



**Scientific Technical Assessment
and Reporting (STAR) Team Meeting**

Theme: Outcome Assessment Support

Thursday, January 23rd, 2025

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Minutes

Meeting Materials: [Link](#)

This meeting was recorded for internal use only to assure the accuracy of the meeting notes.

Action Items:

- ✓ STAR will consider having a future meeting topic on the implications around the fact that some indicators are quantitative and progress driven, while others are more qualitative and assessment focused.

10:00 – 10:05 AM: Welcome, Introductions & Announcements

Ken Hyer (US Geological Survey, USGS) and **Kimberly Van Meter** (Penn State), STAR chair and vice chair, **Breck Sullivan** (USGS) STAR Coordinator, **Peter Tango** (USGS) CBP Monitoring Coordinator

Upcoming Conferences, Meetings, Workshops and Webinars

- [14th National Monitoring Conference](#) – March 10-12, 2025, Green Bay, Wisconsin.
- [The 35th Annual Environment Virginia Symposium](#) – April 8-10, 2025, Lexington, VA.

10:05 – 11:15 AM: 2025 Indicator publishing schedule

Doug Bell (EPA)

Description: The Status and Trends Workgroup (STWG, within STAR) is beginning to scope a 2025 work schedule for ChesapeakeProgress, considering modifications to the Strategy Review System and pending modifications to the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement, particularly for those outcomes with milestone dates of 2025. Doug Bell, Status and Trends Coordinator, will explain the request to Goal Implementation Teams (GITs)/Outcome leads to support this schedule, followed by time for questions. Each GIT/Outcome lead should have received an email regarding the below request from the STWG which will help develop a publication schedule for indicators and any communication products in 2025:

1. *If your Outcome has an indicator (particularly with a milestone date of 2025), do you anticipate an Indicator update at some point during 2025 as part of your regular data collection schedule? If yes, when will data be ready to begin the update process?*
2. *In 2022, all Outcomes were assessed for their attainment (i.e., completed, on-course, off-course). Will your GIT or Workgroup be able to make a similar determination by August 2025.*
 - a. *We assume the work burden would be a status update, rather than a holistic assessment of attainment that was performed in 2022.*
 - b. *August is suggested given the lead time to produce a product before the December 2025 Executive Council (EC) meeting.*

Doug Bell: You received an email from Gabriel regarding the Status and Trends schedule for 2025. We have started doing this every year to help figure out the work calendar for our team, the web development team, and Rachel's communication team, since we all work together. We are asking that you answer the two prompts in the email.

The first (listed above) covers if you are updating your indicator in 2025, particularly if it states 2025 in the language. This is to design our work calendar so we can be responsive to you.

The second (listed above) is a request for your questions regarding outcome attainment and progress. We are also looking for suggestions for how we are going to display/distribute this information – a special addition Bay Barometer? Timeline? Special webpage for progress? This is more of a web development and communications team question.

We don't have a need by date for a response. We asked for the end of January, but we understand that all of the outcomes are doing a lot right now.

Q: *Kaylyn Gootman:* This is great. I really appreciate the outreach and getting coordinated for the year, especially around indicators. I would like some clarity on who is responsible for what. In the initial email, I was confused by being listed as an outcome lead – it's a collaborative effort. Are you asking this question for every indicator? Who goes with what?

- **A:** *Doug Bell:* Yeah, thanks Kaylyn. I was hoping these were going out to GITs, workgroups, and other relative context, but it went out to all outcomes. You are right. I think that second question is a discussion between all of the outcome leads – what are you thinking within the GIT with respect to 2025 outcome attainment? As best as possible, we can help bring people together with email correspondence. I'll talk to Gabriel about that. It was an unintended confusion. It goes to show how many people are involved with indicators.
- **Response:** *Kaylyn Gootman:* Yeah, and I think especially if we are talking about things related to the "Clean Water" tab on Progress, there are three outcomes.

There's a mix of folks that are on the monitoring team and the implementation and evaluation. I just want to make sure nothing gets lost or falls through the cracks. I am happy to coordinate this wherever seems fit for our groups, but I don't want to miss anyone or anything. More clarity on who's responsible for what and if we need to make any swaps would be great.

- *Doug Bell:* I updated our contact list and that contact list was indicator related, status and trends related. They were all outdated. Gabriel is helping me update contacts. I can share that contact list which basically summarizes who we anticipate as the first in line contact for the indicator. That might help you fill in gaps or know who we are intending to reach.
- *Kaylyn Gootman:* Thanks, and I fully believe in any and all of us. We can make any tweaks or additions to that list, that would be something we could help with. I want to get this on time, but we'll wait to hear.
- *Doug Bell:* Rolling basis is what we're anticipating and reminders when necessary. Those that are ready to update, we anticipate, will reach out to us. I know Chris Guy has a couple that are ready to go, and we'll get going on that. So, rolling basis with responses and we can do polite reminders.

Comment from chat: *Bruce Vogt:* We should be good for end of January. Just checking status of oyster update. Blue crab is for certain. Forage and fish habitat don't have indicators, aside from forage indicator report. I don't want to side track things now but one challenge we had in the past was whether indicators need to be about measuring progress or can they be more about assessing change in the system (forage was not about progress but more about assessing status and trends of forage base). This was important to us from an ecosystem basis. But if all outcomes are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) going forward perhaps indicators will be more directly tied to progress.

- **Response from chat:** *Kristin Saunders:* Hundred percent want to underscore this point for consideration. It's important.
- **Response from chat:** *Jennifer Olszewski:* agreed - I would think the most useful indicators measure progress relevant to what partners / stakeholders care about

Q: *Amy Handen:* This is great. Thank you so much, Doug for continuing to encourage us and have us bring indicators to the forefront so we can continue to assess where we are. I just wanted to say that we collect data for a reason, which is to learn from it, to learn what is working and what's not working, and to make decisions based on that data. I know we're pausing the Strategy Review System (SRS) process but collecting data in isolation doesn't enable us to evolve, learn, and change. I would love to make sure that when the Beyond2025 work is complete, we revisit the SRS system ensuring it continues so we can use the data and learn from it to grow.

- **A:** *Doug Bell:* Thank you, Amy. That's where our mind is too – at least mine.

Question: *Ken Hyer:* To your question 2b about what we are thinking about for the 2025 EC Meeting, my reaction is I'm sure we have to wait and get feedback from all the outcomes before we gain clarity on that, but to me, it's too big of an opportunity to miss. I think there is a really good discussion to be had about what we should produce, but I can't see not having something going forward this fall to couple with a revised agreement and a statement of "here's what we're seeing for indicators and progress and here's our story," both good and bad. In my mind, we have to do something, it's just a matter of bigger or more concise. Happy to chat with you more as we get feedback from everyone on which indicators are going to be updated.

- **Comment:** *Doug:* Thanks Ken. I would take your advice on having that conversation with STAR too. On the type of product and what's necessary. With the August timeframe, I figure there is going to be a lot of review and people making sure the representation is accurate on the outcome.

