**Communications Workgroup Meeting Minutes  
 September 05, 2013**

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Catherine Krikstan, CBP Comm. Jenna Valente, CRC Kim Couranz, NOAADeb Kleiner, CCWC Cindy Chance, NPS Matt Ellis, STAC  
Nita Sylvester, EPA Guy Stephens, CBP/UMCES Tom Wenz, EPA  
Kim Couranz, NOAA Bill Hayden, DEQ Steve Droter, CBP comm.  
Donnelle Keech, Nature Conservancy Christine Runion, DNR

1. **Round Robin Updates:**

Kim Couranz:

* Fisheries GIT is currently working on invasive blue catfish outreach.
* Monday 09/09/2013, EarthEco International will be on the Eastern Shore shooting video for a web project. It is an education effort primarily highlighting student efforts to reduce the dead zone in the Chesapeake Bay. They will be spending some time with the NOAA field team on the water to see how basic habitat mapping and analysis and oyster reef ecosystem services research is done.
* Chesapeake Bay Program will be providing support for the EarthEco International project by providing contact information for experts around the watershed.

Matt Ellis:

* The final Real World Wastewater Technologies Workshop report on was released on September 3rd.
* The Lag Times report embargoed copy was sent out yesterday (09/04/2013) to the Chesapeake Bay Program. The final report will be released next Wednesday, September 11th.
* The Oyster Aquaculture Review is receiving its final edits and an embargoed copy should go out on September 16th with the final copy coming out the following week on September 23rd.
* Coastal Habitat report is in draft form and the final distribution will be in late September.
* Nutrient Trading and M3 reports are still being drafted but are expected to be released by early October.

Phil Miller:

* Gearing up and gather sponsors for an event on October 19th: Race for Our Rivers. Partnering with Delaware Invasive Species Council.
* In the planning stage of a rain barrel painting competition that will be taking place over the winter. Judging and announcing winners will happen in the spring at an Earth Day event.
* Have been working on a lot of videos lately – just finished up one on certified wildlife habitat and one on using sustainable gardening practices to improve water quality. The next video coming out this month is going to be called “What’s a septic system got to do with it?”
* Have a new brochure coming out this month about improving water quality around the home.

Donelle Keech:

* GIT 4 is preparing two sessions about various ways to maintain healthy watersheds for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Forum.
* One of them will be an overview of status and trends that will include a report from John Wolf at USGS about the mapping project for healthy watersheds and will also include a report from Jack Frye at the Chesapeake Bay Commission on the crediting conservation report that came out earlier this year.
* The second session is going to feature Owen McDonough from the EPA healthy watersheds initiative. He will be presenting some case study research that documents the tangible, monetized or other quantified benefits of maintaining healthy watersheds on various scales.

Tom Wenz:

* Mostly focused on the Report to Congress.
* Working on media query from Delaware Whey. They want to know how the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and EPA settlement will impact some proposed new chicken plants in Delaware. They would also like to know how partnership will use information from the University of Delaware report.

Cindy Chance:

* GIT 5 is seeking agreement from watershed participants on the outcome and goals section of the new watershed agreement.
* Continuing to collect data on public access
* Planning a session about public access for public participation for this winter. The online mapping tool with most likely be offered again.
* Acting superintendent, Jonathan Doherty, Charlie Stack from Chesapeake Conservancy and Mike Lofton Ann Arundel County Public Access Committee had an hour segment on the Kojo Nnamdi show last week.
* Today Kojo is interviewing Jim Foster from the Anacostia Watershed Society about the Anacostia River.
* A new superintendent will be arriving around September 23rd. His name is Charles Hunt and he is moving from Paris, France where he was managing a consortium of American battlefields and cemeteries.
* Potomac River segment planning for 3 trails: Star Spangled, John Smith and Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail. Hoping to collaborate with NOAA by using CBIBS.
* 199th anniversary of the Battle of Baltimore and North Point is coming up in September.
* Powwows coming up include one in Vienna, MD and one in Millboro, DE.

