



Stream Health Workgroup Meeting - February 2026

Friday, February 20, 2026
10:00am - 11:30am EST

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

Purpose: To hear presentations from scientists in the watershed working on stream health-related topics.

Actions & Decisions

- **Action:** A hybrid meeting about the Multimetric Stream Health Indicator is planned for May 12-13 potentially in the Western Maryland/VA/WV area. A calendar hold and more information will be shared soon.
- **Action:** Learn more about the Pooled Monitoring Program, administered by the Chesapeake Bay Trust, that funded both the studies presented during today's meeting [here](#).
- **Action:** Learn more about Birthe's study ([Final Report](#), [Fact Sheet](#), [Forum Presentation](#)).

Minutes

I. Introductions and Announcements

Lead: Alison Santoro (MDNR)

- New SHWG Chair Announcement
 - Welcome to Brock Reggi, VADEQ who is taking the role of Stream Health Workgroup Co-Chair as Sara Waglein, MDNR is stepping down.
- New Thriving Habitats, Fisheries and Wildlife Goal
 - Kevin Schabow, NOAA and Becky Gwynn, VA DWR were confirmed as Co-Chairs of the Goal Team at the February Management Board meeting.
 - The Stream Health workgroup remains the same the Outcome and targets have modified by the Executive Council on December 02, 2025.
 - As part of this agreement, we are merging the Habitat Goal Implementation Team, and the Fisheries Git into the Thriving Habitats Fisheries and Wildlife Goal Team. The new "megaGIT" encompasses 8 of the 21 outcomes or 38% of the revised outcomes and 19 of 36 Targets or 52% of the targets.
- Management Strategies Update
 - Goal Teams will be asked to update management strategies toward the new Outcomes in the agreement this year.
 - It has already been decided there will be one management strategy MS for whole CBP divided into 4 chapters for each goal. The template is being worked on now.
 - SHWG last revised our management strategy in 2024, so we have a recent update. [Read it here.](#)

- SHWG can do this work during our regular meetings. This is going to require work from the full workgroup, but hopefully not need to add additional work sessions.
- Multimetric Stream Health Indicator Update
 - A hybrid meeting is planned for May 12-13 potentially in the Western Maryland/VA/WV area. A calendar hold and more information will be shared soon.
 - The meeting is a workshop format that will begin to address the question of whether it is feasible to implement a suite of metrics to complement the Chessie BIBI. Attendees will be a mix of federal and state perspectives to give a comprehensive view of the watershed.
- Pooled Monitoring Program Introduction – Sadie Drescher, CBT
 - Funded the work from both of today’s presentations.
 - The program pools funds from many groups to work across the watershed to see how we can best put resources towards the questions and issues we need priority research and answers on.
 - Applications for this next year were due in January so they are being reviewed right now.
 - Last year added a Communications person to help get this information out better.

Actions:

1. Learn more about the Pooled Monitoring Program, administered by the Chesapeake Bay Trust, that funded both the studies presented during today’s meeting [here](#).
2. A hybrid meeting about the Multimetric Stream Health Indicator is planned for May 12-13 potentially in the Western Maryland/VA/WV area. A calendar hold and more information will be shared soon.

Discussion Notes:

- Kristen Saacke Blunk (in chat): You mentioned a co-coordinator, Chris, with you. Who is that?
 - The co-coordinator will be Bruce Vogt (NOAA), the previous Sustainable Fisheries GIT coordinator.
- Denise Clearwater (in chat): Chris would you clarify your role and the Federal/Jurisdictional co chairs?
- Chris Guy: Habitat always had Co-chairs. Since merging with Fisheries, they had a coordinator too so that’s why two co-coordinators now. Chair roles are not completely clear yet, potentially taking on more coordination work since the management board will be gone. Coordinator will continue to just make sure everything is getting done. But largely, things won’t change much for this group. Chris will still coordinate these meetings. And Nick, as staffer, will continue to be the one really getting stuff done.
- Kristen Saacke Blunk (in chat): What is the term of the new co-chairs (Becky & Kevin)?
 - Chris Guy: Terms are a minimum of two years, but can be extended indefinitely.
- Kelly Maloney (in chat): For mussels there is a active conservation partnership that exists which may be a good start for a CBP WG?: [Chesapeake Bay Watershed Region Freshwater Mussel Partnership | SRBC](#)
- Nick Staten (in chat): Chris asked me to tell everyone something he forgot to mention before he left: While we have merged to a new GIT under the leadership of Becky and Kevin, we are SO appreciative of our fearless leader Gina Hunt who has been the Habitat GIT chair. She was nominated as the Thriving Habitat Fisheries and Wildlife Co-chair but ultimately decided to deny the nomination to allow other jurisdictions serve in leadership. We are going to have

