

Chesapeake Bay Program
Watershed Technical Workgroup (WTWG)
Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 5th, 2025

10:00 AM to 11:50 AM

[Meeting Materials](#)

Summary of Actions and Decisions

Decision: The WTWG approved the [May Meeting Minutes](#).

Action: WTWG members interested in the discussion on the application of upland buffer credit and continuing discussions on the Agroforestry EPEG, should attend the June 12th AgWG meeting.

Action: Ruth Cassilly, Durga Ghosh, and Auston Smith, will send out a 2025 QAPP update email in the next couple of weeks to outline possible updates and expectations for the 2025 QAPP process.

Action: Caroline Kleis, WTWG Staffer, will send out a cancellation for the July WTWG meeting.

Action: WTWG members with additional input or concerns on the Agroforestry EPEG recommendations and path forward should email Ruth Cassilly (rcassilly@chesapeakebay.net), Auston Smith (Smith.Auston@epa.gov), Eric Hughes (Hughes.Eric@epa.gov), and Caroline Kleis (Kleis.Caroline@epa.gov). The group will distribute the report when it's done, and final approval will take place at a subsequent WTWG meeting.

Meeting Minutes

10:00 **Introductions and Announcements** – Auston Smith, EPA (10 min.)

- **Decision:** The WTWG approved the [May Meeting Minutes](#)
- Update on Bill Keeling's AgWG Presentation on the application of buffer upland credit for Phase 7
 - Bill Keeling, VA DEQ, spoke at last month's Agriculture Workgroup (AgWG) meeting on the proposed methodology for handling buffer upland credit for Phase 7. Bill will return to the AgWG on June 12th for additional discussion, before coming back to the WTWG for final approval at a subsequent meeting.
 - **Action:** WTWG members interested in the discussion on the application of upland buffer credit and continuing discussions on the Agroforestry EPEG, should attend the June 12th AgWG meeting.
- 2025 QAPP Update Email from Auston Smith and Ruth Cassilly
 - