



## Chesapeake Bay Program

*Science. Restoration. Partnership.*

### Maintain Healthy Watersheds GIT Minutes

February 3rd, 2025 | 11:00am - 1:00pm

[Meeting Materials](#)

#### Attendees

Adrienne Kotula, CBC  
Alanna Crowley, MD DNR  
Alison Santoro, MD DNR  
Angel Valdez, MDE  
Anne Hairston-Strang, MD DNR  
Ben Alexandro, CCP  
Bonnie Bick, MWS  
Lori, Brown, DE DNREC  
Katie Brownson, USFS  
Sarah Brzezinski, EPA  
Cassie Davis, NYS DEC  
Debbie Herr Cornwell, MDP  
Deborah Sward, MDP  
Gina Hunt, MD DNR  
Jeremy Hanson, CRC  
Melissa Harrison, PA DEP  
Ashley Hullinger, PA DEP  
Ken Hyer, USGS  
Arianna Johns, VA DEQ  
Kara Kemmerer, MDE

KC Filippino, Hampton Roads Planning  
District Commission  
Caroline Kleis, CRC  
Daniel Koval, CRC  
Lorena Kowalewski, DC DOEE  
Kristin Saunders, UMCES  
Laura Cattell Noll, Alliance for the Bay  
Jeff Lerner, EPA  
Kelly Maloney, USGS  
Marilyn Yang, CRC  
Mindy Neil, WV DEP  
Dave Montali, Tetra Tech  
Peter Claggett, USGS  
Sarah McDonald, YSGS  
Todd Janeski, VA DCR  
Young Tsuei, DC DOEE  
Elise Turrietta, VA DEQ  
Gabiella Vailati, DE DNREC  
Jason Vogl, DE OSPC  
Holly Walker, DNREC

<b>11:00</b>	<b>Welcome and Announcements</b> – <i>Jeff Lerner (HWGIT Chair, EPA)</i>  For roll call purposes, please enter your name & affiliation in the chat box. Call-in participants are requested to identify themselves verbally.
<b>11:05 (10 min)</b>	<b>Overview of Management Board “Big Questions” Outcome Review Assignment and Timeline</b> – <i>Jeff Lerner (HWGIT Chair, EPA)</i>

<p><b>11:15 (5 min)</b></p>	<p><b><u>Land Use Methods and Metrics Development Outcome (LUMM) Presentation</u></b> – <i>Peter Claggett, USGS (HWGIT Coordinator)</i></p> <p>To prepare for the following discussion and vote, Peter reviewed the draft recommendations and <a href="#">Mentimeter feedback</a> for the LUMM outcome.</p> <p><b><u>Current Draft Recommendations for the LUMM Outcome Assessment:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consolidate the production of land use mapping and monitoring activities initiated by this outcome into an updated Land Use Options Evaluation Outcome.</li> <li>• Support the new CBP Land Use Strategy through the updated Healthy Watersheds outcome and revised Land Use Options Evaluation outcome.</li> <li>• Formally integrate land use mapping, monitoring, and derived metrics into the management strategies of relevant outcomes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>11:20 (10 min)</b></p>	<p><b><u>Land Use Methods and Metrics Development Outcome (LUMM) Discussion and Vote</u></b> – <i>Peter Claggett, USGS (HWGIT Coordinator) and Jeff Lerner (HWGIT Chair, EPA)</i></p> <p>During this agenda item, Peter and Jeff led a discussion on workshopping the <a href="#">draft LUMM outcome assessment</a> and solicited feedback from the members through a collaborative <a href="#">Miroboard</a>. At the end of the discussion, jurisdictional leads were asked to vote on the draft recommendations.</p> <p><b><i>Discussion:</i></b></p> <p>Ben Alexandro: I was curious about timelines—when we’d expect actual development. Like, by this date X happens, by that date Y happens.</p> <p>Peter Claggett: Do you mean timelines for revising the outcome or for producing new metrics?</p> <p>Ben Alexandro: Yeah, the latter.</p> <p>Peter Claggett: OK. The next high-res land use/land cover data will be publicly available in April, covering 2013–14, 2017–18, and 2021–22. That’s three time slices across the watershed and adjacent counties. Then, with EPA support and Chesapeake Conservancy, we’ll remap using 2025–26 imagery, likely ready in 2027. In the meantime, if our recommendations are approved, we’ll produce interim metrics using automated data and high-res inputs—analyzing impacts on water quality, habitat, and near-shore fisheries. Does that answer your question?</p> <p>Ben Alexandro: So those kinds of dates and timelines won’t be in this document—they come later?</p>

