



Diversity Workgroup Meeting Minutes

June 25, 2021 – WebEx Meeting

Meeting Objectives

- Hear some updates on ongoing workgroup efforts and projects.
- During a round robin, share updates and announcements that are happening within your own jurisdiction or organization.
- Revisit how the CBP tracks DEIJ and explore the possibility of introducing other metrics.
- Discuss ideas for a new GIT-Funding project aimed at addressing gaps, barriers, or needs in our ongoing work.

Meeting Attendees (* indicates Steering Committee members):

Name	Organization	Name	Organization
Kevin Newman	Workgroup Chair, District Department of Energy & Environment	Caitlyn Johnstone*	Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
Wendy O' Sullivan	Workgroup Vice-Chair, NPS	Britt Slattery	NPS
Tuana Phillips	Coordinator, EPA	John Brakeall	PA DEP
Bo Williams	EPA	Gabrielle Roffe*	Chesapeake Conservancy, NPS
Briana Yancy	Diversity Staffer, CRC	Erin Sullivan*	EPA
Bre'Anna Brooks	Chesapeake Bay Trust	Jason Swartz	PA DCNR
Trystan Sill*	Maryland DNR	Max Fairweather	Chesapeake College
Melissa Fagan	CRC	Noelle Chao	Anne Arundel Watershed Stewards Academy
Emily Hendrickson	PA DCNR	Ola-Imani Davis*	Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
Kristin Saunders	UMCES	BeKura Shabazz*	First Alliance Consulting
Laura Cattell Noll	Local Leadership Coordinator, ACB	Shannon Sprague	NOAA
Brittany Hall	NPS Chesapeake	Cirse Gonzalez	Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve VA



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Ross Cooper	Alexandria Renew Enterprises	Lauren Taneyhill	NOAA
Edgar Freeman	MD DNR	Julie Lawson	Mayor's Office of the Clean City (DC)
Katie Darr	Lake Champlain Basin Program	Meryem Karad	VA Office of the Governor
Abril Hunter	CRC	Kalaia Tripeaux	U.S Forest Service
Juel Gibbons	Sercap inc	Crystal Zhao	CRC
Clare Sevcik*	DNREC	Francesca King	Anne Arundel Watershed Stewards Academy
Amanda Knobloch	Morgan State University PEARL	Allison Acevedo	PA DEP
James Brunswick	Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control Community Involvement Advisory Committee	Devin Ray	US Fish and Wildlife Service
Kesha Braunskill	Delaware Forest Service		

Welcome and Introductions

Kevin Newman (DOEE) and Wendy O'Sullivan (NPS)

All participants put their name and organization into the chat to introduce themselves.

Kevin Newman introduced himself as the new chair for the DWG and gave a brief background. Kevin has been a member of the workgroup and plays a pivotal role in the DEIJ Action Team. He is a DOEE Environmental Protection Specialist and has been working directly with DC's underserved/underrepresented populations for years. He recently graduated from the Diversity and Inclusion Certification Program at Cornell University. Kevin has immense dedication and passion for this work, and we are excited for him to bring that to our workgroup.

Wendy introduced herself and emphasized the importance of hearing from all of us on these important topics. Thanks everyone for being a part of the meeting today.



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Tuana introduced our C-StREAM interns Abril Hunter and Crystal Zhao

Abril is a rising Junior at Florida State University. Majoring in environmental science and policy with minors in urban and regional planning as well as social welfare. Working with Ecolatinos to help create a workforce development program by analyzing other programs across the country.

Crystal is a rising Senior at John Hopkins University. Majoring in Environmental Science and Economics. She is working on a Story map that highlights the importance of community partnerships.

Icebreaker: Happy Pride Month! What do the colors Yellow and Green in the LGBTQ flag represent ?

[Answer:](#) Sunshine and Nature. For more information on pride flags see [How Did The Rainbow Flag Become A Symbol of LGBT Pride](#)

Updates on Ongoing Projects and Efforts

Briana led the update on DEIJ efforts in the implementation of the Chesapeake Watershed Agreement
[Link to DEIJ in the Implementation of CBWA](#)

Briana also highlighted the Targeted Outreach for Green Infrastructure (TOGI) Project, a GIT funded project from the Habitat GIT. Tuana, Wendy and Briana have taken leadership roles in helping move this project forward.

