**Chesapeake Bay Program**

**Principals’ Staff Committee Meeting**

**February 28, 2014**

**Program Update**

**CBPO Calendar**

2/25 UMCES Insights Report release

2/27-28 CAC meeting (Baltimore)

3/3 Report to Congress final

3/13 Management Board meeting (with New Agreement public listening session)

3/13-14 LGAC meeting (Richmond, Virginia)

3/18-19 STAC meeting (Annapolis)

**Agreement Development Timeline**

2/27 DC Public forum (WashCog, DC)

2/28 **PSC mtg**. – governance issues (Annapolis)

3/4 MD listening session (Annapolis)

3/11 VA listening session (Glen Allen)

3/13 MB Public Forum a.m./CBP Business mtg p.m.

3/17 Public comment period ends

3/21 Comment summary out to PSC

4/7 wk **PSC mtg./Retreat**(tbd)

4/10 MB conf. call

4/14wk Editorial Board – incorporate PSC input/final editing

4/25 Final Draft to Jurisdictions for internal review/ sign-off

4/28wk PSC conf. call/final check-in?

5/5 wk EC signature draft to EC – Agreement complete and ready to move thru signatory process

5/15 MB meeting

6/2wk Final signed Agreement ready for reproduction

6/16wk Executive Council Meeting

**Program Updates**

**Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement**

The draft *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* was released for public comment on January 29. Comments will be accepted through March 17, 2014. The public and interested parties can offer input in three ways: submitting online comments through [www.chesapeakebay.net](http://www.chesapeakebay.net); submitting an email to agreement@chesapeakebay.net; and by submitting an in-person comment at the March 13 meeting of the [Management Board](http://www.chesapeakebay.net/groups/group/management_board). All comments, emails and letters submitted to the Bay Program in regard to the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* will be posted on the CBP website.

Several public listening sessions are also being planned. The District of Columbia Department of the Environment will hold a public listening session on the agreement on Thursday, February 27, from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments building (777 North Capitol Street NE). Maryland has also scheduled a Public Listening Session on March 4th from 3:00pm-8:00pm at St. Johns College, Mellen Hall. Virginia has scheduled a listening session on March 11 in Glen Allen, Virginia from 2-4 pm.

**2013 Chesapeake Bay Program Report to Congress**

On behalf of the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP), EPA will soon submit to Congress “The Chesapeake Bay Program 2013." The report is  called for from CBP every five years as a requirement of the Clean Water Act, Section 117(h). The report includes: the status and trends of the Bay ecosystem; the effectiveness of CBP in implementing management strategies; and recommendations for improved management.

According to the report, overall, the Chesapeake Bay remains in poor health. However, as seen by decreasing nutrient and sediment concentrations and improved habitat resiliency, recovery is under way. Progress in improving the health of this treasured natural resource will be realized through the collaborative efforts of the CBP partners, including implementation of the Chesapeake Bay TMDL and fulfillment by the Federal Leadership Committee of President Obama's Executive Order 13508 - Chesapeake Bay Protection and Restoration.

**EO 13508 FY13 Progress Report and FY14 Action Plan agency review**

Revisions to the draft FY13 Progress Report and FY14 Action Plan have been made to address questions and comments from OMB/CEQ including updated 2014 budget numbers and final editing. The FY13 Progress Report highlights efforts toward reaching the federal milestones set out in the FY13 Action Plan in support of the Executive Order for Bay restoration. The FY14 Action Plan outlines next steps to be taken by Federal agencies in support of the Executive Order for Bay restoration, including outlining the federal two-year Milestones for 2014-2015. The report will be presented to the Chesapeake Bay Program Management Board, then posted for public comment. The final reports are scheduled to be published in March.

Contact: James Edward, (410) 267-5700, edward.james@epa.gov

**New Insights Report Published**

A new report released by the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership on February 25, shows that best management practices—including upgrading wastewater treatment plants, lowering vehicle and power plant emissions and reducing runoff from farmland—have lowered nutrients and sediment in local waterways.

*New Insights: Science-based evidence of water quality improvements, challenges, and opportunities in the Chesapeake* compiles data collected and analyzed by Chesapeake Bay Program partners, including the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES) and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). These data show:

* The Clean Water Act is working. Upgrading wastewater treatment technologies has led to cleaner waters and healthier habitats.
* The Clean Air Act is working. Lowering vehicle and power plant emissions has lowered nutrient pollution in some waterways.
* Reducing agricultural runoff is working. Planting cover crops, managing manure and excluding cattle from rivers and streams has improved local water quality across the region.

**Draft Chesapeake Working Lands Conservation Strategy**

The public comment period on USDA’s Draft Chesapeake Working Lands Conservation Strategy ended February 14. The Strategy is available online at: [http://executiveorder.chesapeakebay.net/](https://mail.chesapeakebay.net/owa/redir.aspx?C=cYRuCPOTik2W3Dnw-QdhBOB9Xu2K3tBI9_OXg6TryuvrwBFOmUHQ4oby5NeCTu5KP-463OP1aTw.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fexecutiveorder.chesapeakebay.net%2f)

This document supports the Chesapeake Executive Order Strategy for Protecting and Restoring the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, which includes an outcome to permanently protect (i.e. through easements, etc.) an additional 2 million acres between 2010-2025, including 695,000 acres of high value forest land. The USDA Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service collaborated with Bay states and other partners to produce this Strategy. The Draft Strategy emphasizes importance of protecting working lands to support environmental, economic, and community goals in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, including water quality goals and the Chesapeake TMDL. It also summarizes opportunities to strengthen working lands protection in the Bay, including recommended actions to advance these goals over the long term.

**Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee**

STAC will hold its fourth quarterly meeting of FY 2013 on March 18-19, 2014 in Annapolis, Maryland.  If you plan on attending this meeting, please send your RSVP to Matt Ellis at [ellism@si.edu.](https://mail.chesapeakebay.net/owa/redir.aspx?C=3t4pNipFRkOHKJqIC6_MKF5SLIEu3NBIZccC-4113GBcBgBrNPYYZ3yjd7CJWMgLRgpmEsco0m4.&URL=https%3a%2f%2fmail.chesapeakebay.net%2fowa%2fUrlBlockedError.aspx)

**Recent Meetings and Events**

Jan 13 Fisheries GIT Executive Committee Call

Jan 13 Water Quality GIT Conference Call

Jan 16 PSC Conference Call

Feb 4 GIT 6 Meeting

Dec 2-3 Mid-Atlantic Environmental Literacy Summit

Dec 3-4 Fisheries Full GIT Meeting

Dec 3-4 STAC Quarterly Meeting