Peter Claggett: Correct. This document is more of a directional guide—like a compass bearing—for the management board. The detailed planning comes later since high-level changes are still possible. Kristen?

Kristin Saunders: Yeah, I added this in the chat, but I'll say it here. Since Ben raised it—I'd suggest thinking now about which other outcomes or goals this land use data should integrate with. You don't need a list today, but it's good to have one ready. It'll help if board members ask how this fits in. Also, goal implementation teams have been pushing for more integrated approaches. If they know Healthy Watersheds is bringing this data forward, they can plan better and adjust their strategies as things change. So even a rough list would help down the road.

Peter Claggett: That's a great suggestion. We actually have a slide coming up showing those connections, and we've already started working with groups like Forestry on this. Thanks.

Jeffrey Lerner: Just to add—this is tricky. It's technically an output, but we don't want to lose the ability to use this data across outcomes. So we're asking: how do we consolidate without isolating this data into its own separate outcome?

Peter Claggett: Right. Seems like no one has major concerns, so we should vote to approve the draft recommendations.

Jeffrey Lerner: I'll go ahead and call roll for the jurisdictions. We'll now ask each jurisdiction to vote on the outcome recommendations following the consensus continuum ([on slide 8](#)).

**Vote:**

**Angel Valdez (MD): Yes, we fully endorse—5.**

**Cassandra Davis (NY): Endorse.**

**Ashley Hullinger (PA): Yes, endorse.**

**Todd Janeski (VA): We're not voting at this time. Need to take it further with our administration.**

**Holly Walker (DE): Endorse**

**Mindy Neil (WV): We abstain because we do not have the ability to control the land use and our participation in Healthy Watersheds is through our tiered III streams, but we don't have control over public lands or conservation easements, so I believe we should abstain and let those who can control that vote.**

	<p>Dave Montali: As I understand it, jurisdictions will be provided the opportunity to review their participation in the revised outcomes and if we can't do much with them then we might not participate, I guess you could put a stand aside for this one.</p> <p><b>Mindy Neil (WV): Yes, I would say stand aside otherwise we would need to run this up to our administration, but do not have the ability to control the factors that impact this outcome.</b></p> <p>Jeff Lerner: To clarify, the purpose of the vote is to move forward these recommendations to the Management Board for discussion, we don't know what they will say or what the final outcomes will be but rather move forward with the revision process, but to confirm what I'm hearing from you is that you are okay with allowing us to move forward with our recommendations although you're not endorsing per say.</p> <p><b>Mindy Neil (WV): Yes, that's a good summary, we are okay with allowing this to move forward but we are not endorsing per say, essentially we stand aside.</b></p> <p><b>Lorena Kowalewski (DC): Endorse</b></p> <p>Peter Claggett: Great thank you everyone, and Todd we will follow-up after this call to get some opinion from VA if possible.</p> <p>Todd Janeski: Okay, we need to run this further up the chain. Similar to WV we are limited in the local land use practices we can affect, therefore some of the language we talk about might be problematic.</p> <p>Peter Claggett: Ok great, we will follow-up and now move on to LUOE.</p>
<p><b>11:30 (5 min)</b></p>	<p><b><u>Land Use Options Evaluation Outcome (LUOE) Presentation</u></b> – <i>Peter Claggett, USGS (HWGIT Coordinator)</i></p> <p>To prepare for the following discussion and vote, Peter reviewed the draft recommendations and <a href="#">Mentimeter feedback</a> for the LUOE outcome.</p> <p><b><u>Current Draft Recommendations for the LUOE Outcome Assessment:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Update the outcome language as: “Develop and provide actionable science and data relevant to land use decisions and local environmental concerns to organizations engaged in those issues and decisions. When additional measures are needed to protect sensitive resources, develop and implement state-level policies and programs relevant to land use decisions.”</li> <li>● Rename the outcome (pending feedback on the name).</li> <li>● Consolidate land use mapping and monitoring activities under this outcome.</li> </ul>

