



**Chesapeake Bay Program
Principals' Staff Committee Conference Call
March 12, 2015**

Program Update

CBPO Calendar

March 12	Management Board Conference Call
March 16	CBWA Management Strategies out for public comment
March 24	Goal Implementation Team Chairs Meeting
March 31-April 2	Environment Virginia Symposium (Lexington, Va.)
April 7-9	Chesapeake Stormwater Partners Retreat (Shepherdstown, W.V.)
April 9	Management Board Conference Call
May 20-21	LGAC Quarterly Meeting
May 21-22	CAC Quarterly Meeting

Program Updates

2014 CBP Bay Barometer

On February 3, the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership released its annual "Bay Barometer." This year's report describes a Bay that is still impaired, but an ecosystem that is in recovery. While the watershed continues to struggle against development, pollution and other challenges, a handful of the environmental indicators presented—including American shad, striped bass and underwater grass abundance—have shown signs of resilience. Still scientists have seen no significant changes in the last decade of water quality monitoring data and a sizeable drop in the abundance of blue crabs.

Communities have continued to reduce the nutrient and sediment pollution that has long plagued the Bay, and some living resources have improved in the face of challenges. Underwater grass acreage has risen 24 percent, American shad have continued to return to their Potomac River spawning grounds and the relative abundance of young striped bass in both Maryland and Virginia waters has recovered from the low numbers seen in 2012.

By tracking changes in this data over time, scientists can better understand ecological patterns and the long-term effects of our restoration work. There was extensive news coverage of the release and a news post on the partnership website.

Contact: Margaret Enloe, 410-267-5470, menloe@chesapeakebay.net

EO Progress Report

The CBP Federal partners are finalizing their work on the 2014 Executive Order Progress Report, subsequent to the President Obama's 2009 Executive Order on Chesapeake Bay Protection and Restoration (13508). The CBP Federal Office Directors have been in contact with OMB/CEQ which provided comments on the draft report. Final edits are being completed including updated budgetary numbers. The final document will be sent to OMB/CEQ the week of March 16.

Contact: Jim Edward, (410) 267-5705, edward.james@epa.gov

Re-envisioned ChesapeakeStat

The Chesapeake Bay Program launched a re-envisioned ChesapeakeStat at www.chesapeakestat.com. With a new Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement in June 2014, a new ChesapeakeStat website will serve as a single source for tracking progress toward our new goals and outcomes. It will serve as a key accountability and communications product to help explain what CBP is, how we are governed and how we work. The site is also intended to be a gateway to three tools that will improve information-sharing and decision-making at the Bay Program: ChesapeakeProgress, ChesapeakeDecisions, and ChesapeakeData.

Work is well underway to develop ChesapeakeProgress, a tool that will help track our progress toward the goals and outcomes of the partnership and will house the data and information that make up our environmental indicators. ChesapeakeDecisions will support CBP's adaptive management process, while ChesapeakeData will make our data more accessible and may even help us enhance our data collection. CBP's TMDL Tracker, Two-Year Milestone progress tool, Best Management Practice review table, and Tracking Healthy Watersheds tools are all linked from the ChesapeakeStat homepage. These tools will eventually be integrated into the ChesapeakeProgress site.

Contacts: Doreen Vetter (vetter.doreen@epa.gov) and Guy Stephens (gstephens@chesapeakebay.net)

Water Quality Standards Achievement indicator release

On January 23, the CBP partnership released the 2011-2013 data for the Water Quality Standards Achievement and held a media call with officials from USGS who compiled the data. As with all partnership indicator data, the WQSA findings were posted to the partnership website (www.chesapeakebay.net), along with a partnership news post detailing the findings. This indicator measures progress towards the achievement of water quality standards for dissolved oxygen, water clarity/underwater bay grasses and chlorophyll-*a* for each 3-year assessment period beginning in 1985. The data shows a positive trend in the long term, however the short term shows a slight decrease from 30.93% in the previous period (2010-2012) to 28.93% of the Bay's tidal segments in attainment, due primarily to losses in bay grasses following severe weather events during the most recent 3-year period. Findings are mixed, with some monitoring sites showing increases and others showing declines and still others showing no significant change, both in the long-term and the short-term trends.

