



## I. Introduction

There are more than 1,800 units of local government in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, and many are already taking steps to restore and protect their local rivers and streams. Additionally, there are more than 600 local conservation and watershed organizations educating and empowering citizens and local leaders to restore and protect local streams and rivers. The *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* acknowledges the important role they play and commits to increase their knowledge and capacity on issues related to water resources, as well as the implementation of economic and policy incentives that will support local conservation actions.

On December 3, 2014, approximately 60 local appointed and elected officials, senior local government staff, experts in leadership training and other stakeholders, participated in a workshop in Laurel, Maryland to share descriptions of successful watershed protection and restoration efforts, identify gaps in information and resources and recommend actions to increase the knowledge and capacity of local officials to help them manage natural resources more effectively.

Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC) members and other officials participating in the workshop stressed that local leaders are diverse in experience, values and agendas; and that the communities they serve vary in resource capacity. Increasing knowledge about the Chesapeake Bay watershed, the complexities of its issues and relating the value of healthy waters to local priorities such

as land use policies, community health, economic development and tourism, will be important to engaging those who are unaware of the critical role local governments play in the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay. As turnover is significant among local officials and their key staff, it will be important to create and nurture a watershed culture of excellence that showcases and promotes local efforts, applauds local initiatives and provides easy access to action-oriented conservation and restoration models for local officials to adapt and replicate.

Recognizing the need for continuous education on Bay issues was instrumental in the development of the Local Leadership Outcome Management Strategy. It includes developing and expanding training and leadership opportunities, facilitating peer to peer interactions among local officials, improving the availability and accessibility of informational resources and identifying and improving key sources of information for local leaders.

By working together to engage and inform local governments and their staff on critical watershed issues, there is great potential for success in restoring the Bay as well as helping their local communities.

## II. Goal, Outcome and Baseline

This Management Strategy identifies approaches for achieving the following Goal and Outcome:



### **Stewardship Goal**

Increase the number and the diversity of local citizen stewards and local governments that actively support and carry out the conservation and restoration activities that achieve healthy local streams, rivers and a vibrant Chesapeake Bay.

### **Local Leadership Outcome**

Continually increase the knowledge and capacity of local officials on issues related to water resources and in the implementation of economic and policy incentives that will support local conservation actions.

For the purposes of this Management Strategy, the term “local officials” includes elected and appointed officials, as well as senior staff in local governments. The term “capacity” is defined as the ability to achieve measurable and sustainable results. Specifically, capacity building refers to enhancing appropriate skills, attitudes and knowledge to help local officials be more effective in adopting economic and policy incentives while understanding obstacles that inhibit their adoption.

### **Baseline and Current Condition**

According to LGAC members and signatory representatives (see list on page three), the knowledge of local officials on watershed issues and their capacity to implement restoration and protection initiatives varies quite dramatically throughout the watershed. An indicator to a measure progress toward the Local Leadership Outcome has not yet been developed; therefore, an identified baseline does not yet exist.

When the baseline for this Outcome is identified, it will also be used to inform the Monitoring and Assessing progress sections of this Management Strategy. The development of this baseline will involve

---

multiple factors, including assessing the knowledge and capacity among local leaders. Developing this type of measurement is problematic. There is potential in uncovering this information through a self-evaluation survey provided to local officials, however given high turnover rates among, results would be biased. Public opinion polls may also be a useful tool in determining a baseline for knowledge and capacity. The Chesapeake Bay Program is currently funding an effort to explore options to develop the baseline.

### III. Participating Partners

**Team Lead:** Enhance Partnering, Leadership and Management Goal Implementation Team

The following partners have participated in the development of this strategy. A two-year workplan accompanies the update to this Management Strategy. It identifies specific partner commitments for the implementation of this Management Strategy.

