



Watershed Technical Workgroup Meeting Minutes

April 2, 2026
10:00-11:20 AM

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

Purpose: This was the April monthly meeting of the Watershed Technical Workgroup. Agenda topics included relevant announcements, an overview of the Beyond Bean Counting Report, and a group brainstorm of future topics of discussion for the workgroup.

Summary of Actions & Decisions

Decision: The Watershed Technical Workgroup approved the March 2026 meeting minutes.

Action: The April 1st deadline for BMP submissions for 2025 Progress and the Phase 7 calibration for BMP history has passed. Additional follow-up will take place with the WTWG as necessary, once the final scenario and Tableau visualizations are finalized. Auston Smith, EPA, will also follow up about the finalized memo and signature and approval process for QAPPs. Please reach out to Auston Smith (Smith.Auston@epa.gov) with any remaining questions.

Action: CAST user research is being conducted by Alex Gunnerson, Koniag, and Sophie Waterman, USGS. If you would like to participate in the CAST user research but have not yet been contacted or responded to the initial request to participate, please reach out to Alex Gunnerson (Agunnerson@chesapeakebay.net). Alternatively, please feel free to book a time slot for a one hour interview through the following [link](#).

Action: Please reach out to Ginny Snead (gsnead@amtengineering.com), A. Morton Thomas and Associates, Inc, with any questions on the Beyond Bean Counting report or comments related to the recommendations outlined in the report.

Action: Caroline Kleis, CRC, will compile and summarize future meeting topic suggestions generated through the Mentimeter feedback activity. This document will be made accessible to WTWG participants via email and on the meeting calendar page. Please reach out to Caroline Kleis (Kleis.Caroline@epa.gov) and Auston Smith (Smith.Auston@epa.gov) if there are additional topics you would like the WTWG to consider at future meetings.

Minutes

I. Introductions & Announcements

Lead: Sushanth Gupta, MWCOG

Sushanth Gupta, MWCOG, opened the meeting and requested the approval of the March 2026 meeting minutes.

The following announcements were made to WTWG members:

- 2025 Progress Release Timeline- Auston Smith, EPA
 - A final reminder for the April 1st deadline for BMP submissions for 2025 Progress and the Phase 7 calibration for BMP history was sent to Progress Buddies yesterday. No major concerns were noted. As such, the latest scenario will be frozen so that the team can begin to finalize communications, make final adjustments, and then work towards the public release. In a couple of weeks, in mid-April, CBPO is also hoping to provide the updated Tableau as well to jurisdictional partners.
 - With this year being a target year, the release of the scenario will likely be in late July/early August. Now that finishing touches are being put on the Progress Scenario, Auston will reach out on the finalized memo and signature process for QAPPs. WTWG members were encouraged to reach out Auston with any remaining questions ahead of targeted release in July and August.
- Phase 7 CAST User Research – Alex Gunnerson, Koniag
 - As part of improvements to Phase 7 CAST and other CAST related topics, CBPO is conducting user research on what visualization products users would like for the model year of review, CAST website improvements, BMP optimization tools/current tools of use, and feedback on a potential exploration of a spatially explicit interface to CAST. The first two topics are things that will be done, and the other two topics are areas where input is being collected, but more information is needed on what should be done and what is feasible. If you haven't been contacted and you would like to participate in this research, please use the booking link or reach out to Alex Gunnerson.
 - Interview Booking Link:
<https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Foutlook.office.com%2Fbook%2FCBPOu...>

Decisions:

1. The Watershed Technical Workgroup approved the March 2026 meeting minutes.

Actions:

1. The April 1st deadline for BMP submissions for 2025 Progress and the Phase 7 calibration for BMP history has passed. Additional follow-up will take place with the WTWG as necessary, once the final scenario and Tableau visualizations are finalized. Auston Smith, EPA, will also follow up about the finalized memo and signature and approval process for QAPPs. Please reach out to Auston Smith (Smith.Auston@epa.gov) with any remaining questions.
2. CAST user research is being conducted by Alex Gunnerson, Koniag, and Sophie Waterman, USGS. If you would like to participate in the CAST user research but have not yet been contacted or responded to the initial request to participate, please reach out to Alex Gunnerson (Agunnerson@chesapeakebay.net). Alternatively, please feel free to book a time slot for a one hour interview through the following [link](#).

Discussion Notes:

Bill Keeling: The March 27th scenario is in essence the “final” one? You might be packaging it up and doing it again somewhere in April and declaring that one the “final final”?