a happy hour late march/early April to celebrate and thank Gina so please keep an eye out for that announcement!

II. Presentation: Land Use and Era of Development Effects on PCB Contamination of Soils and Stormwater Sediments in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed

Lead: Birthe V. Kjellerup

Materials: [Slides](#)

This study looked at the impact of land development (based on both land use categories and land development era) on PCB contamination to identify potential sources of stormwater PCBs and provide information and guidance on PCBs presence (and removal) in stormwater.

- Samples were collected across Anne Arundel County primarily at curbside locations across six different land use categories, using greenspaces as a control area.
- Across sampling sites, there was a wide range of PCB concentrations and variation between different land uses. There were higher concentrations for industrial, residential, and energy sites. When comparing pre- vs. post-1970s, locations with development post-1970s (when PCBs were banned) had lower concentrations, especially for industrial and residential land use sites.
- Some deeper investigation was focused on known sources of PCBs like industrial products, bounding materials road paints, and other products.
- They did not find any trend in the type of PCBs found within certain land uses. There was not a clear signal that Arocolors match up with industrial land use, so not necessarily tied to industrial products only.
- They investigated road paints specifically, looking at PCB 11 which is a byproduct of the manufacturing of yellow road paint pigment.
- Stormwater is an important carrier of PCBs, so looking into street sweeping, catchment basin cleanouts and biodegradation in BMPs can reduce PCB mass.
- As part of the CBT funded study, they developed take home messages (slide to help communicate results from the study and turn research into implementable actions for practitioners.
- Next steps include assessing the impact of soil and particle types, expand the road paint study to include other paint colors, assessing presence of other PCB sources and their contributions and investigating stormwater BMP design to remove PCBs and other contaminants simultaneously

Actions:

1. Learn more about Birthe's study ([Final Report](#), [Fact Sheet](#), [Forum Presentation](#)).

Discussion Notes:

- Kristen Saacke Blunk (in chat): Please define how you understand "reduction". Where did those PCBs migrate to, since we now they didn't break down in the environment. They migrated elsewhere, correct?
- Kristen Saacke Blunk: Based on what you learned, as we're thinking about human health, is it better to encapsulate PCBs in soil to degrade or have them come through water and flush out.
 - Birthe Kjellerup: It depends on the different areas they you're in. Some sites are quite diffuse and there's not much we can do. That's where the street sweeping and the cleanouts of catchment basins might make sense if there is a true hotspot. Practices like using activated carbon can help keep it out of the food chain, too. It

is necessary to know the concentration of PCBs, the different types of PCBs at a site and your timeline to make a decision. Natural attenuation is great, but it takes a long time so you need to ensure nobody would be redeveloping the area.

- Sadie Drescher (in chat):
 - Birthe's final report and fact sheet are available at: [Final Report](#), [Fact Sheet](#)
 - June 2025 Pooled Monitoring Forum presentation: https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/1_CB-TRust_Kjellerup.pdf
 - After this presentation one piece of feedback was, "We have already opened discussions with DOT to change to PCB free road paint!" Hopefully some of you can use this research, as well.