TOGI Description: The goal of the project *Targeted Outreach for Green Infrastructure in Vulnerable Areas* (TOGI) is to identify underserved communities in Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania that are both facing a threat from climate change and have habitat of conservation or restoration value. We will then work with local leaders in those communities to identify and design green infrastructure projects that will make the biggest impact, addressing the specific challenges they face and working to improve habitat value and climate resiliency. Our contractor will hold local listening sessions and workshops with each community to ensure we are tailoring our assistance to their individual needs and capturing what they are hoping to gain from working with us. While the scope of TOGI does not extend to the implementation of the green infrastructure, we plan to assist these communities up until they are “shovel ready” and help them identify and apply for funding sources for the implementation.

Meryem: It is clear that diversity workgroup efforts are well aligned with the action team’s work as well Kristin (in the chat): I hope you guys will include portions of this report into the July program update that goes to the Management Board so they can see the breadth of DEIJ work happening.

Bo led the update on the work of the DEIJ Action Team
Link to the [DEIJ Action Team Update Presentation](#)

Action Team at the Bay program works on short term goals and then they sunset. Workgroups are long-term. The DEIJ Action Team was created by the Principals’ Staff Committee and tasked with developing an implementation plan for the CBP DEIJ Strategy.



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The Action Team developed a draft implementation strategy back in February. During March-May, the Action Team sought feedback from partnership groups (e.g., GITs and workgroups) and members on the draft implementation plan and whether it is practicable, where there are gaps, etc. They received a ton of feedback. Bo thanked the Diversity Workgroup who contributed the most feedback. Since then, the feedback has been incorporated into the plan and there is now a second draft which will be reviewed by the DEIJ Action Team before it is shared to the public via a public comment and outreach period.

The DEIJ Action Team has also been working on a tracking/reporting framework. This will make sure actions are being implemented, there is a structure in place to understand what actions are being done, etc. The Action Team is establishing options for that and would love Diversity Workgroup feedback on the options. Seeking input on: who should be the tracking and implementation lead? The Action Team heard from many that the Diversity Workgroup should take a lead. Also, feedback is needed on the frequency of reporting, process for updating and prioritizing, and performance measures and metrics.

Bo has been working with Kevin, Wendy, Tuana and Briana on a [framework](#) and [performance metrics](#) documents. This was viewed by many as an essential part of the plan and something that hadn't been properly addressed. Bo briefly went through the framework outline and spreadsheet of performance measures of tracking, which can also be found on our [website](#). These documents will be shared with the workgroup over email within the week after this meeting and members will be asked to review and provide comments.

BeKura: There are so many things (groups); Is that sustainable? Coming from this community that everybody loves to target, it can be overwhelming. What are we doing to streamlining CBP processes so people can be included in all the related things?

Gaby: This project will help in this process. The info we gather can be value added for the communities, not just the Bay Program. There is a fine line there, many groups and requests, but the goal is that it will be really intentional about the asks so we don't go to the community empty-handed but have resources ready and available to share.

Wendy: one thing we need to figure out is the CBP is a huge coalition of agencies and various jurisdictions. So the diversity workgroup has a role to step in but the other piece we need to keep in mind is that the other groups within this coalition all have their own efforts internal within their own organizations. We all need to take BeKura's comments to heart to not duplicate efforts and be more streamlined.

Gabrielle led the update on the Strengthening and Building Partnerships project

Link to the [Scope 11](#)

Gaby works for the Chesapeake Conservancy and works in partnership with NPS Chesapeake Gateways Her organizations have long standing partnerships with underrepresented communities.

This project started in April

4 listening sessions (only 8-12 people per group)

First there will be internal focus groups to do some asset mapping to understand internal resources before talking to communities. Goal is to truly understand what the needs of the Bay program are, who the underrepresented communities are, why are we trying to engage, what are our assets and resources to provide so these relationships are mutually beneficial.



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Then, there will be community focus groups; one that is youth focused and then another composed of groups not represented in the CBP thus far.

Finally, the project will lead to a one-day conference in the fall that amplifies community voices and creates dialogue between CBP and communities. In addition, tools and resources will be developed for community participants to help the Bay Program form more long lasting relationships.

Caitlyn: Could you talk through how you ID'ed participants for focus groups?

