves as an interdisciplinary forum for stream health experts to exchange information and make recommendations that advance a holistic approach to improve the physical, chemical, biological and habitat value of streams within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. The primary goal of the workgroup is to restore the health of degraded stream habitats and protect the healthy stream habitats across the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Currently, the stream health workgroup has identified three focus areas to guide discussion and workgroup activities. 1) Identify priority needs for stream health protection, restoration and research and identify and recommend funding sources to address these needs, 2) Identify and recommend development of tools and necessary guidance to maintain and restore stream health, and 3) Provide opportunities to test and demonstrate application of tools or other innovations through demonstration or pilot projects to advance the science and understanding of stream restoration.

The workgroup recently discussed top priorities that align with the identified focus areas. These priorities include being involved with the process of developing the stream health management strategy document that will accompany the new Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement, contributing to the update of the Chesapeake basin-wide index of biotic integrity for stream macroinvertebrates (Chessie BIBI), and co-hosting a workshop with the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) on designing sustainable stream restoration projects

The STAC workshop, "Designing Sustainable Stream Restoration Projects within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed," is chaired by Bill Stack (Center for Watershed Protection) and Rich Starr (US Fish and Wildlife Service) and will be held May 5-6, 2014. The objective of the workshop is to create agreement among practitioners, regulators and scientists on a common language and assessment methods for designing sustainable stream restoration projects that improve the functional elements of stream health to address water quality, climatological impacts, physical and biological components within the stream and adjacent riparian zone. Ultimately, all of the information gathered from the workshop will be made into recommendations on what and how a uniform stream restoration process should be developed.