



**Joint Scientific, Technical Assessment and Reporting (STAR) Meeting/
Coordinator & Staffer Strategic Review System
Quarterly Progress Meeting**

Thursday, January 23, 2020
9:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Conference Line: 929-205-6099 Meeting ID: 649-555-639

Webinar*: <https://zoom.us/j/649555639>

Meeting Materials:

https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/event/scientific_technical_assessment_and_reporting_star_team_meeting_january_2020

Location: Fish Shack

*If you are joining by webinar, please open the webinar first, then dial in.

AGENDA

Action Items:

- ✓ Review the Plastic Pollution Action Team (PPAT) [revised draft charge](#) and send comments to Emily Trentacoste (trentacoste.emily@epa.gov).
- ✓ Please submit names of suggested members and their affiliations for the PPAT to Emily Trentacoste by COB Tuesday, February 11th.
- ✓ STAR will follow up with Denice for a suggested member from the Chesapeake Research Consortium to meet the criteria of Academia for PPAT.
- ✓ Please respond to the [survey](#) about the Chesapeake Monitoring Cooperative data use/needed data.

9:30 Welcome, Introductions & Announcements – Bill Dennison (UMCES) and Scott Phillips (USGS)- STAR Co-Chairs, Peter Tango (USGS) and Emily Trentacoste (EPA), STAR Co- Coordinator

- STAC Workshop preliminary proposals are due February 10, 2020. More information can be found [here](#).
 - The Brook Trout Workgroup is interested in a Brook Trout Genetics Workshop.
 - Emily said she will reach out to a few workgroups based on science needs that are applicable for a STAC workshop.
 - Peter said the Criteria Assessment Protocol Workgroup suggested some ideas upgrading water quality standards and Kd regression methods, but it is not confirmed that the workgroup will submit a proposal.

- Peter also stated that the SAV STAC Workshop for satellite imagery is not looking at drone work which could be a topic for someone else to tackle.
- Highlight of the [survey](#) about the Chesapeake Monitoring Cooperative data use/needed data – Peter Tango
 - Suzi Spitzer is a PhD student at UMCES. She has put together a survey that looks at the Chesapeake Bay Program’s use of citizen science. She would appreciate it for STAR to complete the survey to answer what citizen monitoring data workgroups are using, what workgroups know about citizen monitoring, and what data workgroups need. There is a new RFP for the citizen monitoring program so this survey can also inform the next proposal.

Upcoming Conferences, Meetings, Workshops, & Webinars-

- [Ocean Sciences Meeting](#), February 16 – 21, 2020. San Diego, CA.
- [Association of Mid-Atlantic Aquatic Biologists](#), April 1-3, 2020, Berkeley Springs, WV. Deadline for paper submissions is February 28, 2020.
- [National Watershed and Stormwater Conference](#), April 14-17, 2020, Austin Texas.
- [Choose Clean Water Conference](#), May 19 – 21, 2020. Richmond, VA.
- [Chesapeake Research Symposium \(ChesR20\)](#), June 8 – 10, 2020. Annapolis, MD. Abstracts are due March 15, 2020
- [Chesapeake Studies Conference](#), June 11 – 12, 2020. Salisbury, MD. Poster proposals are still being accepted.
- [The National Conference on Ecosystem Restoration](#) (NCER), August 2 – 6, 2020. Portland, Oregon.
- [World Seagrass Conference & International Seagrass Biology Workshop](#), August 9 – 14, 2020. Annapolis, MD.
- [The National Coastal and Estuarine Summit](#), October 4 – 8, 2020. Providence, RI. Call for Proposals is open until April 3, 2020.
- [A Community on Ecosystem Services](#) (ACES), December 14-17, 2020. Bonita Springs, FL.

9:35 – 10:40 STAR Topic: Plastics Pollution Action Team

Materials: STAC Microplastics Workshop Report Presentation, PPAT Draft Charge and Membership

At the November 2019 Management Board (MB) meeting, the MB decided to create an action team to carry out specific recommendations from the [STAC Microplastics Workshop report](#). The action team will be under the MB and will guide and oversee development of a microplastics ecological risk assessment for the Chesapeake Bay. The MB directed STAR to discuss the charge and membership of the action team for recommendations.

9:40

Update on Microplastics Report – Matt Robinson (DOEE)

Matt will report out on the STAC-sponsored workshop titled “Microplastics in the Chesapeake Bay and its Watershed: State of the Knowledge, Data Gaps and Relationship to Management Goals.” Report can be accessed [here](#).