Q: *Peter Claggett:* I'll try to make this a constructive critique. For the Healthy Watersheds indicator, it's basically a two-part indicator – with impervious surface change and change in protected lands. The Healthy Watersheds goal team went through the SRS process this year and brought it to the attention of the Management Board, that we can't track our progress until we have a date stamp to the protected lands data. This way we can understand what was protected where and over what time period, which we currently cannot do. I emphasized that strongly and we put forward a goal team funding project to track protected lands, that was rejected. Then, when the priority projects came up last week, we put forward tracking protected lands and told them it was necessary. Imagine if you couldn't track when Best Management Practices (BMPs) were implemented, how messed up you'd be when looking at progress. This suggestion of the Healthy Watersheds goal team in support of Protected Lands workgroup was patently rejected. Where we come now with the indicators is here is another opportunity, if I want to look at this in a positive sense, where I can say "guess what, we don't know whether we're on track or off track because we can't track protected lands." I am wondering if this is another opportunity to get that message said. Although, it's clear to me now that the Management Board doesn't see that as a priority. So maybe going to the Principal's Staff Committee (PSC) or some roundabout way of getting the message across. Rather than saying we can't do it, we've been telling you all exactly what we need to track progress and have an indicator, and no one cares. We'll go through this exercise and say we can't report status. It looks bad on us, but personally I think it should look bad on the Management Board.

- **A:** *Doug Bell:* Thank you, Peter. I don't know what I can do to help but we can turn it into an opportunity. I haven't been around, but I know folks have been talking about "what is an outcome? What are the components of an outcome? How does it get supported?" You should be able to measure that outcome. It should be financially supported in whatever technical needs you have in making

that assessment. That might be some type of very clear requirement of what is a post 2014 outcome in the agreement. I hear you, Peter. I'm sorry.

- **Comment:** *Jeff Lerner:* And just to add on to what Peter said. I guess the concern is that if we can't measure things, does that mean that our outcome goes away, because it is no longer relevant? To me, that seems like that's where we're headed with this outcome exercise. My fear is that we'll say "we have this data gap, therefore you're not relevant anymore. Just throw the whole thing out." That may be extreme, but you know you can't help but say that's kind of how we felt coming out of that meeting last week.
- **Comment from chat:** *John Wolf:* Minor clarification - we can't track change in protected lands.
 - **Response from chat:** *Doug:* Thanks for clarifying, John.
- **Response:** *Peter Tango:* Along the lines of this, thinking about water quality. We have had expectations of meeting water standards. Yet, for 20 years we have not had the data to measure completely the status of those and we have been doing it indicator wise and proxy wise. It's really given us the same sense. If there is anything that sits as a quintessential element of what the agreement has wrapped around with water quality that we talked about, we don't have the measures, we haven't had the data, and we haven't had the analysis to support it. Yet, it's certainly a central point of the work we are trying to do, but I think that's giving us the fodder to say if we're not where we are now, how do we better align and what are the things that are close and time and farther in time to fulfill that need. I wouldn't give up on saying that your outcome is not appropriate, but maybe the couching of the language and what you can measure. Hopefully that opportunity here is to align with the things that we do know and what's really close at hand. That should hopefully facilitate any update, revision, or modification of the outcome to be something measurable and attainable. I think we're going towards the same sort of evaluations and having to tune it up a bit to understand and reflect on what we can say, can't say, and why some folks are asking to maybe consider what the scope is in our outcome for the water quality side.
- **Comment:** *Ken Hyer:* Building on that, Peter. I think we need to just use the outcome assessment as the way to continue to raise this right now. That's probably the best path as opposed to going through STAR. We need to use the outcome assessment.
- **Comment:** *Alexandra Fries:* I'm with University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES). We do a lot of indicator work. I just want to add on to what Peter is saying. You know for indicators where we do have goals, data, and information, it is important to update those outcomes. For outcomes where we don't have enough data, monitoring, or research, I think they should still be included, and we should have some language about those needs. It shouldn't get lost just because we don't have enough information to have it be as definitive as some other indicators. Thank you.

Responding to Bruce's earlier comment: *Bruce Vogt:* This is thinking ahead a little bit, not particularly about the exercise that Doug is working on now. Thinking about when we have a better sense about what the outcomes will be. One of the challenges of the 2014 agreement, I don't think we were alone in this, was some of our outcome indicators were very much tied to assessing progress and others weren't. Part of the reasons for that is we have some qualitative outcomes. The track that we took was for the ones that were more quantitative, for example, oysters and blue crabs, we used the data we have to show how we are making progress towards those. For things like forage, it was more about assessing the change in the ecosystem. So, more like status and trends on forage availability, which was important, but wasn't necessarily showing how we were meeting our progress towards the outcome. I think it created some confusion early on and there was some back and forth about "whoa, what are you guys really doing and why don't you have an indicator to track progress?" And we were like "well, we're not trying to track progress this is more about assessing the ecosystem." So, I'm just thinking ahead if there are outcomes like that going forward, maybe there is a need to have a goal depending on what your outcome is. I'm thinking that since the requirement now is that the outcomes be SMART, I assume that indicators associated with those will sort of be tied to progress or attainment of the outcome. There could also be a need for things that are more about ecosystem change. I'm thinking ahead as we start to have outcomes in place and we're putting the other components together with those outcomes and indicators. I just wanted to raise that it's been a challenge in the past and hopefully at some point we can sort of talk about that as we are further down the road.

- **Response:** *Ken Hyer:* Thanks, Bruce. I appreciate hearing that and understanding what's involved with that. It makes sense. The thing it triggered in my mind is I know a bunch of us have talked as we go through this outcome assessment and potential revisions. It's almost that idea of developing our logic models and somewhere in there I would think, we would be capturing output and what indicators we would develop as part of that. I agree completely with you.

Comment in chat: *Britt Slattery:* While I tend to agree that we might be smarter to scale our outcomes/ indicators to what is truly attainable, it also feels a little like how I start my to do lists (first item is something I've already done, so I can check at least that one item off as complete lol!).

Q: *Doug Bell:* Bruce, there's no requirement for the outcome to be SMART? Requirement in capital R in guidance that it must be SMART, right? I know we're trending in that direction to have things have those SMART components, but I don't want to put that out as saying "this is a requirement moving forward. Don't even be creative when thinking about outcomes in any other way." Unless I am mistaken, and it is a requirement, please correct me.

- **Comment:** *Breck Sullivan:* I mean it's in the Executive Council charge; one of the seven bullets that we have to focus on.
- **A:** *Ken Hyer:* I'd have to pull the language up but I'm remembering a very specific exchange in the Beyond 2025 discussion where we said we're moving towards quantitative outcomes, however not to the exclusion of directional outcomes, if necessary. You're probably right Doug. It's more along the lines of strongly suggest, but not to the exclusion of other thoughts.
- **Comment from chat:** *Alexandra Fries:* Maybe I'm wrong, but I would think we want SMART indicators, but not all aspects of the SMART are going to apply to all indicators. Especially indicators that only meet a few of the SMART criteria but are still really important.
- **A from chat:** *Kristin Saunders:* It is in the EC charge but during the robust discussion there was acknowledgment that some directional outcomes would continue to be necessary. What Ken said!
- **Response:** *Doug Bell:* Thanks, Ken. Thanks, Kristin. Bruce, I know I worked with you a little bit on what is an indicator in forage fish and you guys wrapping up the forage fish outcome seems like a really hardy, thoughtful report that's going to inform the next fish habitat outcome. Can it help us think about what is an outcome? What is the logic between an end outcome (environmental change, something that we're working towards) and an output (component of our work along the way)? We might not have been as informed about creating outcomes 15 years ago. So, comment back on that, but that's all I got. I appreciate everyone's comments. I know there will be more.
- **Comment:** *Bruce Vogt:* I just want to say thanks, Doug. I hope I didn't come across as criticizing anyone. I was just noting an issue. The other example is blue crab. We have a targeted threshold that we aim for. At one point, there was a lot of pressure on us to say, "are you meeting your target at 100%?" We're hardly ever at 100%. There was a bit of confusion around what we were tracking. I think those things have been mostly resolved, but I could see in the future that there would be a need for some flexibility in the indicators. I don't think it'll be a one size fits all for whatever the updated outcomes turn out to be. I was sort of flagging it as a conversation for later down the road. Maybe we could have a little more clarity and guidance on what indicators should strive to assess and maybe there is room for both progress and something else that's important to you – either directional or ecosystem based.
- **Response:** *Doug Bell:* Thanks, Bruce. I am going to maintain that so we can work with Ken and Breck in further conversation. That is where we want to get to in talking about that and how we evaluate our progress. Right now, we have the indicators framework.
- **Comment:** *Ken Hyer:* It seems to me, Doug, that we will loop back and have that as a topic on a subsequent STAR meeting. As we think about how we can broaden indicators and what the options are for that. Hopefully we can loop back on this idea of what, if anything, we prepare for the EC meeting this fall.