**11:35  
(20 min)**

**Land Use Options Evaluation Outcome (LUOE) Discussion and Vote** – *Peter Claggett, USGS (HWGIT Coordinator) and Jeff Lerner (HWGIT Chair, EPA)*

During this agenda item, Peter and Jeff led a discussion on workshopping the [draft LUOE outcome assessment](#) and solicited feedback from the members through a collaborative [Miroboard](#). At the end of the discussion, jurisdictional leads were asked to vote on the draft recommendations.

***Discussion:***

Dave Montali: I don't believe how it is currently written is SMART. Is the idea to update this and fix that later?

Peter Claggett: Yes, the latter. In the [draft two-pagers](#), we do talk about short- and long-term goals to make this time-bound, but those elements are still to be determined, and we would love input from the jurisdictions on this.

Kristin Saunders (in chat): Yes, we would call this a "directional outcome" since it's hard to define SMART parameters.

Dave Montali: Is this really about doing periodic updates of high-resolution land use?

Peter Claggett: No, it's more than that. It's about trying to make the data actionable—updating the land use is a piece of it, but when we release that information, it needs to be delivered in a way that is meaningful to local governments, etc. So it's really about making the information actionable to inform land use decisions.

Katie Brownson: It seems like this is packing a whole lot into one outcome, and I'm wondering if there's a way to disentangle some of the things that could be viewed as outputs—like decision support—and whether that is more than an output and not really an outcome. I'm wondering if there's an opportunity to adjust this to anticipate potential confusion from the MB.

Peter Claggett: So to distill what you're saying, we should add specifics about the outputs that are supporting this outcome?

Katie Brownson: I think it's more about disentangling what's an output vs. an outcome—like, is providing data an output or an outcome?

Peter Claggett: Yeah, I think this has been a struggle for everyone. State and federal agencies have very little control over local land use decisions. For the most part, we can't say, "We'll do XYZ and it will result in this" But what we can acknowledge is that land use change is one of the factors that makes it harder to restore the Bay and reach our restoration goals. And we need to address it through land use planning—as has been agreed to in every Bay Agreement. But it's also something we can't directly affect. So we

can do a lot of things and try to be more strategic to influence change. Like, if a state agency is thinking about a land use policy in a certain area, we can provide information to help them. But I struggle with the fact that if we make the outcome too specific, then it becomes an output. So the question is: at what point does the outcome actually lead to change on the ground, and how can you be super specific?

Jeff Lerner: We're open to additional suggestions, and we appreciate the comments coming in on the MiroBoard. But the point is—we know land use change is affecting the overall health of the Bay, and if we don't do anything about that, we're not doing our job to address the ecosystem. But we also recognize the limitations of the jurisdictions across the watershed, so we're trying to figure out what the balance is.

KC Filippino (in chat): I was also a proponent of making sure that these data products are integrated into as many other outcomes as possible, since it's so hard to make this its own outcome. It's ultimately using the data for developing policy changes which may lead to better planning. That's hard to put into words as an outcome since it's local decision making. Sorry to type in the chat and run but I have to hop off.

Laura Cattell Noll: This is something that the Local Advisory Committee is really interested in. I don't have specific feedback to share from them today, but I'd like to bring what you all have shared and drafted to that group and bring feedback back to you. Just reiterating that this is something very valuable to the partnership as you all think about what the right role is moving forward, and how the program can have as much impact as possible. I apologize I don't have more at the moment, but I'll bring all of this to that group and bring back their feedback.