The Anacostia River TMDL was established in 2010 and shared with DC and Maryland. To implement the TMDL, DC DOEE have controlled projects such as trash traps and skimmer boats. They also have non-controlled structures such as innovative policies, clean teams, and Trash Free Potomac Watershed Anti-Littering Campaign. These programs brought insight and the questions about the small plastic and trash. There are microplastics in the Anacostia River that are not being captured. They also noticed that trash is accumulating in SAV beds, and the beds are capturing microplastics which is dangerous because they are critical habit. If SAV beds are a sink for microplastics, then this is where microplastics could be entering the food web.

Tetra Tech did a study on microplastics in SAV beds in DC. The study was on unvegetated and vegetated areas, and they found a significant difference between the two. There have only been two previous studies of microplastics in the Chesapeake Bay, but they showed evidence of microplastics in the Bay. In 2014 – 2015, Bay Trash Trawl conducted by Trash Free Maryland surveyed 30 sites for microplastics in the Chesapeake Bay mainstem and tidal tributaries, and 100% of samples contained microplastics.

STAC conducted a workshop proposed by the SAV workgroup on microplastics in the Bay and watershed. The steering committee decided early on that the workshop should be formatted around conducting an ecological risk assessment (ERA). The ERA consists of the following components:

- Problem Formulation: Determine assessment endpoints and measure endpoints
- Risk Analysis: Identify testable linkages between sources, stressors and assessment endpoints
- Risk Characterization: What are the risk and effects?

The conclusions of the workshop found that studies have shown microplastics are fairly ubiquitous throughout the bay and its tributaries. They have been found in both tidal and non-tidal waters. There was also general agreement that plastics represent a widespread, but largely unquantified, threat to the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem, and there is a need for standardization of terminology because there are many different types and sizes of plastic. The workshop concluded there are a number of piecemeal efforts to monitor plastics in the Bay, but no systematic effort, and the most urgent need is to identify assessment endpoints that represent areas of environmental and human health concern to characterize the severity of those risks.

There were multiple recommendations from the workshop, but today's meeting is focusing on these two recommendations:

- The Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) should create a cross-GIT Plastic Pollution Action Team to address the growing threat of plastic pollution to the Bay and watershed.
- STAR should incorporate development of ERAs of microplastics into the CBP strategic science and research framework, and the Plastic Pollution Action Team should oversee the development of the ERAs focused on assessment of microplastic pollution on multiple living resource endpoints.

Denise reminded the group that this issue came forth through many channels and came up from Ann Swanson from the Chesapeake Bay Commission. It is a concern from the ground up but also an active policy consideration. She thinks STAC is not only interested in the results but also the process of how the efforts are formed and moved forward. They may use it as an example for other issues in the future.

9:55

[Request for STAR's input on Plastic Pollution Action Team charge - All](#)

A draft charge has been developed for the action team, and STAR's input is requested to finalize this charge for presentation back to the MB.

Emily discussed the Plastic Pollution Action Team (PPAT) charge. The role of the charge is to clearly state the actions the team needs to address for the impacts of plastic pollution on the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed, so the team does not oversee any other outstanding issues on the topic. The members would not do the ERA but would oversee it and provide guidance to the entity conducting the ecological risk research. The actual ERA would be completed by EPA, its contractor, grantees, or another entity. The group undertaking the work for the ERA has not been decided so this is a topic the PPAT can discuss if necessary. The action team can have a core group of members that follow through the charge and then add in ad hoc members to help with science, funding, etc.

Kristin added the timeframe for this charge is 2 years and reporting back after 1 year. She also stated there is an opportunity to extend the timeframe if needed.

Greg stated #1 in the charge is written, "the EPA, its contractors, and grantees." If that means funds from the EPA, then this needs to be brought to their attention right away because their fiscal funding period is almost closed. He also mentioned that during the analysis stage of the ERA the group will hit some data gaps where the group will need to reach out to STAC or other researchers to fill this gap. This will make the timeframe longer. Greg stated the group needs to

figure out how urgent and important the ERA is compared to other known issues such as PPC in fish that people eat.

Greg made the group aware of the new Senate bill [Save Our Seas Act 2.0](#). Greg thinks if the team is limited to only the risk assessment, they will miss other projects and research conducted on this topic.

Greg proposes to add the Save Our Seas Act to the charge and to coordinate with other activities that might be helpful for the Chesapeake Bay.

Matt wanted to make a comment about the timeframe. He stated the current proposal states to do a preliminary ERA which will help visualize and communicate the issue. Once this action is completed, it will help the team move forward with the strategy that identifies gaps in information concerning the effects of plastic pollution. The group can then bring this forward to the MB to see if the group should continue with this work. He also noted on the Save Our Seas Act by stating the PPAT wants to complement other organizations working on this issue. Kelly is the Trash Free Waters Coordinator for the region, and she can connect with Greg Allen on the efforts for the Trash Free Waters program. She also stated the Saves Our Seas Act is in the House right now, and it wouldn't be available until October of 2021 which aligns with the timeline of this charge.