Auston Smith: My understanding is that we wouldn't be waiting until Friday of this week to have any more adjustments to it, but there have been adjustments since the 27th version. So, I know that Jess can speak more to the exact date that adjusted scenario would be available to Progress Buddies, but I don't think that we need to wait until Friday to confirm this as the deadline for further submissions.

Bill Keeling: Just notify us when whatever has been finalized is ready.

Auston Smith: It won't just be the 27th scenario, though, I can say that. We will absolutely let you know about that and then a couple weeks after that on the Tableau resource as well.

Bill Keeling: Thank you.

II. Beyond Bean Counting Report Overview

Lead: Ginny Snead, A. Morton Thomas and Associates, Inc. (AMT)

The Beyond Bean Counting Project was initiated by the USWG under the GIT-funding process to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of BMP tracking and reporting processes across the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The final report was published in January 2026. Ginny Snead, AMT, provided the group with an overview of the project, noting the final recommendations for the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership.

Actions:

1. Please reach out to Ginny Snead (gsnead@amtengineering.com), A. Morton Thomas and Associates, Inc, with any questions on the Beyond Bean Counting report or comments related to the recommendations outlined in the report.

Discussion Notes:

Norm Goulet: Thank you for the work. We appreciate it, and we know there was a lot of time that was spent on this. You've been involved with the Bay Program for a number of years now; you're an at-large rep to the Urban Stormwater Workgroup. I am going to ask you an off the cuff question. What was the one thing that came out of this that surprised you the most?

Ginny Snead: It's hard to say. I have to think about that a little bit. Honestly, the ongoing changes to the Bay Program were kind of the biggest surprises for me. I'm optimistic that they will be positive overall, but that was a big thing in the middle of the project to have happen. In terms of our findings, I think it was maybe the disconnect around how best to capture things beyond N, P, and sediment. I thought there might be a little bit more cohesiveness around how to do that, and I thought there might be a little bit more of it going on than actually is happening. So, I feel like that's an area that's underdeveloped and maybe more underdeveloped than I thought it would be. So, I think there's a lot of opportunity and potential to improve where we are with looking at things beyond N and P because it's just not where I thought it would be. So, I would say that's the biggest surprise that I had based on the interviews I conducted.

Auston Smith: CAST also somewhat tracks Greenhouse Gas emissions and soil carbon. Were there any notes from any of your interviewees that called for more of a look or more communication around those parameters?

Ginny Snead: There wasn't much around those types of parameters that was being tracked and reported. I thought there would be more of that, honestly. In terms of jurisdictions, DC is probably doing a lot more than anyone else is. Some of that's because they have permit requirements that require them to do more. Again, that incentive is there for them to do a little bit more. I'm not sure specifically about greenhouse gases. I don't recall that being a big subject matter at all. It wasn't part of the specifics that we asked in our interview questions. But, I would have to go back and look at that.

Auston Smith: Thank you.

Ginny Snead: Thank you for your help as a Steering Committee member. I appreciate that.

Auston Smith: Of course.

Ginny Snead: Overall, those were the two big ones I think that we could move forward with. First of all, standardizing the reporting so that it's easier to find things in the QAPPs. Second of all, looking at ways to better incentivize implementation and reporting of things beyond N and P like greenhouse gases. I think there would need to be a strong discussion about what those would actually be. Is it greenhouse gases? Is it resilience? If it is resilience, how do you best quantify that? I think that there needs to be a long discussion about what that might look like and what the focus would be. The second part of that would be how to best incentivize it so that it is implemented and tracked better than it is right now because, as it was noted, there are capacities to report it within CAST. It's just not necessarily happening to the level that at least I thought it would be. A lot of that is due to the lack of incentive, not a lack of wanting to do that. We heard from all jurisdictions that there is an interest in that, but it's hard for that to happen without the incentive.

Sushanth Gupta: Appreciate that summary, Ginny, and thank you again for the presentation and all the work that went into that report.

III. Brainstorming Topics for 2026 WTWG Meetings

Lead: Auston Smith, EPA

The group was asked to provide their input on potential topics for the WTWG to explore at future WTWG meetings in 2026. Feedback was solicited through a Mentimeter activity. Auston Smith, EPA, walked the group through each of the submitted responses and time was made for any additional discussion.

All feedback has been compiled and binned into key themes, accessible through the following [document](#).