Contact: Peter Tango, (410) 267-9875, ptango@chesapeakebay.net

Bay Backpack Re-launched

The Chesapeake Bay Program's *Bay Backpack*, a website for environmental educators in the region, was recently re-launched with a new design, making it even easier for teachers to find resources that bring the Bay and its surrounding lands into their classrooms. Teachers and educators can use the site's updated design to find more than 750 lesson plans, books, curriculum guides and other teaching resources that are grouped into themed collections—including Bay animals and habitats, people and culture, Earth system science, land use and water quality. An interactive map of nearly 350 field studies allows teachers to search by location, grade level and subject matter to find hands-on learning opportunities outside the classroom. Bay Backpack also continues to provide a catalog of professional development and funding opportunities that support environmental education efforts, and the new responsive design means users can easily access resources on both desktop and mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets.

Additional information: <http://baybackpack.com/>

CBP Director at Chesapeake Bay Bowl

CBP Director Nick DiPasquale served as the keynote speaker during the lunch event for the 18th annual Chesapeake Bay Bowl on February 7 at George Mason University. The Chesapeake Bay Bowl is a regional competition of the National Ocean Sciences Bowl. High school students from Maryland, Delaware, southeastern Pennsylvania, Northern Virginia and Washington D.C. are eligible to participate. Teams of 4-5 participants answer questions based on the marine sciences in a quick answer timed format and more complex team challenge questions.

Contact: Nick DiPasquale, (410) 267-5710, dipasquale.nicholas@epa.gov

Advisory Committee Updates

Local Government Advisory Committee

The purpose of the LGAC is to advise the Executive Council on how to effectively implement projects and engage the support of local governments to achieve the goals of the Bay Agreement.

The Local Government Advisory Committee conducted an abbreviated meeting via conference call on March 5, 2015 after the in-person meeting, originally scheduled as a two-day meeting in Winchester, VA, had to be cancelled due to hazardous weather conditions. New officers were elected. The Honorable Janine F. Burns, Mathews County, VA Supervisor, replaces the Honorable Penny Gross (Fairfax County, VA Supervisor) as Chair. The Honorable Leo Lutz, Columbia Borough, PA Mayor, replaces the Honorable John Thomas of Hampden Township, PA as Pennsylvania Vice Chair. The Honorable Ruby Brabo, King George County, VA Supervisor, was elected to her second term as Vice Chair of the Virginia delegation. Maryland and District of Columbia Vice Chair elections were tabled until May, 2015 due to lack of quorums in both delegations. LGAC established a work group to begin drafting revisions to its Bylaws to enable representation from West Virginia, Delaware and New York. Adoption of the revised Bylaws is anticipated to take place at the Spring 2015 quarterly meeting which is being held in Harrisburg, PA on May 20-21, 2015. For additional information about LGAC, please contact Mary Gattis at mgattis@allianceforthebay.org. To be added to the Interested Parties e-mail distribution list, please contact Amy Robins at arobins@allianceforthebay.org.

Contact: Mary Gattis, mgattis@allianceforthebay.org

Citizens' Advisory Committee

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) is charged with responsibility for representing residents and stakeholders of the Chesapeake Bay watershed in the restoration effort and advising the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership on all aspects of restoration.

The Citizens Advisory Committee held a quarterly meeting in Staunton, VA on Feb 19-20. CAC met with VA Deputy Secretary of Natural Resources; learned about the City of Staunton's partnership with a local watershed group to install stormwater projects in the city; discussed agriculture in Virginia, including hosting a panel of three local farmers; heard and discussed updates from the Bay Program and the Management Strategies; and discussed CAC's priorities and work plan.

Contact: Jessica Blackburn, jblackburn@allianceforthebay.org

Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee

The Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) provides scientific and technical guidance to the Chesapeake Bay Program on measures to restore and protect the Chesapeake Bay.

STAC held its fourth quarterly meeting of FY 2014 on March 10-11, 2015 at the Sheraton Hotel in Annapolis, Maryland. STAC is currently planning two workshops that will take place before May 31, 2015. The workshops are listed below.

- 1) *Comparison of Shallow Water Models for Use in Supporting Chesapeake Bay Management Decision-making* - The workshop objectives are (1) to assess the relative skill of multiple linked hydrodynamic/water quality models in terms of their ability to reproduce observations of multiple variables at select shallow water sites in the Bay; (2) to compare the modeled Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) computed from an empirical SAV model for each participating hydrodynamic/water quality model; and (3) to compare results of nutrient reduction strategies applied to these multiple estuarine models at these select sites. The workshop will take place on May 20, 2015 at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS).
- 2) *Evaluating Proprietary BMPs: Is it time for a State, Regional, or National Program?* - The Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requires significant reductions in nutrient and sediment runoff from new- and re-developed land, as well as restoration goals for existing developed land. In both cases, these goals can be met through a variety of nonstructural and structural treatment practices commonly known as best management practices or BMPs. Manufactured treatment devices (MTDs) are structural BMPs that are typically proposed for ultra-urban or other high density developments. Verifying the performance of MTDs can be difficult and protocols for their evaluations are evolving. The outcome of this workshop will seek to provide recommendations on the shape and function of a Baywide MTD evaluation program. The workshop will take place on March 24, 2015 at the Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC) offices.