Jeff Lerner: Thanks. Our premise is that if we provide additional information, we can look across jurisdictional boundaries and provide jurisdiction-specific data. We could package that to help with local planning decisions. Do you have a sense if LGAC would be supportive of that?

Laura Cattell Noll: Broadly speaking, yes. I've already informed them about your desire to consolidate some of the other outcomes, and I've heard the concern that, number one, they don't want anything lost in the consolidation. But also, it can't just be about putting information on a website—it has to help with capacity building to support local officials in using it.

Peter Claggett: Yes, I agree. We need to do more than just a website or web tool. For example, if we're talking about impervious surface, we could show a jurisdiction how much impervious surface exists in their watersheds and whether it's increasing or decreasing which is whatever, but if you also layer in information that demonstrates how certain thresholds of impervious surfaces result in declines in macro-benthic community condition and then we could package that information and show, "Here are the

watersheds above 10%, here are the ones at 5–10%,” etc., and highlight the areas that have changed. That could really help provide guidance with local decision makers.

Laura Cattell Noll: I think that speaks to the translation piece—making sure this information reaches the target audience.

Ben Alexandro (in chat): Translation is super important, and sometimes does not get the resources is needed to use it to tailor and help the target audience that could use the data.

Sarah Brzezinski: Would it help to restructure the proposed language? I latched onto the comments Katie made. Maybe start with a sentence focused on the ultimate outcome, then follow that with a more targeted and discrete statement that speaks to tangible outputs resulting from trying to achieve that outcome. That structure might help balance the outcome vs. output question.

Peter Claggett: Right—so maybe a goal/outcome in the first sentence, followed by SMART statements that support reaching that.

Sarah Brzezinski: Yes, I go back to the Oyster outcome. The first sentence narrows the broader fisheries goal, and then it's followed by a SMART statement. Maybe something similar could work here.

Peter Claggett: I like that—thank you. Given the time constraints, I’m not expecting to see 5s across the board based on the feedback we’ve heard, but I still think it would be useful to go jurisdiction by jurisdiction to get a temperature read—and to see if there’s something we could do this week that would help build support.

Jeff Lerner: Yeah, we can do that. I’d characterize this as: we had two separate outcomes, but now we realize aspects of them are really outputs, and we’re trying to consolidate and figure out how to move forward. I think what we’re really hoping for is to know whether we’re on the right path. So let’s do a temperature check—are we generally in the right spirit—using the consensus continuum.

**Vote:**

**Lorena Kowalewski (DC): I agree with a lot of the comments, especially about refocusing the outcome and making it more SMART.**

**Angel Valdez (MD): I’ll echo what was said earlier. After hearing the discussion, I do think more intentional local engagement is necessary to make the outputs useful and relevant. But I don’t think the way it’s written now is very SMART.**

**Cassie Davis (NY): I agree with what's been said and the request to look at other outcomes to see whether this could fit into one of them.**

Peter Claggett: Are you suggesting we do away with this outcome and consolidate it with another?

**Cassie Davis (NY): I'm just looking at the other draft outcomes and noticing how this relates to many of them. I think it would be good to step back and see where else it might fit—such as Local Leadership—just to make sure we're not missing something. That could happen later. So I guess I'm currently in agreement with reservations.**

Jeff Lerner: That's a good point. This process is kind of like an abbreviated SRS process, and because of that, we don't always get the full picture—but hopefully these presentations help us get a better sense of it.