Guy Stephens:

* The Communications team has reworked a number of e-news products and updated the news section of the website. Please give them a look and sign up if you haven’t already at <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/news/newsletters/>
* Behind the scenes work for Bay Backpack.
* Chesapeake Stat is going through a discovery process to look at audience needs and users. There will be some rebirth of that product.
* Had some involvement recently with Cloud Computing because the data center at the Chesapeake Bay Program office is looking to move some of the infrastructure offsite. In terms of communications this move will be promising because there have been some issues with the internal hosting at the Bay Program in the past. This shift will provide more capacity.

Catherine Krikstan:

* Upcoming features :
* Recently posted a photo essay about testing ospreys on Poplar Island for chemical contaminants in their blood stream.
* Photo essay on VIMS fish library will be released in the upcoming weeks.
* Have a Restoration Spotlight planned about green infrastructure in southern Maryland
* Web updates: In addition to reworking the e-newsletters the Communications Office has been putting together a timeline for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Forum /30th celebration about the history and successes of the Chesapeake Bay Program.

Steve Droter:

* Still hard at work on the PSA video for the 30th anniversary celebration.
* American University is starting a two year project called Communicating Water. They are teaching water related issues and assigning water related projects to their students in order to get young people thinking about water issues and how to communicate them.
* If anyone has ideas, please provide Steve with the contact information for good interviewees. The students will be making two minute videos.

1. **CBP News story planning/Pending news releases:**

* Lessons Learned report is a product that is coming from the Chesapeake Bay Program’s STAR group and is a combined effort between STAR and UMCES.
* It looks at success stories overtime and is a public friendly report and is not meant to be a technical report.
* It shows where we have been most successful in our restoration efforts, specifically in the areas of wastewater and air pollution.
* Aiming to release it on Thursday, September 19th. It will be a combined release between the Chesapeake Bay Program and University of Maryland and it will take place somewhere in Annapolis.
* The press release will be sent to everyone in the Communications Workgroup in advance once it has been drafted and reviewed.
* Every year the Chesapeake Bay Program teams up with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation team up and do a press event that announces the NFWF grant award recipients.
* Working towards doing the release in early October and NFWF just shared an embargoed list of recipients with us and we are working to pull out the local stories.
* The combined press event will be larger and might be in Prince George’s County but in the D.C. metro area. NFWF has paired with a smaller press team to do more localized events.
* NFWF tries to do grant awards in all different states, so Margaret will keep the group posted about awards given to states outside of Maryland and Virginia.
* Bay Barometer is usually published in January but now that the Executive Council meeting has been moved to December we would like to try to get it out the door in early November for more communications opportunities and press hits.
* This Bay Barometer will be on the 2012 indicator data. All of the data has already been posted on our website so it should be a summary of what we have already posted.