Then, ultimately, you and Gabriel will be pinging some folks if you don't hear back from them regarding their current indicator plans. There probably are three follow ups.

10:20 – 10:35: Elevating conservation in the Chesapeake Bay Program

Breck Sullivan (USGS), Katherine Brownson (USDA), Peter Claggett (USGS)

Description: Breck will provide a brief background on how conservation has risen to an important topic in the outcome assessment. Katie Brownson, Forest Workgroup Coordinator, and Peter Claggett, Healthy Watersheds GIT Coordinator, will share their own ideas on how to incorporate conservation in outcomes and across the CBP. Please note these ideas are not final and are subject to changes in their respective workgroups/GITs.

Breck: Moving into our second topic of today's meeting, we are going to discuss how to incorporate conservation within the Chesapeake Bay Program. Two outcome leads will be sharing their ideas – these are just ideas, not final decisions. I am going to start with a presentation on the importance of conservation in this Beyond 2025 phase.

Firstly, conservation is highlighted in one of the seven bullets in the Chesapeake Executive Council Charge, which says “elevating conservation as a key pillar of the Chesapeake Bay Program, alongside science, restoration, and partnership.” This stems from our Beyond 2025 Steering Committee report where conservation was added to the restoration section. It was also mentioned that conservation needs to be considered within the science and partnership sectors of the program. Within the public commenting period, there were hundreds of comments emphasizing the importance of including conservation within the program's structure and projects. Today is an opportunity to discuss what that might be. Peter Claggett, would you like to go first?

Peter Claggett: Thank you, Breck. If you don't know I coordinate the Healthy Watershed goal team and help support Jeff and Deb. Britt, Katie, and I have been having a lot of discussions about the role of conservation in the Bay Program, over these last six to nine months. We came at these discussions from a GIT centric perspective. When going through the SRS process and realizing that in maintaining healthy watersheds that are already healthy, conservation is pivotal.

Then we have the Protected Lands workgroup and maybe that's how we get conservation in healthy watersheds. But, in talking to Britt and Aurelia, at the time the Protected Lands workgroup was really focused on meeting the two million acre goal. The individual benefits of conservation and location of conservation wasn't as much of a concern as how much conservation. Then, I was conveying that we care about how much, but unless we know where and ensure conservation is targeted to healthy watersheds, we can't meet our goal. Conservation directly relates to 18 of the outcomes, if conservation were targeted to areas that would help address those outcomes – if conservation were strategic. So, if conservation is going to be

integrated into the Bay Program, it should be integrated into the majority of outcomes we have, not necessarily in the outcome language but in the supporting language – hopefully somewhere in the two pagers. Although I doubt that’s going to happen at this point because we are on such a fast track.

We really need to focus on a couple of things. One is tracking, as I already mentioned, where and when conservation occurs, but also attributing conservation with the ecosystem services that it provides or preserves. For example, public access for underserved communities, ecosystems services, carbon sequestration, and helping to maintain economically viable forests and things like that.

Another reason why it’s so important is that in the context of population growth and climate change, we face an uphill battle. This area is so beautiful. A lot of people like to live here – about a million per decade. How do you maintain progress with restoration while all this other stuff is happening? Conservation is key to that. I think many people have recognized that, but it’s not ingrained in the Bay Program.

If it is to be a pillar of the Bay Program, what we need to make sure of structurally, is it’s not something that’s just given lip service. Other things I won’t mention that get a paragraph in outcome language and then move on. That’s not what we want for conservation.

- **Comment in chat:** Nick Staten: Brook Trout is having a Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) workshop about conservation of "stronghold" brook trout populations. I have been wondering if there is an opportunity for protected lands and brook trout to collaborate for a protected stream reach within these stronghold areas?

Katie Brownson: Thanks, Breck, for allowing space for conservation here, because I think conservation is one of those topics where we really need to be talking across our various outcomes and goal teams to think strategically about how we can integrate conservation throughout the program, just as Peter said.

I guess starting within our silos, you know our two existing forestry outcomes do include conservation, at least implicitly. Our tree canopy outcome is a net gain outcome. We want to have a net gain of tree canopy throughout the watershed within communities. Similarly for forest buffers, we don’t just look at planting. We also look at riparian forest cover and have a target for riparian forest cover. So, we’re looking at the loss of riparian forest as well. I think we actually do include conserve existing riparian forest specifically in our outcome language. With both of those outcomes, we’re seeing our planting rates going up – we’re doing great with planting, but we are nowhere near keeping up with the pace of loss. I think there’s recognition that conservation can’t be an implicit thing or an afterthought. It needs to be more of an explicit focus.

I think what conservation looks like in different parts of the landscape is quite different. The protected lands workgroup is really focused on permanent land conservation and Chesapeake Conservation Partnership (CCP) is focused on

permanent land conservation. While that is a critical piece of the puzzle, conserving urban trees requires so much more than just permanent land conservation. We also have to be thinking about land use planning, ordinances, and other strategies for conserving trees within the communities.

I also want to zoom out for a minute. I did some rough number crunching this morning. We have like 25.5 million acres of tree cover in the watershed. When you look at riparian forests and community trees together, maybe that's about 5 million acres and there is probably some overlap there. That leaves at least 20 million acres of forest that are not in riparian areas or in our census places. The Bay Program is not paying enough attention to those forests, in my opinion. We do have a sub-goal in the protected lands outcome to conserve forests of the highest value. However, we're really not tracking progress towards that. In part, due to the data limitations that Peter mentioned and, like I said, we need to go beyond just thinking about permanent land conservation. Forests need good stewardship and management to not get overtaken by invasive species, so they can continue to function. We're interested in thinking about how we can better instill the importance of considering the at least 80% of other forests in the watershed – outside of riparian areas and communities. These provide huge value for water quality, habitat, climate resiliency, recreation, and so many more benefits that we're not accounting for. Along with, the importance of stewarding them and managing them as part of an ethic of conservation. These are some of the discussions we are having at the forestry workgroup right now. How we do that still remains to be seen. I am interested in hearing ideas today as we get into the discussion.

- **Comment in chat:** Helen Golimowski: For those that are interested, this month's Chesapeake Assessment Scenario Tool (CAST) webinar talked about modeling conservation and the recording is now posted at the link below under Develop a Plan. <https://cast.chesapeakebay.net/Learning/FreeTrainingVideos>

Comment: Breck Sullivan: Thank you, Katie and Peter. I appreciate you both commenting on what you've been thinking around conservation, and you had some really interesting points. That's a lot of million acres of trees that we're not considering. Now we can open it up to discussion, whether that is comments on what Peter and Katie said or potentially your own ideas on how your outcome is considering conservation.

10:35 – 11:25: Discussion on integrating conservation

All

Description: Discussion reserved for asking questions and providing comments on the two ideas shared by Katie and Peter. Other outcomes may share their ideas on integrating conservation within their outcome/outputs.

