



Chesapeake Bay Program

Science. Restoration. Partnership.

Meeting Minutes

Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP)
Maintain Healthy Watersheds Goal Implementation Team

March 29th, 2016 10 AM – 3 PM

Meeting Participants:

Mark Bryer (TNC), *Chair*

Jason Dubow (MDP), *Vice-Chair*

Renee Thompson (USGS CBPO), *Coordinator*

Tuana Phillips (Chesapeake Research Consortium), *Staff*

Justin Hynicka (MD DNR)

Bevin Buchheister (CBC)

Mike Naylor (MD DNR)

Diane Wilson (PA DEP)

Greg Evans (VA DOF)

Mary Gattis (Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, Local Government Advisory Committee)

Nesha McRae (VA DEQ)

Sally Claggett (USFS)

Todd Janeski (VA DCR)

Lee Epstein (CBF)

Earl Bradley (Sierra Club, MD)

Laura Free (EPA)

John Schneider (DE)

Bill Jenkins (EPA)

Misty Downing (TNC)

Keith Fisher (TNC)

Christine Conn (MD DNR)

Marian Norris (NPS)

Welcome and Introductions

Mark Bryer welcomed everybody to the call and confirmed participants.

GIT Updates

Mark Bryer reviewed the current status of the Workplans as well as a summary of the comments received during the public input period. For more information, please see his presentation by [clicking this link](#).

Other notes:

- Funding columns were removed from all workplans due to the concern that funding was not consistent across all actions and across all workplans. The funding conversation will return later this year after having collected feedback during the Public Input comment period and having gone through the discovery process for ChesapeakeDecisions. Using as a starting point this

information on the need, existing documentation used for Chesapeake Registry related to definitions, etc., and using the new Budget and Finance workgroup and working with OMB, the CBP will develop a system that will be useful to audiences and that will fulfill the requirements under the Chesapeake Bay Accountability and Recovery Act. Budget information will be collected by September 2016.

ACTION: The Budget and Finance Workgroup under Goal Team 6 (Partnership & Leadership GIT) is looking for members/participants! Email Nicole Lehmer (Nicole.lehmer@epa.gov) if interested. For a description of this workgroup please visit [this link](#).

- Renee reviewed [a document with the GIT's response to the public input comments](#) received on the Healthy Watersheds Workplan.
 - Maryland has formally responded to the Carroll County, MD letter.
 - Some key actions led by Trout Unlimited (TU) were added to the Healthy Watersheds Workplan.
- Update on Delaware actions in the Healthy Watersheds Workplan (John Schneider)
 - As of 3/29/16, Delaware has not contributed actions to the Workplan.
 - John explained that 100% of Delaware's healthy watersheds are impaired; therefore there are no healthy watersheds. Anything that DE would put in the Workplan would be duplicative of what is in Water Quality Workplan.
- Update on Virginia actions in the Healthy Watersheds Workplan (Todd Janeski)
 - As of 3/29/16, Virginia has not contributed actions to the Workplan.
 - VA is currently working on actions solely for Healthy Watersheds workplan. The actions should be finalized within the next month.

Presentation: Identifying Additional Healthy Watersheds in WV (Misty Downing, Keith Fisher TNC)

Misty reviewed the process employed by TNC and West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection to conduct a watershed assessment and delineate healthy watersheds in the Potomac watershed portion of West Virginia. This project was funded by the Healthy Watersheds GIT in 2014 and was completed in the fall of 2015. The methodology used was the same as the one applied in the West Virginia Watershed Assessment Pilot Project, which Keith Fisher presented on at a Goal Team meeting in the past. As part of this project Ms. Downing created a comprehensive 39 metric index of overall watershed health.

In her presentation, Misty reviewed the process she took to conduct the assessment. She focused on the metrics used to identify healthy watersheds and explained how she interpreted the results. For more information, please see Misty's PowerPoint presentation by clicking [this link](#).

A copy of the project's summary report can be found at [this link](#).

