

“Factors Influencing Fish Habitat Function in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed: Application to Restoration and Management Decisions”

STAC Staff Comments:

- Clearly indicate the member(s) of the steering committee that will function as the chair or lead of the workshop.
- Provide confirmation (via email is acceptable) that STAC members identified provided confirmation that they will serve on the steering committee.
- Clarify whether the first four described workshop products will be included in the report, or as separate products.
- Clarify if the follow-up steering committee meeting will be a separate in-person meeting, or if it is suggested that it will take place via conference call/webinar. Will this event need funding from the total workshop funds?

STAC Members Comments:

- The SC membership appears to be lacking for FW habitat expertise, workshop focus as written is not limited to tidal brackish (maybe it should be?) , so if it is intended to represent beyond brackish, you'll need a SC member with that focus -- if representation is included, not clear from listing SC names only.
 - As a joint workshop proposal, we have brought together the interests of the Habitat GIT (freshwater habitats) and the Fisheries GIT (tidal habitats). We will be collaborating with experts from both GITs to obtain expertise in the five designated habitats recognized in the workshop proposal. Steering Committee member, Rich Starr will act as our Stream Health Workgroup representative.
- Please list out the "5 habitat types" identified by the MS mentioned in the proposal; * RE: representative spp. table needs more careful review: Bay anchovy will not be a representative species for structured habitat - they are ubiquitous across a wide variety of habitats in the Chesapeake, including open water; similarly, "grass shrimp" range is restricted by salinity, so is not a good representative of the entire Tidal SW ; and silversides and mummichog should be better representatives of SW-FW tidal .
 - The five habitats: 1) Tidal saltwater sub-tidal, 2) Tidal saltwater nearshore and intertidal, 3) cold and upstream freshwater non-tidal, 4) warm freshwater non-tidal, and 5) freshwater tidal are identified in both the workshop proposal in the table and are identified in the Fish Habitat Management Strategy.
 - Workshop development will include further refining of representative species by steering committee members. The preliminary list provided in the proposal will be subject to change based on input from experts, steering committee members, and further literature review. Members will take the above recommendations into consideration when refining the representative species list.
- I find the title rather confusing. Is the focus here on fish living in the watershed (i.e. which I guess would have to be in small streams), rather than fish living in the Bay? Perhaps the title is meant to imply that the workshop will examine watershed factors affecting fish habitats in the Chesapeake Bay? (If so, the title should be changed accordingly.) Why not *all* factors affecting fish habitats? Why just watershed factors?
 - We have changed the title of the proposal to specify that this workshop will include evaluation of both tidal and non-tidal habitats in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. This will include the above listed habitats, consisting of freshwater and tidal habitats. We will examine all factors affecting fish habitat including both tidal and non-tidal factors.
- In the text, the proposal states that the workshop will examine habitat function in the watershed. Again, why habitat function in the watershed and not in the Bay itself? Also, since “habitat function” is the overall goal of the workshop, it would be helpful if the proposal defines what is specifically meant by “habitat function”, and how this differs from a “habitat type” (i.e. as listed in the table provided) or “habitat suitability”.

- Habitat function in this context is defined as “The range of services provided to an organism, including, but not limited to, mediating trophic interactions, reproduction, shelter, and feeding, and influencing the behavior of organisms. “ (as defined by the Marine Stewardship Council)
- Will only “watershed” factors be examined, or will “Bay” factors be examined as well? For example, will the impact of hypoxia on habitat be examined? Or will only the impact of watershed nutrients (which presumably causes Bay hypoxia) be examined?
 - This workshop proposal seeks to address factors (i.e. shoreline hardening, dredging, sea level rise, etc.) throughout the tidal and non-tidal Chesapeake Bay and its watershed.
- A bulletized list of workshop objectives would also be helpful.
 - We have reformatted and rephrased the question section to address the objectives we will target using this workshop forum.