

*LGAC Members Present:* James Barnhart, Markus Batchelor, Richard Baugh, Patty Bubar, Daniel Chao, Jake Day, Mark Dobbins, Amy Dubois, Sheila Finlayson, Jasmine Gore, Penny Gross, Josh Hastings, Michael Helfrich, Donna Iannone, Leo Lutz, Andria McClellan, Brianne Nadeau, Don Phillips, Kelly Porter, Robin Rich-Coates, Lisa Schaefer, John Thomas, James Wheeler, Emeritus Member Phil Briddell, Emeritus Member Ann Simonetti, Emeritus Member Bruce Williams, and LGAC Staff: Ola-Imani Davis and Jennifer Starr

*Speaker/Guests Present:* Marisa Baldine (CRC), Carolyn Berndt (NLC), Carin Bisland (EPA CBPO), Jessica Blackburn (Alliance), Patti Bohnsack (Alliance), Heidi Bonnafon (Metro-Washington COG), Laura Cattell-Noll (Alliance), Tony Clark (US Army Corps of Engineers), Meg Cole (CRC), Megan Diehl (WV Region 9), Rachel Felver (CBP), Kate Fritz (Alliance), Amy Handen (EPA), John Maleri (DC DOEE), Julie Mawhorter (US Forest Service), Adam Pugh (NACo), Julie Reichert-Nguyen (NOAA), Jessica Rodriguez (DoD), Martha Shimpkin (EPA CBPO), Kathy Stecker (MDE), Phil Stafford (MD DNR), Jim Sullivan (DE DNREC), Justin Williams (VA DEQ), Tree Zuzzio (PA DCED)

#### **Thursday, March 17, 2022**

##### **Call to Order: Greetings and Introductions**

Chair, Jasmine Gore called the meeting to order at 11:05am. She welcomed all attendees to the first in person LGAC Quarterly Meeting since December 2019.

##### **Beyond Environmental Benefits Case Study Database & Hooked on Clean Water and Value of Outdoor Recreation Fact Sheets**

*Rachel Felver, Communications Director, Chesapeake Bay Program*

Rachel walked LGAC and attendees through the *Beyond Environmental Benefits Case Study Database* and its associated infographics. Located within the Chesapeake Bay Data Dashboard, the database provides detailed case study examples of solved best management practices (BMPs) around the Chesapeake Bay watershed states and the community and economic benefits of each. Along the same effort, the *Hooked on Clean Water* fact sheets communicate the economic benefit of investing in the environment and outdoor recreation. Produced for each state, each fact sheet reports annual consumer spending, jobs supported, and the tax revenue generated supporting such activities.

The database and fact sheets were produced by the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) and its partners with data collected from multiple sources. These data sources are also being compiled in a separate spreadsheet to share once finalized.

*Action: Staff to share the database and fact sheets with LGAC.*

##### **Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week Update**

*Marisa Baldine, Communications Staffer, Chesapeake Research Consortium*

Marisa shared plans for the 2022 Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week (CBAW) (June 4-12). CBAW is a watershed-wide initiative to celebrate and bring awareness to the history, culture, and beauty of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. This year's theme is, "Restoration Brings Results," which will focus on spotlighting local restoration efforts within smaller watersheds.

For CBAW, CBP will provide a sample proclamation template for local governments to customize, a social media toolkit, and access to a calendar of CBAW-related events. CBP also welcomes the opportunity to work with LGAC Members to promote local efforts through their online channels.

*Action: Staff to share the CBAW proclamation and social media toolkit with LGAC.*

## **County Tree Cover Status and Trends Fact Sheets**

*Julie Mawhorter, Mid-Atlantic Urban and Community Forestry Coordinator, U.S. Forest Service*

Julie shared the draft U.S. Forest Service county fact sheets that report the trends of tree planting, tree equity, and urban tree canopy BMPs, using data from the states and the CBP partnership's land use and land cover data sets. Specifically, this data will be used to share a municipality's tree cover status and rates of change, calculations of achieved benefits/losses, and a breakdown of overall land use/cover per locality. County fact sheets will be completed and available summer 2022 and there are plans to create municipal facts sheets as well.

Members discussed tree maintenance, local ordinances, engaging volunteers and resources for local governments. Members also asked about maintaining urban trees in low survival areas to which others offered suggestions of prioritizing native species, planting larger trees initially (with wraps) to lessen person-access to the tree itself, providing some planning authority to local arborists, and tapping into local youth and implementing a "treekeeper"-like program.

*Action: Staff to share fact sheets with LGAC when finalized.*

## **Local Leadership Workgroup Update**

*Heidi Bonnacon, Senior Environmental Planner, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and LLWG Chair*

Heidi shared the LLWG's 2022 initiatives including preparing for the *Wandering Waterways* bus tours for elected officials in Virginia (March 31-April 1), Maryland (April 21-22), and Pennsylvania (May 5-6), the status and expansion of *A Local Government Guide to the Chesapeake Bay* educational modules, and an update on the *Planning for Clean Water* monthly webinars (January-June).