For additional information about the workshops above, contact Rachel Dixon at dixonra@si.edu or visit that STAC workshop webpage at http://www.chesapeake.org/stac/stac_ws.php.

STAC is in the process of finalizing six workshop reports. Below is a list of reports that STAC will distribute over the next few months.

- 1) Management Effects on Water Quality Trends.
- 2) The Peculiarities of Pervious Cover: A Research Synthesis on Allocating Pollutant Loads to Urban Land Use in the Chesapeake Bay.
- 3) Designing Sustainable Stream Restoration Projects in the Chesapeake Bay.
- 4) Exploring Applications of Behavioral Economics Research to Environmental Policy-making in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.
- 5) Re-plumbing the Chesapeake Bay Watershed: Improving Roadside Ditch Management to Meet TMDL Water Quality Goals.
- 6) Assessing the Chesapeake Bay Forage Base: Existing Data and Research Priorities.

Finally, STAC is working closely with CBP representatives to plan for the upcoming CBP Partnership requested STAC sponsored independent scientific peer reviews. The 10 remaining reviews will take place between now and 2016. The STAC reviews will help inform the Partnership's 2017 mid-point assessment.

Goal Implementation Team, STAR and Communication Workgroup Updates

Fisheries Goal Implementation Team

The Sustainable Fisheries GIT focuses on advancing ecosystem-based fisheries management by using science to make informed fishery management decisions that cross state boundaries.

- Management strategy teams are addressing signatory comments and finalizing the drafts for the public release on March 16th.
- The Chesapeake Bay Stock Assessment Committee (CBSAC) had a conference call on March 9th to discuss and finalize the draft terms of reference (TORs) that will guide the next blue crab benchmark stock assessment, which is currently scheduled to be complete in late 2016/early 2017. The final TORs will affect how much funding will be necessary to complete the assessment.
- GIT staff and the Executive Committee are planning for the semiannual full Fisheries GIT meeting for the first week of June 2015. The meeting will take place in Virginia (specifics tbd) and will cover multiple topics including the 2015 Blue Crab Advisory Report.
- The STAC Forage Workshop chairs Tom Ihde (STAC member) and Ed Houde (Chesapeake Biological Lab) as well as the rest of the steering committee are working on the final workshop report and recommendations. They hope to have a finalized report this spring after the STAC review process.
- The Fisheries GIT Executive Committee will have their next monthly conference call on Monday, March 16th.

Contact: Bruce Vogt, bruce.vogt@noaa.gov

Habitat Goal Implementation Team

The Habitat GIT is restoring a network of land and water habitats to afford a range of public benefits and to support priority species.

The Habitat GIT is focused on developing the Management Strategies to support the six habitat outcomes in the new Agreement as well as the Fish Habitat outcome with the Fisheries GIT:

- Fish Passage Outcome: (POC: Mary Andrews, NOAA—Fish Passage Workgroup Chair) The initial management strategy draft was sent to the Fish Passage Workgroup for comments by Dec 31. The team reviewed the comments, revised the draft and sent to the interested parties for comments by February 20th to prepare for public input release.
- SAV Outcome: (POC: N/A) The draft has been developed based on previous strategy documents however there is no official POC to coordinate review. The Habitat GIT has solicited over 12 individuals to chair the SAV Workgroup and take lead on the final steps of the drafting process and received no response. The Habitat GIT requests that the MB or PSC assign someone to fill this role. Meanwhile, Lee Karrh (former workgroup chair) sent the draft to workgroup members for review and the GIT has revised the draft based on comments for Management Board review and public input release.
- Wetland Outcome: (POC: Erin McLaughlin, MDNR—Wetland Workgroup Co-Chair) The management strategy drafting team reviewed workgroup comments received on an initial outline. A revised draft was submitted to the Management Board for review.

