

Next Generation Stewards Quarterly Progress Meeting Summary

May 14, 2020

Environmental Literacy Planning

<https://www.chesapeakeprogress.com/~engaged-communities/environmental-literacy-planning>

Outcome: Each participating Bay jurisdiction should develop a comprehensive and systematic approach to environmental literacy for all students in the region that includes policies, practices and voluntary metrics that support the environmental literacy Goals and Outcomes of this Agreement.

What Worked?	What didn't work?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Analysis of ELIT Survey DataState Working GroupsLeadership Summit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Participation in ELIT SurveyEnvironmental Literacy Plans

What's on the horizon

- Slow but steady progress is being made
- COVID-19 has the potential to severely impact the effort
- Change in school operations due to COVID-19
- Uncertain budgets – will need to be supported by environmental community during this time
- GIT funding project to create a “network of networks”
- New state learning standards
- ELIT school year 2020-2021 data collection
- Better understand the nature of support from the various jurisdiction agencies



We plan to:

- Continue leadership summits
- Provide comments on relative state standards
- Assess impact of COVID-19 on 2020-2021 school year operations
- Encourage state departments of education and natural resources to connect regularly

Help needed

- Better connect regional and state environmental literacy efforts
 - Update a preliminary network analysis of state environmental education networks
 - Single point of contact from each jurisdiction at the leadership level (ex. VA's MB member)
- Identify funding to support Meaningful Watershed Education Experiences (MWEEs)
 - Use the list of funding from the previous SRS cycle to identify where to focus on developing a stronger funding strategy
- Continue to improve MWEE data collection
 - Increase participation in 2021 data collection; encourage development of communication strategy to increase survey participation in areas where data is missing



Student

<https://www.chesapeakeprogress.com/engaged-communities/student>

Student Outcome: Continually increase students' age-appropriate understanding of the watershed through participation in teacher-supported, meaningful watershed educational experiences and rigorous, inquiry-based instruction, with a target of at least one meaningful watershed educational experience in elementary, middle and high school.

What Worked?	What didn't work?
• 2018 MB request to convene leaders	• Professional Development Distribution
• Professional Development	• Interdisciplinary Connections
• Credits to Incentivize Trainings	• Lack of Administrator Buy-In
• Development of New Training Resources	• Barriers to Public Lands
• Outdoor learning network initiative	

What is a MWEE? (Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience)

- Students participate in robust unit study designed to increase understanding and stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and its local watersheds
- Four essential elements:
 - Issue definition, outdoor field investigations, action projects, synthesis & conclusions

On the horizon

- Need to reach more diverse and underserved districts
- Outcome is heavily influenced by local policies
- State and federal education funding
 - Growing specific sources
 - Identifying environmental literacy as an “allowable use” for existing funding (Education and Environmental)
 - Organizing expertise and funding to engage under-resourced districts
- COVID-19
 - MWEEs can't be fully delivered via distance learning
 - Field trip policies when school returns
 - MWEEs can be conducted on the school yard (instead of a field trip)

We plan to:

- Build connections between education and natural resource leaders
- Continue to promote MWEEs as a best practice regionally and nationally
- Identify new funding sources for underserved districts
- Encourage MWEE professional development in pre-service and in-service teacher trainings
- Adapt to post-pandemic school system policies

How you can help:

- Promote School Administrator buy in at the school district and school building level by making MWEEs a state education priority
- Increase in-service and pre-service teacher professional development in MWEE implementation by increasing funding opportunities and engaging key higher education partners
- Build strategic statewide efforts to reduce barriers to schools using public lands for investigations and action projects by convening education and natural resource leaders



Sustainable Schools

<https://www.chesapeakeprogress.com/engaged-communities/sustainable-schools>

Schools Outcome: Continually increase the number of schools in the region that reduce the impact of their buildings and grounds on their local watershed, environment and human health through best practices, including student-led protection and restoration

What Worked?	What didn't work?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2018 GIT Funding, Stroud Research Center• Individual states are anticipating increased Sustainable Schools growth (PA, MD) based on new Governors' priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• District-level involvement is limited• Individuals pursue restoration projects• Limited resources inhibit school districts from developing info on sustainable schools

Progress:

- In 2017, 14 percent of public and charter schools in the Chesapeake Bay watershed—610 schools in all—were certified sustainable. This marks a 22 percent increase from the number of sustainable schools in the watershed in 2015. Updated data is forthcoming.

We plan to:

- Promote green cleaning practices in the face of COVID-19. Green cleaning practices are an effective method to combat the spread of COVID-19 within the school.
- Connect MWEEs to sustainable schools to help raise awareness of sustainable schools
- Increase recognition for Sustainable Schools certification (ex. MD Annual Youth Summit)

Help needed:

- Provide an updated list of appropriate contacts for Sustainable Schools (federal, jurisdictions, and partnership level)
 - US EPA Region 3 has a new schools coordinator, and it would be helpful to have an updated list
- Initiate conversations with State Secretaries and Governors to increase recognition and visibility of sustainable school programs

Common Themes for Next Generation Stewards SRS Cohort

- How to continue the momentum from the 2019 Environmental Literacy Summit?
- How to improve the connection between MB members and their education counterparts?

