



Adaptation Workgroup Meeting Minutes- June

June 24th, 2026

10:00 am - 12:00 pm

[Visit the meeting webpage for meeting materials and additional information.](#)

Purpose: This meeting will be used to provide updates on the management strategy development timeline and responsible outcome components, present ideas on how the Adaptation Workgroup can add value and a case study example of innovation with nature based solutions from concept to implementation. Meeting participants will have an opportunity to provide ideas for the Adapting to Changing Environmental Conditions (ACEC) outcome's management strategy components, including identifying outcome challenges and 6-year management approaches.

Minutes

I. Introductions and Announcements

- Introducing ACEC Co-Chairs
 - Natalie Snider, Director of Watershed and Climate Services, Maryland Department of Natural Resources
 - Ben McFarlane, Chief Resiliency Officer, Hampton Roads Planning District Commission, VA
- Workgroup membership update
- June 25th Webinar: PA GeoBoard Seminar: Flooding, Data, and Decision-Making: Lessons from the Front Lines. Register [here](#).

Lead: Julie Reichert-Nguyen, ACEC Coordinator

Decisions [required]:

N/A

Actions [required]:

N/A

Discussion Notes:

- **Peter Claggett:** I was on the GIT chairs call yesterday and it was mentioned that all the workgroups and goal teams needed to have at least their voting membership finalized by the end of July. I haven't heard anything else about additional members of the Adaptation Workgroup, I will check.
- **Julie Reichert-Nguyen:** Once we understand a little more about the governance and structure process, we will start the process for nominating the at-large members, so stay tuned.

II. Management Strategy Update

The workgroup will be updated on the Healthy Landscapes Goal Team's management strategy next steps, review the CBP template, and components we are responsible for. ACEC leadership will provide examples of value added strategies.

Lead: Julie Reichert-Nguyen, ACEC Coordinator and Natalie Snider, ACEC Co-Cha

Decisions [required]:
N/A

Actions [required]:
First MS draft due to HL in July, second draft end of August or early September

Discussion Notes:

- **Sarah Brezinski:** The public feedback period has not changed, the plan is still to have a compiled version of the strategic plan with all of the goal management strategies presented to the PSC that they will get on October 22nd.
- **Jason Dubow:** One of the big challenges with this outcome is deciding as a group what will be good enough in terms of success. For example would we need to achieve a certain number of projects, or have a certain impact size from those projects by the 2040 deadline? Just a thought.
 - o **Natalie Snider:** We have been discussing this, trying to understand what we want to achieve in the workgroup but understanding that our role isn't necessarily to implement it. We are trying to focus more on building partnerships, networks, lessons learned, and where does that lead.
- **Fredrika Moser:** Curious if there is thought as to how the seven sub-watersheds will be distributed across the CB watershed? How small would a sub-watershed be?
 - o **Natalie Snider:** None of those decisions have been made, we want to distribute them across the partnership so we can have more engagement with both tidal and non-tidal. So we would be looking at both land use and location. There will be a lot to talk about, I think it will be a large part of our work within the first six to nine months. Things like assessing watersheds, selecting them, huck 8 vs. huck 12.
 - o **Ben McFarlane:** Yeah, I would just add that, you know, from our perspective, I think we really want to work with a diverse range of environments and types of communities. I think, you know, the seven number, that's a minimum target for us, but when we're thinking about, you know, the whole idea here is that we're using those seven as examples that can then spur additional work within the rest of the watershed. And so the more we can identify areas and communities that represent a range of different circumstances, different environments, different challenges, you know, the better off those case studies will actually be in order to serve others in the watershed that might not be one of these targeted areas from the get go. And I think, you know, the other thing is I don't think we're locked into choosing the seven right off the bat, right? I think we will have some flexibility over time. So if we start out with some that might be easier wins, for example, where there's an existing capacity that we can work with, that then sets us up to build capacity into additional watersheds or sub watersheds further down the road.

III. Nature-Based Solution Case Study

A case study demonstrating innovation with nature-based solutions from planning to implementation.