Actions:

1. Caroline Kleis, CRC, will compile and summarize future meeting topic suggestions generated through the Mentimeter feedback activity. This document will be made accessible to WTWG participants via email and on the [meeting calendar page](#). Please reach out to Caroline Kleis (Kleis.Caroline@epa.gov) and Auston Smith (Smith.Auston@epa.gov) if there are additional topics you would like the WTWG to consider at future meetings.

Discussion Notes:

Joseph Schell (in chat): Would NRCS aggregated data be part of this?

Auston Smith: Yeah, is it just about higher access to what NRCS provides to Devereux Consulting and USGS for their synthesis? I know that that's been a focus in the past- exploring ideas, workarounds, avenues for enhanced information sharing around the 1619 agreement. There was the Federal Crediting Task Force a few years ago. Before that, there was the BMP Verification Ad Hoc Action Team. So, there have been a few efforts around those data sets, but always trying to improve the information sharing with our federal partners. As folks maybe have suggested avenues for the watershed of for their particular jurisdiction, I would love to discuss those moving forward.

Joseph Schell (in chat): From Delaware Perspective - I think verification of older practices, data aggregation, and how NRCS practices can translate to CAST BMPs are sometimes frustrating. We struggle with also seeing how these BMPs fit into a larger progress context for our state from a planning perspective. This is in response to all the NRCS points.

Caroline Kleis: To the point about the BMP Quick Reference Guide, I am working with Jeremy to help make the necessary updates for Phase 7. So, we have a running list of ones that we know

need to be updated or added, links to fix, and things like that. But, if there is anything that would make it more useful to you or anything you would like to see edited or updated that might not be on our list, feel free to reach out to me. I am keeping a running list of all the updates needed for that.

Tyler Trostle (in chat): Caroline, can we have these topics packaged up and sent out to us? I want to ensure I have them for my notes. Thank you.

Caroline Kleis (in chat): Tyler, yes! I will make sure these get posted to today's webpage and sent out with the minutes.

Scott Heidel: I just wanted to touch base on the comment directly above that [“encourage the use of remote sensing and machine learning modeling to connect BMP implementation with water quality monitoring at the local level on up”]. It is about remote sensing and machine learning modeling, but it is also to connect BMP implementation with water quality monitoring results at the local level as well on up. I don't think that we've really dug into that at this point yet, but it is certainly something that I think would be really beneficial to start to tell the story of how the BMPs are affecting water quality. So, I just wanted to get that point out there, too.

Auston Smith: Thank you for that clarification. You're right, I did kind of skip over the more important ending of that point. Absolutely. I know my colleague, Kaylyn Gootman, can speak a lot about how monitoring is integrated into the model. I think that mirrors another comment that I read through; tying it to specific BMPs more accurately can certainly be a focus to aid in the efficiency or Expert Panel revisitations that the Workgroup is responsible for. I really appreciate everyone's responses here. We will be trying to provide a synthesis of this and any follow-up discussion that we can have now as well.

Sushanth Gupta: Thanks, everyone, for contributing your thoughts to that discussion which will be really helpful for the Workgroup moving forward.

IV. Wrap-Up

Lead: Caroline Kleis, CRC

V. Adjourn

Next Meeting: May 7th, 2026, from 10:00AM-12:00PM

Attendees:

Sushanth Gupta, MWCOG
Christina Lyerly, MDE
Auston Smith, EPA
Caroline Kleis, CRC
Emily Dekar, USC
Bill Keeling, VA DEQ
Dave Montali, Tetra Tech
Samuel Canfield, WV DEP
Tyler Trostle, PA DEP
Katherine Dyer, MWCOG
Samantha Cotten, DNREC
Ginny Snead, A. Morton Thomas and Associates
Cass Klingaman, NYSDEC
Mark Dubin, VA Cooperative Extension
Bruce Naylor, PA DEP
Norm Goulet, NVRC
Alex Gunnerson, Koniag
Eugenia Hart, Tetra Tech

Mary Simmons, A. Morton Thomas and Associates
Josh Glace, Larson Design Group
Scott Heidel, PA DEP
Karl Blankenship, Bay Journal
Ashley Hullinger, PA DEP
Lori Brown, DNREC
Alicia Ritzenthaler, DOEE
Arianna Johns, VA DEQ
Megan Thyng, EPA
Rachel Owrutsky, DNREC
Jess Rigelman, J7 LLC/CBPO
Joseph Schell, DNREC
Sabine Miller, DOEE
Jeremy Hanson, CRC
Patrick Thompson, Energy Works
Elizabeth Hoffman, MDA
Tom Butler, EPA