#### ***Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement Signatories and Advisory Committees Participating in Strategy Development***

- State of Maryland
- Commonwealth of Virginia
- District of Columbia
- Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
- State of Delaware
- State of West Virginia
- Chesapeake Bay Commission
- US Environmental Protection Agency
- National Oceanographic Atmospheric Administration
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- Fish and Wildlife Service
- Local Government Advisory Committee
- Citizens Advisory Committee

#### **Local Engagement**

A key factor in the success of Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts relies on the ability to increase the knowledge and capacity of local leaders. During the last decade, federal and state regulations were significant in guiding Chesapeake Bay Program efforts. Continued progress in the watershed will depend on voluntary, informed actions by local officials, watershed associations, nongovernmental organizations, grassroots leaders and individual citizen stewards.

This Outcome relates to the building of knowledge and capacity of local officials; hence there is a specific, critical role for local government officials and associated local leaders in advising the Enhancing, Partnering and Leadership Goal Implementation Team (GIT 6) on the development of this Management Strategy. It includes the recommended actions identified by local officials from across the watershed who participated in the December 2014 workshop and follow-up meetings.

Additionally, watershed associations, nongovernmental organizations and other community-based and under-represented groups will play critical roles in reaching local officials to build their knowledge and capacity for conservation action. Therefore, it will continue to be important that actions are compatible with, and key stakeholders are engaged, during the implementation of the Citizen Stewardship and Diversity Management Strategies.

During the implementation of this Management Strategy, the involvement of local officials is crucial to achieving this Outcome. Offering advice on workplan development, including identifying adjustments over time is critical to its success, along with participation in training and peer-to-peer activities, both as leaders and as learners will contribute to the success of this Outcome.

## IV. Factors Influencing Success

The Chesapeake Bay watershed is vast, its geology complex and its population diverse.

Turnover rates among elected and appointed officials are unpredictable, complicating the return on investment from training on watershed issues. Availability of resources - defined as expertise, time, staff and funds - vary widely. Some local officials are technically sophisticated; others are not. Environmental issues are often not routinely addressed in capital planning and annual budgets.

Some local officials are already committed stewards of local resources and the Bay. Others will become committed if they recognize the correlation between local waters, a healthy Bay and individualized local priorities such as economic development, tourism and job development. The general electorate, particularly in coastal communities, is becoming more aware of rising sea levels and recurrent flooding, but do not necessarily link those events to environment-related best practices.

The following have been identified as key factors influencing the ability to achieve the Local Leadership Outcome. The most critical factor is listed first:

- Competing interests for resources (people, time, money) and the attention of local officials.
- Size, geography and civic and political complexity of the watershed, which creates distinct regional needs.
- Community awareness of, and support for protection and restoration activities, along with coordinated communications to keep the public informed.
- Easy access to actionable and reliable information that is understandable and not too technical.
- Political will and a consistent and focused state and federal program implementation at the local level.
- Turnover rates of local elected and appointed officials.

## V. Current Efforts and Gaps

Multiple jurisdictions, organizations and groups of citizens are already working to restore and protect the watershed. In many cases these efforts need to be enhanced, expanded and shared as models with others in the watershed. Examples include:

- Multi-year (FY2014-FY2017) grant-funded projects focused on local elected official watershed education and curriculum development.

- 
- Development of a “Chesapeake Watershed: Understanding the Big Picture” video to be provided to trusted information sources (e.g. MD and VA Associations of Counties).
  - Increase partner capacity to communicate and address non-water quality *Watershed Agreement* outcomes to engage local officials through efforts such as:
    - ❖ Watershed Implementation Plan co-benefit templates.
    - ❖ Cross-Goal Implementation Team mapping efforts.
    - ❖ Chesapeake Monitoring Cooperative.
  - State-by-state outreach, roundtables and training via municipal organizations and state associations.
  - Peer-to-peer outreach and networking through LGAC, Chesapeake Bay Watershed Forum and other opportunities as identified.
  - Field opportunities for local officials such as bus tours and other meaningful watershed education experiences.
  - Increasing Chesapeake Bay Program and general media coverage of significant events such as flooding, stormwater and community projects.