*Action: Staff to share LLWG Planners Workshops and P2Ps dates.*

## **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Technical Assistance Opportunities**

*Tony Clark, Technical Assistance Branch Chief, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers*

Tony gave an overview of the technical assistance programs offered by the U.S Army Corps of Engineers including:

- Planning Assistance to States (PAS) - all things water (flooding, drought, water supply, stormwater, comprehensive planning, etc.)
- Floodplain Management Services (FPMS) - all things flooding (riverine, tidal, hurricane-driven, stormwater, compound; structural, non-structure, natural and nature-based solutions, etc.)
- Silver Jackets (SJ) - all things flooding and interagency collaboration
- Tribal Partnership Program (TPP) - all things water resources
- Continuing Authorities Program (CAP) - all things water resources
- Other general planning, design, & construction services under \$15 million

Tony also reviewed relative case study examples of how specific municipalities have been supported under each service.

## **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Update**

*Carolyn Berndt, Sustainability Legislative Director, National League of Cities, and Adam Pugh, Associate Legislative Director, National Association of Counties*

Carolyn and Adam provided an overview of the U.S Department of Treasury's newest guidance on ARPA funding. A few highlights of their update:

- The Final Rule is effective April 1, 2022, but local governments can take advantage of flexibility prior to that date.
- Local governments are allowed to use up to \$10 million of ARPA Recovery Funds as "loss revenue" for the provision of general government services without needing to use the Treasury revenue loss formula.
- Guidance presumes certain populations were "impacted" and "disproportionately impacted" by the pandemic and therefore are eligible to receive a broad range of services and support.
- Guidance broadens eligible use of funds for water and sewer projects to include culvert repair, dam and reservoir rehabilitation.

- Guidance broadens eligible broadband infrastructure investments to ensure better connectivity to broader populations.

Regarding water and sewer infrastructure, eligible projects such as (additional) lead remediation projects, rehabilitation of certain stormwater infrastructure, culvert repairs, and improved access to clean drinking water as it pertains to residential wells, dams and reservoirs, were added under the Final Rule. To identify necessary infrastructure projects, the Final Rule also acknowledges the EPA's Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) and Drinking Water SRF programs.

Members were concerned that ARPA dollars may be withdrawn. Adam and Carolyn recommended that Members build relationships with their Congress member and champion for the projects needed in their local communities as well as the benefits those projects provide to residents. Members also discussed ways to maximize all of the federal resources to ensure best use of funds.

### **Department of Defense Funding Opportunities**

*Jessica Rodriguez, Department of Defense (DoD) Chesapeake Bay Program Coordinator*

Jessica explained DoD Chesapeake Bay Program's Office of Local Defense Community and Cooperation planning and project implementation resources including the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program, Sentinel Landscape Partnerships, and the Defense Community Infrastructure Program (DCIP). These resources are designed for communities to understand the concerns and opportunities of military installations and sustainability.

She also plugged the Association of Defense Communities' (non-DoD) *Advancing Resilience for Defense Communities* planning framework that contains additional helpful resources and opportunities.

Jessica asked Members for the most effective way of getting this information to local military communities and how they interact with their military installations. Members with military communities shared that they have regular meetings with military commanders/deputies, and adjacent jurisdictions that share military borders, to discuss any installations. Members also recommended that Jessica connect with regional, state or veterans' agencies to locate more information on the pathways of communication.

### **Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Funding**

*Martha Shimkin, Deputy Director, EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Office (CBPO)*

Martha reported that under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the CBPO will receive \$238 million over 5 years (\$47.6 million each year) to fund the Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Grants, Small Watershed Grants and Most Effective Basins Grants.

She also shared details on the EPA's Mid-Atlantic Virtual Summit (May 25, 2022). The summit will showcase innovative practices that address modern environmental and public health challenges impacting communities, as well as provide a better understanding of the EPA's priorities and resources, including funding through the infrastructure law.

*Action: Staff to share EPA Infrastructure Funding matrix once finalized.*

### **LGAC Member Discussion: Barriers for Local Implementation**

LGAC Members held an open discussion regarding the barriers to implement watershed restoration efforts. Barriers identified include:

- Limited staff capacity and ability to apply for, be competitive with, and administer grants.
- Staffing challenges to be innovative with available opportunities.
- Meeting match requirements.
- Difficulty in partnering with neighboring municipalities and creating local and regional partnerships.
- Time sensitivity of federal dollars that do not cover the costs of planning for new projects, but for "shovel-ready" projects only.
- Availability of skilled labor in local communities to implement projects.
- Limited understanding of local processes on a federal level when it comes to administering federal dollars.
- Availability of circuit riders and their ability to assist local communities who do not have the capacity or political will to implement necessary projects and share the concern of getting dollars to underrepresented communities.

- How projects that have/will be installed will be properly maintained into the future.
- The challenge of addressing upstream issues including the idea that downstream communities allocate funds to address upstream concerns.

## **Friday, March 18, 2022**

### **Jurisdiction Breakfast Meeting Report-Outs and Member Updates**

*District of Columbia* shared that they will be using ARPA funds to initiate lead removal and green infrastructure projects throughout the district and expand workforce development training. Green infrastructure signage will also be incorporated to serve as a living classroom for the general public.