- Planning team consists of members from the diversity workgroup steering committee. 4 different focus group in total; internal ones consist of CBP leadership and then staffers/coordinators as they have more day to day connections
- Community focus groups will include youth voices 18-25 across the watershed; then for the other focus group representation of groups that we haven't reached in the watershed, specifically BIPOC. We welcome input to add to those lists.

Kristin: (in the chat) Is it safe to say that this project will help inform the PSC and Diversity Action Team on how to proceed with regard to a version of a community advisory board?

- Yes the plan of the action team now is to use this project to help inform recommendations on the community advisory board concept.

Julie (in the chat): Will the community members in the focus groups be compensated?

- Yes they will be compensated. Stipends and honorariums.

Meryem: is there a list that helps identify stakeholders that can be shared?

- That list can be found [here](#)

Abril led the update on her summer internship project in partnership with ecoLatinos

A copy of her presentation can be found on our [website](#)

Abril is looking at the importance of latino inclusion in green careers especially in relation to workforce development programs. She is working with Ruby Stemmler from Ecolatinos.

Trystan (in the chat): happy to provide Work2Live Well resources. Also I have a spreadsheet of workforce development programs in MD

Britt (in the chat): Be sure to connect with the [Chesapeake Network's youth and young professionals jobs portal](#). It's a good place for connecting these programs with each other and with youth.

Kevin: I know that this project you are working on is on developing a green infrastructure training program with ecoLatinos, but I believe this resource will be extremely valuable in the Chesapeake Bay region and we can share with all of the jurisdictions about the different job training programs.

Round Robin Updates and Sharing

Kevin introduced the round robin and explained how we can use such opportunities at this and future meetings to create a platform for the jurisdictions and workgroup partners to share about the work that they are doing.

Kevin: We want the jurisdictions to report so we know what's going on but this is also going to help CBP be more on the ground. If you have a project going on we hope other members from the diversity



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workgroup can come out and support each other's activities. Or maybe we can even consider hosting 1 or 2 events a year where we as a workgroup do a project together. It is important for the Bay Program to change with the times and become more of an engagement organization.

Clare Sevcik: DNREC started an environmental justice team to integrate DEIJ ideals into the rest of DNREC. In the process of creating a Delaware-specific EJScreen tool. If anyone wants to poke around the [WRR](#), here's the link. You can find multiple States, including DE.

Edgar Freeman: MD DNR working on programming. Despite challenges from pandemic, they have done several environmental justice programs and training. Also have been working with MD HBCU to start up internships.

Trystan Sill: Maryland Climate Change Commission's climate justice workgroup will hold Climate justice/EJ training for MCCC members in late July.

Brittany Hall: Provided a presentation on behalf of NPS chesapeake youth initiative. Her slides can be found on our [website](#)

BeKura Shabazz: working on a DEIJ model that helps environmental orgs mitigate racial tension with non profit organizations. Very successful prototype mediation/restorative justice tool

John Brakeall: PA DEP has formed an internal DEI committee. They also are looking at equity within grant making. John also has been working with the TOGI project in Williamsport.

Julie Lawson: Did an event in partnership with Bilingual immersion charter school and Rock Creek Park NPS on community awareness project about the importance not littering [See some of the signs the kids made](#)

Melissa Fagan: CRC is working on a database that tracks recurring efforts to see where they need to spend more time building relationships to increase diversity in the candidate pool.

Shannon Sprague: June 15th held an environmental literacy summit. See agenda [here](#). Please see their current project to put together [equity and environmental literacy layer](#) for EJ Dash

Francesca King: Watershed Stewards Academy received funding for two DEIJ consultants. One is specific to a restoration program, Replant Anne Arundel (<http://aawsa.org/replant-2>). Replant is a program designed to plant trees in response to tree canopy loss in Anne Arundel County. We are excited to have just contracted with Abel Olivo and his organization, Defensores de la Cuenca who will assess the program and design and implement a strategy of approach to engage landscape professionals and the Latino community. We are also in the process of selecting a DEIJ consultant to assess our organization as a whole and develop strategies and best practices to reach our goals of equitably engaging with and representing the residents of the county. Additionally, for those who don't know we were founded through a partnership with Anne Arundel County Public Schools. I wanted to let you know there is currently a position open with Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center (in the Environmental Literacy office, posted



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here: <https://aacps.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=13884>), it closes June 30th. There will be other positions opening in the next couple of months.

