



## Communications Workgroup Monthly Conference Call Minutes

March 2, 2017

### Participants

Catherine Krikstan, UMCES (Chair)  
Krista Parra, DoD (Vice Chair)  
Stephanie Smith, ACB (Coordinator)  
Joan Smedinghoff, CRC (Staff)  
Greg Barranco, EPA  
Jessica Blackburn, ACB  
Gregg Bortz, MDNR  
Kim Couranz, NOAA  
Jody Couser, Ches. Conservancy  
Adrienne Diaczok, MDE  
Diane Davis, DOEE  
Caroline Donovan, UMCES

Rachel Felver, ACB  
Amy Handen, NPS  
Paige Hobough, CRC  
Caitlyn Johnstone, ACB  
Julie Mawhorter, USFS  
Megan McSwain, NPS  
Leila Mitchell, NYS DEC  
Kristin Reilly, CCWC  
Kristin Saunders, UMCES  
Jennifer Starr, ACB  
Tom Wenz, EPA  
Tom Zolper, CBF

### I. Communicating the Midpoint Assessment and Phase III WIPs ([presentation](#))

- We need to communicate:
  - Decisions by the Principals' Staff Committee: how to account for growth, climate change, planning targets and the impacts of the Conowingo Dam; decisions will be made by late October
  - Midpoint Assessment: Are states and localities meeting targets for Bay restoration? If not, what needs to be done?
  - Phase III WIPs: local governments in particular will need to know about the process
- Jurisdiction partners, please keep involved with the [Local Government Engagement Initiative](#) (LGEI), and coordinate with partners working on the Phase III WIP planning process
- Updates from the Principals' Staff Committee:
  - Suggested audiences: regulated and source-sector audiences (e.g., homebuilders)
  - More information would be helpful around planning targets and around the economic benefits of the work we do, co-benefits of improving water quality
  - Suggested documents include:
    - What is expected in the Phase III WIPs? Document that is more readable than EPA expectation document
    - Something that explains the differences between the new and old model
    - A narrative of how we got here as opposed to just where we are now
  - Treat communications to all audiences, including local governments, as a whole as opposed to separate efforts
- What can the Comm Office do to help communicate to these audiences? What can the Communications Workgroup collaborate on to reach these audiences?
  - NOAA has been looking at their communications strategies: have some ready-to-go statistics, numbers, facts about the benefits of what they do
    - E.g., tie in buoy system to safe operations in the Port of Baltimore → assist in safe delivery of x# tons of cargo/year
    - Highlight what they're doing is economically and ecologically beneficial
    - [NOAA Fisheries Economics of the United States report](#) (2014), Mid-Atlantic section, done by state
  - Nonprofits

- Testimony from governors about the value of the partnership, how they value the partnership, calling out work of the Bay Program
- Things that are easily sharable
  - Bullet points
  - Listicle of successes so far
  - Recap over the years
  - Things that went well
- Anything that is easy to change/adapt for members and tailor to be state-specific

**Action:** The workgroup agreed to act as a sounding board and provide edits for Midpoint Assessment communication materials.

- A theme that came out of the Strategy Review System meeting in February was *test your message with your audience*. We should build in time to test our materials, messages with a select group. CAC and CBC has volunteered to act as a sounding board.
- Our communications plan should be flexible enough to prevent misinformation from taking hold. We could hold more frequent calls, emails, etc.
- What other audiences should we engage with?
  - Schools and teachers
  - Businesses for the Bay to link with businesses, chambers of commerce to spread message of economic benefits; board members who are part of business sector, stormwater
  - Tourism industry

**Action:** Choose Clean Water offered to help connect with members from identified target audiences.

**Action:** The Chesapeake Bay Foundation offered to help put together a list of business contacts (e.g., in the stormwater industry).

