

**Communications Workgroup
Monthly Meeting**

 **November 7, 2013**

 **9:45-11a.m.**

 **Minutes**

Mike Land, NPS (Chair) Catherine Krikstan, Alliance

Samantha Kappalman, MDE (Vice Chair) Cindy Chance, NPS

Margaret Enloe, Alliance (Coordinator) Guy Stephens, UMCES

Kim Couranz, NOAA Jessica Blackburn, Citizens Advisory Committee

Tom Wenz, EPA Pat Buckley, DEP

Jenna Valente, CRC Darlene Pisani, DNR

Deb Kleiner, Choose Clean Water Leila Mitchell, DEC

1. Round Robin / GIT Updates

**NOAA:**

* Partnering with Maryland DNR and Army Corps of Engineers for an oyster restoration project. The Army Corps sent out press release about it to gain more public interest.
* Fisheries GIT meets twice a year for an in-person meeting. The next meeting is planned for December 3rd-4th.
* It would be good to get the word out about the meeting and let the media know that they are welcome to attend. It will take place on Solomons Island.
* Education Workgroup is holding its education summit on December 2nd-3rd in Annapolis.
* NOAA is currently going through FY14 planning and is in the process of setting some priorities and milestones.
* The office director would like to up web use of CBIBS in 2014.

**EPA**

* The Report to Congress is in its final review stages with the EPA regional administrator and is due by the end of December.
* As of now, it is 64 pages long and originally was well over 80.
* Working on putting together an EPA statement on the USGS study about lag-times.
* Region 3 is working on doing some outreach to tell success stories about wastewater treatment facilities throughout the watershed.
* The regional administrator is meeting with Maryland Chamber of Commerce Environmental Committee this morning and will be addressing mostly TMDL issues.
* Working to support a query from The Washington post, it will be a national story involving the Chesapeake Bay TMDL.
* **Action**: Tom will share Report to Congress with Communications Workgroup.

**CBP:**

* Developing the State of the Program report where all goal teams will report on what they have been working on for the past year. The audience for this report is the Executive Council.
* Although it is an internal only report, it will be made publicly available and will be posted on the Executive Council website.
* Quarterly grant reports are due by December 1st for both the communications team and the multimedia grant.
* The next work plan and grant for the next two years are due for the Communications Office.
* Steve Droter has been working very hard over the last couple of months to pull together a PSA. It will be more Bay Program based than 30th anniversary. Not many video products will be coming out between now and the Executive Council because his focus is on that.
* **Action**: Margaret share State of the Program with the Communications Workgroup when it is finalized.

**NPS:**

* Next week is the Large Landscape Conservation Workshop. Representatives from each of the watershed states and non-profits will be working toward attainment of the acreage goal by 2025.
* Open this month is the online mapping tool for public access. This will be the third time that NPS has asked for public comment on this mapping tool.
* During the first 30 day period that it was open it had 10,000 hits to the website – it is a popular program/tool/invitation.
* The tool is looking for new suggested public access sites.
* When the period closes on December 1st, the team will vet the sites for readiness, safety, and potential for environmental damage.
* Working right now on an announcement about financial investment made by the National Park Service Chesapeake Bay Office in FY2013. Money went to public access development, education and youth engagement projects.
* Yesterday marked the graduation ceremony for the 1st three interns in the Chesapeake Youth Corps intern program. In 2014 the program will expand to five interns placed with the James River Association, Parks and People Foundation, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Anacostia Watershed Society and one in NPS Chesapeake Bay Office.
* **Action**: if you have a way to publicize the online mapping tool and would like to do so, please contact Cindy Chance.

**MDE:**

* Starting a public relations effort about stormwater. Have a brochure available to be introduced at local WIP meetings to use as outreach to citizens.
* Reached out to a couple NGOs and other state agencies to partner on the campaign.
* Will be highlighting different successful stormwater projects leading up to the general assembly which starts the second week in January.

**DNR:**

* Last call we had great news about oyster restoration with the 1.25 billion record progresses under the oyster aquaculture restoration grant.
* Also, the governor received leadership awards about climate change and environmental literacy. So, it has been a really good month for us.

**Choose Clean Water Coalition:**

* Working with organizations to do stormwater education research. Have been using focus groups around the state of Maryland to figure out the best ways to communicate about stormwater and how to deal with some of the negative language that has popped up surrounding it.
* Although this study was conducted in Maryland, a lot of the information will be relevant for regional use.
* There have been a series of Maryland regional workshops about stormwater. CCWC has been attending those and presenting about communications and encouraging people to use plain language and tell stories when communicating stormwater issues to the public.
* Annual conference planning is underway. It is going to be in Stanton, Virginia this year from June 3rd and 4th.  The focus of the conference will be on engaging the public. Please mark your calendars!
* **Action**: If you know of anyone who would be a good speaker for the conference please contact Choose Clean Water.

**UMCES:**

* Most of the Chesapeake Bay Program web products are hosted at the Bay Program office. During the government shutdown, our servers were down, causing the Bay Program to lose about 50,000-85,000 visits to the site.
* The Bay Program team has been working to put together a grant which was awarded to move to an offsite cloud computing system. So, if there is s government shutdown in this future this will not happen again.
* Chesapeake*Stat* is moving into a discovery phase. The focus is moved to redefining and figuring out who the users are and what their needs are in order to get the product more on track and focused.