Finally, the next class of our certification course (for those who live, work, worship, or learn in AA County) starts in the fall. Attend an information session this summer to learn more

(<http://aawsa.org/become-a-wsteward>)

Lora Harris (UMCES): My updates are primarily that I'd like to share our results from the Estuaries and Coasts paper where we looked at national patterns of coastal and shoreline demographics versus inland counties showing how important ethnic and racial minority communities are in these locations. We also looked at national patterns of the Social Vulnerability Indicator (SoVI) that showed the importance of meeting community needs along the coasts. I know a lot of this may seem like "yep, we know that!", but I was surprised that this wasn't documented in the literature. I also hope that the second paper on equitable exchange might be of interest - I was working on this when I provided feedback on the RFP for the community engagement funding opportunity from this group and you can probably see how that infused my comments! I continue to work on this at the national scale, we are launching a conversation with the AGU's Thriving Earth Exchange next week. Both of Lora's papers can be found on our [website](#). I also wanted to make sure the group knew about a [report](#) authored by Cirse Gonzalez, who is the Coastal Training Program Coordinator for the Virginia CB NERR. The only other report out from me is that if anyone is ever looking to recruit talented early career scientists into the workforce or graduate school, please reach out to her as we have a great talent pool through our [SEAS Islands Alliance](#).

Ola-Imani Davis: Quick update on behalf of the Local Leadership Workgroup and Local Government Advisory Committee: The team rolled out "A Local Government Guide to the Chesapeake Bay" in early May which is a 7-module 101 series for local elected officials ranging from Watershed 101, Foundations of Clean Water, Benefits of Trees, etc. with each having a DEIJ component. Each unbranded module is able to be shared and freely used as a PDF 1-pager or an editable PPT presentation! For access please visit the [workgroup page](#)!

Kevin: DOEE has an equity and engagement specialist who joined recently. Implement DC equity and me training series. Equity committee is also developing tool kits, metrics and training. [FY21 DOEE Equity Committee Work Plan](#) & [May 2021 Meeting Minutes](#) – includes most recent updates to the work plan.

Tuana: The CBP Office budget includes funding for most effective basins which allow for "state-based implementation in the most effective basins." In previous years, EPA identified those basins based on a finding that reducing excess nitrogen from agricultural sources would have the most impact on key areas of the Bay at the least cost. For Fiscal Year 2021, the Most Effective Basin (MEB) funding includes an increase of \$1.25 million over the FY 2020 appropriation of \$6 million. EPA is focusing this additional funding allocation on those areas that have been identified as being most effective for improving water quality while targeting underrepresented communities.

In addition, EPA Region 3 (Mid-Atlantic Region) is currently planning for increased EJ activity in the region. Steps include: (1) establishing a shared, practical understanding of what is EJ in order to move towards EJ integration; (2) gathering and documenting baselines – determining the universe of programs to be reviewed, identifying metrics that can be used to assess the extent of EJ integration as well as those



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needed to support continuous improvement; (3) gathering and documenting regional best practices that should be sustained and/or extended to advance EJ; (4) identifying ideas for near-term opportunities for improvement – changes we can make within our sphere of control to advance EJ; (5) developing a road map for regional action based on these steps.

Meaningful Metrics for DEI/J

Note: Our workgroup's primary method for tracking progress is through the diversity profile indicator, which measures the percentage of people of color participating in the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership. For more information, see the [Chesapeake Progress](#) website.

The purpose of this conversation is to ask is this metric enough or are there other things we should track to show progress and success?

Crystal presented on metrics used in other programs that track engagement with diverse communities. CBP is ahead of the curve on tracking engagement but we can and should improve. Her presentation can be found on our [website](#)

We used mentimeter to ask two question (below) and the **results can be found [here](#)**

- How Does Your Jurisdiction or Organization Measure DEI/J Success?
- What New Indicators Could We Use To Better Track Success In Our Workgroup Efforts?

Britt: among other workgroups in GIT 5 there are existing means to track metrics that we should look at. Back to BeKura's point, to not overwhelm it is really important that we look at ways to use existing frameworks and not increase the work we do. Examples: environmental literacy school district survey, current public access GIT funded project of focus groups on barriers to public access to waterways and Chesapeake Bay report card indicator of stewardship behaviors.