Other notes:

- There were two levels of assessment: relative and objective. Under the objective assessment, most watersheds fall into the "fair" category; the relative assessment produces the full spectrum of categories including more watersheds that fall into the extreme categories of "poor" and "very good."
- The Potomac Healthy Watersheds relative and object assessments done at both HUC12 and Catchment levels can be found on slides 26-29.
- "Poor" quality areas often correlate with one or two indicators or land use.

- You can make an educated guess on what is causing the poor quality by clicking on a catchment and seeing for each individual metric the raw and assigned value.
- The original assessments were done within each HUC8 watershed, in other words the metrics within the HUC8 watershed were not compared to metrics of the entire region. You can use that original assessment too to look at just one HUC8 area if needed.
- Misty also included main caveats to interpreting and using the healthy watersheds data.

Questions:

- Is there a place you are keeping this information?
 - It is not stored anywhere at this point. It is also worth noting that there is a lot of information and it would be difficult for anybody to quickly pick up how to use it.
 - For now as a start those who are interested can look at the final summary report.
 - TNC will be hosting a lot of these layers as part of a web application. Misty is working to get this data updated into the web application. The link to this web application will be put on the Maintain Healthy Watersheds GIT website.
- How have you captured combined animal feeding operations in your assessment?
 - We did look into that at the beginning. We tried getting the dataset WV collects but we were denied access to it. I do think, however, that this is reflected in the water quality data.
- How much did this assessment cost?
 - Just under 40k for this expansion of the West Virginia Watershed Assessment Pilot Project. Thanks to Renee the GIT was also recently able to do a contract extension with TNC so that TNC can continue refining some of this work and augment the information.
- How is this going to be used by the state of WV and TNC?
 - This data is pretty new so TNC has not had much of a chance to use it yet but TNC has already used the original assessment for some of their work. Other partners, such as NRCS and DEP have also utilized it.
 - Renee will be coordinating meetings with WV DEP and TNC. At the beginning of this project DEP said they would review the data and results and consider using it for their state-identified healthy watersheds dataset.
 - Kelly Watkinson from the Cacapon and Lost Rivers Land Trust is interested in using information from this assessment to update the Land Trust's GIS data layers.

Discussion: building a framework for tracking healthy watersheds

Representatives from Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia reviewed how their healthy waters and watersheds list gets updated. By doing this members were able to better understand the timeframe that each state uses to provide those updates to the GIT. Also members discussed the "baseline" issue and whether it is feasible to lock in the state-identified healthy watersheds dataset. Previously, we had agreed that new watersheds could be added, but not taken away.

Maryland:

- MD has Maryland Biological Stream Survey (MBSS) data which allows the state to make strong evaluations for 2nd and 3rd order streams. Currently Maryland uses tier 2 streams and it is scaled up to the catchment level to be used in the state-identified healthy watersheds dataset.
- MBSS occurs every year, it is an annual survey of streams in random locations. It is also money dependent.

- There creates a time lag issue because, although it is updated every year, different watersheds are updated in different years.
- More information on Maryland's Tier 2 streams and watersheds (including location and map) can be found on the [DNR website](#).
- Does this information get disseminated to local governments?
 - Some counties are more receptive and active than others.
 - There was an effort at DNR to take the GreenPrint map to counties to make sure they incorporated the protected lands as well as healthy waters in their comprehensive plans.

Delaware:

- Delaware, like Maryland, also collects data on macroinvertebrates and every year rotates which streams to sample from. Sites are selected randomly and occasionally the state is able to go back and see if there has been any improvement. No improvements have been noted to date.
- Delaware does not have restrictions on development; Delaware has flat lands and wetlands you can farm or grow houses on and extensive protected areas within the Chesapeake drainage. Within the protected lands there are agricultural areas which are leased and managed very well with buffers, etc., but still contribute nutrient and sediment loadings to the Bay.
- What about looking at streams in the protected areas?
 - DE lands are very wet and channelization tends to occur so even where protected lands or State Forests exist the rivers are straight and deepened to the clay layer. We have some nice riparian areas but in some cases they don't function well because of the hydrology.