Lead: Ben McFarlane, ACEC Co-Chair

Decisions [required]:

N/A

Actions [required]:

N/A

Presentation Highlights: Ben highlighted examples in Hampton Roads, Virginia, such as Lake Hampton and Bow Creek Stormwater Park, in order to walk the group through: the identification of environmental challenges, identification of changing conditions, and implementation of nature based solutions focused projects that provide multiple benefits. Examples include planning for storm water inundation, creating recreational opportunities out of restoration projects, and flood risk reduction.

The goal of the [presentation](#) was to provide perspective and start thinking about how to extrapolate this work to other areas of interest in the watershed.

Discussion Notes:

- **Jason Dubow:** What metrics should be used to consider the success of the Lake Hampton project? For example, x acres of habitat for x species; x less days of nuisance flooding
 - **Ben McFarlane:** In both cases, these projects were designed to meet certain return period thresholds for different levels of flooding. And in the case of the Lake Hampton project, it was designed to meet a 25 year design storm; it addresses the drainage area, which is within 113.5 acres, and it created 18.86 acres of wetlands. I don't have them on hand for Virginia beach, but the cities have done some work to quantify the benefits they are providing.
 - **Julie Reichert-Nguyen:** I can see a future meeting bringing more information about the type of metrics people are using to evaluate the resilience enhancement from these projects. Maybe we can learn and figure out how to translate that to a sub-watershed area and what metrics we should think about.
- **Kevin Du Bois:** Ben, with these lake or closed system features (Hampton Lake), do you know what design aspects have been added to ensure wetlands will be sustained during long periods of drought? Has the suite of vegetation been selected to survive under both long-term flooded or dry conditions?
 - **Ben McFarlane:** I don't know exactly, we would be able to get lists of plants from each community to determine that, but that is a great point to bring up- this issue of longer periods of drought and more intense rainfall.
 - **Kevin Du Bois:** The reason I ask is because of the photograph, you could clearly see in the before the erosion of the shoreline. I have seen that typically in lake systems where you get periods of drought, the water level drops, and now the waves on unvegetated shoreline causes erosion. So I am just curious if they are planning on a wetland there, if the water drops and all of a sudden the wetlands

not getting flooded or inundated or the soils are not saturated, it could be difficult to sustain.

- **Ben McFarlane:** That is a good point, this presentation was hopefully to use this kind of work to share these experiences so this is good to point out. One of the many challenges of nature based approaches is that it doesn't always work as well as we think right off the bat. It is a good point to not be assuming conditions will always be as steady as they are under the more typical planning process.
- **Neil Ganju:** Can you share examples of how these individual project plans informed each other, i.e. lessons learned along the way across disparate land uses, external stressors, etc....that kind of knowledge transfer on the small scale can inform bay-wide knowledge transfer.
 - **Ben McFarlane:** We have a robust community of practice on these issues in Hampton Roads, so how we can export that model to others is something I have been thinking about. In terms of these specific projects, I don't think there is a direct connection between the two, but I would say that the perspective of incorporating natural components into more typical infrastructure has been around our region for a number of years now, so I would say the thinking of trying to do more with less is shared. From a more specific perspective, both of these projects have been shared and briefed from the locality staff at different regional meetings throughout hampton roads
- **Jason Dubow:** I think the metrics of particular projects could help the ACEC workgroup with demonstrating its overall impact over the years. The workgroup would have to decide what it could take credit for.

IV. Management Strategy Brainstorm - Challenges and 6 year strategies

We will utilize break-out groups to identify challenges related to the Adapting to Changing Environmental Conditions outcome.

Answers were captured in the [Padlet](#).

Lead: Julie Reichert-Nguyen, ACEC Coordinator, Natalie Snider, Co-chair, Ben McFarlane, Co-chair

Decisions [required]:

N/A

Actions [required]:

N/A

Discussion Notes:

- In the discussion, challenges are highlighted in light red, with 6 year strategies to address the challenge in light green. See an overview of the challenges/strategies identified in the [posted slides](#).
- **Ben McFarlane:** One of the challenges we wrestled with was the realization that the majority of the watershed is privately owned, so if we want success a lot of what we need

to do will be on private grounds. How do we get people to do something they might not otherwise do, or take advantage of existing programs or build on them?