**Ashley Hullinger (PA): We agree—it's difficult to fit so much into a single outcome. One thing we'd like to see come out of this is more emphasis on advancing data collection and remote sensing as a priority for the Management Board. So I'd say agreement with reservations—it could be improved, but we like the direction.**

**Todd Janeski (VA): We appreciate the intent here, but we're concerned about the vague nature of what's being proposed and the potential for it to lead to more heavy-handed development or implementation of state-level policies. That kind of thing takes legislative action and can take authority away from the local level. Instead, I recommend we offer models or tools to our conservation districts or other entities with planning expertise, so they can deliver that information to local governments. Because of that, we're abstaining—for now—but we're still in conversations with the Virginia administration.**

**Mindy Neil (WV): I agree with what was said about the statement being heavy on state-level policies. I also agree with making the language more measurable. We are totally in support of how Peter described packaging this information, but for now, we'll stand aside on the vote.**

**Holly Walker (DE): I'm in agreement with reservations. Let's just make it SMART, as others have said.**

Jeff Lerner: This is great—thank you. We'll take this feedback and work to update the language quickly, since we need to submit to the Management Board by February 13. We'll send the revised version to the HWGIT via email for review.

**POST MEETING UPDATE:** Following the meeting, the HWGIT leadership worked to update the LUOE outcome assessment based on the feedback and shared it with the HWGIT via email. [[Revised LUOE outcome assessment 2/7/25](#)]



<b>11:55</b>	<b>Break</b> (5 minutes)
<b>12:00 (10 min)</b>	<p><b><u>Healthy Watersheds Outcome (HW) Presentation</u></b> – Jeff Lerner, USGS (HWGIT Chair), Debbie Herr Cornwell, MDP (HWGIT Vice-Chair), Peter Claggett, USGS (HWGIT Coordinator) (45 min.)</p> <p>To prepare for the following discussion and vote, Peter reviewed the draft recommendations and <a href="#">Mentimeter feedback</a> for the Healthy Watersheds outcome.</p> <p><b><u>Current Draft Recommendations for the Healthy Watersheds Outcome Assessment:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To better align watershed health with stream health update outcome as: “Maintain landscape integrity, watershed processes and conditions contributing to healthy aquatic ecosystems.”</li> <li>• To ensure that the Healthy Watersheds Goal is consistent and supportive of the new outcome, recommend to the Principals Staff Committee to update the goal as: “Protect and sustain healthy waters and watersheds recognized for their high quality defined by ecological, socioeconomic, and/or cultural values” and to update the topic as “Watershed Health” in place of “Healthy Watersheds”.</li> <li>• Establish both short-term (5-year) and long-term (20-year) targets for building local capacity and for protecting, maintaining and improving watershed health</li> </ul>
<b>12:10 (50 min)</b>	<p><b><u>Healthy Watersheds Outcome - Discussion and Vote</u></b> – Peter Claggett, USGS (HWGIT Coordinator) and Jeff Lerner (HWGIT Chair, EPA)</p> <p>During this agenda item, Peter and Jeff led a discussion on workshopping the <a href="#">draft Healthy Watersheds outcome assessment</a> and solicited feedback from the members through a collaborative <a href="#">Miroboard</a>. At the end of the discussion, jurisdictional leads were asked to vote on the draft recommendations.</p> <p><b><i>Discussion:</i></b></p> <p>Jeff Lerner: We think this reflects a marriage from the recommendations from the Beyond 2025 Phase 1 process and then what the HWGIT has been working on for years, we are a little concerned that if we don’t continue talking about the importance of watershed health that it may get lost in the DNA of the Bay Program. We also feel that this outcome is very aligned with the desire to elevate conservation.</p> <p>Anne Hairston-Strang: I think this going in a great direction, my only hesitation during the first time of getting this goal through, when they got to the higher levels that’s where you got the designation of the state identified healthy watersheds because jurisdictions didn’t want to commit to goals they couldn’t meet.</p>

Peter Claggett: Yeah but as it is now those watersheds aren't even measured on a frequent basis enough to report progress anyway and there's not equity across the whole Bay watershed and how we look at that.

Anne Hairston-Strang: No I agree with you on ecology and biology, but for this to advance as a goal it needs to meet politics.

Kristin Saunders: I remember those conversations and I do think an aspect of that was that because beach jurisdiction had a different way of defining a healthy watershed to their state and they didn't want a broadly imposed definition applied to them.

Anne Hairston-Strang: Right they wanted something management and were reluctant to be held to a goal where many factors are out of their control.