Virginia:

- In Virginia, those waters and watersheds that have high integrity according to Virginia Commonwealth University's Interactive Stream Assessment Resource (INSTAR) application are considered healthy.
- Virginia's Healthy Watersheds Program resides in the Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Natural Heritage. The Division is currently finalizing an assessment looking how at how vulnerable Virginia's natural resources are. Healthy watersheds will be a component of that.
- VA has no budget to do a state-wide, MBSS-like program but is able to use Chesapeake Bay Implementation Grant (CBIG) funds to resample data that is older than 10 years. Some areas have been resampled already and by doing this VA can analyze trends over time.
- Given the fact that your budget is limited, has your program thought about looking at other datasets?
 - Yes and no. VA is looking at the vulnerability data, and based on that will see what other outside tools are available.
 - VA also has a state-wide watershed integrity model which is being refined and streamlined. This is in the final stages and should be completed soon.
- Are streams evaluated on rotating basis?
 - It is updated every time we get new INSTAR data.

Group discussion on determining the "baseline" of state-identified healthy watersheds:

- One challenge that the GIT faces is that as programs, models and information improve we will have a better data on healthy watersheds. In a sense, we are dealing with a moving target. In addition, we need a baseline to see if we are making progress over time.
- Some members indicated they would prefer that healthy watersheds data be as updated as possible.
- Another challenge is that each state reports healthy watersheds differently yet we need to collectively report if we've been able to achieve our outcome of maintaining 100% of state-identified healthy waters and watersheds.
- Must acknowledge that our state-identified healthy waters and watersheds map will never be perfect.
- In the next couple of months we can decide on the frequency to report back to partnership.
 - As a first step we can develop an internal database. We can list every single one of the healthy waters and watersheds and note which ones are set in stone, which are in flux, and then every year states can note the status with the last date it was assessed. This would not be a report but an internal database we can start using to track healthy watersheds.
- At the last Water Quality GIT meeting jurisdictions made the decision to hold everything stagnant so that don't have to deal with moving target. So perhaps we might want to think about how we set the baseline now holding things static and note when and where there will be changes as part of the workplan moving forward so people understand better data will be made available by states over time.

DECISION: The GIT will use the most current ([2015](#)) [map of state-identified healthy waters and watersheds](#) as a baseline for healthy watersheds in the Chesapeake region. Going forward with new information the GIT will adjust this map while also acknowledging such changes in an effort to be transparent.

- **ACTION:** Develop an internal database listing every single one of the healthy waters and watersheds and note which ones are set in stone (protected), which are in flux (vulnerable), and then every year states can note the status with the last date it was assessed. This would not be a report but an internal database we can start using to track healthy watersheds.

Discussion: Near Term (2016) GIT Workplan Priorities (Jason Dubow)

Jason Dubow (Vice Chair) introduced an approach to move forward with priorities outlined in the Healthy Watersheds Workplan by starting with a couple of actions that could be done in 2016. Prior to the meeting, Renee worked with Jason to highlight 6 potential actions in the Workplan that the GIT could work toward with tangible results this year. These 6 highlighted priority actions were chosen because the Maintain Healthy Watersheds GIT was put as the primary entity in charge. They can be found in an Excel document [at this link](#) and are also listed below.

1. Under Management Approach 1, Prioritize Protection, "Assess protected status of healthy watersheds"
2. Under Management Approach 2, "Work collectively to improve outreach strategies, and better get the word out across multiple Management Strategies to determine the best approaches and methods for reaching key stakeholders.