Q: Bruce Vogt: Thanks for bringing this conversation forward. I agree with Katie, that I think this is going to be really important across outcomes. Something came to mind from a fisheries perspective, and this is just my opinion, not the opinion of all

of the fisheries managers. I think one of the focuses for fish habitat has been looking at some of the major stressors impacting fish. One of the things that we have identified is hardened shorelines and we've noted that for a while. I think we do have an interest in conserving the natural shorelines that are still out there, which ties to the shallow water recommendations. This is just an example, but we have been thinking about how conservation might feed into that. One of the other things we have talked about is conserving areas that are important for fish productivity, like spawning areas. Aside from restoration and water quality improvements, is there a goal for conservation in and around the landscape that surrounds those important aquatic habitats? Another thing that came to mind was the priority projects and suggestions that came forward last week. One of the suggestions is to develop a living resource priority assessment where we'd be scoring 92 tidal segments. I think the way that has been discussed has been to support the tiered total maximum daily load (TMDL) implementation, but also to guide habitat restoration. I don't see why we might not consider conservation in that and in the criteria that we use to score areas. Thinking ahead again, I'm guessing if that all works, we're going to have areas that are high functioning, in between, and severely degraded. Then this prompts the question, do we need to restore areas that are high functioning, or do we want to preserve what we have? Here, we can take more of a conservation focused approach. Lastly, conservation has also come up in our oyster discussions, because we are going to have ten tributaries with a couple hundred acres of oysters in each, that we want to maintain. We don't want to lose those investments. Even though we have ensured protection in current outcome language, there has been discussion on what that means and if it's doable in some jurisdictions. There's a discussion right now about opening some of the areas that have been restored or were considered pre-met, in Virginia, to harvest. Somehow, we're going to have to dig into this conservation concept when it comes to conserving the restoration we have done and thinking about what that looks like for our future outcome. Those are a couple of things I wanted to raise from a fisheries perspective.

- **A: Ken Hyer:** Bruce, those are three or four fantastic examples of what it means to weave conservation throughout our partnership and outcomes and have it stand as a pillar. Those are great examples, thank you.
- **Response: Breck:** Thank you for sharing those ideas for us to consider.

Comment from chat: Jennifer Olszewski: The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Environmental Stewardship business line struggled with something similar in communicating the value of the lands they maintain/conserves around USACE lakes. We developed something called "quality forest acres" as an indicator, which was a function of forest area, # specialist species, # endangered species, # invasive species, etc. Not sure if it's helpful here, but thought I would share!

- **Response from chat: Jeffrey Lerner:** On the topic of forests: Each state has a State Forest Action Plan. Many have spatial priorities for conservation and

stewardship. Many also contain sections on watershed forestry which speaks to the management of public and private forest lands in support of watershed health. Those plans are more comprehensive than just urban tree canopy.

- **Comment:** *Jeff Lerner:* Building on Katie's comment. All of the states are required to produce state forest action plans on a regular basis. These plans are updated every five years, I think. Those are comprehensive assessments of what's going on with forests in your state. It isn't just about tree canopies or buffers, but it can include those topics. It can also think about larger issues like long-term stewardship of forests, dealing with invasive species, protecting land, etc. The states are in different places in terms of how they have constructed those plans but have been expected to produce spatial priorities in most cases. That could be helpful in terms of guiding conservation efforts. How do you align what the Bay Program is interested with what the states said they are interested in regarding protection work? EPA has provided some grants in the past to state forest agencies to help them with some of their watershed protection activities. I think there is already an existing nexus there. That's just one example and there are other plans, for example state wildlife action plans, that could be looked at to guide conservation. Regarding the earlier comment in the chat about brook trout strongholds, I would expect there is going to be a lot of overlap between those strongholds and important forested areas within the watershed. We could be looking at those as we determine spatial priorities for conservation across the landscape.

Comment: *Bill Jenkins:* Good morning, everyone. This is Bill Jenkins, the co-chair of the Habitat Goal Team. I just want to say I am a major fan of increasing conservation across the program as much as we possibly can. I really appreciate and agree with everything that Peter and Katie said. I want to emphasize a couple things. Conservation has come up in all the meetings we have had with our workgroups on the outcome assessment, except stream health which is tomorrow. There has been active discussion on how to include conservation going forward in our outcomes for the workgroups. I feel like we, as a partnership, should be emphasizing and focusing more than we have in the past, on ecosystem service evaluation and incorporating that information into what we do. I think that can help in terms of landowner engagement, community engagement, planning, prioritizing areas for conservation, and being more strategic as we go forward. The other thing I want to put out there in terms of being strategic, which has come up in previous conversations, is the idea of thinking about conservation as essentially a protection and insurance program for protecting the amount of investment that the Program makes on restoration. How can conservation and restoration be brought together so that the investment and implementation can be protected by land conservation? And how can it be done strategically? I just wanted to throw those ideas out there for consideration. Thank you.

- **Response:** *Breck:* Thank you, Bill. I appreciate the reminder around ecosystem services. That is something I have also been hearing throughout multiple groups.

Comment: *Keith Bollt:* I am also agreeing what others have said about the importance of including conservation with restoration. This is a new way of thinking about how we do our work. I'm reflecting on a conversation I listened in on, the July Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC) meeting, which was focused on responding to Beyond 2025 Phase 1 report. In that meeting the LGAC members, and I'm sort of using them as a proxy for the general public, got caught up on the definition of conservation and were interpreting it as preservation. It is easy to use one for the other. As I was waiting, I searched for the definitions. From the National Parks Service, conservation seeks the proper use of nature while preservation seeks protection of nature from use. The members of LGAC were putting on their economic development hats and were concerned because they didn't understand the reason why we were elevating conservation was to emphasize that it's as important as restoration. I wanted to highlight the PR messaging side of this to make sure that when we are talking about conservation, we are not talking about ending economic development in the Bay watershed or the federal government overstepping what they can do in terms of local land use planning. There were LGAC members saying, "EPA is going to stop development in the Bay watershed," and I was like "you know, we can't do that." It's two points. One is making sure that when we are talking about conservation, we mean conservation, not preservation, and when we mean preservation, we'll say preservation. There has been some confusion about why we are elevating the issue, so I just wanted to bring that up, since I have seen that confusion in practice.

- **Response:** *Laura Cattell Noll:* Thanks, Keith, for bringing that forward. I messaged Breck, Peter, and Katie earlier about how important this issue is to LGAC. We're planning on having our entire June meeting focused on this topic, so we are excited to collaborate with folks on this call. I'll reiterate what Keith said about being careful what language we use. If we mean permanent land preservation, we should say that. I think a lot of my members think of conservation as a bigger concept than just permanent land protection but thinking about stewardship of our existing land. Many of our members manage parks. How are they managing them in a way that is advancing our collective goals? I am just flagging that some of my members are thinking about conservation in a broader way and perhaps more as a spectrum. How can we do development in a way that best enhances our living resources, for example? LGAC is going to continue having that conversation. Anyone who wants to talk about that more, please reach out.
- **Response:** *Ken Hyer:* Thanks, Laura and Keith. That's a great point. We bump into this time and again. We have to really develop the definitions of these terms to ensure we are all on the same page.
- **Response in chat:** *Kristin Saunders:* To Keith's point, the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership (CCP) has heard that Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC) message and talking specifically about how we talk about

conservation in the context of not ending development (not an either/or) but as a way to achieve both.

- **Comment in chat:** *Keith Bollt:* From the National Parks Service: "Put simply conservation seeks the proper use of nature, while preservation seeks protection of nature from use."
- **Comment in chat:** *Peter Claggett:* Another important distinction between the role of planning and conservation- conservation is often more permanent whereas planning is more subject to political whims. But- planning is still a very important tool for holding the line against land conversion and degradation.

