Monitoring Workgroup Meeting

September 21st, 2026
2:00 PM – 3:30 PM
Visit the meeting webpage for meeting materials and additional information.

Purpose: This was the inaugural meeting of the Monitoring Workgroup. This meeting began with introductions from the leadership team including the chairs, coordinator and staffer. Then, Peter Tango (USGS) presented on the structure and membership of the workgroup along with its place in the 2025 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement, specifically under the Water Quality, Standards Attainment and Monitoring Outcome. Next, there was a discussion on the format of Monitoring Workgroup meetings and how they would be structured to cover all relevant materials. Lastly, there was a discussion on the vision of the workgroup.

Minutes

I. Welcome, Introductions & Announcements

Lead: ***Peter Tango*** *(U.S. Geological Survey, USGS)*

Upcoming Conferences, Meetings, Workshops and Webinars

- Restore America's Estuaries' 2026 Coastal & Estuarine Summit – September 22-25, 2026. San Francisco, California.
- Chesapeake Watershed Forum – November 13-15, 2026. Shepherdstown, West Virginia.
- National Water Quality Monitoring Council Virtual Gathering – March 9-11, 2027. Virtual.

II. Leadership Team Introductions

Lead: ***Peter Tango*** *(USGS),* ***Tom Parham*** *(Maryland Department of Natural Resources MD DNR),* ***Cindy Johnson*** *(Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, VA DEQ),* ***Meighan Wisswell*** *(VA DEQ) and* ***Allison Welch*** *(Chesapeake Research Consortium, CRC).*

Each member of the leadership team introduced themselves. Peter Tango is the coordinator of the Monitoring Workgroup and the Monitoring Coordinator at the Chesapeake Bay Program. Allison Welch is the staffer for the Monitoring Workgroup employed by the Chesapeake Research Consortium. The Monitoring Workgroup currently has three chairs. Meighan Wisswell is from VA DEQ and serves as a Water Monitoring Coordinator for their Nontidal Monitoring Program. Cindy Johnson is a Chesapeake Bay Monitoring Grant Coordinator with VA DEQ. Cindy is planning to retire next December. Meighan will be taking over responsibilities for Cindy, which is why they are currently serving as chairs together. Lastly, Tom Parham oversees Maryland's tidal monitoring program with MD DNR.

III. Monitoring Workgroup Structure and Membership

Lead: ***Peter Tango*** *(USGS)*

Peter began his presentation by sharing the leadership and membership of the Monitoring WG. This group will have 15 voting members, which is aligned with the Governance and Management Framework (GMF). Eight of these will be the members selected by the signatories and seven of these will be at-large members that have been nominated and are currently being voted for. At-large members will be serving two-year terms.

Next, Peter showed the structure for the Clean Water Goal Team (CWGT). The Monitoring Workgroup is under the CWGT, specifically under the Water Quality, Standards Attainment and Monitoring (WQSAM) Outcome. This new workgroup is a combination of the previous Hypoxia Collaborative group, Non-Tidal Workgroup, and Data Integrity Workgroup. The main points of contact for this group are the coordinator, Peter Tango (pjtango@usgs.gov), and the staffer, Allison Welch (awelch@chesapeakebay.net).

Next, Peter dove into the connection with the Revised Watershed Agreement. This workgroup will mainly focus on the WQSAM Outcome and its four targets. He also covered the strategic plan, management strategy and workplans which will be produced to achieve the Watershed Agreement's goals, outcomes and targets. There is a timeline that was shared for the management strategies and workplans so they can be revised on a regular basis. There is also a timeline for the development of the strategic plan, management strategies and workplans.

Peter shared the outcome and target language for the WQSAM Outcome and shared how this connects to the Monitoring Workgroup.

Discussion Notes:

Q: *Dave Montali:* We have been working through our membership with the Modeling Workgroup. The Chesapeake Bay Commission (CBC) opted not to participate as a voting member for our workgroup, which gave us eight members. I noticed you have eight out of the nine signatory members as well. Has CBC also opted out of this group?

- ***A:*** *Peter Tango:* At the moment, we are missing New York.
- ***A:*** *Anna Killius:* There are four of us at CBC that try to cover as much of the Bay Program as we can. We kept our voting seat on this workgroup but chose to leave our space vacant on the Modeling Workgroup to leave space for a different expert to come in. You'll see us do that on a few other workgroups where we felt that the space could be better filled. We had to stretch our capacity throughout the different workgroups.
- ***Response:*** *Dave Montali:* I understand. Our workgroup is less about policy and more about science. The Clean Water Goal Team has a max of 15; you can't have 7 at-large members with 9 signatories.
- ***Response:*** *Peter Tango:* We are accounting for a vacancy from New York. If a vacancy is offered by a signatory member, there is an opportunity to fill that with an at-large member.
- ***Response:*** *Cassie Davis:* At this time, we are going to participate with the Monitoring Workgroup as available, but we won't take up a voting member role. We only have five stations within the watershed, and they're funded by New York State.
- ***Response:*** *Peter Tango:* Thank you for the update. We are happy to have you in any capacity.
- ***Response:*** *Kaylyn Gootman:* That opens up an additional at-large seat, which would add up to the total of 15.