*Delaware* shared that limited state money will be used towards water and sewer projects in favor of supporting communities affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. DE is sending education modules of the Local Government Guide to the Chesapeake Bay to over 120 local government staff. Each module was customized with local case studies and data and shared on a monthly basis. Finally, DE expressed interest in a fall bus tour.

*Maryland* discussed the need for technical service providers to support administrative and grant writing efforts. They are also preparing for their spring bus tour.

*Pennsylvania* recommended locations for the June 2022 LGAC Quarterly Meeting and shared updates for their spring bus tour. They also had a discussion about their MS4 mandates and if associated projects should be prioritized.

*Virginia* is looking forward to their spring bus tour. They also shared their thoughts on the state's new administration.

*West Virginia* shared their highway flooding and green workforce restorative initiatives. They also reported Berkeley County's 250th anniversary where they will plant at least 250 commemorative trees.

### **Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) Project: Rising Watershed and Bay Water Temperatures - Ecological Implications and Management Responses**

*Julie Reichert-Nguyen, Natural Resources Specialist and Chesapeake Bay Program Climate Resiliency Workgroup Coordinator, NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office*

Julie detailed the last STAC workshop (March 14-15) where attendees discussed the drivers of rising water temperatures while identifying the ecological impacts and management implications for living resources and habitats. Draft recommendations for overcoming management/policy challenges as well as the necessary research, monitoring, and analyses needed to support these recommendations were also identified. The final report for this project will be shared in the summer of 2022.

Members discussed how to educate residents about rising water temperatures and the impacts. They also advocated for a greater FEMA role and proactive stance to prevent and mitigate such impacts.

### **Chesapeake Bay Program Update**

*Carin Bisland, Branch Chief, Partnerships and Accountability Branch, EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Office*

Carin provided an overview of the CBP including its goals and outcomes, table of organization, and leadership. Additional updates included:

- Forest Buffer Workshop (April 27) – designed to address the scale and urgency of forest buffers on a state-by-state basis.
- Wetlands Workshop (TBD) – designed to identify actions to overcome the barriers of implementing non-tidal and tidal wetland restoration and accelerate progress towards the Wetlands Outcome.
- An overview and next steps for the Climate Change Directive signed by the Chesapeake Executive Council in October 2021.
- Social science updates including a new CBP website that will provide behavior change resources (spring 2022) and a future social science analysis assessment (fall 2022).
- The finalization and distribution of the 2022 CBPO Grant Guidance (March 2022).

## **Business Meeting**

*Approval of December 2021 Minutes* – Markus Batchelor motioned to approve the December 2021 minutes, seconded by Donna Iannone.

*Annual Elections for LGAC Chair and Vice Chairs* –

- LGAC Chair – Richard Baugh nominated Jasmine Gore as LGAC Chair, seconded by Andria McClellan.
- PA Vice Chair – Leo Lutz nominated Michael Helfrich as PA Vice Chair, seconded by James Wheeler.
- VA Vice Chair - Andria McClellan nominated Richard Baugh as VA Vice Chair, seconded by Jasmine Gore.
- MD Vice Chair – Bruce Williams nominated Mark Dobbins as MD Vice Chair, seconded by Jake Day.
- DC Vice Chair – Markus Batchelor nominated Daniel Chao as DC Vice Chair, seconded by Sheila Finlayson.
- At Large Vice Chair – James Barnhart nominated Don Phillips as At-Large Vice Chair, seconded by Jasmine Gore.

*Executive Committee Report (Chair)* – Jasmine shared her actions as LGAC Chair since December 2021. She attended the Chesapeake Executive Council meeting at the Governor’s Mansion in Richmond, VA where she shared 2021 LGAC Recommendations (December 15, 2021), monthly Management Board meetings, the Principal’s Staff Committee (PSC) meeting (March 2, 2022), and the Mid-Atlantic Planning Collaboration meeting (January 20, 2022). She also expressed her interest in LGAC Members getting more involved in external opportunities to ensure their voices are heard.

*Coordinator’s Report (Coordinator)* – Jennifer reminded Members of the purpose of LGAC and actions towards reaching the goals outlined within their approved bylaws. She also discussed upcoming events including the *Wandering Waterways* bus tours, *proposed* Bipartisan Infrastructure Law: State Revolving Funds Webinar, and the remaining 2022 LGAC Quarterly Meetings. Finally, Jennifer shared recent communications efforts and thanked Members and jurisdiction representatives for their continued participation.

*Action: Staff to send LGAC By-Law Goals for jurisdiction response.*

## **Final Thoughts/Actions from this Meeting**

*New Business* – Members reminded the group that LGAC Quarterly Meetings are open to the public, both in person and virtually, and that they are able to invite their staff member along to assist them during the meetings.

*Future Agenda Items* – Topics include: trees/ecosystems, workforce/training barriers, regional/upstream impacts on communities downstream, ARPA funds follow-up from LGAC’s open discussion, social science, and urban farming.

**Adjourn at 12:00pm**