- **Julie Reichert-Nguyen:** One specific example of this is in the Choptank, looking at their tidal marshes and migration pathways, it's all farmland; it is privately owned. Any thoughts on as a workgroup, what our role could be?
- **Natalie Snyder:** We could bring in people we know that work with private landowners, like the soil conservation districts, and that can serve as a connection between us and landowners.
- **Taryn Sudol:** Note of caution about private landowners...make sure we can deliver! "Folks show up, but they never stay".
- **Alisha Mulkey:** Farmers = Return on Investment (ROI) is primary driver
- **Jason Dubow:** I wonder, is it worth, as part of management strategy, encouraging other partners to implement programs that have been successful in engaging private property owners? For example, the DNR watershed projects. So essentially, if we know of some successful programs that exist at state level or other level, can we encourage other partners in the watershed to replicate those?
 - **Ben McFarlane:** Yeah, Jason, I think that's a great point. And I guess a corollary to that would be, if we have examples of programs that maybe aren't working out so well, for example, some of the programs available for agricultural BMPs have not been as the take up hasn't been as broad as we'd like it to be, why is that not happening? Why are programs not working? And like you said, can we find examples where they are working and then use that to recommend tweaks to programs to improve their effectiveness?
- **Julie Reichert-Nguyen:** We talked about the challenge of identifying the role our workgroup will play and how that can add value. One of the things that came up was our role as a connector, and that we can think bigger. This could translate into a management strategy in that we spend some time trying to figure out alignment across organizations.
 - **Jason Dubow:** I wonder if it would be valuable to put out a request for interest amongst any partners out there to get an opportunity to connect. It would be interesting to see what kind of requests for assistance come in. We wouldn't be able to help everyone, but we can serve as a connector and say 'oh you are looking for this, well we know x and y organization...' etc.
 - **Natalie Snider:** My group talked a little about this too, we talked about network mapping or providing a list of partners or TA providers, making sure people know where the resources can be found, and peer-to-peer connections. We also talked about bigger efforts like round tables or workshops.
 - **Jason Dubow:** Yeah, I guess this gets to the metrics issue too. Can we draw a line between certain actions that we do, like network mapping, and then a successful project somewhere that results because of our actions? And is there a way that we can take credit for that? How do we track that sort of thing? I think that would help us with the second part of the outcome, which talks about the implementation side of things. How do we track the metrics, but also take credit for those projects that actually get done?

- **Julie Reichert-Nguyen:** Yeah, that's always a challenge. How do you get to that point of the engagement, and the technical expertise and the capacity building to where it led to folks actually being successful and getting funding and implementing projects in a strategic way? We could have a whole workgroup meeting around that and metric development for the workgroup. That's another challenge really is that metric, we lack metrics to do this right now and developing those metrics will be important so we can report progress on outcomes or the targets.
- **Meredith Lemke:** I'm happy to discuss some of the challenges and opportunities with conducting network mapping from the Stewardship Workgroup's perspective with ACEC some time!
- **Cindy Osorto:** We could also consider rural, suburban, and urban local government and nonprofit water protection involvement in specific areas, such as support for local gov adaptation plans that consider flooding emergency plans or serving in-need folks like the elderly population.
- **Natalie Snider:** We talked about the challenge of selecting watersheds that provide a mix of diversity and representation across communities, habitats, land use, geographic areas.
 - **Peter Claggett:** We could address this by having short term, mid term, and long term goals, because we eventually want to scale up to address all the diverse needs, but we won't be able to do it right away.
 - **Nicole Carlozo:** We also talked about starting small (2 sub watersheds) and building from there based on lessons learned.
 - **Julie Reichert-Nguyen:** Yeah, for example if we identify the first two under a common theme like flooding, we can have tidal and non-tidal areas to help us find our footing as a group.
- **Jadon Dubow:** Can states or other signatories or partners take credit towards this outcome? For example if our workgroup didn't exist, there is work already being done; can we take credit for those types of actions towards that outcome? Or are we limited to only take credit for things that we do collaboratively as a group?
 - **Julie Reichert-Nguyen:** People were in the opinion of the latter- through this collaboration, what have we been able to move forward? That's what I heard, at least in previous Climate Resiliency workgroup meetings when they were developing this outcome. I think the reason they said that is because we did fall into this bit of a trap in the beginning with the Climate Resiliency workgroup, where people wanted us to document all adaptation and resilience efforts happening across the watershed. And we did not have the capacity to do that. It never led to anything. That was the way they wanted to track progress on the original adaptation outcome, and it was unfortunately a bit of a failure. We started focusing on more collaborative projects with other outcomes that were implementing nature-based solutions, working with community resilience efforts with nature-based solutions, and trying to quantify the effectiveness of nature-based solutions. So those were the main priorities that the workgroup identified, but we never got to the point where we developed metrics we could track progress on. It was more qualitative that, hey, our workgroup was able to do