Q: *Breck Sullivan:* I have a question for anyone who wants to comment on this. Considering we have the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership and the Chesapeake Conservancy; how can we make sure we are working with them and aligning with them without duplicating their work? And how do we still make sure we still have a main focus on conservation within the Bay Program?

- **A:** *Wendy O'Sullivan:* CCP has a steering committee that is made up of state, federal, and land trust members. CCP is a cross section of the partners involved in land conservation, a range of protection of lands. For example, Katie, Genevive, myself, and others are on that committee as federal representatives. There are also state representatives. CCP functions in a way that is very purposefully outside the construct of the Bay Program, while having tethers from the members that are within CCP. Also, there is a nexus between CCP and the Protected Lands workgroup. So, there are members that are on CCP in the Protected Lands workgroup and state representatives with leadership roles in CCP have members of their staff on the Protected Lands workgroup. There is synergy between those two, but CCP does seek to maintain a space where they can advise and make recommendations rather than function as the Protected Lands workgroup. There is a history of CCP mainly linking into the Protected Lands workgroup space, but there was a conversation yesterday about CCP starting to look more broadly. They walked through several of the outcomes that are being looked at for conservation, like vital habitats which they haven't looked at in the past. They voted yesterday to expand their membership to bring in someone that represents National Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) and bring agriculture to the table. I think there is openness and willingness there and thinking through where additional tethers to the Bay Program can be incorporated.
- **Response:** *Ken Hyer:* Thanks, Wendy. I appreciate that because when we were putting this decision topic together, we wanted to be sensitive to the fact that we are working collaboratively. I appreciate hearing that there is already a great connection and that the act of incorporating conservation this does nothing to diminish the partnership or CCP's role. It's fully complementary is what I'm hearing. That's encouraging.
- **Response:** *Wendy O'Sullivan:* Yeah, I think it's complimentary. I think there is room for shared thought leadership. The CCP is anxious to support elevating

conservation in the Bay Program, but they have some members who have been around long enough who don't want to get sucked into the morass that is the Bay Program. There is a little bit of a dichotomy there and an interest in being a space that is dynamic, nimble, and effective. And maybe Kristin can help frame that out. She was there with us and has been a long-time member of the steering committee for CCP.

- **Response:** *Kristin Saunders:* I underscore everything that Wendy just said. These conversations that we're having today, internal to the Bay Program, are really essential for a couple reasons. One, we have been asking the leadership and Management Board to give us the space and time to get outside our silos and think strategically across the spectrum of work. STAR is a place where that can happen and is happening today, which is awesome. I also think that the CCP can be used as another voice and convener for those voices that would speak in support of whatever comes out of these internal conversations. For instance, we talked yesterday about as the outcome review is happening and as these ideas are being surfaced from the goal implementation teams and workgroups to the Management Board for consideration, the members, stakeholders, and partners of CCP are doing the implementation at local and state level. They can speak to underscore the value of considering these things. As suggestions bubble up from the discussion today or individual outcome discussions or workgroups, the members of the CCP want to be that additional voice in support of making sure conservation is integrally linked to the other outcomes in the agreement. The other place that I think it can be helpful is sometimes the members of the CCP, because they are outside organizations that aren't necessarily funded by the Bay Program, they can say things that people on this call may not be able to say. Again, there is that opportunity to amplify that message, to come at it from a different direction, to work individually within their jurisdictions because some of them are very tied into their local leadership. They can be that voice of support at the local level. We have seen that happen as the concerns came up about potentially perceiving this push for land conservation as an all or nothing – development vs preservation. Some folks at the local land trust have been able to go and talk to local officials in their communities to explain that this is not an either/or. We're just trying to make sure we can plan for both things in unison. They can be activated to carry some of these messages forward. The other thing that is in the works, which I think we'll get into this more at the PSC meeting next week, is as the PSC starts to think about how they're going to scan for any necessary changes to the vision, principles, and goals, part of what each jurisdiction has been tasked with is to look at how those elements in the EC charge can be moved forward in the considerations that the jurisdictions are doing. By way of example, Maryland has it's Bay Council. They met last week and one of the things that Secretary Kurtz said was "let's think about how we as Maryland are going to speak up for the need to imbed conservation across the work of this agreement. How are we going to make sure that climate, diversity, and environmental justice considerations are imbedded?" Each state and

signatory is thinking about how the EC charge should be considered in their own siloed state role. Those conversations with the PSC will be happening over the next couple of months as to what implications those have for potential changes to the vision, goals, and principles. There is another place for this conversation and the work that will come out of it to be elevated through the management board and through our state members that are having those conversations within their own jurisdiction. That's how we're doing vertical and horizontal integration right now and trying to make sure to connect all the pieces. I don't think this conversation duplicates anything that's going on. I think it's really necessary and helpful. Thank you for the opportunity to share that.

- **Response: Peter Claggett:** I think the question Breck was first to bring this up is what is the role of the Bay Program in conservation that compliments the CCP or works in tandem with the CCP? I would like to share my thoughts and part of this is a reiteration of what I said in my intro. I know that the CCP and land trusts are often strategic, to the extent that they can be, even though conserving private lands have an opportunistic aspect to it. Where the Bay Program comes in is with supporting strategic conservation as it relates to other outcomes. Part of that is looking at the ecosystem services, public access, and other things that conservation provides and quantifying and communicating those benefits to the public and potential funders – working with the CCP in that way. I think it's our job as the Bay Program to try to tie conservation to all these other outcomes. I think Public Access Outcome is a great example because another part of the EC charge and the Beyond 2025 discussions seemed to elevate being more people centric as a principle moving forward. How do we be more people centric in relation to conservation? To me, that means public access and communicating those benefits. Those are my thoughts. I think the Bay Program needs to answer that question of what is our value-added role as a complement and not as a confounding entity?
- **Response: Ken Hyer:** Thanks, Peter. I'd love to hear other thoughts on that but today when we were flushing out this discussion that was our starting point, thinking about how these conservation thoughts are affecting the outcomes. You said it really well. How can the partnership support strategic conservation within the outcome framework. I really like that.

Comment in chat: Sophie Waterman: A small group of us have started meeting to discuss moving conservation forward from within. In our next meeting, we will be talking about how we are currently addressing conservation in our outcomes (either explicitly or implied) and how we may move forward in the Beyond 2025 (B-25) world. If you are interested in joining those conversations, please let me know! my email is swaterman@chesapeakebay.net

- **Response: Sophie Waterman:** I just put this in the chat. There has been a small group of us, specifically in the protected lands, forestry, and healthy watersheds world, who have been talking about these conservation issues and bringing them forward to the Management Board. We have been trying to get on the same

page for this Beyond 2025 world of talking with the management board and trying to convey to them the importance of the data establishment, tracking protected lands, and the overall importance of conservation. It's a small group; like I said just a couple of outcomes. If you would like to be part of those conversations to be part of that unifying voice of conservation within the partnership, please let me know. We'll have another meeting in February. Nothing is scheduled or consistent, they just kind of pop up. I am finding them helpful to gauge where we are in working with other outcomes to move this important issue forward and get the Management Board behind that. Please let me know if you'd like to be a part of those. Thanks.

Comment: *Breck Sullivan:* Any other comments around your own outcome? I will note, the Water Quality Standards Attainment and Monitoring (WQSAM) outcome team recently had a really great feedback period with the Watershed Implementation Plans (WIP) outcome during what was called an "office hour." There were a few comments in our Menti responses making sure that we consider conservation within our WQSAM outcome. I'll be completely honest; I hadn't really considered that when first thinking about it because in the previous years, our outcome has been so focused on monitoring – the activity of getting water quality data. Looking outside of "how can conservation support us reaching our attainment?" is a different framework that I hadn't thought of before.