3. Under Management Approach 3, “Engage with federal agencies other than EPA (such as FERC and DOT) to leverage opportunities within those agencies so that they can set the stage for state and local governments to further healthy watershed protection.”
4. Under Management Approach 4, “Continue meeting 2-4 times a year and at meetings continue hosting Case Study presentations related to healthy watershed protection/tracking”
5. Under Management Approach 4, “Provide messages and resources to CBP Communications Staff.” Also, “share presentations, slides, pictures, graphics, to help partner agency staff prepare presentations, reports, etc. with effective healthy watersheds messages”
6. Under Management Approach 4, “Continue to work with the Chesapeake Bay Program and partners to quantify and incorporate conservation practices into the Chesapeake watershed modeling efforts and to explore how land use protections might be used to quantify future pollutant load reduction incentives for land conservation”

Jason pointed out that another task the Goal Team can be in charge of is over time track and see what is working and what is not in the Workplan (i.e., compiling, synthesizing, and analyzing what has been done).

After briefly reviewing the 6 actions identified above, Mark Bryer led a more detailed discussion on each of the actions. GIT member volunteers are currently being recruited to start thinking about how the GIT can accomplish these actions. Specifically, volunteers will come up with concrete steps to then bring back to the Goal Team in May for further discussion.

Discussion Notes:

- Under Management Approach 1, Prioritize Protection, “Assess protected status of healthy watersheds”
 - A lot of the data we will need will also be needed by the stream health group, fisheries GIT, and others.
 - A first step could be a summary of how each state is planning to assess protection status of healthy watersheds and other data layers that could help assess that.
 - This can also be brought to the Chesapeake Bay Program’s Coordinator/Staffers meeting for further discussion.
 - **ACTION:** Solicit a small team of GIT members to meet over the phone and come up with a list of short-term steps that we as a GIT can work on toward completing this Workplan action item. The team will bring this list back to the GIT at the May 3rd meeting.
 If you would like to volunteer to be on this team, please email either Renee or Tuana.
- Under Management Approach 2, “Work collectively to improve outreach strategies, and better get the word out across multiple Management Strategies to determine the best approaches and methods for reaching key stakeholders.”
 - Because this action item is related to the Local Engagement discussion at 2 PM, the GIT decided to wait until then to talk about it.
- Under Management Approach 3, “Engage with federal agencies other than EPA (such as FERC and DOT) to leverage opportunities within those agencies so that they can set the stage for state and local governments to further healthy watershed protection.”
 - The first thing we should do is establish what exactly we want from their engagement. We want to engage with these federal agencies because their work has a huge impact on land

- use but yet they are not connected to the Chesapeake Bay Program. Maybe check in with the federal facilities group?
- We also want to identify which agencies we want to engage with (e.g., DOT and USDA might be important as well).
 - Some agencies may be listed in the President's Executive Order.
 - One person recommended to check in with the Chesapeake Bay Program Federal Facilities Workgroup.
 - **ACTION:** Solicit a small team of GIT members to meet over the phone and come up with a list of short-term steps that we as a GIT can work on toward completing this Workplan action item. The team will bring this list back to the GIT at the May 3rd meeting.
If you would like to volunteer to be on this team, please email either Renee or Tuana. So far Lee Epstein (CBF) has volunteered.
- Under Management Approach 4, "Continue meeting 2-4 times a year and at meetings continue hosting Case Study presentations related to healthy watershed protection/tracking"
 - For obvious reasons we will not need a small volunteer team for this action item.
 - Under Management Approach 4, "Provide messages and resources to CBP Communications Staff." Also, "share presentations, slides, pictures, graphics, to help partner agency staff prepare presentations, reports, etc. with effective healthy watersheds messages"
 - The Communications Team at the Bay Program wants to be engaged with us from the beginning, not at the end when we have the products complete.
 - We should work with the Communications Team to develop discuss what messages we want to create and the sort of avenues we have based on our audience.
 - **ACTION:** We need a volunteer from the GIT to be a liaison to the Communications Workgroup. This volunteer would have to attend the monthly Communications meetings.
 - **ACTION:** Solicit a small team of GIT members to meet over the phone and come up with a list of short-term steps that we as a GIT can work on toward completing this Workplan action item. The team will bring this list back to the GIT at the May 3rd meeting.
If you would like to volunteer to be on this team, please email either Renee or Tuana.
 - One first step could be to decide as a team what we want to communicate.
 - We may need to do a gap assessment. The gap assessment may involve a half day meeting with members from the Communications Team.
 - Under Management Approach 4, "Continue to work with the Chesapeake Bay Program and partners to quantify and incorporate conservation practices into the Chesapeake watershed modeling efforts and to explore how land use protections might be used to quantify future pollutant load reduction incentives for land conservation"
 - The group agreed that we are not here yet. There is another group working on this now (consisting of members from EPA, CBC, CBF, and TNC).
 - **ACTION:** Mark Bryer volunteered to circle back and report to the GIT on this effort.

