

**Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP)
Maintain Healthy Watersheds Goal Implementation Team (GIT)
Local Engagement Workgroup Conference Call
August 12th, 2014
1 PM – 3 PM**

Participants:

Donnelle Keech, The Nature Conservancy, *Co-Chair*
Wink Hastings, National Park Service, *Co-Chair*
Tuana Phillips, Chesapeake Research Consortium, *Staff*
Renee Thompson, U.S. Geological Survey
Kevin Case, Land Trust Alliance
Mary Gattis, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, Local Government Advisory Committee
Daniel Rosen, Maryland Department of Planning
Reggie Parrish, Environmental Protection Agency

Purpose of meeting: to hone in and agree on the key questions we want to answer.

Minutes:

Donnelle Keech started the meeting by providing a summary of the last Local Engagement Workgroup call that took place in March.

- During this call, participants took time to discuss assumptions and build understandings that will be used to help make well-conceived recommendations to the Healthy Watersheds Goal Team.

Donnelle also reviewed the Maintain Healthy Watersheds goal and outcome in the new Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement:

Healthy Watersheds Goal: Sustain state-identified healthy waters and watersheds recognized for their high quality and/or high ecological value.

Healthy Watersheds Outcome: 100 percent of state-identified currently healthy waters and watersheds remain healthy.

Discussion of Key Questions:

The conference call's conversation was focused on the following list of questions:

- Who are the leaders/local actors in the Bay Watershed?
- What are these leaders doing?
- What needs do the leaders have?
- What are other CBP Teams doing in terms of Local Engagement?
- What do the Bay Program and Healthy Watersheds Goal Team have that is unique and useful to local engagement efforts, including core skills and ability of individuals in the Team?

Donnelle explained that local engagement workgroup members and invited guests will meet next in person to discuss the answers and recommendations to the above questions. This will be part of the "information-gathering" phase. Also during this phase, this conversation will be taken to

the 2014 Watershed Forum in September during a session focused on healthy watersheds. Audience participants at this session will be able to provide feedback and information. Furthermore, throughout the next couple of months, the Maintain Healthy Watersheds Goal Team will develop a management strategy for the healthy watersheds outcome. Renee Thompson reminded members to give thought to management strategy development as the workgroup moves along.

Key question #1: What are other CBP teams doing in terms of Local Engagement?

There are several other initiatives in the Bay Program focused or related to local engagement. It is important to keep these interrelated efforts and moving parts in mind. They include:

- 1) Local Engagement Team – led by Julie Winters (EPA), this team serves as an overarching umbrella for all CBP-related local engagement activities. Historically the team has focused more on TMDL and nutrient/sediment goals. The team has not been very active in recent months, but may reinvent themselves and become more active with the signing of the new Agreement in June.
- 2) There are outcomes in the Agreement related to local engagement but not housed by the Healthy Watersheds GIT. These include the citizen stewardship outcome and local leadership outcome.
 - The Enhance Partnership GIT will be responsible for the local leadership outcome in the Agreement. The GIT is currently proposing a Local Leadership Institute and two local leadership projects, described at the following link:
http://www.chesapeakebay.net/channel_files/21264/local_leadership_proposal_options.pdf
- 3) The Healthy Watersheds GIT has adopted the two land use outcomes in the Bay Agreement. The “land use options evaluate” outcome in particular is related to local engagement, as it reads “evaluate policy options, incentives and planning tools that could assist [local governments] in continually improving their capacity to reduce the rate of conversion of agricultural lands, forests and wetlands as well as the rate of changing landscapes from more natural lands that soak up pollutants to those that are paved over, hardscaped or otherwise impervious.”

Discussion points:

- Action item: Mary Gattis offered to act as a liaison between the Enhance Partnership GIT and the Healthy Watersheds Local Engagement Workgroup.
- Members discussed the meaning of “local officials” in the local leadership outcome, and agreed that this term is meant to represent not only officials but a broader population of local actors.

Are there centers of local engagement activity outside of the Bay Program we can learn from?

- The Journey Through Hallowed Ground Initiative: <http://www.hallowedground.org/>
- Chesapeake Funder’s Network: <http://www.chesbayfunders.org/home>

Discussion points:

- Considering the various ongoing local engagement efforts within the Bay Program, our focus should be specifically on healthy watersheds.
- There are a lot of examples, case studies, and organizations out there that we can learn from.
- Coordination among interrelated efforts is important.