IV. Discussion on Monitoring Workgroup Meeting Structure and Frequency

Lead: ***Tom Parham*** *(MD DNR),* ***Meighan Wisswell*** *(VA DEQ), and* ***Cindy Johnson*** *(VA DEQ)*

In this presentation, Meighan and Tom covered two of the ideas the Leadership Team has been brainstorming about meeting structure and frequency. Meighan's idea broke the meetings down

into subgroups for each monthly meeting. She shared a few different ideas for how this could work varying in the division of groups and inclusion of data integrity.

Next, Tom shared his idea, which would have a large quarterly meeting that focused on one of the five monitoring networks. This would help produce a State of the Monitoring Network report. Then, there would be shorter monthly meetings that would focus on hot topics.

Discussion Notes:

Comment: *Kaylyn Gootman:* I think both options present good opportunities in thinking about the new Agreement, workgroup structure and developing the management strategy. I think operations of our groups and action teams will be much more directive than daily network operations. Everyone here knows that daily network operations are a lot of work. This would be getting agreements and contracts in place, quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC), data integrity, data deliverables and reporting. I feel there will be more than just the maintenance of the monitoring networks at the forefront of this group. I like what Tom has suggested with the cycle that works towards a State of the Monitoring Network report. We would also have the flexibility to cover topics as they come up, like if there is a data release for a specific network. I appreciate what Meighan shared with bringing data integrity to the forefront and I think that could fit well into option 2.

Comment: *Dave Montali:* I think it depends on what you need to talk about, which I don't have a great sense of. West Virginia (WV) would encourage less meetings. If you go with the monthly option, it would be good to build in data integrity to each one. I think West Virginia would want to be focused on nontidal monitoring and maybe tidal. Less is more. If you go with the quarterly idea with the in between monthly meetings, then you might want to think about the quarterly meetings including everything, not just focusing on one topic. For the quarterly Modeling WG meetings, they are long, but they include everything. West Virginia would push for less meetings, especially because it's harder for those in smaller organizations to attend a lot of meetings.

- ***Response:*** *Peter Tango:* If it's a quarterly meeting, there could be a compromise that it would be longer, and we'd be able to dig into topics. Across the five monitoring networks, we have the need for extended conversations. Thanks for highlighting the Modeling WG meetings.
- ***Response:*** *Kaylyn Gootman:* For those who are worried about having too many meetings, I think there is always the option to pick and choose what meetings you'd like to attend. It might not make sense for a WV representative to participate fully in a tidal quarterly. I think this group will be charged with more than day-to-day monitoring operations. This is clear in the management approaches. There may be opportunities to work across groups, but maybe not. There has been a lot of talk about focusing on networks. I am excited for the opportunity to try something different. If it doesn't work, the group could always pivot. For a quarterly meeting, the beginning could cover everything and then people could drop off once the focus dials in. Option 2 helps us work towards our goal.

Q: *Tom Parham:* Dave, when I thought about the quarterly meeting, I was inspired by the Modeling WG. Is your new format just quarterly or do you have in-between monthly meetings?

- ***A:*** *Dave Montali:* Most of the time we just do the quarterlies. Recently, we did an interim meeting in September to approve various models. We use interims as needed. If you only have quarterly but have a hot topic you need a decision on before the next quarterly, then you can add an interim meeting for it. If you have a comprehensive quarterly, people can tune in when they want to based on the agenda, if you can stay on track. It's hard to maintain the timing on the agenda.

Comment from chat: *Amanda Shaver:* I could see where a longer quarterly meeting could facilitate the opportunity to meet in person and do field work? (potentially), but I like the monthly structure and attention to data integrity

- ***Response:*** *Peter Tango:* I know all of the Modeling WG meetings used to be in-person. Now, they are more of a hybrid setting. I know that the Brook Trout WG has done meetings in-person and then gone into the field. We haven't done something like that in a while. I appreciate that idea.
- ***Response:*** *Dave Montali:* I think that we are losing information transfer by not being in-person. I've taken a couple of trips to Annapolis to be at the quarterly and in-person attendance is sparse. We have a hybrid approach, which seems to be how the trend is going. If you want the meeting in-person, you need to encourage it these days.

Q: *Jimmy Webber:* Monitoring WG and Data Analysis and Reporting (DAR) WG have so much overlap and we want to be in coordination with you. We're thinking about how we can structure ourselves. Have you thought about how you will utilize your membership for these topics/ideas? Were you thinking about having offline conversations after workgroup meetings? There might be things that can't be unpacked in a 60-minute meeting. We've been thinking about these things for DAR. If there are things that you have to discuss offline with certain participants, how do you bring that back at the next meeting?

- ***A:*** *Tom Parham:* That's a great question. We haven't discussed that yet but I'm sure we've all thought about it. Because this group is coalescing all these other groups, there are a lot of folks and a lot of things going on across the five monitoring networks. We would like to keep an open virtual door for updates and comments about things that we need to be aware of and need to address. Maybe we could start our meeting with a quick update from each of the groups. I talked to Ken the other day about developing monitoring stories. For example, we had that large algal bloom, and different states had to address that. That's a story that needs to be discussed. From each of the monitoring programs, I'm sure there are things that are going on. That could be from the field and state of the Bay to the lab, and to monitoring related reports.

