



Meeting Minutes
Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP)
Maintain Healthy Watersheds Goal Implementation Team
Work Session

May 16th, 2016 10:30 AM – 12:30 AM

Meeting Participants:

Jason Dubow (MDP), *Vice-Chair*
Renee Thompson (USGS CBPO), *Coordinator*
Tuana Phillips (Chesapeake Research Consortium), *Staff*
Steve Epting (EPA Healthy Watersheds Program)
Dan Murphy (FWS)
Bevin Buchheister (CBC)
Mike Naylor (MD DNR)
Greg Evans (VA DOF)
Nesha McRae (VA DEQ)
Anne Hairston-Strang
Todd Janeski (VA DCR)
Lee Epstein (CBF)
Earl Bradley (Sierra Club, MD)
John Schneider (DE)
Marian Norris (NPS)
Catherine Krikstan (UMCES)

Welcome and Introductions

Jason Dubow welcomed everybody to the call and confirmed participants. He explained the purpose and goal of the two-hour work session: At the last GIT meeting in March the team highlighted 6 shared GIT action items in the Healthy Watersheds Workplan that the GIT could work toward with tangible results in 2016. After the meeting, several GIT members volunteered to share ideas and come up with short-term steps or recommendations for each action item. Jason thanked everyone who volunteered. Volunteers' recommendations are summarized on Tuana Phillips' PowerPoint slides at [this link](#). The goal of the two-hour work session was to review the volunteers' recommendations and gather feedback from other GIT members participating on the call so that we can solidify next steps and move forward with completing the shared GIT action items.

Summary of Feedback, Questions, and Final Recommendations:

1. Key Action: *“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.”*

Lee Epstein (CBF) and Greg Evans (VA DOF) reviewed their recommendations for this action item:

1. Request EPA as chair of the Federal Leadership Committee to seek Committee agreement to invite FERC and DOE to participate as a member of the Committee and extend such invitation, pursuant to the President's Executive Order, to FERC and DOE.
2. Request EPA to pursue a cooperative agreement with FERC and DOE focused on EO 13508 directives modeled after the recently approved "EPA-DOE-FERC Coordination on Implementation of the Clean Power Plan".
3. Request EPA to convene a multi-agency workgroup of the Federal Leadership Committee to evaluate on a section by section basis, which program-related priorities established in EO 13508 are not currently or adequately being addressed, and develop a department by department action plan to do so, including with respect to federal agencies already participating in the Strategy. As necessary, formal invitations to agencies not currently involved in the TDML work effort, pursuant to the Executive Order, would also follow, with subsequent assignments of responsibilities and an appropriate participation process to be established.
4. Coordinate effort with Chesapeake Bay Partnership Program management.

Other notes:

- Lee Epstein also reviewed the preliminary estimate of new/pending natural gas pipeline miles within the Chesapeake Bay watershed (currently more than 500).
- DOT involvement is minimal. They have a smart growth type of program that provides assistance to local governments. But as an agency they are responsible for 80% rate of funding for major federal highways. They write environmental impacts statements and undertake reviews. It seems like they should be more involved with our objectives especially with healthy watersheds.
- The other example is USDA which has major funding programs for best management practices across the watershed and undertakes other activities but we think it's more than that.

Comments:

- Instead of our GIT doing the work it sounds like the recommendation would go to the Management Board for some type of discussion.
- Question: on number 2 you want them to pursue a cooperative agreement, what specifics do you want to see in that agreement?
Answer: The end result will hopefully be that FERC and DOE become full federal partners under the Bay Agreement and join the Federal Committee group.
- Number 3 seems like a reboot of the Federal leadership committee developing a new plan on how to meet the EO, but they already have a plan from a few years ago. Is that something that has to happen to engage FERC and DOT?
Answer: We may have written more here than is necessary. Really what we are saying is EPA as chair needs to do another look over all federal partners. Somebody needs to be charged with reviewing the activities of federal agencies, department by department and determine whether need to bring into the Bay Program umbrella. This would be a relatively significant undertaking, and would include a review of their latest report.
- There is a type of analysis that could be useful prior to moving on with this and that is to figure out: are these agencies' hands tied right now in terms of considering additional things such as impacts to healthy watersheds, or are there additions things they could do without regulatory authority? That type of analysis could be helpful to figure out what is possible.

ACTION: Jason, Renee, and Tuana will work to vet these recommendations through CBP leadership and coordinate with Mark to take this to the GIT Chairs for further feedback.

Key Action 2. "Assess protected status of healthy watersheds."