Shannon Sprague: Would be interesting to see if this RFP from Puget Sound partnership results in anyone proposing to monitor/track DEI/J under their "Vibrant Quality of Life" Goal. <https://pspwa.app.box.com/s/cpppaacw9u5kcntaap8u4o0so59d6gsl>. See pg. 19 of this report for what they currently have information on...one is participation in cultural practices, another is employment in natural resource industries (not sure what info is in there), and there is one for sense of place (which has strong ties to community).

Julie: This conversation came up during the DEI/J action team meetings where we need to better define the success of the action plan and strategy. It needs to go beyond employment and participation within the partnership. So thinking about what success of the strategy looks like and working backgrounds could help with that.

Identifying Gaps and Barriers in our Work to Inform a GIT-Funding Project

Note: Every year we have the opportunity to submit a GIT-Funding project that will advance the work of our workgroup. Since 2014, the Environmental Protection Agency Chesapeake Bay Program Office



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(CBPO) has made yearly funding available for key projects intended to accelerate accomplishment of outcomes in the *2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*. The goal of these funds is to identify and remove key barriers that are hindering accomplishment of outcomes. The EPA Chesapeake Bay Program has a cooperative agreement with the Chesapeake Bay Trust who provides assistance and oversees the RFP and award process. For more information, see the [Chesapeake Bay Trust website](#).

We used Mentimeter to ask: Based On Our Conversations Today And Ongoing Efforts What Could Our Workgroup Use The Most Help With? **The results can be found [here](#)**

Britt: Seems like a lot of us do not know how to match effective approaches for community engagement with means to measure them. We need training and help designing metrics.

Brittany: thinking about Green 2.0 and how internal workforce development has been prioritized but next steps should also mean including recruitment, readiness and retention in our engagement and outreach. I think that if we frame our next GIT proposal with meeting that internal side with also the needs assessment and are now starting the next steps of engaging outwardly that that creates a more promising GIT proposal. There are folks outside of the diversity workgroup that still need to do that internal work before we push outwardly.

Kristin (in the chat): my thoughts are to look at metrics that look for success in: grants going to organizations and communities located in EJ communities, restoration and conservation projects installed in DEIJ communities, number of new organizations or diverse representatives who join our partnership at some level (not just leadership). Another thought to share: when we create metrics, there is always a corresponding reporting requirement or survey effort that can take additional time and resources, so if there are metrics we can land on that may be available through existing reporting happening, or enhancing that reporting, it may make the effort easier. For example, if we want to track restoration or conservation projects happening in DEIJ communities, those may be an added feature to GIS reporting that is already collected and would just require analysis.

Lauren (in the chat): I missed the mentis... for 1 example of what we're tracking - NOAA has started including new wording in funding opportunities that gives preference to diverse-led and diverse-community-serving applicants, so now we are tracking how much funding goes toward DEIJ for fisheries research grants and BWET grants. And personal opinion here, but I agree with those who noted metrics about funding and grants seems like a top priority for tracking. Money sure is ~meaningful~

Cirse (in the chat): CBNERR-VA is positioned to provide resources to meet training gaps; please reach out to connect on programming! - Cirse Gonzalez, cagonzalez@vims.edu

Closing Remarks and a Path Forward

Kevin Newman (DOEE) and Wendy O'Sullivan (NPS)

Thank you everyone for attending and taking part in these conversations.

Action: If you have any additional ideas for metrics or GIT funding projects please email those to Briana Yancy (yancy.briana@epa.gov) by **July 16**



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Action: if you have time please review and provide feedback to Bo Williams on the [Implementation Plan Performance excel sheet](#) and the [framework document](#) by **July 15**. These documents were sent out with the meeting minutes and posted on our website.

Acronym Guide

CBP = Chesapeake Bay Program

CBPO = Chesapeake Bay Program Office

CRC = Chesapeake Research Consortium

DEIJ = Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice

DOEE = Department of Energy & Environment

DWG = Diversity Workgroup

EPA = Environmental Protection Agency

GIT - Goal Implementation Team

NPS = National Park Service

PSC = Principals' Staff Committee