III. Presentation: Use of molecular sewage indicator methods to reduce uncertainty in watershed remediation efforts and water contact recreation

Lead: Eric Schott, UMCES-IMET

Materials: [Slides](#)

As Baltimore Harbor continues to get cleaner, there is more water contact recreation, and even more planned for the future. A reduction of indicator bacteria (enterococcus) levels was observed between 2010 and 2020. However, there is variability over time in bacteria levels, which primarily vary due to sewage, which can get into the harbor through wet weather overflows and dry weather seeps. Waterfront Partnership began daily testing during the summer for the past 3 years, which allows for quick turnarounds to use results from the previous day to make assessment of the safety of a specific days' swimmability.

- This study investigated two main research questions: 1) How do current FIB measurements and DNA-targeted measurements for human sewage compare? 2) Can DNA-based methods allow daily water testing to provide actionable information about the safety of recreational waters?
- They conducted a paired sampling approach with both tidal and nontidal sites at four locations over four-day periods in three intervals in the recreational season. Compare culture method (Enterolert) and molecular methods.
- Results from four sites are outlined on the [slides 18-23](#), comparing Enterolert, Human MST (Microbial Source Tracking) and Canine MST levels, and noting timing with rainfall events.
- Takeaways:
 - Rainfall effects similar to what was observed before with higher and more specific signals after rainfall
 - Comparing paired tidal/nontidal sites show lower levels in tidal/downstream sites from dilution effects.
 - Lower values/more zeros with microbial method compared to Enterolert method.
 - The canine signal is less common, but highest at Harris Creek after rain.
- Next Steps:
 - Investigate new qPCR targets (total enterococcus, birds, deer, and potentially rats)
 - Build diagnostic capacity by partnering with private labs and engaging partners across non-profits, academia and municipalities

Discussion Notes:

- Elizabeth Mckercher: In Virginia, we used MST way back in early TMDL and consent decree development. We have a library we pull from now. The biggest issue is cost.
- Eric Schott: Digital PCR is pretty expensive, so it's probably not the best for routine monitoring. It is best for following up on investigations.
- Eric Schott: In Occoquan, VA there is a diagnostic lab that does digital PCR
- Elizabeth: We've worked with many labs, I'm not sure specifically about that one. We usually stick with the state labs because it's more efficient contractually and transportation of samples is a very important and precarious aspect of our monitoring program. These labs outside of state labs are being used mostly for emerging pollutants.
- Matthew Meyers (in chat): [Occoquan Watershed Monitoring Laboratory | Virginia Tech](#)
- Sadie Drescher (in chat): Cost is a question that the program is asking related to pollutants of emerging concern that's not been addressed yet. Great point and Amanda Shaver is the current VA DEQ Pooled Monitoring Advisory Committee member who can carry forward these and other DEQ priorities into the research questions/process. Let me know if you have other ideas.

IV. Wrap-Up and Adjourn

Next Meeting: Stream Health Workgroup Meeting - April 2026 | April 17, 2026 from 10:00am - 12:00pm

Attendees:

- Alison Santoro, MDNR
- Brock Reggi, VADEQ
- Chris Guy, USFWS
- Nick Staten, CRC
- Birthe Kjellerup, UMD
- Eric Schott, UMCES-IMET
- Sean Taylor, Prince George's Co., Md
- Maggie Woodward, CBC
- Cassie Davis, NYS DEC
- Scott Heidel, PADEP
- Denise Clearwater, MDE
- Sara Waglein, MDNR
- Brittany Sturgis, DNREC
- Sadie Drescher, CBT
- Claire Buchanan, ICPRB
- Kelly Maloney, USGS
- Rikke Jepsen, ICPRB
- Kristen Saacke Blunk, Headwaters LLC
- Mimi Abdu, CBT
- Carol Cain, MDNR
- Petra Baldwin, CRC
- Emily Young, ICPRB
- Matthew Kierce, IWLA
- Rosemary Fanelli, USGS
- Sandra Davis, USFWS
- John Lancaster, PA (unknown department)
- Matthew Cashman, USGS
- Mark Southerland, TetraTech
- Becky Monahan, MDE
- Chris Spaur, USACE
- Elizabeth Mckercher, VADEQ
- Marina Metes, USGS
- Matthew Meyers, Fairfax Co., Va
- Peter, Unknown Affiliation
- Aerin Portner, VADEQ