Comment: *Ken Hyer:* Thanks everyone. As someone who is not as well informed on the conservation side, I appreciate this discussion. This has been really helpful. We thought STAR would be a good framework to ask "how are folks thinking about it? How should we be thinking about it?" We'll try to continue to build those connections, integrate pieces, think about ecosystem services, and avoid the silo traps.

- **Response:** *Breck Sullivan:* We have Sophie as a contact for future discussions. It also seems like LGAC is going to continue having discussions around this and I am sure some of the outcomes within their outcome assessment meetings too. Jeff, you have your hand up.

Comment: *Jeffery Lerner:* I wanted to say, thanks very much for the conversation. As Ken was talking it triggered another thing in my head. We have said this to our Healthy Watersheds GIT, the Land Use Workgroup and others, but for everyone's awareness, EPA issued guidance to all the states associated with non-point source pollution, to all the non-point source programs, late last year. In that, there is a specific mention of a national priority focused on watershed protections. The point is, while the guidance talks about a lot of different things related to non-point source, it also indicates that if you're going to address non-point source pollution, you also need to prevent non-point source pollution from happening. A good way to do that is through protection activities. I just want to make people aware of the fact that that came out as guidance to all the states late last year.

- **Response in chat:** Kristin Saunders: Per Jeff's last comment, Water Quality GIT could explore the healthy watersheds directive from EPA and the nexus with their work
- **Response in chat:** Jeffery Lerner: New guidance to states on nonpoint source: <https://www.epa.gov/nps/cwa-ss319-grant-current-guidance>

Comment in chat: Laura Cattell Noll: Yes, if anyone wants to connect with LGAC on this issue, please reach out. lnoll@allianceforthebay.org . We have tentatively set aside our June meeting to focus on this discussion.

- **Response:** Breck Sullivan: Thanks Jeff. Thank you, Laura, for putting some information in the chat. You can reach out to her to connect with LCAG. Now, we can go to our final agenda item.

11:25 – 12:00: Follow up to November 2024 STAR *Initial Response to Outcome Assessment*

All GITs- Round Robin

Description: Based on the previous discussion and discussions with your relative GITs/workgroups, what is each outcome lean towards to, “provide advice to the Management Board on whether to consolidate, reduce, update, remove, replace, reclassify, or add new outcomes.” You are welcome to state the outcome is considering multiple paths and your response is subject to change based on more discussions. This information will help with future STAR and GIT Chair planning, and it provides an opportunity to share how a response for one outcome may impact the response of another outcome.

Breck: This is a check-in that STAR initiated in November of last year to see how people are feeling with their outcome assessment around the “Big Question.” What advice do you have for the Management Board? Are you considering updating, consolidating, reclassifying, etc.? It is open to anyone who would like to share. These are not final decisions. They can change. We won’t be posting this to the webpage. This is an opportunity because we’ve been noticing people saying, how is this all going to fit together? How are these going to connect? So being able to see what people are thinking may help us map it out what it could look like.

Below are the tentative responses from each outcome as of January 23rd, 2025. These are not definitive and are **subject to change.**

Water Quality Standards Attainment and Monitoring (WQSAM)

UPDATE

The current outcome is not quantitative, it states “continually improve.” This makes it challenging to track progress. The language strongly focuses on

monitoring and reporting on trends which speaks more towards activities and outputs rather than the change in the ecosystem. When it comes to updated language, there are a lot of different opinions. There are conversations regarding whether it will continue to focus on TMDL or if it should be broadened, whether monitoring is an activity, and whether “monitoring” should be included in outcome language or not. The team is still unsure how the language will be updated.

Oyster Outcome

UPDATE

There is consensus for continuing to build on the momentum and success of the large-scale oyster restoration effort. There is draft language, but additional considerations need to be taken into account before producing a final draft. This includes the issue regarding how to best engage industry in an outcome, sub-goal, or separate outcome of restoration of oysters.

Blue Crab Management Outcome

REMOVE

This outcome has been completed for a number of years.

Blue Crab Abundance Outcome

UPDATE

The team is planning on adjusting the language for this outcome, partly based on the stock assessment that is happening now.

Forage Fish Outcome

REMOVE

This outcome will be bundled under the fish habitat outcome.

Fish Habitat Outcome

UPDATE

This outcome will be updated to make more quantitative and increase focus on shallow water. This may also include some element of the living resource priority assessment, if that is deemed a priority.

Q from chat: What about catfish? This is an action team right now, is that something the Fish GIT is considering continuing with or elevating?

- **A:** We definitely plan to continue it. There are mixed opinions on whether or not it needs to be elevated. One of the conversations we've had at the Fish GIT is that not everything needs to be an outcome for us to work on it. That group is functioning and doing a lot of good things, so we may not need to elevate it as an outcome. We're not sure what that would look like as an outcome and there has been some debate around that. We are uncertain at this point but are leaning towards not making it an outcome.

Climate Resiliency Adaptation Outcome

UPDATE

The new language will likely expand the scope of the outcome to include both tidal and non-tidal waters. There has been some discussion around including a place-space element and time bound objectives for implementing adaptation strategies. It would also include a monitoring or science output that would help determine what adaptation strategies are most effective.

Climate Resiliency Monitoring & Assessment

REPLACE

The plan is to replace this outcome with something bigger. The team is still working on what the name would be. It would serve as a climate resiliency framework for the entire Bay Program, seeking to provide the best available science support to help outcomes determine how the climate might impact the attainment of their outcome and strategies for mitigation. This ties into the EC climate directive from a couple of years ago. The team would love for this to be an outcome but recognizes that it potentially could be incorporated into the governance and structure of the Bay Program with a wide integration of climate science into all the outcomes.

2017 Watershed Implementation Plans (WIP) Outcome

REMOVE

The team feels like they can build checkpoints into the outputs or activities under the WIP outcome. As this checkpoint has passed, they recommend removing it.

2025 Watershed Implementation Plans (WIP) Outcome

UPDATE

There have been a lot of thoughts from folks regarding this outcome. Some people want to broaden this to include more water quality parameters, while others want to keep it streamlined to nutrients and sediments. This is a conversation that needs to be continued. When thinking about keeping an outcome SMART, with the S meaning specific, the team is leaning towards keeping the outcome to nutrients and sediments. Some suggestions would be adding new outcomes to cover other water quality parameters. The team is also still discussing the new time constraints needed to keep the outcome time bound. This is a conversation that they would like to bring to the bigger group for the time bound aspect. The team is leaning towards implementing tiered targets for improvements rather than a deadline. They have also been receiving feedback about integrating existing tools into the outcome. There is still information they are waiting on before they can make their final decisions and draft updated language.

Q: One of the things that came up in the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership meeting was what is the time span we are looking at? I don't think anyone knows the answer to this yet. We haven't gotten that direction from leadership. This conversation prompted some thinking from me and others. Do we think we have some ideas to offer on what could happen within certain timeframes so that the Management Board and Principal's Staff Committee could take that information into their deliberations as they think about the time horizon for this next agreement? We can use land conservation as an example. Some jurisdictions have already committed to conserving 40% of their important lands by 2040, or 30% by 2030, or something along those lines. Do we have a sense from the jurisdictions of what kind of time horizon they'd be comfortable with? I remember when we were beginning our Beyond 2025 work, Virginia (or possibly Pennsylvania) said something to the effect of "we think by x date we will be at 100% of implementation." I am wondering if that has come up in any conversations and if you have a sense of what the appetite is for jurisdictions when thinking about different time horizons. Are there options here for leadership to consider?