Peter Claggett: Well, this is where changing from "healthy watersheds" to "watershed health" will hopefully help—because we're not imposing a fixed norm on what is considered "healthy" or achievable. What we're doing is more like what we've done with stream health: moving toward a continuum and a multimetric approach to assessment. The idea is to look at metrics that support ecological uplift, and to develop tools to track a range of conditions related to the health of aquatic systems. By complementing this with the Stream Health Outcome, we would have a much more holistic story to tell about the condition of watersheds. We're tabling what we had before of what is healthy or not to avoid getting into the politics of that.

Kristin Saunders (in chat): Is there a reason we limited it to healthy aquatic ecosystems? emphasis aquatic?

Peter Claggett (in chat): Yes because "watersheds" are a hydrologic concept.

Jeff Lerner: It also has been suggested that we include both aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems as they both can relate to overall Bay health.

Ben Alexandro (in chat): Here has 5 year goals and 20 year goals. Last time everything was pointed at 2025. Do we know if there is a certain date that the bay program is pointing to this time around? Or will there be different goals/ outcomes at different attainment dates?

Kristin Saunders (in chat): good question Ben - the PSC has not publicly grappled with the time horizon yet. Until they do, we are sort of suggesting that folks think about what their metrics would be at different time horizons or when you would expect to see change in the system

Peter Claggett: In response to Ben, all I can say is they are talking about having interim timebound goals and then long term goals over 10 years, I think people are realizing 10 years is too short.

Jeff Lerner: And for many of these goals, such as maintaining a continuum of watershed health, we should be thinking about how we get there and stay there overtime, especially in terms of articulating milestones and timelines.

Peter Claggett: I see in the Miroboard a suggestion to add ecosystem services, which is a good idea. Especially if we want to make conservation a pillar, we need to show the value these services provide. Being able to quantify that—for example, for Protected Lands—is important, as it would strengthen this outcome by demonstrating the importance of keeping a percentage of watershed forests intact, and how that affects not only stream health but other aspects as well.

Jeff Lerner: And we think that we can quantify these ecosystem services more comprehensively across the watershed

Peter Claggett: I also see a cautionary comment in the Miroboard towards including socioeconomic and cultural aspects as scope creep from the concept of watershed health, the reason we put that in there is because the goal currently reads that way so that might be something the partnership wants to visit.

Anne Hairston-Strang: Are there other funding aspects we're looking at when federal funding is moving away from equity?

Jeff Lerner: So, the concept of conserving watershed health applies wherever it occurs, and some areas are more intact than others. Activities in intact areas focus more on protection, while more degraded areas may require restoration to achieve watershed health. One of our key points is that there should be some modest level of support—from the Bay Program and others—emphasizing both protection and restoration on the land. The capacity piece is very important, as we've heard from others. I don't have a clear answer on specific funding sources, but I believe opportunities could be found under the banner of watershed health.

Anne Hairston-Strang: Well said Jeff.

Peter Claggett: I just wanted to follow up on my previous comment about socioeconomic and cultural language. I wanted to make the correction that this language was not taken from the Healthy Watersheds Goal language but rather in the Conservation Goal language because conserving land is one of the main actions partners can take to maintain healthy aquatic systems, therefore we referenced some of that language. So, it serves as a cross-reference that land protection is an important mechanism and can be implemented for various reasons, not just for water quality or aquatic health, but we'll see how that fares.

Todd Janeski: I put that comment in because I understand the challenges around combining land use with healthy watersheds. For the most part, we have typically put

land use behind healthy watersheds. The concern now is that when we go to our administrations, it might be perceived that we are characterizing land actions based on these criteria. Some states might not be able to make those claims because they lack the authority or ability to make those changes. It feels like this is moving away from the original intent of the state-identified aspects, and maybe that's why we have struggled with it. I'm concerned this could become a catch-all, implying we are addressing everything, rather than keeping it more focused.

Mindy Neil: The goal that you read for conservation? What is the point of having those overlap? If this is healthy watersheds, which is our perspective at WV DEP, why bring in language from the land conservation goal?

