



Meeting MINUTES

March 14, 2014

Commonwealth Park Suites Hotel, Richmond, VA

Members Present: Dave Dunmyer, Sheila Finlayson, Rick Gray (Chair), Penny Gross, Maryann Lisanti, Leo Lutz, Sheila Noll, Kelly Porter, Emily Rice (alternate for Adriana Hochberg), Debbie Ritter, Ann Simonetti, John Thomas, James Wheeler, Bruce Williams, Rosemary Wilson. **Staff Present:** Mary Gattis (LGAC Coordinator, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay), Jessica Blackburn (staff, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay), Amy Robins (staff, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay), and Al Todd (Executive Director, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay). **Guests Present:** Russ Baxter (VA DNR), Jessica Blackburn (CAC staff), Jeff Corbin (EPA), James Martin Davis (VA DCR), Nissa Dean (Alliance), Natalie Gardner (STAC staff), Rhonda Manning (PA DEP), Reginald Parrish (EPA)

Meeting presentations and material: <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/S=0/calendar/event/21408/>

Call to Order, Introductions

Chairman Gray called the meeting to order at approximately 8:00 a.m. LGAC members and guests introduced themselves.

Citizen Monitoring Presentation

James Beckley, Quality Assurance Coordinator, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality

Mr. Beckley presented on how the agency uses citizen volunteer water quality data in Virginia. The presentation included a general overview of how the agency partners with citizen volunteer monitors such as providing training, quality assurance reviews, and funding. The presentation included a slide showing that for the 2012 305(b)/303(d) Integrated Report, citizen volunteers provided over 4,100 stream miles worth of water quality data.

Anna Mathis, RiverTrends Coordinator, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay

Ms. Mathis presented on RiverTrends, a program of the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay. RiverTrends, one of the largest citizen water quality monitoring programs in Virginia, started in 1985 on the Patuxent and James Rivers. As the program grew it had almost 400 sites monitored by citizen volunteers. Due to funding cuts RiverTrends now only monitors approximately 40 sites a year.

The Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP), approved by DEQ and EPA, documents monitoring, quality assurance, training, and other programmatic procedures. Groups that do not have their own QAPP can be trained under our program, thus allowing for the combining of resources. The Alliance also has a Train-the-Trainer program which qualified regional coordinators to be able to train volunteers and perform quality assurance. The Virginia Citizens for Water Quality annual summit, also coordinated by the Alliance, brings together citizen scientists, localities, the state and others to coordinate existing volunteer water quality monitoring efforts, identify appropriate volunteer water quality monitoring methodologies, identify appropriate uses of volunteer water quality monitoring data, promote watershed water quality and stream health needs and issues.

Program Costs: Starting kits cost about \$300 per site and \$100/year to resupply with nutrient analysis for four sites costing around \$350/year. Additional costs include: training supplies, postage for shipping supplies, printing costs (report cards and outreach materials), and staff time.

Funding: Until 2000, the Alliance's citizen monitoring program was almost entirely funded by the Chesapeake Bay Program. However, due to budget cuts and priorities, the Chesapeake Bay Program decided to discontinue funding in December 1999. Upon further consideration CBP decided to fund the program for one more year in 2000 and requested that the Alliance perform a study on how best to prioritize its funds towards citizen monitoring across the Bay watershed. Several priorities came out of this study, but one action item that the Alliance strongly recommended was to establish a position to coordinate citizen-monitoring efforts throughout the Bay watershed. The state representatives to the CBP at the time all felt strongly that their individual states were capable of coordinating citizen monitoring within their own states. Therefore, no funding was provided for a Bay-wide citizen monitoring coordinator or a Bay-wide Citizen Monitoring Program. Since 2000, funding in Virginia has been precarious for a statewide citizen monitoring coordinator. Citizens have had to rally together several times to maintain funding for this position.

Despite loss of CBP funding, the Alliance continues to run the RiverTrends program, relying on funding from VA DEQ, Virginia's Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund (CBRF), Royal Bank of Canada, and Dominion Foundation to perform some support to organizations for limited items and develop watershed report cards.

Issues for future discussion:

☐ The Mid-Atlantic Tributary Assessment Coalition: a unique and growing group of watershed organizations interested in advancing the use of environmental data from local organizations and citizen scientists for use in report cards and assessments.

☐ Importance of Water Quality Monitoring Councils (VA and MD have them)

☐ What role could WWTP labs play in a local wq monitoring program?

☐ How to get the word out when funding is threatened? The Alliance alerts their partners in VA.

Bay Program Indicators: Effectively Communicating Progress

Carin Bisland and Nita Sylvester, United States Environmental Protection Agency

Carin provided an overview of the Bay Program Indicators and sought feedback from the Committee on which indicators were of most interest to local government. Nita joined by telephone and provided clarification as needed.

