



## **Protected Lands Workgroup Meeting**

**Wednesday September 27th, 2023**

**3:00pm – 4:00pm Video Call [Link](#)**

**Or dial: (US) +1 731-435-3160**

**PIN: 643 120 139#**

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### **Attendees**

William Urvina - CRC	Joel Dunn - Chesapeake Conservancy	Kevin DuBois - DOD
Ashley Rebert - PA DCNR	Ashton Berdine - WVLT	Aurelia Gracia - NPS
Ben Alexandro - CCP	Britt Slattery - NPS	Chase Douglas - CCP
Jamal Childs - CCP	John Wolf - USGS	Katy Brownson - USFS
Michelle Campbell - DOEE	Sara E Coleman - MD DNR	Steve Storck - CCP
Cheryl Wise - MD DNR		

### **Summary**

During the meeting, several key points were discussed. One of the main topics was the protected lands indicator, which involved reviewing and finalizing publication materials and messaging. The overall direction of the messaging was to highlight the improved accuracy of the data. The team is aiming to publish the materials by October and emphasized the importance of a call to action to encourage more years of protection. They also mentioned the initiative to establish a GIS team to work with the workgroup.

There was a lot of discussion about how to present the data, particularly regarding the categorization of state progress. Some states categorize their data differently, which led to a discussion about whether to focus on lands protected by the state or on lands protected within the state (this would include everything besides federal land i.e., tribal lands, land trust acquisitions, etc.). The workgroup members expressed different opinions on this matter, with some suggesting that the other category, which represents land protected within the state, is more accurate and truthful in terms of showing the increase of protected land over time.

Another topic discussed was the pre-planning for a new work plan. The team reviewed the

outcomes of the September CCP Steering Committee Meeting, which included bringing in the Environmental Policy Innovation Center to help create a federal funding navigator. CCP also expressed a strong interest in supporting regional collaboratives and highlighted the importance of conservation at the Chesapeake Bay Program. The workgroup members also shared ideas and focus areas related to carbon sequestration, increased staffing capacity, equitable access for under-resourced communities, and current funding trends.

The meeting concluded with a discussion about the next steps, including sharing any big initiatives happening at respective jurisdictions and confirming the date, time, and location of the next follow-up meeting, which was scheduled for October 25th from 3-4pm.

#### **Action Items/Takeaways**

- Finalize publication materials and indicator messaging for the protected lands indicator and aim for an October deadline
- Communicate with respective state GIS contacts to establish a GIS team to work with the workgroup
- Explore focus areas/actions items for new work plan and continue discussion at next meeting

#### 3:00 PM Introduction (Wuill)

- Have everyone go around and introduce themselves. (Name, Organization, and Position)
- Recap the purpose of today's meeting.

#### 3:10 PM Protected Lands Indicator (Aurelia)

- Review of publication materials and indicator messaging.
  - Currently in the process of reviewing and finalizing public materials
  - Aiming for an october timeline in terms of publishing
  - Story overview: Working towards improving accuracy of data; focus on the progress of the states and address some of the data challenges; focus on a call to action to have folks gear up for more years of protection; there is also an initiative to stand up a GIS team to work with the workgroup
  - There's an increase in land roughly ~51K acre increase from states from 2018-2022
  - Much more positive story when we separate out the federal lands numbers
- Discuss any questions or progress within states and federal lands.

- Two questions:
  - There was a lot of discussion around state progress due to the difference between how the data can be presented. Some states categorize their data differently.
  - There are two ways the data was presented
    - Lands protected by the State (land that is directly claimed to be protected under the State's jurisdiction)
    - Other Categories (Everything except federal lands i.e. tribal lands, land trusts, etc.)
  - How do folks feel about these two ways? Which should be presented?
    - Cheryl Wise: When referring to the other category, is it State protected (protected by the jurisdiction) or just land protected within the state?
      - The other category represents land protected within the state, not necessarily by the State.
    - Ben Alexandro: An important question to consider is what is the change over time and what is the honest trend? Depending on the answer, it will prefer one way to present the data or another.
      - The other category is what is more truthful in that sense as it represents the increase of protected land over time.
    - Michelle Campbell: I agree that the Other Category is more accurate, at least as far as DC is concerned!
    - Sara E Coleman: Maybe showing who manages the land would be helpful to get a sense of the bigger story? If the second way of presenting the data is chosen, knowing the breakdown could give credit to the appropriate people.
      - Aurelia: That might have to be the direction the narrative analysis takes (breaking down the lands by ownership type within the state).
    - Steve Storck: Are people comfortable with the fact that we don't have a definite way to say that the trend is positive in an accurate way? The way it should be presented would be more along the lines of "this is where we are in terms of data

without a definite way to say that the trend being positive is 100% accurate”.