Peter Claggett: The reason is because, as a result of the 2014 agreement and how it's structured, we have been siloed, and that has been an issue since all of these topics are interrelated and interdependent. We need to make clear connections to the MB. There could be an advantage in making it clear there are cross-connections, and maybe we could do that somewhere else rather than in the outcome language. But it is a concern for many of us that the MB will not see the connection between all of these outcomes. For example, with the land use outcomes we discussed earlier—in order to communicate with localities and others—we talk about the need for this kind of network of networks, basically expanding the number of people within each state who are working with local organizations and local governments to communicate science, information, data, etc., and to translate it more effectively, as Laura said. That group of people would benefit from about five or six outcomes that all call for the same thing. Should we put that in one outcome, or should we put it in all the outcomes so that the MB gets it and sees that we really do need this? Because our outcomes would benefit from having people out on the landscape helping to inform decisions.

Anne Hairston-Strang: And they will be looking at combining many of these things anyway, right?

Peter Claggett: Probably. They seem to be in a lumping attitude.

Jeff Lerner: So it's a bit of a Venn diagram—it's not completely distinct from other outcomes. We recognize that. For example, with outcomes such as protected lands and stream health, during the SRS process we organized those groups under a suggested watershed health cohort. In essence, this tries to do that as well—we're not completely independent from those outcomes. You could throw everything under "healthy watersheds," but it would be daunting and hard to compete. So this is a bit of a compromise.

Ben Alexandro (in chat): Whatever we do, I think it would be ideal to ensure it is something trackable and measurable.

Dave Montali: Right now, there is a goal and an outcome that kind of read the same. I don't see much value in the existing outcome. Conceptually, this all comes back to conservation. So rather than changing the goal, the advice should be to consolidate with stream health A, and then maybe create a new outcome under land conservation—or make it part of that.

Jeff Lerner: Yeah, we don't know the future organization of the partnership going forward, but there has been a suggestion of a conservation goal team. That could involve absorbing or changing other GITs like the HWGIT.

Angel Valdez (in chat): I don't want the factors that are not linked to conservation to get lost if the GIT was moved under another. There's more to protecting and improving HW than conservation and reforestation. There's a spectrum of actions and aspects that affect HW.

Katie Brownson (in chat): Tend to agree that "watershed health" is broader than "conservation" and could be unifying across a broader range of outcomes.

Allison Santoro: Hi, Stream Health Workgroup coordinator. We discussed this idea of combining with HWGIT, and we have concerns with elements of our outcomes changing. There is overlap, but they are also very different. Healthy Watersheds is about the landscape, whereas Stream Health is about the water—and you have to remember that stream health only covers non-tidal streams. Healthy Watersheds contributes to all water resources, including wetlands and tidal resources. They are similar, and we will work to consolidate some of our actions, but I think the outcomes should remain separate.

Jeff Lerner: I'll mention we also use the term "landscape integrity" to try and convey that what we do on the landscape affects the water, and the conservation decisions we make on land.

Peter Claggett: With "landscape integrity," I think it's fair to say it's not obvious what that means. But my interpretation is that it's about having a sufficient amount of natural lands in the watersheds and having connectivity across those lands.

Jeff Lerner: Right. When we look at the key features of the CHWA, we're looking at things like impervious surfaces, which show how the landscape has been affected by development. But we're also looking at other factors, such as the metrics associated with stream health—which gets at Allison's point: we are connected but not identical. We need information about what's happening on the land and in the streams to get the full picture.

Peter Claggett: I think it's a good time to go through the vote roll call again, just to see where we stand with this.

