

Chesapeake Bay Program Communications Workgroup Charter

Revised August 2016

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Purpose

The Communications Workgroup **fosters cross-jurisdictional communication** among Chesapeake Bay Program partners by providing a collaborative forum to discuss communications issues, meet communications needs and conduct public relations with the media, the public and other critical audiences.

The Communications Workgroup **provides expert advice and recommendations** when asked to address the communications needs of Chesapeake Bay Program groups (including the Chesapeake Executive Council, Principals' Staff Committee or Management Board; Advisory Committees; Goal Implementation Teams; workgroups, committees and subcommittees; and Chesapeake Bay Program leadership).

The Communications Workgroup **provides professional guidance to the Chesapeake Bay Program's Communications Office** in support of its mission to support and communicate the policy, science and data of the Chesapeake Bay Program through media outreach, web- and print-based products, high-quality multimedia, an established and consistent brand, targeted messaging, and collaboration and engagement with stakeholders around the watershed.

Goals

- Help set annual priorities for the Chesapeake Bay Program's Communications Office.
- Provide expert advice and recommendations when asked to address the communications needs of Chesapeake Bay Program groups (e.g., the Management Board, Advisory Committees or Goal Implementation Teams).
- Foster cross-jurisdictional communication among Chesapeake Bay Program partners by providing a collaborative forum to discuss communications issues, share ideas and resources, and meet communications needs.
- Promote current communications best practices to foster professional development and growth among members.

The Communications Workgroup will revisit and revise these goals and objectives as needed.

Membership

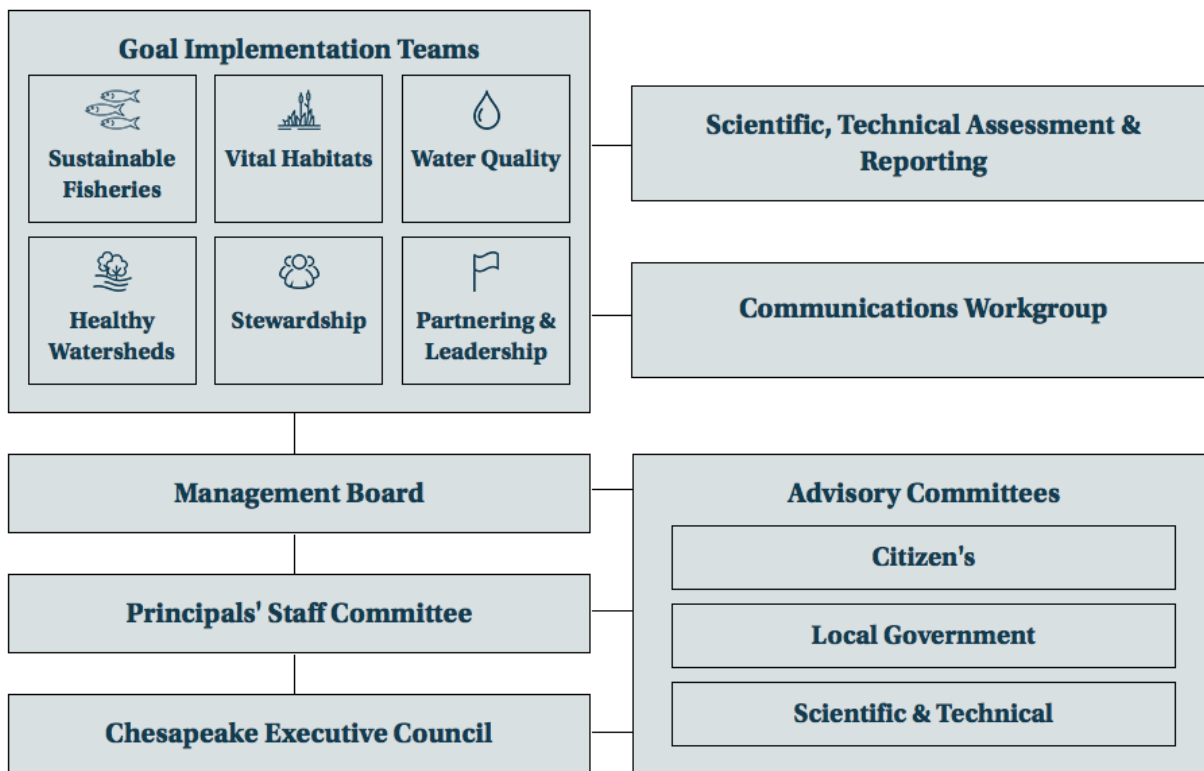
The Communications Workgroup is comprised of communications and public relations professionals from the seven Chesapeake Bay watershed jurisdictions, the Chesapeake Bay Commission and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. It also includes representatives from the Chesapeake Bay Program's three advisory committees, as well as select members of the Chesapeake Bay Program's Creative Team. It may also include similar professionals from other federal and state agencies (e.g., the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the National Park Service or the U.S. Department of Agriculture), academic institutions (e.g., Maryland Sea Grant or the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science) and nonprofit or nongovernmental organizations (e.g., Chesapeake Bay Foundation).

