



Stream Health Workgroup Meeting - April 2026

Friday, April 17, 2026
10:00am - 12:00pm EST

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

Purpose: To hear presentations from partners in the watershed working on stream health-related topics including the next steps in developing a suite of metrics to complement the Chessie BIBI, and Virginia's update to their stream health indices methodology.

Minutes

1. Introductions and Announcements

(10:00 – 10:10)

Requested Action: Non-decisional

Lead: Alison Santoro (MDNR), Brock Reggi (VA DEQ)

Materials: N/A

Decisions: N/A

Actions: Workgroup members - please review posted management strategy and work plan documents and note desired changes for the new unified strategy.

Discussion Notes:

- June meeting rescheduled for June 26th
 - a. The regularly scheduled June meeting falls on Juneteenth and has been rescheduled to June 26th.
- Update on Management Strategies: awaiting guidance from Bay Program leadership.
 - a. Alison Santoro and Chris Guy discussed ongoing changes in Bay Program management strategies, including the merging of habitat and fisheries groups into the new "Thriving Habitats, Fisheries and Wildlife" Goal Implementation Team. Becky Gwynn and Kevin Schabow are new co-chairs.
 - b. The Management Board will be phased out by July, with responsibilities shifting to the new goal implementation team chairs.
 - c. A new unified management strategy is being developed for all outcomes, with chapters for each area. The workgroup will soon be asked to help populate the new template, which will require engagement and input. The process must be completed within 18 months.

- d. Alison posted links to the most recent management strategy and work plan for review. Members are encouraged to note what should be kept or changed for the new format.
 - i. 2024 Management Strategy:
https://www.chesapeakebay.net/files/documents/2024_10_16_Stream_Health_Management_Strategy_v4_2024-2025_FINAL.pdf
 - ii. 2024 Work Plan:
https://www.chesapeakebay.net/files/documents/2024_10_16_Stream_Health_Work_Plan_2024-2026_FINAL.pdf

2. **Note: Presentation time slots were switched during the meeting**

Presentation: Update to Virginia's Stream Condition Indices **(10:40 – 11:10)**

Presentation Description: Virginia Department of Environmental Quality will present on Virginia's stream condition index methodology and implementation as well as their updates to incorporate benthic macroinvertebrate data to the genus level.

Requested Action: Non-decisional

Lead: Andrew Garey (VA DEQ)

Materials: N/A

Decisions: N/A

Actions: See below

Discussion Notes:

- Virginia DEQ is currently updating stream bioassessment methodology for non-coastal streams: new methods use 220 specimen subsamples identified mostly to genus level, instead of 110 identified to family, as in current method (Virginia Stream Condition Index).
- The new indices are expected to be more accurate and precise, with strong separation between reference and stressed sites.
- Four new multi-metric indices (MMIs) have been developed for upland streams (i.e. streams west of the Coastal Plain), separated by bioregion (mountain/Piedmont) and season (spring/fall). Genus-level indices to replace the family-level indices in the Coastal Plain are still in development.
- The new approach reduces misclassifications compared to the current approach in Virginia's Piedmont and Mountain regions.
- The technical report is in final review, with implementation planned for the 2028 integrated report. Communication materials for technical and non-technical audiences are being prepared

3. **Presentation:** Next Step for Developing a Suite of Stream Health Metrics **(10:10 – 10:40)**

Presentation Description: Matt Baker (UMBC) will present about the upcoming CESU workshop focused around the development of stream health indices that could complement the Chessie BIBI. The presentation will include a brief history of the ongoing stream health indicators project, what the workshop aims to accomplish, as well as an update on the location and date of the workshop.

Requested Action: Non-decisional

Lead: Matt Baker (UMBC)

Materials: N/A

Decisions: N/A

Actions: See below

Discussion Notes:

- Matt Baker provided an update on the planned workshop at the National Conservation Training Center, now scheduled for June 29–30.
- The workshop aims to synergize Bay Program and local jurisdiction assessment needs, review challenges and successes in stream health assessment, and discuss new tools and findings (including Tetra Tech and USGS research).
- Day 1 will focus on jurisdictional challenges and recommendations; Day 2 will address how new tools and findings can augment current programs.
- The workshop will be hybrid (in-person and remote participation). A draft agenda is in progress, and travel justification materials may be provided for attendees.

Other Announcements:

- Rosemary Fanelli shared a new USGS effort to compile and synthesize information on how non-tidal streams are evaluated for water quality and biological impairment across jurisdictions. Coral Howe will reach out to jurisdictions for review and input. This complements Tetra Tech's work on stream health indicators.
 - Rosemary Fanelli (Chat): I wanted to share with the workgroup about a new USGS effort to compile and synthesize information across the jurisdictions within the CB watershed on how non-tidal streams are evaluated for water quality and biological impairment. Coral Howe (chowe@usgs.gov) is summarizing information on water quality criteria, assessment methods, and ATTAINs data from each of the jurisdictions to describe similarities and differences across the region. This effort builds on the earlier [study](#), which summarized stressors identified as causes of biological impairment across the CB watershed. This effort also complements the work being done by Tetra Tech to identify water quality indicators of stream health. Coral will likely be reaching out to folks from each jurisdiction later in the summer to review the results. Our team would be happy to present the results and plans to use this information to the SHWG later this year.

Action Items:

- Alison to draft travel justification materials for the June workshop and coordinate with Matt Baker and Breck Sullivan.
- Workgroup members to review posted management strategy and work plan documents and note desired changes for the new unified strategy.
- Coral Howe (USGS) to reach out to jurisdiction contacts for input on the new synthesis project.

Attendees:

- Staten, Nick
- Reggi, Brock (VA DEQ)
- Alison A Santoro (MD DNR)
- Kristen Saacke Blunk (NFWF Field Liaison)
- Claire Buchanan (ICPRB)
- Sturgis, Brittany E. (DNREC)
- Denise Clearwater (MDE)
- Lancaster, John (PA DEP)
- Noe, Gregory (USGS)
- Davis, Sandra (USFWS)
- Southerland, Mark (Tetra Tech)
- Maloney, Kelly O (USGS)
- Kyle Hodgson (MD DNR)
- Joe Berg (Biohabitats)
- Roth, Nancy (Tetra Tech)
- Garey, Andrew (VA DEQ)
- Gwynn, Becky (VA DWR)
- Mueller, Sandra (VA DEQ)
- Emily Young (ICPRB)
- Fanelli, Rosemary M (USGS)
- Davis, Cassandra M (NYS DEC)
- Sara Weglein (MD DNR)
- Guy, Chris (USFWS THGIT coordinator)
- Howe, Coral M (USGS)
- Mckercher, Elizabeth (VA DEQ)
- Walker, Holly (DNREC)
- Anne Hairston-Strang (MD DNR)
- Secrist, Mark (unknown affiliation)
- Heidel, Scott (PA DEP)
- Sadie Drescher (Chesapeake Bay Trust)
- Robinson, Matthew (EPA)
- Maggie Woodward (CBC)
- Bollt, Keith (EPA)
- Owrutsky, Rachel (DNREC)
- Metes, Marina J (unknown affiliation)
- Matt B (UMCES)
- Meyers, Matthew (unknown affiliation)