**Vote:**

**Mindy Neil (WV): We're standing aside again, but I don't see a big distinction between the land conservation and healthy watersheds goals and think they could be consolidated.**

**Todd Janeski (VA):** VA supports the Healthy Waters program, but unlike WV, our Tier III waters fall primarily within federally protected lands, which are somewhat outside our purview. For our Tier II waters, we only have authority when they are under water quality permit review. That leaves us with limited tools to achieve ecological health. Some of the ongoing challenges VA continues to face relate to the push towards a strong focus on protection, which can place a heavy burden on us to commit to actions that are beyond our control. I believe if the language were less broad and more focused, that would be an improvement. **However, as it stands now, we are going to abstain.** We remain committed to the overall goal of Healthy Waters, but I still think the current 2-pager needs significant revisions.

Peter Claggett: So I take it Todd that you like the outcome language, but are not supportive of the goal language which goes beyond high ecological value?

Todd Janeski: In a non voting way it gives me less heartburn, there are many levels of the administration that need to be briefed and to receive approval before.

Jeff Lerner: Back to the heartburn area — we work in a pretty proactive, non-regulatory environment when we talk about a lot of this stuff. I'm just wondering, if we were to characterize the importance of this work, there is support for the concept — but we may get caught up in the reaction that there might be identified areas that need to be more intact, and states may not have the ability to do that. But the repercussions of that aren't as clear.

Todd Janeski: Well you bring up a good point that it could lead to instances where if we don't meet a goal it could jeopardize us with getting EPA funding. It's more helpful to have a modeling tool to help local decision makers with their decisions vs this is where you should protect — its all in the delivery.

**Cassie Davis (NY): Agreement with reservations category, some of the language is similar to our NY ecosystem based management programs that are very specific place based geographies, so I'm struggling a bit to how some of these aspects such as the socioeconomic considerations would be applicable watershed wide when it's so placebased — we need tools to develop this and understand the heartburn.**

**Ashley Hullinger (PA): I agree with agreement with reservations and would like to see some of the other comments from the jurisdictions reflected, but as for PA we can definitely voice our strong commitment to how we monitor streams in our**

	<p><b>agency and practices that affect water quality on the watershed scale and the holistic prioritization as we view restoration as critical.</b></p> <p><b>Angel Valdez (MD):</b> I think we probably fall within agreement with reservations, while making sure there is still that level of state control and achievability, as that's incredibly important and this really drills down to a lot of local decisions. The current makeup of this HWGIT can't really affect the outcomes of those. I think MD is kind of in an odd spot because we already have our own Healthy Watersheds Assessment tool. So, if the Bay Program wanted to develop their own thing, we could go along and mimic it — but there are so many other pieces at play when you flip the goal by looking at watershed health versus healthy watersheds. That said, we're not going to stand in the way. We like where it's going, but we're agreeing with reservations.</p> <p><b>Holly Walker (DE):</b> To preface, we support healthy watersheds, but DE is in a situation where we don't have any defined healthy watersheds at this time. That doesn't mean we're not doing the work — it just means our definitions are different. Prior to my time, different standards were set up where watersheds would only be considered healthy when they meet the TMDL loads and the water quality standards. We're not at that point yet. We're also facing a lot of changes with a new administration, so I don't want to influence this. <b>I'll abstain until I can have a better connection with our new administration about this.</b></p> <p><b>Lorena Kowalewski (DC):</b> DC also does not have any defined healthy watersheds, so I am going to abstain until I can talk to others.</p> <p>Peter Claggett: Thank you, everyone, for all your suggestions. We have recorded all the comments and will work on updating the language to get revised two-pagers out to you. Once you receive them, please review and let us know—especially those with reservations—whether your concerns have been addressed and your comments captured. It's possible we won't have full agreement by the time we go to the MB, but we'll make sure they understand the situation. We are taking your suggestions to heart and will do what we can.</p> <p><b>POST MEETING UPDATE:</b> Following the meeting, the HWGIT leadership worked to update the Healthy Watersheds outcome assessment based on the feedback and shared it with the HWGIT via email. [<a href="#">Revised HW outcome assessment 2/7/25</a>]</p>
<b>1:00</b>	<p><b>Adjourn</b></p> <p><i>NEXT HWGIT MEETING:</i> Monday, April 14th (11:00 AM - 1:00 PM)</p>