- Brook Trout: (POC: Steve Perry, EBTJV—Action Team Lead) The management strategy drafting team is requesting and reviewing comments received on an initial draft. A revised draft was shared with the Management Board for their review.
- Stream Health: (POC: Neely Law, CWP—Stream Health Workgroup Co-Chair) The management strategy had been in development and several drafting team meetings were held. The draft was shared with the Stream Health workgroup and comments were addressed and incorporated into the strategy for Management Board review.
- Black Duck: (POC: Lacy Alison, FWS Mig Bird Div.—Action Team Lead) The initial drafting team call was on December 17th and a working session was held on Jan 28th. A revised draft was sent to the Management Board.

President Obama's proposed fiscal year 2016 budget was released and includes nearly \$38 million dollars to fund land conservation in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. If fully appropriated, this funding could conserve up to 7,500 acres.

Contact: Jennifer Greiner, Jennifer_greiner@fws.gov

Water Quality Goal Implementation Team

The Water Quality GIT works to evaluate, focus and accelerates the implementation of practices, policies and programs that will restore water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal tributaries to conditions that support living resources and protect human health.

Erosion and Sediment Control Practice

The WQGIT approved the decision to allow states to use the Abandoned Mine Reclamation BMP to offset loads for all extractive areas that are not disturbed for 2015 Progress. Additionally, the WQGIT directed the WTWG to make a recommendation for: 1) Whether or not Erosion and Sediment Control – Construction should be used to treat extractive areas; 2) Establish a new expert panel if determined to be necessary.

Shoreline Nutrient Management Expert Panel Report

The WQGIT raised several comments and concerns with the report and requested, in accordance with the BMP Protocol, that the coordinator of the panel work with the commenters to develop and incorporate clarifying language into the report to address the concerns raised. The report, with the new language, will be presented to the WQGIT again in the March timeframe.

Management Strategies

A revised draft of the Water Quality Management Strategy was presented, highlighting major changes as a result of the Management Board retreat. The main points from the initial review drafts of the Toxic Contaminants Management Strategies were also presented to the WQGIT.

Midpoint Assessment Website and Outlook Calendar

A Midpoint Assessment website has been developed to house documentation associated with the midpoint assessment priorities, including the Project Plan. In addition, external outlook calendars for the WQGIT, Management Board, and PSC have been developed for those key decisions and briefings under the midpoint assessment from 2015-2018.

Monitoring Report Briefings

The WQGIT received updates from USGS on the findings and recommendations from the recently released Conowingo Report, and the upcoming BASIN Water Quality Report.

Upcoming WQGIT Topics for March Calls

- The WQGIT will hold two calls in March (March 9th, and March 23rd). The WQGIT has also scheduled a full-day, interim face-to-face meeting on April 13th at CBPO in Annapolis.
- Drafts of the Land Use Management Strategies and the Forestry Management Strategies will be presented to the WQGIT.
- The WQGIT will reach a decision regarding the Shoreline Nutrient Management expert panel report.
- The WQGIT will receive updates on the draft acreage for federal land boundaries, and the Chesapeake Bay high res LiDAR data.

Contact: Lucinda Power, power.lucinda@epa.gov

Foster Stewardship Goal Implementation Team

The Fostering Stewardship GIT promotes individual stewardship, supports environmental education for all ages, and assists citizens, communities and local governments in undertaking initiatives to achieve restoration and conservation in the Chesapeake region. It aims to build public support of restoration efforts and increase citizen engagement and active stewardship.

Citizen Stewardship

The Citizen Stewardship Outcome Stakeholder Team met on February 9th. The group reviewed the updated framework for describing the levels of citizen engagement and discussed how this will be used as a framework for discussing the management strategy. The attendees also provided feedback on the factors influencing section and the management approach sections of the Strategy. A subset of the Citizen Stewardship Outcome Team will meet on Monday, March 16th to discuss the development of an index that would provide a metric(s) for the citizen stewardship outcome. Please contact Amy Handen at Amy_Handen@nps.gov for more information.

Environmental Literacy

The Education Workgroup Leadership Team will meet on April 6th. The focus of this meeting will include the implementation of the Environmental Literacy Indicator Tool (ELIT) for the 2014-2015 baseline. Please contact Shannon Sprague at Shannon.Sprague@noaa.gov for more information.

Public Access

The Public Access Team has completed the data call for 2014 and has identified 17 new access sites, 14 new sites in VA, 1 in MD, 1 in PA, 1 in NY. Please contact John Davy at John_Davy@nps.gov for more information.

Land Conservation

The Partnership's new name, logo, and website continue to gain visibility. A communication plan is currently under development by the Communications and Outreach Work Group. This plan seeks to strengthen internal communication among the more than 50 organizations that participate in the Partnership and build a robust "community of practice" for land conservation in the Chesapeake. The Steering Committee will meet on March 24th in Bladensburg MD where they will work to establish goals and priorities for the next year and beyond. For more information on the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership contact Kate_Baker@partner.nps.gov.