## Gaps

Information and resources are necessary to increase the number of local officials and watershed residents committed to responsible natural resource management. In reviewing current efforts, the following gaps were identified:

- In many cases, information or products exist, but are not being distributed or presented to local elected officials in a way that resonates with their communities. This can result in these officials focusing their priorities elsewhere.
- Information should be designed specifically for elected officials and delivered via trusted sources (e.g. PSATS), thereby building capacity of our partners to communicate and engage with local elected officials.
- Few opportunities exist for elected officials to share information and learn from one another.
- Lack of a repository/database to keep updated lists and contact information for local elected officials, particularly newly elected officials.
- Lack of an assessment of or awareness about training opportunities and funds and how to access them.
- No existing curriculum to launch watershed education program initiatives, including unique jurisdiction- and/or region-specific opportunities, characteristics, etc.
- A variety of methods are necessary to effectively engage local elected officials, including, but not limited to, webinars, podcasts, infographics, handbooks, blogs, etc.
- Success stories and committed local stewards and/or communities are visible only within the already committed conservation community.
- No current baseline related to the knowledge of local officials in regard to watershed issues and the capacity to implement watershed restoration and protection initiatives.

### **Actions, Tools and Support to Empower Local Government and Others**

Stakeholders identified a variety of actions, tools, and technical support needed to increase the knowledge and capacity of local officials. This Management Strategy addresses these actions, tools and support. Many are identified in current efforts and gaps.

## **VI. Management Approaches**

In developing the Local Leadership Management Strategy, several approaches were identified as critical to expanding the knowledge and capacity of local officials. These approaches were developed by signatory representatives, a group of local officials and trusted sources. Specific suggestions for programs were provided by local officials and educators that warrant further discussion among stakeholders as to their feasibility and priority given the reality of limited resources. Local officials continue to be engaged in the consideration of specific suggestions during the refresh of the workplan, which accompanies this Management Strategy.

The following management approaches set a framework for the Bay Program to identify existing knowledge and capacity building resources, as well as opportunities to enhance, expand or replicate effective programs. In some instances, the Bay Program may consider establishing new programs where needed. Lastly, these management actions should be considered on a state-by-state and region-by-region basis, given the variety of local needs, priorities and approaches to resources management. In addition, continually increasing the knowledge and capacity may require establishment of a system of learning for local officials.

### **1. Develop, enhance and expand training and leadership programs**

Local leaders have many competing interests vying for their attention and often limited time and resources. Given this situation, it was recognized that training and leadership programs can play a key role in increasing the knowledge and capacity of local government officials in achieving local and regional goals for environmental conservation and restoration. There is also a constant turnover of local officials throughout the watershed and, hence, a need for training programs to be offered on a recurring basis. Increasing the frequency and consistency of core training on a Bay-wide and regional basis can address the wide disparity in knowledge and capacity that currently exists, as well as provide opportunities to focus on specific region by region complexities, as well as unique solutions to informational needs. These training opportunities can also serve the important role of identifying approaches that address local priorities while improving the local environment, which, in turn, improves the health of the Bay. The Bay Program will work with state, federal and non-governmental partners to enhance and expand training opportunities through the development of watershed education curriculum, outreach activities and other mechanisms. Bay Program grants (e.g., local government funding, NFWF) should be considered as potential funding sources. Steps to achieve this action may include:

- Developing an assessment of current training and other opportunities to enhance the connection of Bay Program priorities to local priorities.
- Expanding the reach of successful training and education programs.
- Assisting in the development of cross-outcome efforts, such as including a tree canopy pilot module as part of a watershed education program curriculum.

---

## 2. Improve transfer of knowledge to local elected officials.

While a lot of available information exists; local officials express concern that it is not readily accessible or easily understandable. The below approach addresses the need for improved access to *existing* information to local elected officials, as well as members of the public that help build community support. This may include an expanded availability of online resources. Steps to achieve this action may include:

- Work with Chesapeake Bay Program outcomes leads (e.g. climate resiliency) that have identified needs, communication or otherwise, related to local elected officials.
- Develop a strategy containing recommended best practices for providing information to less engaged communities.
- Periodically review and continually improve these approaches based upon the needs of local officials.
- Assure that information is delivered in a way that is timely and resonates with local elected officials.