LGAC charged their Communications Workgroup with the task of providing more feedback related to most important indicators for local governments and best way to convey that info to local governments.

Information needs/indicators of most interest:

- ☐ oyster reef restoration efforts
- ☐ impervious cover/development
- ☐ tree canopy
- ☐ forest buffers lost
- ☐ protected land (need to clarify what is tracked)
- ☐ public access

Committee members provided feedback/questions, including:

1. Jurisdiction boundaries should be included on maps (Gross)
2. Users need to be able to locate their community on a map; dynamic maps would be useful
3. Ability to download and use data locally would be helpful

4. Need to better understand how local land use/land cover data will be used

Carin also briefed the Committee on that status of ChesapeakeStat, which is being redesigned to better track and communicate progress. Target audiences will include: public, internal, and federal oversight groups. The redesign will enable target audiences to understand and act upon information, use information to inform decisions, facilitate implementation of adaptive management procedures, and be an authoritative source of Chesapeake Bay performance information.

Bay Program Updates

Joseph Gill, Secretary of Maryland's Department of Natural Resources & PSC Chair

Frank Dawson, Deputy Secretary of Maryland's Department of Natural Resources

Secretary Gill briefed the Committee on steps he, as chair of the Principals Staff Committee, has taken to ensure that a new Bay Agreement is signed. He and Deputy Secretary Dawson have visited or spoken with all of the signatories. They received a favorable response from the jurisdictions with most pointing out they are already implementing many programs that will help realize the vision for the Bay. Deputy Secretary Dawson briefly responded to questions regarding Conowingo Dam and the 2014 relicensing. He referenced a new study that will go out for public comment mid-July-August. Deputy Secretary Dawson reviewed several key environmental bills that were in Maryland Legislation.

Nick DiPasquale, Director, EPA Chesapeake Bay Program

Mr. DiPasquale reviewed public comments on the watershed Agreement. Many addressed concerns about Toxics and Climate Change. The Bay Program will be working with partners to incorporate comments for review by the PSC in mid-April. The Executive Council will review and finalize the agreement in June 2014. One year from the Agreement signing management strategies are due to address the outcomes. He also reviewed past, current and future funding for the Chesapeake Bay Program. The Bay Program received an increase from \$54 million to \$70 million for the FY2014 budget. He stated almost 80% of the increase is going to the state grants. Other investment areas include Goal Implementation Team support, BMP Expert Panels and Verification Programs, CAST/FAST Tools, Climate Change, Citizen Monitoring Initiative and Trading Program Support. \$5 million will be made available to jurisdictions for local implementation. LGAC was asked to provide input on how these funds might be distributed.

Business Meeting

December 2013 meeting minutes approved on a motion by D. Dunmyer and second by S. Noll.

Election for chair and vice chair(s). Sheila Noll from Virginia was elected as the new chair to LGAC. John Thomas, Rosemary Wilson, and Sheila Finlayson were elected as vice-chairs for their respective jurisdictions. E. Rice requested that a vote on Vice Chair for the District of Columbia be tabled due to lack of sufficient representation from the District.

Report to the Executive Council

The committee confirmed that the following issues will be addressed in LGAC's 2014 report to the Executive Council for the Chesapeake Bay:

1. Diminishing staff resources at state agencies
2. Pool of skilled contractors is inadequate
3. Lack of protocols for reporting BMPs

The committee also wants to convey the importance of setting a date for the annual EC meeting and sticking to it. Attendance by one of the top three officials (Governor, Lt. Governor or Secretary) should be mandatory. Gattis agreed to convey this to the EC Planning Team.

P. Gross suggested report to EC be in positive terms, e.g. increased regulation, reporting and responsibilities.

New Business/Announcements for the Good of the Committee/Future Agenda Items

Next meeting June 5-6, 2014 in Harrisburg, PA.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:30 p.m.

Note: This meeting was preceded by a Green Infrastructure Tour for elected officials from the Richmond Region. LGAC members were joined by Canova Peterson (Hanover County Supervisor), Marlie Smith (Parks, City of Richmond), Gay Stokes (DPU, City of Richmond), Tony Griffin (General Services on the Capital), and Russ Baxter (Deputy Secretary for Natural Resources) for a tour of green infrastructure installations at Virginia's capital complex. The tour was guided by Nissa Dean, Virginia Director of the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and Chris Sonne from the Civil & Environmental Services. The tour highlighted the "Greening the Capital" Project that brought together Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Virginia Department of General Services, City of Richmond and the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay to install stormwater BMPs. A brief networking reception and followed.