LandScope

There are no new updates from LandScope. For more information please contact the LandScope Chesapeake Team at LandScope_ContactUs@naturereserve.org
Contact: Amy Handen, ahanden@chesapeakebay.net

Enhance Partnering, Leadership, and Management Goal Implementation Team

The goal of the Enhance Partnering, Leadership, and Management GIT is to continually improve the governance and management of the CBP Partnership.

Local Leadership Outcome Management Strategy:

This management strategy continues to be further developed. The drafting team has received feedback from a targeted group of stakeholders from across the watershed. The drafting team will incorporate comments received during the Management Board fatal flaw review to prepare the public input draft for release on March 16, 2015.

Independent Evaluator Function and the Chesapeake Accountability and Recovery Act:

The Independent Evaluator Workgroup recently met with EPA CBPO managers to discuss a process and timeline for responding to the new law which requires an independent evaluator of the program. Feedback reaffirmed that GIT 6 will continue to be the lead for developing options for the PSC. Next steps are to develop criteria for nominees, as well a description of the expectations for the independent evaluator and to develop a timeline and process leading to establishment of the evaluation process.

Governance Document:

The Goal Team has formed an Action Team to develop revision recommendations to present to the Management Board. The team plans to present the updated governance document to the Management Board in April.

CBP Annual Performance Review:

Preliminary steps in planning this regular and structured performance review have been initiated among Goal Team members. A subgroup under GIT6 with members from across the Partnership will likely be formed to develop a proposal for the timing and content of the reviews. One concept suggests the performance review could be timed to follow the release of the Bay Barometer but be before the annual EC meetings allowing for reports to the EC.

Contact: Greg Allen, allen.greg@epa.gov

Scientific, Technical Assessment, and Reporting Team

The purpose of STAR (Scientific, Technical Analysis and Reporting) is to facilitate productive deployment of scientific resources, to provide timely, quality information to managers, and to expand communication between workgroups.

Modeling Workgroup

Two quarterly review meetings were held in January, addressing aspects of the WQSTM and the Watershed Model. As Phase 6 model construction continues through 2015, there will be further incorporation of several factors.

- Update of the Airshed Model to the CMAQ Bidirectional Ammonia Model
- Revisions to the Watershed Model system structure and a revisiting of model calibration methods
- Refinements and updates to the WQSTM and shallow water simulations
- Continued exploration of factors associated with TMDL
 - Effects of Conowingo Infill
 - Influence of climate change on Chesapeake WQ standards and the 2010 Bay TMDL
 - Review of James River chlorophyll criteria and James River TMDL allocations
 - Influence of oyster filter feeders on water quality, with increase aquaculture and sanctuary development

In addition, the Modeling WG will continue to carry out requests by STAR that support the needs of the WQGIT and provide TMDL midpoint assessment support, and assess and explain water quality trends.

Climate Change Workgroup

Efforts of developing the climate resilience management strategy are ongoing. Both outcome groups have held drafting meetings and a combined management strategy document has been compiled. This document was circulated to the entire Climate Change WG for feedback, and the workgroup reconvened on February 18 to review comments and make revisions to the draft.

Presentation on BASIN report to the Water-Quality Goal Team

STAR provided a presentation to the Water-Quality Goal Team on the initial recommendations for the BASIN (building and sustaining integrated networks) water-quality report. The first draft is expected in March for comment. STAR is also preparing a summary of results from the Global Seminar Services on Monitoring.

Contact: Peter Tango, ptango@chesapeakebay.net

Communications Workgroup

The Communications Workgroup provides strategic planning and expert advice to support the communication needs of the Chesapeake Bay Program partners, and spur public action through consistent messaging, expanded media coverage, use of multimedia and online tools, comprehensive branding and promotion, outreach to stakeholders, and coordinated internal and external communications.

Contact: Margaret Enloe, menloe@chesapeakebay.net

Recent Meetings and Events

March 10-11	STAC (Annapolis, MD)
Mar 5-6	LGAC meeting (Winchester, VA)
Mar 1	NY/PA/VA Animal Ag Program Assessments
Feb 19-20	CAC meeting (Staunton, Va.)
Feb 18	PSC meeting (Washington, D.C.)
Feb 7	Chesapeake Bay Bowl (Fairfax, Va.)
Feb	EO Progress Report release