Key Question #2: Who are the leaders and local actors in the Watershed?

- Watershed organizations
- Local land trusts
- Conservation districts
- Non-traditional partners (e.g., Trout Unlimited, hiking groups, bird clubs, Choose Clean Water Coalition)
- Local officials
- National umbrella organizations for local governments (e.g. National Association of Counties, or NACo)
- State-wide umbrella organizations (e.g. municipal leagues)
- Forests for the Bay and similar programs

Discussion points:

- Watershed organizations and local land trusts have a place-based focus. How can we engage them in a broader conversation or perspective? In addition, a lot of groups live far from the Bay and are not interested in hearing about the health of the Bay.
- Land Trust Alliance (LTA) coordinates land trusts. Is there a group that does that for watershed organizations?
- Conservation districts can be conduits for watershed organizations, or can also themselves be local leaders.
- “Local officials” in this list refers to those who are elected. They may work for municipalities, townships, counties, etc.
- The Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC) has liaisons who remain active in each of the 6 Bay states’ municipal leagues. These liaisons may serve as great conduits for promoting and communicating healthy watersheds messages.
- The Chesapeake Bay Commission is spearheading efforts that would allow land conservation to be credited as a Best Management Practice (BMP) in the Chesapeake Bay model.
- Local land trusts and programs such as Forests for the Bay have mastered how to have good relationships with private land owners.

Key Question #3: What needs to the leaders have?

- Workgroup members voiced that this question needs to be expanded. E.g., what needs to they have in order to be more effective in their ability to protect healthy watersheds?

- In addition, it is important to ask: what is serving as the driver for leaders in protecting healthy watersheds? The Hallowed Grounds program is successful because a lot of people care about protecting Civil War areas. Identifying the local value is key.
- Another thing to keep in mind is that not every part of the watershed is designated a state-identified healthy watershed. We do not want to be exclusionary. It is also in our interest to increase the number of identified healthy watersheds.
- Another way to rephrase our question is to ask: why should local leaders want to protect their watersheds?
- Local relationships, giving attention to the land owners, is important and can be powerful.
- The Healthy Watersheds GIT is hesitant to share the data from the current map of state-identified healthy watersheds. The map will be refined in the near future. Once the GIT is comfortable with the map, the GIT and workgroups will be able to use it to do more outreach work.
- LGAC is hosting a citizen and local monitoring workshop in September. Participants in this workshop and other similar workshops might be interested in learning how to get their watersheds designated as healthy.

Key Question #4: What do the Bay Program and Healthy Watersheds Goal Team have that is unique and useful to local engagement efforts, including core skills and ability of individuals in the Team?

- A direct connection to LTA, one of the premier coordinating organizations of land trusts.
- Technical skills and capacity. E.g., GIS mapping abilities at the Bay Program as well as through other partners.
- Access to a broad and deep knowledge base.
- Ability to catalyze local communities and people through communications work.
- Communities recognize they are a part of a neat group.
- Ability to provide access to resources (people, money, mapping).

Who is this Workgroup missing from the table?

- Farm Bureau. How is CBPO already engaged with the Farm Bureau?
- American Farmland Land Trust.
- Builders Associations such as the National Association of Home Builders. It would be interesting to see if healthy watersheds are features people seek in a place to live.
- Rural Waters associations and EPA Rural Waters.
- Umbrella/conduit/aggregator organizations for watershed organizations.
- Local planners, e.g. American Planning Association chapters, and landscape architects.

Next Steps for the Workgroup:

Donnelle wrapped up the call by going over the next steps for the Workgroup:

- Mull over the questions and conversations from this conference call.
- Donnelle will have a series of individual conversations with team members and key stakeholders from outside the Healthy Watersheds GIT to nail down on our collective understanding of who the key local actors are for Healthy Watersheds, what the

opportunities are to connect with them, and how those opportunities fit into larger CBP landscape of who is doing what AND management strategy development. With the take-aways from those conversations rounded up in some form of usable template, the next step is to further discuss with the Local Engagement Team (and invited guests) in a webinar in preparation for the in-person workshop.

- Get the right people in the room at the in-person workshop.
- Work on theory of change building with the goal in mind to ultimately make recommendations to the Healthy Watersheds Goal Team.
- Collaborate with the Goal Team on management strategy development.