Kristin suggested adding a number 4 to the charge stating, "Continue to monitor policy advances at the federal and state level that may potentially impact, advance, or compliment this work."

Denice commented that when the PPAT comes across a gap they may not need to fill it if other organizations are working on filling that gap. It is also an opportunity for the team to prioritize gaps since not all of them are equal. It is important to include the "actionable science" in the charge.

People in the meeting agreed with these suggestions.

In #1 of the charge it states, "For example, this oversight will include advising researchers on assessment endpoints for the ERA, such as...." Jennifer asked if the workshop characterized those species and if they are all aquatic. Bob said most of them were aquatic and adding one then adds a lot of chains to the endpoint. Jennifer said it would be good to add a bird species. Emily said it would be helpful if someone in the PPAT could voice this concern of adding different species because it could be analyzed during the preliminary ecological risk.

Denice also stated it is important to start thinking about the monitoring needs. Emily said the PPAT should report-out to the Integrated Monitoring Team throughout its process to discuss monitoring needs.

Based on these suggestions, the revised draft can be viewed [here](#).

10:10

Discussion of action team members – All

STAR is looking for interested members for the Plastic Pollution Action Team. Membership can include representation from the scientific community, GITs, jurisdictions, agencies, etc.

Bob said 15 members would be ideal. The categories of representation they would like to be involved include:

- Academia
- Federal/State Representation
- GIT representation
- Crossover (multiple experience from same member)

Scott asked Denise if STAR could follow up with CRC to capture someone in Academia. Denise agreed.

Emily already has a suggestion for EPA – Kelly Somers.

Morgan said the Fisheries GIT is interested. Jennifer said she has some suggestions from the Habitat GIT that meets multiple categories of representation. Scott can follow up with Toxics workgroup. He knows Doug Austin is interested. Francesca said it is important that someone from Stewardship is involved.

Bob mentioned there are also suggestions of members from the STAC workshop.

Emily asked if there is anything missing from the categories of representation.

Brooke suggested adding someone from policy. Kristin said to contact Ann Swanson and encourages those who are finalizing the team to make it diverse. She suggested adding diversity to the categories.

10:30-11:45 SRS Topic: Dry Runs of Stewardship Cohort Presentations

Materials: Citizen Stewardship SRS Dry Run Presentation, Diversity SRS Dry Run Presentation, Public Access SRS Dry Run Presentation

There are 3 CBP outcomes, organized under the Stewardship Cohort, that will be reviewed by the Management Board on February 13, 2020. The dry run for STAR provides an opportunity for each outcome to provide their MB presentation and get suggestions for improvements. The presentations should follow the guidelines provided under the Strategy Review System, and on Chesapeake Decisions.

10:30

Citizen Stewardship – Amy Handen (National Park Service)

Challenges in developing and sustaining effective stewardship include workgroup capacity challenges... Successes from the workgroup include focusing on behavior change approaches to building stewardship.

In the future, increased investment in social science from the CBP will be extremely helpful. EPA has put funding towards a social science position for the CBP. They currently have data on the likelihood of future adoption and current adoption opportunity, but the data on environmental impacts for water quality

still needs to be collected to fully understand what behavior change to tackle. With data they have available, the workgroup is in the progress of developing a website that will share stewardship behavior data with practitioners.

Citizen Stewardships need help from the MB to:

- Continue increasing the priority of social science in the Partnership
- Support of future data collections at a 3 – 5 year frequency
- Obtain commitment from federal, state, and local partners to utilize social science frameworks and stewardship data to better design public engagement, education and behavior change programs.

Comments/Suggestions about the presentation:

Denice suggested to define what they mean by social science, and to move up the data model earlier in the presentation because it helped her connect the information.

Kristin suggested to make the asks more direct: “Make social science a priority.” “Support future data collections.” “Commit to utilize...”

Emily suggested to provide more details on what making social science more a priority means. She also mentioned adding more details on future data collections.

Peter suggested to give more details about the data they have collected.

Jennifer said it would be helpful to include as a task for the future of incorporating the habit of thinking about social science while workgroups go through their science needs. Emily mentioned this is under the Stewardship’s workgroup’s science need, but it would be helpful if they created a framework for this process.

Scott asked for clarification on the social science strategy. Amy said it is different from the Management Strategy and Logic and Action Plan, but it includes some of the same aspects. Scott suggested to think about how to combine these plans so that they do not branch out from the current process at the Bay Program.