Chesapeake Bay Program Goal Implementation Teams (GITs) will be represented through GIT Liaisons, who are involved with and aware of the work of the GIT they represent. GIT Liaisons provide monthly updates to the Communications Workgroup on their GIT's priorities, projects and communications needs.

Committees

The Communications Workgroup may establish ad hoc or standing committees or teams to address specific issues. These teams report directly to the group.

Placement Within the Chesapeake Bay Program's Organizational Structure
Approved by Management Board July 2010



Roles and Responsibilities

Position	Description
Chair	<p>The Chair is responsible for managing the overall strategies and performance of the workgroup. These responsibilities include setting priorities; facilitating meetings; representing the workgroup in various forums (e.g., Management Board meetings); and monitoring and adjusting the workgroup's performance as needed.</p> <p>The Chair serves a two-year term unless circumstances require an extension.</p>
Vice Chair	<p>The Vice Chair provides direct support to the Chair and serves as Chair in his or her absence.</p> <p>The Vice Chair moves into the Chair's position at the end of the Chair's term unless the workgroup decides otherwise.</p>
Coordinator	<p>The Coordinator provides direct support to the Chair and Vice Chair with regard to meeting facilitation; performance monitoring; coordination among and communication with Advisory Committees and Goal Implementation Teams (GITs); and other duties as necessary.</p> <p>The Coordinator also provides supervision and guidance to the Staffer, and attends bimonthly meetings that bring Chesapeake Bay Program Coordinators and Staffers together.</p>
Staffer	<p>The Staffer provides direct support to the Chair, Vice Chair and Coordinator with regard to organizing meetings; drafting and distributing meeting minutes; communicating with members and keeping member records up to date; and other administrative duties as assigned.</p>
GIT Liaisons	<p>GIT Liaisons represent the Goal Implementation Teams with which they are involved. GIT Liaisons are responsible for providing monthly updates on their GIT's priorities, projects and communications needs.</p>
Members	<p>Members actively participate in monthly meetings by providing updates from their own agency, organization or jurisdiction and offering constructive ideas, input and feedback where requested. Members are responsible for using their subject matter expertise to advance the effectiveness of the group and their authority within their agency, organization or jurisdiction to expand the reach of the group's work.</p>

Operating Procedures

- The Communications Workgroup will meet each month to provide updates on relevant news, issues and information related to member agencies, organizations and jurisdictions.
- Twice each year, the Communications Workgroup will help set priorities for the Chesapeake Bay Program's Communications Office and contribute ideas to the Creative Team's editorial calendar.
- Twice each year, the Communication Workgroup will meet in-person to engage in professional development opportunities and strengthen relationships among members.
- As needed, the Communications Workgroup will provide input on Chesapeake Bay Program publications and outreach efforts, especially as it relates to strategic planning, product creation and editorial revision. The Communications Workgroup will review Chesapeake Bay Program media materials in advance of their release.
- As requested, the Communications Workgroup will provide input on partner publications and outreach efforts.
- The Communications Workgroup will share resources among members, including subject matter experts, media contacts and print and digital resources.
- The Communications Workgroup will invite presentations or request further information from scientific or other experts on leading issues where appropriate.

Meetings

- The Chair, Vice Chair and Coordinator will set the agenda for each meeting based on input from workgroup members. The Staffer will circulate an agenda and supporting documents before each meeting, and record and circulate meeting minutes for comment within 15 days of each meeting
- The Chair will run the meeting and is responsible for sticking to the schedule; guiding the discussion; tabling those discussions that are not the agenda; and clearly communicating which items are for decision, discussion or information.
- The Chair will promote processes and procedures that encourage all workgroup members to express their opinions and ideas.
- The workgroup will conduct periodic evaluations to make sure its meetings are productive and make good use of participants' time.

Decision-Making:

The Communications Workgroup will operate under a consensus-based decision-making process. A consensus-based decision-making process is a group decision-making process that seeks the agreement of most participants and the resolution or mitigation of minority objections. This decision-making process will aim to be:

- Inclusive of as many members as possible.
- Participatory (actively soliciting the input and participation of all).
- Cooperative (striving to reach the best decision for the group rather than the majority).
- Egalitarian (with all afforded, as much as possible, equal input into the process).
- Solution-oriented (emphasizing common agreement over differences and reaching effective decisions using compromise to resolve mutually exclusive positions).

Members Agree to:

- Use their positions and expertise to positively influence actions within their organization, agency or jurisdiction that directly or indirectly affect the Chesapeake Bay Program.
- Engage with the Chesapeake Executive Council, Principals' Staff Committee and Management Board as requested or as necessary on important decisions throughout the year.
- Join Chesapeake Network and use the Communications Workgroup Group Page to receive updates from and communicate with members.

Revision of Charter

The Communications Workgroup will periodically review this charter to determine whether modifications are needed. Upon the agreement of all members to specific revisions, a modification to the charter may be made at any time.