**Citizens Advisory Committee:**

* Advisory Committees are now working on their reports for the Executive Council, focusing their comments on the draft agreement.
* Working on a joint meeting between CAC and LGAC on December 5th.

**NY DEC:**

* Modifications to the wastewater treatment permits have been public noticed in the Environmental Notice Bulletin. A comment period will start for those permits.
* Also, a funding program is available in New York for people to apply to for grants to help them do any work that they need to complete for their permit modifications.
* Doing outreach to make sure the public knows about the funding opportunities and to answer any questions anyone might have.
1. Editorial Calendar and Social Media Campaigns
* The Bay Program has a lot in the news cycle for November (See below):
	+ Editorial Calendar: November
	+ 11.01 (Fri.): Critter of the Month: [Greater Yellowlegs](http://www.chesapeakebay.net/fieldguide/critter/greater_yellowlegs)
	+ 11.04 (Mon.): [Chesapeake Currents](http://us6.campaign-archive2.com/?u=f8c6c5815e1e73e0561b6f0f6&id=4d7902b482&e=c216426e3f)
	+ 11.12 (Tues.): Blog Post: [Groundwater pushes nitrogen into Bay, delays effects of restoration](http://www.chesapeakebay.net/blog/post/groundwater_pushes_nitrogen_into_bay_delays_effects_of_restoration_work)
	+ 11.13 (Wed.): Blog Post: [Ancient seawater found in Chesapeake Bay](http://www.chesapeakebay.net/blog/post/ancient_seawater_found_under_chesapeake_bay)
	+ 11.14 (Thurs.): [Restoration Spotlight: Green building brings conservation to community college](http://www.chesapeakebay.net/blog/post/restoration_spotlight_green_building_brings_conservation_to_community_colle)
	+ 11.19 (Tues.): Blog Post: [Potomac River Report Card](http://www.chesapeakebay.net/blog/post/potomac_river_scores_c_on_latest_report_card1)
	+ 11.21 (Thurs.): Blog Post: [Executive Order on climate change](http://www.chesapeakebay.net/blog/post/executive_order_calls_on_nation_to_prepare_for_climate_change)
* Social media:
* As a way to get people around the office to like the Chesapeake Bay Program’s Facebook page, Jenna and Catherine dressed up on Halloween and delivered Dum Dum lollipops to everyone that were attached to card saying “Don’t be a Dum Dum, “like” us on Facebook!”.
* The Bay Program put up a new photo album called Beards for the Bay on Facebook. It is a way to stay relevant and capitalize on No Shave November or Movember. In addition, we hope to draw awareness to the issues surrounding the Chesapeake Bay and our social media sites.
* Three winners will randomly be selected at the end of the month for a Chesapeake Bay prize pack.
* **Action**: Please participate in the Bay Programs social media campaigns and share them with others.
1. Bay Barometer
* Working with a new designer for this year’s Bay Barometer.
* The text was reviewed by the Management Board and sent to the Communications Workgroup for review.
* Narrowed down to 8 pages this year (2 11X17 pages).
* The biggest change from last year will be the use of very clear, simple, web-friendly icons to go with the indicators.
* Final draft will be distributed to leadership and the Communications Workgroup.
* Hope to release the document before the Executive Council meeting – aiming for December 2nd at 1:00PM as a social media release.
* In terms of messaging, there is a new way of tracking water quality that combines underwater grasses, dissolved oxygen and clarity by different segments in the Bay. Under the new indicator, water quality went down 10% between 2011 and 2012.
* This new methodology can be traced back to 1985 so we can now look back in history.
* It will be good to get this out to the public before the Executive Council meeting so the public knows where the Bay is at now and where restoration efforts need to go in the future.
* Chesapeake Bay Foundation will not be doing the State of the Bay report this year because they publish it every other year.
1. Agreement update Executive Council Meeting: Planning and Information
* Executive Council meeting is December 12th and will be held at National Arboretum in Washington D.C.
* The meeting will be shorter than usual (10-1:30 or so).
* Bay Program is not releasing a draft agreement for the Executive Council meeting.
* There will not be a public meeting this year where the agreement and Executive Council will be discussed.
* There will be a private breakfast where the agreement will be discussed between the members of the Executive Council.
* The Idea is to have a second Executive Council meeting in the spring where an official agreement can be signed.
* Revised agreement should be out to the PSC today to give them roughly 6 weeks for comments and editing leading up to the Executive Council meeting.
1. Lessons Learned Report
* Presented to the Communications Workgroup several months ago from UMCES and STAR (making it partially a Bay Program product).
* The report was intended to be public friendly but the writing is very technical.
* There is a lot of potential for promoting success stories across the watershed from this report.
* Suggest promoting this around January to give it more time for editing and to separate it from the holiday buzz and the Executive Council meeting/Bay Barometer.
* **Action**: Margaret will send Nita’s presentation on this to the Communications Workgroup.