Denice suggested to go through a concrete example throughout the presentation.

Emily suggested to give examples of the practitioners who will use the information. She also said to highlight more the idea of the need to collect this information so that practitioners can use it to know which habit they should target.

Denice said to add an ask to the MB about increasing the social science expertise in STAC.

10:55

Diversity – Jim Edward (EPA), Tuana Phillips (EPA), Francesca King (CRC)

Jim announced that the word minority will be removed from the outcome. The Diversity workgroup is currently off-track for their outcome. In 2016, the percent of people of color in the CBP was 13.7%, and the preliminary result for 2019 is 14.6%. The goal is 25%. The demographic profile used to measure progress was first sent out in 2016, and the second one was sent out in 2019. It will now be on a two-year cycle. The workgroup currently has a Diversity Strategy, but they will be announcing an additional Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Strategy to the MB. The success of this workgroup includes creating an indicator, relationship building with Bowie State and other institutions by creating a memorandum of understanding, and workgroup members have attended multiple career fairs and events. Challenges for the workgroup are lack of funding for members to be reimbursed for their time with workgroup activities, a lack of employment opportunities, a lack of diversity and staff in the program, and an obstacle of tracking and measuring the workgroup's long and robust workplan.

The MB can help the Diversity Workgroup by:

- Adopt/Endorse DEI Strategy
- Adopt DEIJ Statement for CBP
- Commit to Cultural Competency trainings
- Create space for understanding groups
- Improve access to funding

Comments/Suggestions about the presentation:

Julianna suggested to change the word "pathways" if isn't the Federal Pathways Program.

Laurel suggested to give an example on the type of plan and factors the workgroup will use to streamline their actions and efforts.

Emily suggested to talk through the slide that shows the results of the demographic profile and to change the words adopt/endorse in the first ask to implement. She also suggested to expand on the last request by having partners consider DEIJ issues as a component of the funding proposal or grant.

Scott suggested to provide more detail on the first two asks by making them one slide and the other asks on a different slide. He also suggested to explain the difference between the two strategies (DEI & DEIJ).

Denice suggested to explain why it matters for the MB to endorse the DEI and DEIJ strategies, and she said to show the UMD study to give a concrete example.

Wendy said she has seen some of the profile results, and she suggested to include them to help the MB understand the cultural issue such as the survey question that asked if people would benefit from a diverse work atmosphere.

11:20 **Public Access – Jackie Kramer** (National Park Service)

Public Access is on track to exceed their outcome. Challenges include management strategies and actions that are out of date and workgroup capacity. A success includes tracking new sites. They have added 176 new sites which is 59% of their 300-site goal with 151 new sites offering some form of boating access and 81 of the new sites developed on already existing public lands. In the future, they will focus on federal, state and local funding and prioritizing access for all communities. They are noticing climate impacts are affecting them, and they want to consider if they should proceed with quality vs. quantity sites. If they focus on quality of sites, it can possibly bring in a wide diverse set of users. Based on what they want to do in the future, they will leverage available funding for new access sites, evaluate site applicability using factors including sea level rise, and engage new users through programming and increasing types of access to increase stewardship.

The MB can help the Public Access Workgroup by:

- Funding for planning, development, and maintenance of new and existing sites
- Development and implementation of programming that expand number and diversity of users

Comments/Suggestions about the presentation:

Scott suggested changing the wording of the first ask to “have states set up funding mechanisms to enhance maintenance opportunities.”

Emily asked if the workgroup had ideas or examples on the second ask. She thinks giving more detail will help the MB understand what they can personally do for the ask.

Scott asked if there are any statistics of what gap of communities the access sites are missing. Jackie said they have some information they could share with the MB.

Cuiyin asked if they have identified access sites that will be impacted by sea level rise. Cuiyin suggested to add this detail to the maintenance part of the first MB ask.

11:45 **Coordinator/Staffer Meeting**

12:30

Adjourn

Next Meeting Dates: February 27th

Participants: Greg Allen, Bill Jenkins, Bruce Michael, Jennifer Star, Julie, Matt Robertson, David Woodward, Doug Austin, Denice Wardrop, Jeremy Hanson, Kelly Somers, Ken Hyer, Rebecca Chillrud, Peter Tango, Emily Trentacoste, Bob Murphy, Scott Phillips, Renee Thompson, Cuiyin Wu, Breck Sullivan, Tuana Phillips, Morgan Corey, Megan Ossmann, Julianna Greenberg, John Wolf, Brooke Landry, Kristen Saunders, Nora Jackson, Jennifer Greiner, Francesca King, Liz Chudoba, Laura Cattell Noll, Jackie Kramer, Amy Handen, Laurel Abowd