In addition, the information needs of local elected officials differ from those of the general public or the scientific community. Development of *new* information will be created as part of this approach. This approach will address modifying similar messages for different audiences. While messages for local officials and the general public may be similar; content, tone and presentation should be distinct. Local officials need to know how actions will support local priorities. Effective communication is clear, brief and contextual; addresses obstacles perceived by local leaders; and builds community support. Steps to achieve this action may include:

- Develop a “watershed booklet” for newly elected officials that covers jurisdiction- and region-specific curricula aimed at local priorities, including, but not limited to, flooding resiliency and land use policies.
- Deliver product(s) and content via trust sources (e.g. PML)

Finally, recognizing that many people acquire knowledge directly from their interactions with other individuals, consider peer-to-peer programs that can provide resource recommendations, share lessons learned and encourage local leaders when the political environment is challenging. Steps to achieve this action may include:

- Inventory and assess existing peer-to-peer approaches, from both inside and outside the watershed, for effectiveness and applicability.
- Conduct at least one local elected official bus tour from non-tidal to tidal regions within the watershed. If pilot is successful, plan for more tours in 2020 and beyond.
- Reserve time at each Local Leadership Workgroup meeting (and LGAC, if applicable) to discuss new opportunities for peer-to-peer knowledge exchanges.
- Establish jurisdictional contacts to maintain updated lists of local elected officials.

### Cross-Outcome Collaboration and Multiple Benefits

The *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* is complex with intersecting Goals and Outcomes. To establish a culture of excellence across the watershed, the Local Leadership Outcome depends on the achievement of other Outcomes, including Citizen Stewardship, Diversity and Environmental Literacy.

Local officials react to the needs of their diverse constituents, so a culture of stewardship at the grassroots level is also important to the success of this Outcome. An environmentally literate electorate can help drive the success of increasing citizen stewardship and engaging local leaders.

Many other Goals and Outcomes, including Outcomes for the Urban Tree Canopy, Water Quality and Land Use Options and Evaluation, among others, rely on the local implementation of actions, and the increased knowledge and capacity of local officials. When a strong culture of excellence in natural resource management exists among local officials, it provides the framework for the action necessary to achieve the vision(s) articulated in the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*. Therefore, the GIT 6 is cross-collaborating with the following Goals Implementation Teams that are responsible for Outcomes that depend on informed local leaders:

- Sustainable Fisheries Goal Team (Oyster Outcome).
- Protect and Restore Vital Habitats Goal Team (SAV Outcome).
- Protect and Restore Water Quality Goal Team (2017 WIP, 2025 WIP Outcomes, Urban Tree Canopy and Riparian Forest Buffer Outcomes).
- Maintain Healthy Watersheds Goal Team (Land Use Methods and Metrics Outcome, Healthy Waters Outcome).
- Foster Chesapeake Stewardship Goal Team (Citizen Stewardship Outcome, Environmental Literacy Outcome, Public Access Outcome, Land Conservation Outcome).
- Diversity Action Team Goal Team (Diversity Outcome).

Information and resources are necessary to close the gaps and increase the number of local officials and watershed residents committed to responsible natural resource management. In order to support conservation actions, and accept responsibility for implementation, local officials need to possess at least a basic understanding of key environmental issues and concepts. There are several Management Strategies that identify the importance of increasing the knowledge of local officials, as a necessary step in achieving their desired Outcomes. Steps to achieve this action may include:

- Coordinate development of two-year workplans for Citizen Stewardship, Diversity and Environmental Literacy with the Local Leadership Management Strategy to ensure actions are complementary.
- Review other Management Strategies for opportunities to engage local officials increase their capacity to achieve, as appropriate.
- Periodically assess *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* goals to identify information sharing and knowledge transfer needs.
- Continually update two-year workplan with results from the above actions.