- **A:** At this point, no. Most people agree the timeline needs to be updated but there isn't a clear sense of what that should be. I am hoping we can get more insight and feedback at the meeting on Monday. I would like to go in with a suggestion. Until we know the updated planning targets, nobody is going to feel comfortable doing an end game projection, but maybe we could see what incremental checkpoints people are comfortable with.
- **Q:** Great topic. I know that we are going to try to discuss timescale a little bit this afternoon in a GIT advisory team member/anyone can join call to start talking about that. I am particularly excited that the work groups are

being asked for feedback on that kind of time horizon/time frame. I think this is something we should take advantage of and develop our thoughts. My second thought is that is part of the big question, right?

- **A:** Yes, it's in there twice, because it asks if your outcome is SMART and then it asks for time.
- **Response:** We've got to begin to make a little progress on this. I am glad they are giving us some freedom to explore it rather than assigning us.

GIT 5 Outcomes

UPDATE

Generally, we are headed toward Update for our outcomes under GIT 5 - except for under Environmental Literacy that has three outcomes - two will be updated and one will be recommended to become an indicator under one of their outcomes.

Healthy Watersheds Outcome

UPDATE

The team would like to update the outcome to make it more specific, especially in terms of what watershed health means. There has been a suggestion to change the title to "Watershed Health," which has been well received by the leadership team. The plan for the outcome language is to have something along the lines of "maintain landscape integrity for watershed processes and conditions contributing to healthy aquatic systems."

Land Use Methods and Metrics (LUMM) Development Outcome

REMOVE/CONSOLIDATE

This outcome is more of an output. This informs a variety of indicators and 20 out of the 31 outcomes. They plan to continue this work but consolidate it under the Land Use Options Evaluation Outcome, removing the LUMM outcome.

Land Use Options Evaluation (LUOE) Outcome

CONSOLIDATE

This outcome will be made more specific by focusing on the value-added contribution that the Bay Program can make towards federal land use

decisions. These decisions are local, not made by states or federal agencies, so the updated language will be along the lines of “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, support development of state level policies and programs relevant to land use decisions.” The team is trying to focus on conserving healthy watersheds in some way and these changes can help them get there. They are unsure where they sit amongst other outcomes and have had and will continue having conversations with other workgroups and outcomes in terms of alignment with watershed health.

Comment: This is just an offer, I’m not sure if it’d be meaningful. There is a national fish habitat partnership that’s currently developing a new national fish habitat (NFHP) assessment. I forgot the exact timeline, but I am on the science and data committee, and I think a few other USGS reps are too. The reason I am bringing this up is, I know you all have a lot of data, probably at a finer resolution, but the result of that will be a map that looks a little bit like the one behind Jeff on his screen (a map of the United States showing all waterways with each river system represented by a color), but with more colors. This will show where fish habitat is currently healthy, degraded, or somewhere marginal. It also helps identify what stressors may be contributing to the scores the most. I will put it in the chat if you are interested in that. You could potentially work with the reps from that team, if there is anything you can glean from that in terms of watershed health. I’m happy to share and talk some more.

- **Response from chat:** Here is a link to NFHP assessment page where you can find the previous assessment products and presentations.
<https://fishhabitat.org/science-resources>. Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership (ACFHP) is our regional level partnership,
<https://www.atlanticfishhabitat.org/> but I think Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture (EBTJV) is involved as well. The USGS rep more locally on the NFHP science and data committee is John Young jyoung@usgs.gov

Comment: We’re somewhat familiar with some of this, but I do think this is a really good connection thanks for pointing that out for us.

Q: Great update on the outcomes and the direction you’re going. The question I have is does this trigger a revision to goal text? Sorry, I haven’t looked at it, so I don’t remember if this modifies goal text. Do you need to be briefing some PSC folks so that they are aware ahead of time? Do we have something here that we have to be thinking about in a bigger picture?

- **A:** Yeah, for sure. So unfortunately, the goal is written similar to the outcome. It's like "maintain state identified healthy watersheds," which we are moving away from. The goal has to be re-worded. We started to go there a little bit with making suggestions but then we started thinking "maybe this isn't the time." There are a lot of structural issues with these outcomes that I think need to be revisited. To answer your question, yes, it has to be re-worded and that needs to go through the PSC.
- **A:** What I can tell you from the PSC standpoint is that we've been working behind the scenes to develop a process for the PSC to step through. You got the outline of that at the last PSC and Management Board joint meeting. At the meeting next week, they are going to dig into a more formal look at how they are going to step through the vision, principles, and goals. One of the things that we've been talking about here, within the DNR team, is how to make sure that in addition to hearing from the Management Board jurisdiction reps. The PSC members would really benefit from hearing the expertise from the advisory committee, other federal agencies, and the goal teams who have been living and working in this space. Although you haven't been formally asked yet for input on necessary changes to goals, I recommend everyone think about that. Just to let you know, Leila Duman, who is the new Management Board representative for Maryland, is going to reach out 1on1 to the jurisdiction members to get an idea of what changes they are already thinking about in other parts of the agreement, particularly the goals. She also intends to do 1on1 conversations with representatives from the goal teams and the advisory committees. This way everyone gets a voice. It will come in multiple ways. It might be in the PSC meetings themselves. It might be through these 1on1 discussions. It might also be through your own chain; in the organizational chain you work in to submit those thoughts. It's something to be thinking about right now. The more heads up we have on what outcome changes create the domino effect throughout the rest of the agreement, specifically the goals – it'd be good to flag those. You will be asked for that. We haven't put out a formal process, but some form of that will be coming. The first pieces of that conversation will play out during the PSC meeting next week. There is a specific placeholder for those conversations on the agenda. It will start next week but be thinking ahead of time so that you can contribute to those conversations.
- **Response:** I know in the agenda there was this cross connection between the work of the PSC and the work of the workgroups and outcome review teams. It's great to see those threads and look forward to this discussion opportunity. Thanks everyone. Thanks for letting us know that we have a goal that possibly needs to be adjusted.

Toxic Contaminants Policy and Prevention Outcome

UPDATE

The goal language for the Toxic Contaminants Goal was clipped from the Clean Water Act, Section 117, that states that there will be a basin wide toxin reduction strategy. This goal works to ensure that the basin is free of the effects of toxic contaminants on living resources and human health. The Toxic Contaminants Research Outcome and Policy and Prevention Outcome, where most of the reduction takes place, are under the Toxic Contaminants Goal. The partnership decided that polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) would be the emphasis on reduction work. This is because PCBs are the pollutant that drives most of the fish consumption advisories in the estuarine part of the system.

The team is still discussing their decision, but they'd like to see it more closely referred to attainment of water quality standards, like the nutrient and sediment outcomes. Like other pollutants, PCBs can have set water quality standards, go out and monitor, determine whether there are impairments, and if so, expect management actions around those impairments. Their jurisdictions have made good progress with connecting their PCB TMDLs with regulatory levers, like storm water and wastewater permits. This ensures PCB TMDLs are leveraging the permitting system. This is a good strategic move that the team loves seeing. By referring to water quality standards in the contaminants outcome, it will be more in line with those strategic directions, supporting jurisdiction partners and their work. This switch could help make the goal more specific and create detailed targets.

Toxic Contaminants Research Outcome

UPDATE

The research outcome has done a good job at prioritizing the most important work and research. The team doesn't think it needs much editing. They are thinking about including PFAS. The quarterly PFAS meetings are very popular and productive, therefore the team may suggest including this in the outcome language. These two outcomes are being presented at the last meeting in March, so the team has a lot of pivotal conversations ahead of them.

