

Worksheet: Outcome Starting Thoughts for CWGT Management Strategy

Input submitted by: *Tony Timpano, Keith Bollt, Petra Baldwin with additional support from Sushanth Gupta and prior TCW documents.*

Situation Analysis & Challenges

How would you summarize or describe the current situation for your outcome? I.e., what's the message of where we are right now?

Recognizing where federal and jurisdictional signatories are working on toxic contaminants reduction outside of CBP and the resources and capacity within the Bay Program, work within the partnership is in a period of transition towards more targeted information sharing and creating of useful tools and communications pieces to help disseminate that information and connect researchers and practitioners. TCW has a longstanding history of convening, but with priorities and engagement underfunded and underimplemented. We are not starting from scratch with information sharing as a partnership, but we are shifting to more strategic ways to spend our time and engage partners meaningfully to add value.

How would you summarize or describe past accomplishments or effort towards your outcome? I.e., what's the message of where we've been and/or how far we've come?

- Prior to 2025, TCW has functioned as a convener for information sharing, particularly on research, in addition to projects of interest to members and aligned with the prior two toxics outcomes.
- In light of the complexities of multi-jurisdictional implementation requirements and constraints, the Executive Council saw a need with its 2025 revisions to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement to narrow and hone the mission of the toxic contaminants portion of the Chesapeake Bay Program to focus on value added to its signatory members. The Toxic and Emerging Contaminants Outcome is a consolidation of scope and mission between two previous outcomes, one that focused on policy and the other on research. By honing in on convening and information sharing through a value-added and strategic engagement of signatory and at-large members and interested parties, TCW's ultimate goal is supporting its members in their efforts to reduce the risk of toxic contaminants to human health and the environment in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

We do not need a summary or description of existing indicators. However, do you have initial thoughts on new indicators that may be needed for your outcome under the

revised CBWA? Do you have ideas or suggestions on how we may more effectively utilize any of our existing indicators?

- The prior Toxic Contaminants Policy and Prevention (TCPP) indicator is a distillation of the toxics-relevant portions of Integrated Reports developed by the tidal jurisdictions (VA, MD, DC). This synthesis is traditionally performed by the TCW staffer, with review by membership.
- A substantial consideration for TCW is whether to measure progress via an Indicator for our Outcome or our Target. Given the indirect, delayed impact of information sharing on actual reduction of toxic contaminants, an Indicator of information sharing will more directly reflect the work CBP is actually doing and put progress under the control of the CBP. The current Indicator shows a flat trend in toxic contaminant levels since 2014, a measure which is beyond the reach of TCW's direct influence. However, continuing to have a watershed-wide synthesis of contaminant status with an established time series is valuable.
- After multiple discussions at TCW meetings and meeting with the CBP indicators coordinator, TCW's leading suggestion for now is to primarily track progress via an Indicator for our Target on information sharing through collecting metrics on presentations, people engaged, etc. This aspect requires further discussion to determine how to provide a holistic narrative on progress.

What are your key gaps or challenges?

- Lack of a consistent approach and comparable data on the occurrence and trends of toxic contaminants across jurisdictions, which inhibits a watershed-wide assessment of toxics and inhibits ability to integrate into local programs
 - Toxic contaminants tend to be localized challenges, rather than watershed wide
 - Distinguishing the opportunity for collaboration and partnership influence for localized challenges and working within the constraints of TCW's scope and authority
- Resource constraints, including capacity within CBP, minimal funding opportunities, relative emphasis on nutrients and sediment limit opportunities focused on toxic contaminants
- Limited up-to-date information on the practices to mitigate contaminants, and their potential co-benefits with nutrients and sediment reductions
- Lack of understanding of sources of contamination leading to fish consumption advisories
- Fast pace of change and limited knowledge on emerging contaminant issues

- Limited connectivity among groups hinders technical information transfer within the partnership and beyond
- Messaging the role of TCW versus outside toxics programs to internal and external partners
- Hesitancy of CBP signatories to partner on toxic contaminant issues due to uncertainty of value added

Do you have specific tasks, needs or priorities that are already on your radar for the upcoming months or years?

- Chart out future focus, roles and responsibilities of TCW and establish expectations from and relationship with CWGT
- Find co-chair and institutionalize plan of succession
- Update the current TCPP Indicator to account for the feedback received over the last few years on its limitations to make it more useful for practitioners and the public across the watershed. Potentially transition it to be a tool and not an official “Indicator”.
- Create a repository of recent research and resources on the TCW chesapeakebay.net page or other appropriate location
- Increase collaborative agenda setting and presentations by signatory membership
- Increase information sharing by TCW members between meetings

Potential Management Approaches

Consider the outcome and targets stated in the CBWA, and the gaps, challenges and other tasks/needs you described above. Please brainstorm potential Management Approaches that can guide the partnership (specifically the CWGT and its workgroups).

- Host targeted topical meetings to bring information to a broader group of partners across the CBP, especially with nutrients-focused source sector workgroups and the Habitat Goal Team
- Synthesize and share information on source tracking studies from across the watershed
- Synthesize and share success stories from jurisdictions on management practices on a regular basis
- Establish expectations for convening and information sharing among members, including collaborative agenda setting and snowballing information between meetings

- Reach out to researchers and partners not currently engaged in TCW to build a broader list of participants, and improve variety of engagement pathways for those with different capacity (e.g. sharing resources by email, repository on website, etc.)
- Expand the Partnership's role in cross-jurisdictional coordination on interstate pollutant loads of toxic contaminants (e.g., PCBs). For example, continue to facilitate and promote learning from the Alternative Restoration Plan (ARP) pilot project in the CB watershed, by identifying and facilitating opportunities to implement elsewhere.
- Revisit and update or adapt [Toxic Contaminants in the Chesapeake Bay and its Watershed: Extent and Severity of Occurrence and Potential Biological Effects \(2012\)](#) to guide establishment of future toxic contaminant priorities.

General

Do you have any key talking points, bottom line messages, or take-away that for the overall narrative or story you wish to tell for your outcome?

- TCW is still looking for its hook/mission/value-added and is optimistic for the future.
- TCW recognizes the challenges remaining including network connectivity, information sharing, and capacity, and this updated Management Strategy reflects that.
- Continued collaboration and internal discussion will be necessary to sharpen the details of our approach.