Tuana Phillips reviewed the proposed timeline and steps:

1. CBP Staff develop a database which as a starting point will list the state-identified healthy waters and watersheds. Send to each Jurisdictional representative –early June 2016
2. Jurisdictional representatives provide GIT with criteria used to determine whether watershed or water are "sustained" and fill out the rest of the information on the database –July 2016
3. Coordinator creates a status map using data provided from Jurisdictions –Mid-August 2016
4. CBP Staff develop an interim tracking protocol modeled on other jurisdictions to assess progress toward goal in lieu of a jurisdiction providing it directly. –August 2016

Other notes:

- Developing "internal database" doesn't mean we won't be sharing this database. It simply means we will work internally on this at first to test it out. It will be an iterative process.

Comments:

- What is the ultimate goal for this information? Who is going to use it?
Answer: This will probably go on Chesapeake Stat. We have an obligation to report the overall progress of this particular outcome. So this is mainly for Bay Program accounting purposes, but it is also needed to inform locals on the ground.
- The EPA Healthy Watersheds Program has historically worked individually with states to look at health in variability, although the spatial catchments have varied. This year the Program is working on moving on from the state work to develop a relative index scoring at the HUC12 level for all of 48 lower states. The main goal is to provide states a relative health and vulnerability layers. For each HUC12 watershed there will be two scores: how it relates to other HUC12 watersheds in the state as well as how it relates to watersheds in the ecoregion (e.g., R3). To do this data layers that have national coverage are being used. Steve Epting is happy to share the Program's outline and approach which might be helpful for the GIT to find data layers that would be consistent across states.
- VA comment: The timeline won't be a comfortable process for us. Anything that we give to the Bay Program is considered an external process, so we will need to have conversations on our side on the data layers and how they are displayed. We are developing our own resampling and processes, but we won't be able to have anything done by the summer.
- Maryland certainly would be in the same boat as VA discussed on some of these items that would require higher level support. Every state will probably have to deal with that.
- MD comment (06/17 email): What is meant by "sustained"? Is that why it's in quotations in the text, because there isn't a solid definition? I read 'protected status' and 'status' and 'sustained' as different things. Protected status, in my interpretation, is how much of the healthy watersheds are protected in terms of land use/land cover change, development pressures, and other key factors which impact water quality. Status, from Maryland's perspective is whether or not the healthy watershed has assimilative capacity. As far as I can tell "sustained" is equivalent to assimilative capacity.

ACTION: The GIT will move forward with the proposed steps, keeping in mind that the proposed timeline for completion by the end of the summer is unrealistic. The GIT will instead aim to get a lot of this work done by the end of the year. Renee will go ahead and create the internal database and start working with jurisdictions.

Key Action 3. "Continue meeting 2-4 times a year and at meetings continue hosting Case Study presentations related to healthy watershed protection/tracking."

Question proposed to GIT: Are having these presentations a good use of your time and if so, do you have any suggestions for presentations?

- As we move into the phase of our work where we are trying to gauge how these watersheds are protected, if we could find counties or states that perhaps have active protection programs in place for their watersheds then it might be useful to hear about their efforts and programs.
 - It would be helpful to have case studies presenting on ideas that could help the Goal Team decide how to make progress towards the action items in our workplan.
- There are a few urban healthy waters in Fairfax, VA.
- A presentation that would do a cross-over with the work of the Landscape Conservation Cooperatives. The kind of conservation they are looking to do would have direct application to healthy watershed work.
- The North Atlantic LCC just completed a Connecticut River landscape conservation design for entire Connecticut River watershed. It might be useful to have one of those folks come out and talk about that process. That design did not involve localities, they kept it at the state level and so they had people from the states and then federal people and academia give input. But ultimately there are towns and cities that could use the design to prioritize areas for protection.
- A presentation on geologic diversity (Mark Anderson with TNC) and biodiversity. This in part is to make things have as much cross-over with our objectives as possible. Geology drives a lot of our water quality issues.
- Presentation opportunity later this summer: EPA Healthy Watersheds Program's work toward completing a HUC12 watershed health and vulnerability analysis using a multimetric approach and relative scoring for the contiguous United States.

ACTION: GIT members can provide additional case study presentation suggestions/ideas to Renee or Tuana.

Key Action 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."

Update on the FY15 Healthy Watersheds TMDL Forestry Project, Phase 2 – Demonstrating the Value of Retaining Forestland in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed:

- PA is replicating Phase 1 of the project and is now working on the modelling component.
- Greg Evans and team have started to meet with representatives and officials to discuss the results of Phase 1.