these workshops with these groups and we were able to get this funding for these efforts to research how to quantify the effectiveness of these solutions. That's something we're gonna have to sort out too, how we're actually gonna track this progress and what it looks like.

- **Natalie Snider:** Something else we talked about in our group was that we all have our day jobs; we can't spend boots on the ground time building trust and relationships. **How do we get funding to help support our work?** That is a strategy we need to talk about, and I think talking through these things will help us determine how we add value and from value the metrics.
 - **Jason Dubow:** I feel that the work that each signatory completes on its own should count towards achieving the outcome. Otherwise we're selling ourselves short and not communicating to the public how the signatories collectively are making a difference. The protected lands outcome counts the work that's completed by each signatory and is not limited to successes resulting from the protected lands workgroup.
- **Ben McFarlane:** I have a note for the management strategy. At some point, we're going to want to start building a list of candidate watersheds, and that's going to rely a lot on not only the jurisdictions being able to inform, but also the partners that are here that are kind of aware of efforts or interests from groups that may be not busy as tied in with the jurisdictional representatives. That's one of the key first steps that we're going to have to do is in order to pick one; we have to have a list. We're not quite there yet. I know we've got the Choptank, which is kind of like half in, half out. I don't know if that would be considered cheating to claim the Choptank as one of our success stories, but I would hope that we could use that as a kind of a springboard to our first real one.

V. **Management Strategy Brainstorm - 6-year strategies**

We will build from the challenges identified and discuss 6-year management strategies for the ACEC outcome.

Lead: Julie Reichert-Nguyen, ACEC Coordinator, Natalie Snider, Co-chair, Ben McFarlane, Co-chair

Decisions [required]:
N/A

Actions [required]:
N/A

Discussion Notes [optional]:

- This discussion was integrated in the previous challenges session above. Each breakout group picked a challenge and the participants brainstormed what would be needed in a management strategy. These are summarized in this [presentation](#) in slides 11-13.

VI. Adjourn

Next Meeting: TBD

Attendees:

Meredith Lemke, CRC

Julie Reichert-Nguyen, NOAA

Ben McFarlane, HRP PDC

Emma Corbitt, HRPDC

Johns, Arianna, DEQ

Klingaman, Cass D, DEC

Kevin Du Bois, DoW CBP

Jason Dubow MDP

Jackie Pickford, USGS

Natalie Snider, DNR

Norah Carlos, CBC

Taylor Woods, USGS

Neil Ganjum USGS

Nadya Chehab MDA

Amanda Malagari DNR

Taryn Sudol, MD Sea Grant

Lydia Brinkley, USC

Peter Claggett USGS

Sarah Brzezinski EPA

Coral Howe, USGS

Nicole Carlozo DNR

Amy Freitag, NOAA NCOS

Michael Maddox UMD

Lena Easton-Calabria, MARISA; RAND Corp.

Dr. Yi Liu, Morgan State University

Fredrika Moser UMD

Cindy Osorto MDE

Sarah Koser DNR

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