Presentation and Discussion: Local engagement activities at the Bay Program (Renee and Greg Evans)

Greg Evans provided a brief project status update on the Phase II "Healthy Watersheds Forest TMDL" project. This project aims to negotiate with local officials to get land use policies and decisions that retain forestland in healthy watersheds. Greg provided some specific examples of the intended products of this project that will serve as a starting point to help the group understand how the results

could be incorporated and can complement other local engagement efforts within the goal team and the CBP partnership. His PowerPoint presentation can be found [at this link](#).

Other notes:

- Phase 2 of this project includes additional partners and will expand into Pennsylvania. This means that two different jurisdictions which function differently will have done this.
- Already Greg and project partners are finding that locals' reactions are very different in different parts of the Rappahannock river basin. They have learned that they cannot use the same science at different regions because what is important in one place may not be important in another.
- The Rappahannock River Basin Commission has really stepped up front to do this engagement.
- A challenge with local engagement is to connect with the people who are the boots on the ground, like the Rappahannock River Basin Commission.
- Greg and project partners are trying to meet individually or with few leaders at a time to find local champions. Greg recommended having somebody else in the room who already knows the leader(s) well.
- There is some overlap and potential for collaboration between this GIT funding project and the "Evaluation of Land Use Policy Options, Incentives, and Planning Tools to Reduce the Rate of Agriculture Lands, Forest and Wetlands" GIT funding project.

Discussion: Local Engagement Efforts at CBP

Within the Bay Program partnership there are multiple goals and ongoing efforts to engage with local officials, citizens, and other key local actors. As a review, Renee Thompson and Tuana Phillips briefly reviewed the multiple local engagement efforts occurring within the Maintain Healthy Watersheds Team and rest of the Bay Program. A discussion followed to brainstorm how GIT priorities can be linked and coordinated with the other local engagement efforts so that our work is not duplicative and burdensome to local governments and others.

Discussion notes:

- One thing the Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC) really wanted was to have local government/engagement in all of the management strategies or workplans.
- The Local leadership outcome is really focused on local officials. The Local Leadership Workgroup will soon reach out to the GITs to gather information on workplan items related to local leadership. Further, the Workgroup is working on a project looking at how local leaders learn and want the information, which will get at what is the most effective way to get the information to them.
- The Stewardship GIT may also be interested in reaching out to certain people. Also the Water Quality GIT has a task force for local engagement.
 - James Davis-Martin may be a good resource, he is on WQGIT and involved in Healthy Watersheds TMDL-Forest project.
- In addition, the Principals' Staff Committee (PSC) is also devoting a significant part of their next agenda to locals.
- **ACTION:** Solicit a small team of GIT members to meet over the phone and come up with a list of short-term steps that we as a GIT can work on toward completing this Workplan action item under Management Approach 2: "Work collectively to improve outreach strategies, and better get the word out across multiple Management Strategies to determine the best approaches and methods for reaching key stakeholders." The team will bring this list back to the GIT at the May

3rd meeting. **If you would like to volunteer to be on this team, please email either Renee or Tuana.**

- The GIT has a number of products being created:
 - The GIT's FY15 project, "Demonstrating the Value of Retaining Forestland in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed (Phase II)"
 - The GIT's FY15 project, "Evaluation of Land Use Policy Options, Incentives, and Planning Tools to Reduce the Rate of Agriculture Lands, Forest and Wetlands"
 - The map of state-identified healthy watersheds to communicate where the healthy watersheds are located.