Comment: *Ken Hyer:* I thought there were legs behind the idea of a quarterly deep dive into each network. I love the idea that within one 18-month window, we would do a wholesale review of each network, which would provide a window to talk about the beginning of supporting a network to data and lab analysis to communication. I saw a lot of value in that. I know you can get close to the same result if you break it up into pieces and phases, but I've been in enough discussions that you learn a lot and develop strategic thinking when you are able to look across a whole network at once. I support this idea of taking a deep dive into each network. I think it would benefit the partnership.

Comment: *Peter Tango:* The Modeling WG has a weekly meeting tackling focused issues and moving the gears of progress along with their quarterly meetings. Those sub pieces can be helpful to keep the gears moving and working across networks. I don't know if we'd have to do that. The 2007-09 Monitoring Review had us meeting every Friday to tackle some of the issues and it was complimented by workshops. I don't know the intensity of this group yet, but I know it's a lot of work from a lot of people to pull together. There are many steps in the process for each monitoring network. There are hard topics that may need extra discussion with select folks. We can see how our meeting needs evolve.

V. Discussion on Monitoring Workgroup Vision

Lead: ***Tom Parham*** *(MD DNR),* ***Meighan Wisswell*** *(VA DEQ), and* ***Cindy Johnson*** *(VA DEQ)*

This discussion topic allowed for participants to answer the question "What do you want to get out of the Monitoring Workgroup?" and share their perspective on what is vital to keep included in the Monitoring Workgroup, especially as we work to tie together several workgroups. Unfortunately, there wasn't much time to answer this question, however the leadership team encourages participants to share their thoughts via email. Feel free to email Allison Welch (awelch@chesapeakebay.net) with these thoughts.

Discussion Notes:

Comment: *Cindy Johnson:* I would also encourage you to think about anything you were scared to lose when you heard that your workgroup would be merging into the Monitoring Workgroup. These things would be good to highlight to ensure we can keep them going.

VI. Adjourn

Next Meeting: *TBD*

Attendees:

- Abby Ethridge, Old Dominion University (ODU)
- Alex Fries, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES)
- Allison Welch, CRC
- Amanda Shaver, VA DEQ
- Andrew Keppel, MD DNR
- Anna Killius, CBC
- Anthony Timpano, VA DEQ
- Austin Smith, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Becky Monahan, Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE)
- Bhanu Paudel, Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC)
- Caitlin Bolton, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG)
- Carol Cain, MD DNR
- Cass Klingaman, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NY DEC)
- Cassia Pianca, Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS)
- Cassie Davis, NY DEC
- Cindy Johnson, VA DEQ
- Dave Montali, TetraTech
- Dave Parrish, VIMS
- Dong Liang, UMCES
- Doug Moyer, USGS
- Elgin Perry
- Emily Young, Interstate Commission of the Potomac River Basin (ICPRB)
- Gabriel Duran, CRC
- Gregory Zuknick, EA Engineering, Science, and Technology, Inc. (EAEST)
- Holly Walker, DNREC
- Jaclyn Mantell, UMCES
- Jerry Frank, UMCES
- Jessie Turner, ODU
- Jenna Schueler, Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF)
- Jimmy Webber, USGS
- Joe Berg, Biohabitats
- Jon Harcum, TetraTech
- Josh Lookenbill, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP)
- Karen Andersen, Friends of the Shenandoah River (FOSR)
- Kaylyn Gootman, EPA
- Kelly Doordan, Trash Free Maryland
- Ken Hyer, USGS
- Kevin Minga, ODU
- Kristen Heyer, MD DNR
- Lucretia Brown, District of Columbia Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE)
- Matthew Kierce, Izaak Walton League of America (IWLA)
- Martha McCauley, EAEST
- Mary Stack, ICPRB
- Mason Kilbourn, Friends of the Middle River (FOMR)

- Meighan Wisswell, VA DEQ
- Meg Maddox, UMCES
- Megan Fitzgerald, EPA
- Megan Thynge, EPA
- Molly Pulket, PA DEP
- Nick Murray, West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (WV DEP)
- Piero Mazzini, VIMS
- Peter Tango, USGS
- Peyton Hamilton, ODU
- Rebecca Murphy, UMCES
- Renee Karrh, MD DNR
- Safiya Farid, Clean Fairfax
- Sarah Holter, Blue Water Baltimore (BWB)
- Sakinat Ahmad, DNREC
- Sandy Davis, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- Suzanne Doughten, ODU
- Tammy Domanki, Anne Arundel Community College (AACC)
- Than Hitt, West Virginia Rivers Commission (WVRC)
- Tom Parham, MD DNR
- Tyler Shenk, Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC)
- Victoria Hill, ODU
- Victoria Prouty, Otsego County Conservation Association (OCCA)
- William Harbold, MD DNR