1. **New water quality indicator**

* Still trying to decide how we are going to handle this in terms of press and publicity. Should we do a separate press release on the indicator? We may talk about it with some local messaging when we do the release of Bay Barometer because that is when all of our indicators come out.
* Milestones Workgroup will be meeting sometime in September to discuss the final assessment of 2013 milestones and development of 2015 milestones.
* **Action:** Nita will update group during the next meeting about the outcome of the Milestones Workgroup meeting.
* We have data going back to 1985 and the indicator is fully consistent with how Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia currently list their portion of the Bay’s tidal waters and provides means for illustrating improvements over time. If there aren’t improvements it will illustrate the degradations through time.
* Additionally, this indicator is used to measure progress towards the Chesapeake Bay Executive Order strategy’s water quality outcome.
* On the Chesapeake Bay Program’s homepage, if you click ‘How’s the Bay Doing?’ it will link directly to the indicators page related to Bay health.
* Achievement of the Chesapeake Bay Water Quality Standard is how the new indicator is listed on the site. We like to make things as user friendly as possible on our site so we provide a summary next to the indicators. For example, the new water quality indicator’s statement explains that 30% of the Bay was attaining its water quality standards. This number is not much different from the messaging we have been using for our other key Bay health indicators.
* We want to be up at the top when we are restoring the Bay. In terms of achieving water quality standards, you can see that we have a long way to go.
* In terms of news, this indicator is new but is not really showing us any new information because this is a roll up of data and showing information over a long period of time.
* At the bottom of page, under the chart, there is access to data and analysis and methods to find out how indicator is developed and how the data is pulled together.
* Summarize on the webpage the importance of the indicator, trends and additional information that we feel needs to be highlighted. Plus, contact information and where the data comes from is included.
* There are related indicators at the bottom of the page with links provided.
* Related indicators are ones that we have already been reporting on our website so there will be nothing new on those links.
* Underwater Bay grass abundance, our current goal is 185,000 acres but be on the lookout for a revised goal in the new agreement. There will be a discussion at the next Management Board meeting so keep your ears open for news about that change.
* Water Quality Standards indicator is showing poor results right now because it incorporates water clarity, Chlorophyll A, Bay grass abundance and dissolved oxygen.
* Water clarity page will be changing because it will no longer be tracking water quality standards attainment – Liza Hernandez has done all of the work for developing the new indicator and she has a lot on her plate right now but will get to it as soon as she can
* University of Maryland uses this indicator in their Bay Report Card each year. So, when we redesign this page we will be providing a link and letting people know that if they want the information related to that old indicator they can click the link on our webpage and be directed to the mid-channel water clarity data.
* Although the water clarity page is changing, it is a popular indicator which is why we feel like we should provide links for the public to be able to access the information even after it has changed.
* Chlorophyll A is reporting from all tidal waters of the Bay, but the new indicator will be reporting from only where we have Chlorophyll A standards and there are only 6 segments that we have standards for.
* We will be improving the water quality standards indicator in the near future because right now we are only reporting though 2009 period but the indicator will be updated by Liza Hernandez soon. We also plan to have maps so people can drill down to specific information about localities.
* We will have the ability to show information about every single designated use for scientist and professionals in this office. They can get information about specific locations/rivers/ect.

1. **Agreement/Executive Council Meeting**

* Samantha Kappalman is chair of editorial board and she has been working hard with that team to get the agreement to be more readable and public friendly.
* Management Board will be discussing the new agreement on September 12th.
* Communications will be the first thing their agenda so Samantha will be able to understand what the Management Board thinks the tone of the agreement should be.
* Looks like we’re aiming for a December 12th meeting for the Executive Council, at which the agreement will be signed.
* Everyone is having different assumptions about who will be signing the agreement. People seem to be assuming that the governors will be attending the meeting and signing the agreement but, in the past, it has been acceptable for secretaries to attend in their place.
* This is the first time that Delaware, Virginia and headwater states will be signing the agreement, so please check your governor’s schedules closely because, from a communications perspective, it might not look so good if your states governor is not there.
* The Chesapeake Bay Program is planning on doing something similar to the last public comment period for the upcoming public comment period for the agreement.
* On our webpage, when the next public comment period opens, we will take down the set of comments from the first agreement and put a summary of original comments and our response to them then we will post the new document and accept comments.
* All comments will be posted and made public.
* 30th celebration may host several smaller events between now and the Executive Council meeting instead of one large event.
* Steve is working on the PSA and Catherine and Jenna are working on the timeline.
* **SIDENOTE**: EPA related communication protocol – EPA has submitted a request for a disclaimer to put on every one of the Chesapeake Bay Programs news posts. Margaret has replied that we are not going to do that because this is a partnership website. It is meant to represent the overall partnership, not just one voice. Also, we already have our own terms of use for the Bay Program site.
* Nick has been writing opinion pieces once a month for the Bay Program’s website and Chesapeake Currents - those will have the EPA disclaimer attached to them.