- There is one delegate really interested in the NY City Adirondacks green infrastructure model and wants to do something similar in the rural peninsula he represents.
- Good news – the project is gaining a lot of interest. Greg Evans and Mark Bryer have recently been approached by several people outside of the Rappahannock Basin to present on this project at conferences and events.
- By this fall the team will have developed a toolbox of incentives and policies, etc. At that time PA should also have their assessment completed with additional information/results to use to discuss with local jurisdictions.

Comments:

- Question: Have you heard anything about the effort to have the TMDL be based on 2025 land use for next WIP3 iteration? That decision would have to be made by November. Mark Bryer and Anne Swanson would be handling this.

Answer: We haven't heard anything, Mark Bryer or Anne might know more.

The following Key Actions were grouped together for discussion:

Key Action 5. 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.”*

Key Action 6. Under Management Approach 4, *“Provide messages and resources to CBP Communications Staff.”*

Key Action 7. *“Share presentations, slides, pictures, graphics, to help partner agency staff prepare presentations, reports, etc. with effective healthy watersheds messages.”*

Tuana reviewed the recommendations and ideas provided by GIT member volunteers ([Slides 15-23](#)).

Participants were unable to discuss the recommendations and ideas due to lack of time. Jason proposed that Tuana send a summary and request input via email.

ACTION: GIT members should review the summary of recommendations and ideas below. Please provide your feedback to either Renee or Tuana.

Summary of Recommendations and Ideas:

1. We should focus on who our stakeholders are, what they care about, and how to reach them.
 - Who are our stakeholders?
 - Relevant work: [Donnelle Keech \(TNC\) local actors analysis](#)
 - An alternative way of binning our stakeholders: three geo-political categories (Large Urban MS4 areas, Small Urban MS4 areas, and rural areas). The reason for doing this is because different geo-political categories have different drivers/motivators (e.g., economic, environmental, regulatory). For instance, early lessons from the Forest TMDL project in VA have shown that drivers identified by CBP related to the TMDL may not be as important as we first thought. This is especially true in rural areas where there is ample green space and the local governments have already adopted conservation practices on their agricultural lands. Although the TMDL does not really drive work in such rural areas, there may be other opportunities in such areas including the idea of credit trading with urban areas.
 - What do they care about? What is important to them?

- We may have incomplete assumptions about what is important to our key audience and stakeholders.
 - Their drivers/motivators, as explained above, also play a part in this.
 - How do we reach them?
 - We want to make it easy for local stakeholders to reach us too. We want to make it a two-way street.
 - We can utilize existing networks that already do a lot of outreach/messaging to locals (e.g. the NPS land conservation efforts).
 - The Local Leadership Workgroup is taking the lead on this question. This summer the Workgroup will have several focus groups looking at how local leaders learn and want their information. There will be an opportunity for our GIT to develop messages or other content for the focus groups to take and bounce off of local leaders as part of their effort to learn about how local leaders prefer to get their information.
- 2. There is a need for continued “discovery” with regard to the above (i.e. our key audience, their interests, and how to best share information).
 - As of now we have several GIT products already created or being created with communication elements: the map of State-Identified Healthy Waters and Watersheds, the results of FY14 and FY15 GIT Projects “Healthy Watersheds TMDL Study – Demonstrating the Value of Retaining Forestland in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed”, and the results of FY15 GIT Project “Evaluation of Land Use Policy Options, Incentives, and Planning Tools to Reduce the Rate of Agricultural Lands, Forests, and Wetlands.” In addition, it is in our interest to communicate the importance of maintaining watersheds and waters that are currently healthy.
 - That said, creating communications messages now might be premature because we are in a discovery phase.
 - The discovery phase includes the following:
 - The FY15 GIT Funding Project “Demonstrating the Value of Retaining Forestland in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed” is telling us a lot about what locals are interested in and how to best engage with them.
 - We will learn a lot from the efforts of the Local Leadership Workgroup, including the work of the workgroup’s focus groups this summer. This effort will help inform whether to put the information gathered from our FY15 GIT funding project “Evaluation of Land Use Policy Options, Incentives, and Planning Tools to Reduce the Rate of Agricultural Lands, Forests, and Wetlands” on the Chesapeakebay.net website or if there is a better location or method for locals to access the information.
 - The third step in the Land Use Options Evaluation Management Strategy is to survey local governments for further information on which policy options, incentives, and planning tools are most effective at reducing land conversion rates. When we get to this step, it will be another opportunity to engage and learn from local governments and their interests.