- Aurelia Gracia: It is important to be as accurate and truthful with the data we used.
- Britt Slattery: What if it says this is what has been TRACKED as protected in xyz time period?
- John Wolf: If there was a way to focus more on the numbers and move away from the success story. I wouldn't rely so much on these numbers when there is the possibility of errors in the data.
- Any initial feedback or questions to consider with the federal lands and the appearance of a decrease?
  - Ben Alexandro: Would it be possible to go back and adjust the baseline?
  - Britt Slattery: But do we want to call attention to that drop?
  - Sara Coleman: So maybe a caveat is needed, such as "updated baseline".

### 3:25 PM Pre-Planning for New Work Plan

- Review meeting outcomes from the September CCP Steering Committee Meeting (Ben)
  - Brought in EPIC (Environmental Policy Innovation Center), to help create a federal funding navigator. It is supposed to help with navigating federal grant programs and offering alerts, etc.
  - Our CCP Annual Meeting is coming up in November.
  - Really interested in helping regional collaboratives and looking into how they function.
  - Looking into highlighting the importance of conservation at the Chesapeake Bay Program. Looking to make sure that conservation is foundational for the program and that it is not focused only on the main stem of the bay and water quality.
    - Kevin DuBois: I wanted to add that I listened to a carbon sequestration webinar. A main takeaway is that to make advances in carbon sequestration is to make sure that we are preserving natural landscapes and conserving land. There is a way to approach from multiple viewpoints to highlight the importance of conservation. With the Beyond 2025 committee, framing why land conservation is

important in terms of carbon sequestration would position it well to highlight its importance and relate it to recommendations in the CESR report.

- Ben Alexandro: Wanted to share the Lyme Timber report on aggregation of small forests and farms for ecosystem markets (from last year), getting involved in cap & trade – report dives into how folks can get more involved and how conservation can contribute to the carbon sequestration puzzle.
- How do these relate to or affect the work that the Workgroup can consider for our new work plan? (Aurelia)
  - Question regarding state progress
- Discuss preliminary ideas for our work in the next two years. Consider factors that affect current rates of conservation and assess possible solutions. (Aurelia)
- What do we need to learn from the CCP Annual Meeting that would help us to frame our actions for the next two years? What questions or topics would we ask at the Annual Meeting? (Wuill)

*\*Homework: as a state representative, think of one focus area/action your state would like to implement for the next two years. This will be used for our open discussion regarding the development of a new logic and action plan.*

- Ashley Rebert: In Pennsylvania, we are working to better serve under-resourced communities and looking to see where there are opportunities to direct funding and support towards these communities. We are looking to embrace and focus funding towards equitable access and looking for communities we haven't been able to reach traditionally. Our department hired a new director of DEIJ.
- Steve Storck (Chat): Ashley not sure if these resources would be helpful to your DEIJ work but these are the primary geospatial indexes to DEIJ groups  
<https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen> EJ Screen is deprecated White House Environmental Justice and Climate Change Mitigation Exec Order - link New Tool - Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool now being used for grant scoring  
CCP Green Space Equity Map -  
<https://www.chesapeakeconservation.org/our-work/current-initiatives/ccp-green-space-equity-mapping/> CDC Social Vulnerability
- Cheryl Wise: As the statewide supervisor, I have been focused on staffing up my workgroup for the open space program team. We have gotten a lot of new staff and we've been focusing on training them to make some progress with the open space program.

- Michelle Campbell: There are a couple of focus areas we have been focusing on lately. First, we've been trying to work with local land conservation trusts to find avenues we can use to enact tax incentives. It is difficult to have private landowners conserve land if there is nothing we can offer them. We are also focusing on protecting lands that have wetlands, streams, and riparian buffers.
- Kevin DuBois: One idea was the development of a Sentinel landscape within the District of Columbia to protect conserved land.
- Katy Brownson: We are looking for opportunities to collaborate among CBP workgroups and different departments. For example, looking at the forest buffer outcome, there are areas where we could collaborate. We should explore the nexus points between land conservation and other outcomes in order to make more progress overall.
- Joel Dunn: There should be a focus on federal funding conservation opportunities. We could have federal agency partners direct more funding to conservation. For example, New Jersey has allotted 10 million for conservation in the State. Another example, there are many tribes in the Chesapeake looking for LWCF (Land and Water Conservation Fund) funding for acquisitions of tribal lands. We should look into an allocation for Chesapeake conservation specifically.
- Steve Storck: There have been a lot of conservation funds with zeroes for protections near dams. If you bought all of the land below a dam, that would constitute the removal of a dam as a threat to climate change. A lot of federal funding could be turned into protected lands.

#### 3:55 PM Next Steps (Wuill)

- Share any big initiatives happening at your respective jurisdictions - Round Robin
- Confirm the date, time, and location of the next follow-up meeting.
  - October 25th, 3-4pm