- [Timeline](#)
  - Late August/early September: Watershed model released
  - Late October: PSC decisions on accounting for growth, Conowingo, etc.
  - August 2018: draft planning targets posted
  - December 2018: final planning targets

## II. 2016 Analytics ([presentation](#))

- More successful stories include: visual storytelling, good news and restoration successes, personal connections and approachable science
- Less successful stories include policy and complex (or obscure) reports

## III. Messaging Forecast

- **D.C.**
  - April 21 or 23: Anacostia Festival Day: cleanup, build sculpture out of trash, completely recyclable picnic
  - Trash cleanups every six to eight weeks
  - Restoration projects on Anacostia streambanks: planting grasses
  - Oil cleanups in sediment
  - Replacing asphalt at schools
- **MDE**
  - PSAs: request came out of last year's [Executive Council meeting](#)
  - Language is broad; it says PSAs but can include social media and other types of outreach

- MDE will work with DNR and Ag on developing a PSA
- **MDNR:** Will work with MDE on PSA
- **NY DEC:** Annual Water Week: May 7-13, social media campaign (theme: nonpoint source pollution)
- **NOAA**
  - Working on annual update on oyster restoration implementation in Maryland
    - Creating a companion piece for Virginia
    - Hoping for release in early Spring
  - March 11-12: opening of Harriet Tubman visitor center
  - April (before Earth Day): NOAA video about the Choptank Complex habitat focus area
- **DoD**
  - March: winter journal, focus on public access within DoD installations
  - April-June issue: focus on stewardship, Earth Day, Clean the Bay Day, Project Clean Stream
  - April: annual progress report, efforts of DoD installations over past year
- **NPS:** June 3 is National Trails Day
- Stories leading up to conferences: post about an issue or subject, and then finish post by promoting the conference
  - March 16-18: [Atlantic Estuary Research Society](#)
  - April 4: [Center for Watershed Protection Stormwater Conference](#)
  - April 4-6: [Environment Virginia Symposium](#)
  - June 8: [Maryland Land Conservation Conference](#)
- **CBF:** Report and educational video on oysters, finishing in the next few months
- **Chesapeake Conservancy:** Malloes Bay Potomac River is under consideration to be a National Marine Sanctuary; NOAA accepting public comment
- **UMCES**
  - [New website](#) launched
  - Chesapeake Bay report card will come out soon
  - **Chesapeake Monitoring Cooperative:** quarterly newsletter
    - Caroline would like feedback ([cdonovan@ca.umces.edu](mailto:cdonovan@ca.umces.edu))
    - Newsletter: general for science monitoring, more about specific trainings coming up
- **Stewardship GIT:** Stewardship indicator will be finished this summer

#### IV. **Chesapeake Tree Canopy and Riparian Forest Buffer websites**

- [Chesapeake Tree Canopy Network](#)
  - Hub to build support, share information
  - Map listing localities that have done tree canopy assessments
  - Chesapeake Network [group](#)
  - “Expand Your Canopy”: best practices, technical assistance partners, funding sources, outreach, tree steward programs
  - Always looking for new story ideas and resources to share
- [Chesapeake Riparian Forest Buffer Network](#)
  - Targeted to people who are already engaged with forest buffer work
  - Toolkit for practitioners to do local outreach and program implementation
  - Chesapeake Network [group](#)
- Need help getting people aware of these sites

- [Blog post and social media kit](#) on our Chesapeake Network page
- Questions, comments, suggestions for ways to promote? Get in touch with Julie at [jmawhorter@fs.fed.us](mailto:jmawhorter@fs.fed.us)

#### V. Round robin

- **CBP**
  - The Bay Program released the [Diversity Indicator](#), please share
  - The Executive Council meeting will be June 8 in Annapolis, more details to come
  - The Communications Office is hiring a [multimedia intern](#) for the summer, please share
  - Will Parson's [Kids in Kayaks](#) video won Maryland Park and Recreation's Video of the Year award.
- **NPS**
  - Roving Ranger will be on site at our next meeting!
  - Press release, photo shoot at Sandy Point Park
  - Looking for locations for it to park
- March 8: Water Words that Work Training (Part 3)
- **Chesapeake Monitoring Cooperative** prioritization report is being finalized, contact Lea Rubin ([lrubin@iwla.org](mailto:lrubin@iwla.org)) with questions

**Next call:** April 6