### **Approaches Targeted to Local Participation**

The approaches cited above are intended to facilitate local participation and develop local leaders who can participate more fully in implementing Management Strategies. To facilitate greater local participation from under-served and under-represented communities, the Local Leadership Workgroup will work closely with the Diversity Workgroup to identify non-traditional partners and conduits for achieving the Outcome. Additional actions, tools or technical support needed to empower local governments to participate in achieving the Outcome will be identified in the accompanying workplan.

---

## VII. Monitoring Progress

During the update of the workplan and implementation of key actions, a baseline and success criteria will be established, and metrics developed to determine progress. Making this information available to a diversity of constituents, especially those at the community level, will prepare groups and individuals to understand where there is a need to encourage policy change. (The following tools and resources have been identified to assist in progress monitoring.)

- Utilize surveying instruments such as before and after training surveys.
- Explore innovative approaches in gaining baseline data (e.g. trivia contests, games, creative phone apps).
- Consider basic tracking of local elected officials using number of contacts and meetings.
- Track the number of people going through the leadership academies.
- Use the Chesapeake Stormwater Network annual survey of members to assess programming.
- Determine the different mechanisms for how local officials are categorized (e.g., elected versus senior staff).
- Count how many exchanges occur, and commitments are made and completed.
- Count the number of municipalities that have built-in requirements for certification or training.
- Track the number of local officials and mentors participating in mentoring programs and track how many maintain their relationships when complete.
- Include an estimated number of educational programs, online resources, etc. Connect this back to the baseline when developed to track the range of methods being used for increasing knowledge and capacity.
- Use existing research that measures local knowledge base.
- Review metrics used by local leadership programs to determine success.

## VIII. Assessing Progress

Progress toward building the knowledge and capacity of local officials will be assessed every two years. At the December 2014 workshop, many officials agreed to participate in this initial effort to determine success factors and develop progress criteria.

Throughout the initial assessment period, local officials will be a part of the process to determine how progress is determined, which will include criteria, scope, scale and the utilization of adaptive management techniques. It is anticipated that this strategy may require one or more two-year cycles to fully determine whether the initial effort has been successful.

## IX. Adaptively Managing

As the first two-year period has concluded, the existing workplan has been updated and accompanies this Management Strategy. The purpose of updating the two-year work plan will be to maximize the effectiveness of the methods utilized to increase the knowledge and capacity building of local leaders in achieving program success.

## **X. Biennial Workplan**

This Management Strategy outlines the approach the Chesapeake Bay Program will be taken between now and 2025. A biennial workplan, focusing on the priorities and resources available to all participating signatory representatives and partners for the following two years has been updated and accompanies this Management Strategy. It will include the following information:

- Key actions.
- Timeline for each action.
- Expected outcomes.
- Partners responsible for each action.
- Estimated resources required.

Throughout the workplan and its implementation, there will be targeted outreach to township, municipal and county associations and other groups as identified.

---

## Appendix A

The following is a list of the individuals who have participated in the development of this Management Strategy through input at stakeholder meetings.