Q: I'm thinking about the logic framework. Isn't research more of an activity? Does that fit the ideals of having outcomes more ecosystem result oriented rather than activity oriented? Maybe you don't have an answer now. I know it's part of the bigger picture discussion, but I am just thinking about the conversations around targeting outcomes rather than outputs or activities. Is this part of the discussions?

- **A:** It certainly could be. As we're working on these two-pagers, that is the kind of question we're answering – re-justifying it at the sub-goal/outcome level. We thought it was talking about an outcome relating to increasing our understanding which is more outcome like. Let's keep challenging ourselves on that. Please keep bringing it up. We could maybe also drop some ecosystem service-related things in there. We are certainly open to concepts coming out of other outcome evaluations and modifications that would complement toxic contaminants. Along those lines, fish is an area where that linkage could be made. I would love to see the fish related outcomes talk about quality of fish in addition to quantity, maybe relating back to those things that bioaccumulate in our fish. Conversely, we could mention fish more clearly. We are open to any suggestions along those lines with ecosystem services. Thanks! Let's keep talking about this.
- **Response:** I'll just end with flipping on my own thoughts on that. We talk frequently about the environmental ecosystem but that's almost the social ecosystem element. You could couch it as an outcome reflecting the social ecosystem side, putting the people elements front and center. I am playing the devil's advocate on my own thoughts.
- **Comment:** I am going to make a note of that for our two-pager on research. Thank you. That's a good one.
- **Response:** I was going to ask a similar question. I was going to ask if you still consider the research outcome as an outcome or output? I ask because we went through a similar process with our Land Use Methods and Metrics which we saw as a data product we'd completed. Therefore, we saw that as more of an output that we had done. That's why we were transitioning in our thinking. Just curious if that was the same thought line, but you've already answered where you are thinking on that. I just wanted to echo what was asked.

Comment from chat: Regarding PFAS, the Chesapeake Bay Commission has determined that PFAS is a top priority for them in the next two years FYI. And as we talk about centering people, PFAS nexus and impact on people may be really important to explore.

Comment from chat: I'll keep contaminants in mind as we think about the fish habitat outcome. Happy to have your input. Fish quality has come up in regards to forage availability and disease issues. But perhaps toxins could be better incorporated.

Black Duck Outcome

REMOVE

Black Duck will be removed as an outcome and made into an output under the Wetlands Outcome. The team wants to move this beyond Black Duck into a broader group of indicator waterfowl species.

Wetlands Outcome

UPDATE

The Wetlands Outcome currently has two teams within it, tidal and non-tidal. The group is either going to recommend two separate outcomes or have two outputs within a broader Wetlands Outcome. This is further conversation that needs to happen.

Fish Passage Outcome

UPDATE

The Fish Passage Outcome has been revised since the original outcome language was written. Because of this, less revision is needed. The team does want to change it from Fish Passage to Aquatic Organisms to recognize the connectivity beyond anadromous species and increasing connections with Brook Trout.

Comment from chat: That is an exciting change to organism passage!

Brook Trout Outcome

UPDATE

The Brook Trout Outcome needs an update. The goal of 8% occupied habitat wasn't very realistic, so this language needs to be revised. The team isn't clear where they are planning to go with it.

Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) Outcome

UPDATE

The Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) Outcome needs updated language.

Comment: The team would like to talk more about some of the alignments and links within the outcomes, especially relating to conservation. They'd like to take a further dive with the whole team before finishing the two-pager.

Comment from chat: We are going to have a Fish GIT meeting in March to get deeper into draft outcome language. Since Fish Habitat outcome has

been a joint effort under Habitat GIT and Fish GIT, we make sure Habitat GIT representatives are invited to the March meeting.

Breck: I know we missed three outcomes, but that is time. This was again just a check-in. We can reach out to those outcomes. Thank you for sharing where you are, this will help us map out for the future. We are offering a STAR meeting on February 6th as an opportunity for the outcomes that are going to the Management Board for their outcome assessment meeting to share their elevator pitch and speak to their outcome assessment. This is also an opportunity for people to educate themselves on the material prior to the management board meeting and an opportunity to see some of these cross-GIT connections. This is something I would like to bring to the GIT chairs meeting later today to see if they have advice on how to structure it and set it up. The date, February 6th, is locked in. I also want to say thanks to everyone who participated in the discussion today. It was great to have a multitude of people speak their ideas around conservation.

Ken: Great discussion today. One of my thoughts from this quick round robin is we know we are trying to streamline and simplify. It is encouraging to see some updates, revisions, and some outcomes removed, so there is some streamlining and simplification. I think one of the challenges we all need to think about going forward is that not everything needs to be an outcome to be important to this partnership. How do we walk in both worlds? We can have things that are not an outcome but are still huge priorities, outputs, and things we are working on. I think we need to talk more about that because I think that will help us streamline. Gina had a great comment about creating the space to connect between outcomes. Otherwise, that's all I've got. Thank you all. We'll talk to you again in February.

12:00 PM Adjourn

Next Meeting: February 6th

STAR is offering to host three meetings for the outcomes presenting to the Management Board (MB) in between the time their materials are due and the MB meeting. These meetings objectives include:

- Opportunity for Outcome leads to practice their elevator pitch for their Outcome Assessment Meeting and gain input from participants.
- Opportunity for participants to review and familiarize themselves with material prior to Outcome Assessment Meeting.
- Discuss options for outcomes and make connections between outcomes.

The dates are the following, and please reach out to Breck Sullivan (bsullivan@chesapeakebay.net) if you have any questions.

- Feb 6th: meeting for first group of outcome assessment ([link](#)).
- Feb 20th (Afternoon so to not overlap with Wetland Workgroup meeting): meeting for second group of outcome assessment ([link](#)).
- March 7th: meeting for third group of outcome assessment ([link](#)).

Attendees:

Gabriel Duran (CRC), Gary Shenk (USGS), Britt Slattery (NPS), George Doumit (DNREC), John Wolf (USGS), Ken Hyer (USGS), Jeff Sweeney (EPA), Allison Welch (CRC), Douglas Austin (EPA), Emily Young (ICPRB), Ann Foo (UMCES), Breck Sullivan (USGS), Helen Golimowski (Devereux), Christina Garvey (CRC), Suzanne Trevena (EPA), Marisa Baldine (Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay), Douglas Bell (EPA), Bill Jenkins (EPA), Alex Fries (UMCES), Kristin Saunders (UMCES), Alex LaCurto (Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay), Greg Allen (EPA), KC Filippino (HRPDC VA), Keith Bollt (EPA), Denice Wardrop (CRC), Jess Blackburn (Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay), Laura Cattell Noll (Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay), Amy Handen (EPA), Wendy O'Sullivan (NPS), Julia Fucci (CRC), Melissa Fagan (CRC), Katie Brownson (USFS), Dylan Burgevin (MD DNR), Meg Cole (CRC), Rick Mittler (Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay), Bruce Vogt (NOAA), Carl Friedrichs (VIMS), Dede Lawal (CRC), Patrick Thompson (EnergyWorks), Nick Staten (CRC), Jeff Lerner (EPA), John Bovay (Virginia Tech), Katherine E. Bunting-Howarth (Cornell), Yusuke Kuwayama (UMBC), Matthew Kierce (IWLA), Kaylyn Gootman (EPA), Angie Wei (UMCES), Suzanne Trevena (EPA), Peter Claggett (USGS), Jennifer Olszewski (USGS), Ruth Cassilly (University of Maryland Cooperative Extension), Erin Sonnenburg (EPA), Tou Matthews (CRC), Gina Hunt (MD DNR), Leila Duman (MD DNR), Jeremy Hanson (CRC), Dave Montali (TetraTech)