# Participants

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Irina Calos, VA DEQ

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Joan Smedinghoff, ACB-CBP

Kathy Stecker, MDE

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# Welcome

# Taking stock: What’s already working well?

# Pennsylvania:

# Some communications products have been created by Pennsylvania’s Communications and Engagement Workgroup. They have been working with Water Words that Work, a consulting group that has done various projects around the watershed. This summer, they began to generate the first of many communications to come, starting with basic introductory letters (these are included in the email Deb sent out).

# In the spring, they held an invited stakeholder meeting in Harrisburg with over 200 people to see what county level WIP planning in PA will look like. Different needs were identified here, including the need for basic introductory letters from DEP/Dept. of Ag/DCNR department heads. Volunteers in PA’s communications workgroup worked with Water Words that Work to draft the letter from state agencies to county leaders. They also created another version for county leaders to use to reach out to stakeholders and ask them to be part of PA’s WIP engagement team. The letter explains the importance of the team and why the person is being asked to get involved.

# Q: Has this work with the consultant been broadened beyond Pennsylvania? Deb: I haven’t heard if this will be shared watershed wide.

# The letters have already gone out to the four counties chosen as the pilots for the Community Clean Water Toolbox. They also sent those counties a PowerPoint that helps introduce the WIP planning efforts.

# These letters and materials could serve as models to be adapted for other jurisdictions. PA’s messaging is very locally focused and upstream focused, which may differ from state to state, but can serve as a template.

# PA also created an FAQ about WIPs, including why they’re important, what they can do for communities, deadlines, etc.

# PA has all or part of 43 counties in Chesapeake Bay watershed. So far, they have only used the products with the four pilot counties.

* + Maryland:
    - Maryland has two letters that can be shared as well. Both letters are from MD’s Bay Cabinet to elected officials, one in 2016 and one in 2018. The purpose was to ask the elected officials for support.

# Delaware:

# Delaware used tri-fold mailers developed by LGAC on local government’s role in the Chesapeake Bay Cleanup Effort. Phil is unsure if these have been sent out yet. Jim Sullivan is responsible for most of the local government engagement efforts and may plan to incorporate something more personal in the future. He has more one-on-one relationships with the local governments.

# Deb: it’s important for either mailers or emails to be personalized and addressed to the person, not sent in a blast. Personalization is one of the best ways to try to make sure the recipients actually read and engage with it.

# West Virginia:

# They haven’t used this kind of intro letter used in WV. They have focused on building slow, steady relationships over the past seven years. They made sure to avoid swamping people or overcomplicating communications—just provide the amount of information that people need and can handle. Many of the people working in the local governments are volunteers and don’t have time to engage full-time with this issue. Messaging and WIP components focused on local benefits—reducing flash flooding, improving sanitary conditions, protecting source water, etc. They listen to challenges and offer to help where possible through WIP strategies. Matt works with a group of 13 local governments, so most of the work is done one-on-one, face-to-face conversations. They work by starting (and finishing!) projects that the localities are interested in to build trust over time. There is less need to educate localities on what WIPs are, since there has been consistent work over time.

# What has been most or least effective?

# Maryland has found that talking to individual county public works staff, county environmental health directors and SWCDs has been most successful in getting folks engaged.

# PA has made an inventory of outreach opportunities that’s been working really well. They have thought about where they need to be at different points in the WIP timeline and what communications might be needed to talk to different audiences at those points. They also keep track of meetings that will be happening: legislative breakfasts, borough meetings, etc. Does anyone else do this?

# Irina was very impressed by the opportunities matrix. Is there an explanation for the matrix from Water Words that Work? Deb will check to see if they have any written guidelines that could be shared.

# Virginia has been dealing with fatigue from local officials who feel like they’ve already done as much as they can. VA did a workshop with planning districts, SWCDs and local governments around the Richmond area where they got a list of their specific challenges and barriers and what they would need to overcome those challenges. One challenge was different agencies coordinating similar things and a lack of local authority. They are currently making a list of these challenges to bring to the general assembly. They’ve had just had one workshop so far.

# Q: How did they get them to the workshop? A: Management called people at the localities and local elected officials to encourage them to come. They found it helped to acknowledge how much of a challenge it is for localities to get on board.

**Next meeting:** Thursday, November 1, 2018 from 1:00-2:00 pm