1. Randy Bartlett, Fairfax Department of Public Works and Environmental Services
2. Don Baugh, Chesapeake Bay Commission
3. Chris Beacraft, MD Department of Natural Resources
4. Gem Bingol, Piedmont Environmental Council
5. Carin Bisland, EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Office
6. Jessica Blackburn, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and Chesapeake Bay Citizens Advisory Committee Coordinator
7. Heidi Bonnaffon, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
8. Janine Burns, Mathews County, VA Supervisor and Chesapeake Bay Local Government Advisory Committee Chair
9. Dennis Buttorf, Jersey Shore, PA Mayor
10. Jim Caldwell, Howard County Office of Environmental Sustainability
11. Trish Carothers, Susquehanna Greenway Partnership
12. Mark Charles, City of Rockville, MD
13. Alexandra Chiaruttini, Stock and Leader, Attorneys at Law
14. Sandy Coyman, Talbot County, MD Department of Planning (retired)
15. Meo Curtis, Montgomery County, MD Department of Environmental Protection
16. Philip Cwiek, US Army Corps of Engineers
17. Diane Davis, DC Department of the Environment
18. Jacob Day, Salisbury, MD City Council President
19. Nissa Dean, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
20. Lindsay Dodd, DE-MD Agribusiness Association
21. Deborah Ealer, North Middleton Township, PA Township Manager
22. Suzanne Etgen, Watershed Stewards Academy
23. Greg Evans, VA Dept. of Agriculture and Forestry
24. Andy Fellows, University of MD
25. Erik Fisher, Chesapeake Bay Foundation
26. Kathleen Freeman, Caroline County, MD Department of Planning, Codes, & Engineering
27. Kate Fritz, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
28. Jack Frye, Chesapeake Bay Commission
29. Alan Girard, Chesapeake Bay Foundation
30. Jacqueline Goodall, Forest Heights, MD Mayor
31. Norman Goulet, Northern Virginia Regional Commission
32. Leslie Grunden, Caroline County, MD Department of Planning, Codes, & Engineering
33. Joe Grzeika, King George County, VA Board Member
34. Peter Hill, DC Department of the Environment
35. Ruth Hocker, Lancaster, PA Director of Public Works
36. Mark Hoffman, Chesapeake Bay Commission

37. Steve Hubble, Stafford County, VA Department of Public Works
38. Elizabeth Johnson, Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission
39. Charlotte Katzenmoyer, Lancaster, PA Director of Public Works
40. Donnelle Keech, The Nature Conservancy
41. Les Knapp, Maryland Association of Counties
42. Ed Knittel, PA State Association of Boroughs
43. Larry Land, Virginia Association of Counties
44. Ernie Lehman, North Old Town Independent Citizens Civic Association (Alexandria, VA)
45. Megan Lehman, Lycoming County, PA Department of Planning and Community Development
46. Joe Lerch, VA Municipal League
47. Rhonda Manning, PA Department of Environmental Protection
48. Stuart McKenzie, Northern Neck Planning District
49. Erik Michelson, Anne Arundel County, MD Department of Public Works
50. Shannon Moore, Frederick County, MD Sustainability and Environmental Resources
51. Ellen Moyer, Former Mayor of Annapolis, MD and Former Chair of Chesapeake Bay Local Government Advisory Committee
52. Jennifer Nelson, Sussex Conservation District (DE)
53. Nancy Nunn, Harry H. Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology
54. Reggie Parrish, EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Office
55. Matthew Pennington, WV Eastern Panhandle Planning and Development Council
56. Harold Phillips, Local Government Advisory Committee
57. Julie Pippel, Washington County, MD Division of Environmental Management Director
58. Gwyn Rowland, Susquehanna River Basin Commission
59. Matt Royer, Penn State Agriculture and Environment Center
60. Steven Saari, DC Department of the Environment
61. Paul Santay, Stafford County, VA Department of Public Works
62. James Shallenberger, Susquehanna River Basin Commission
63. Pam Shellenberger, PA Chapter of the American Planning Association
64. Tanya Spano, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
65. Phillip Stafford, MD Department of Natural Resources
66. Jennifer Starr, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
67. Charlie Stek, Chesapeake Bay Citizens Advisory Committee Chair
68. Christopher Thompson, Lancaster County, PA Conservation District
69. Joanne Throwe, Environmental Finance Center
70. Emily Vazir, Chesapeake Research Consortium
71. Jennifer Walls, DE Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control
72. Wendy Walsh, Tioga County, NY Soil and Water Conservation District
73. Tim Ware, George Washington Regional Commission
74. Matt Weir, Derry Township, PA Supervisor
75. James Wheeler, PA State Association of Township Supervisors