One thing we have to ask is, how do locals want this information?

- Meanwhile, CBP leadership should think about where this and other products which are in the process of being created should go (e.g., some sort of repository).
 - Perhaps as we create this repository, we can also include a list of questions. This would be a place for use to provide information to locals and get their feedback.

Summary of Meeting Decisions and Next Steps

- The Summary Report for the FY14 GIT Funding Project "Identifying Additional Healthy Watersheds in West Virginia" is now posted on the GIT website page, at [this link](#). On the website page Tuana will also post a link to TNC's Web application once the data from this project have been incorporated into the application.
- **ACTION:** The Budget and Finance Workgroup under Goal Team 6 (Partnership & Leadership GIT) is looking for members/participants! Email Nicole Lehmer (Nicole.lehmer@epa.gov) if interested. For a description of this workgroup please visit [this link](#).
- **DECISION:** The GIT will use the most current ([2015](#)) [map of state-identified healthy waters and watersheds](#) as a baseline for healthy watersheds in the Chesapeake region. Going forward with new information the GIT will adjust this map while also acknowledging such changes in an effort to be transparent.
 - **ACTION:** Develop an internal database listing every single one of the healthy waters and watersheds and note which ones are set in stone (protected), which are in flux (vulnerable), and then every year states can note the status with the last date it was assessed. This would not be a report but an internal database we can start using to track healthy watersheds.
- **ACTION:** Solicit a small team of GIT members to meet over the phone and come up with a list of short-term steps that we as a GIT can work on in 2016 toward completing the Workplan action item under Management Approach 1, Prioritize Protection: "Assess protected status of healthy watersheds." The team will bring this list back to the GIT at the May 3rd meeting. **If you would like to volunteer to be on this team, please email either Renee or Tuana.**
- **ACTION:** Solicit a small team of GIT members to meet over the phone and come up with a list of short-term steps that we as a GIT can work on in 2016 toward completing the Workplan action item under Management Approach 2: "Work collectively to improve outreach strategies, and better get the word out across multiple Management Strategies to determine the best approaches and methods for reaching key stakeholders." The team will bring this list back to the GIT at the May 3rd meeting. **If you would like to volunteer to be on this team, please email either Renee or Tuana.**
- **ACTION:** Solicit a small team of GIT members to meet over the phone and come up with a list of short-term steps that we as a GIT can work on in 2016 toward completing the Workplan action item under Management Approach 3: "Engage with federal agencies other than EPA (such as

FERC and DOT) to leverage opportunities within those agencies so that they can set the stage for state and local governments to further healthy watershed protection.” The team will bring this list back to the GIT at the May 3rd meeting. **If you would like to volunteer to be on this team, please email either Renee or Tuana. So far Lee Epstein (CBF) has volunteered.**

- **ACTION:** Solicit a small team of GIT members to meet over the phone and come up with a list of short-term steps that we as a GIT can work on in 2016 toward completing the Workplan action item under Management Approach 4: “Provide messages and resources to CBP Communications Staff.” Also, “share presentations, slides, pictures, graphics, to help partner agency staff prepare presentations, reports, etc. with effective healthy watersheds messages.” The team will bring this list back to the GIT at the May 3rd meeting. **If you would like to volunteer to be on this team, please email either Renee or Tuana.**
- **ACTION:** Mark Bryer volunteered to circle back and report to the GIT on the ongoing effort related to the workplan action under Management Approach 4: “Continue to work with the Chesapeake Bay Program and partners to quantify and incorporate conservation practices into the Chesapeake watershed modeling efforts and to explore how land use protections might be used to quantify future pollutant load reduction incentives for land conservation.”
- **ACTION:** The GIT needs a volunteer to be a liaison to the Communications Workgroup. This volunteer would have to attend the monthly Communications meetings.
- Our next GIT meeting will be on May 16th at the Chesapeake Bay Program Office.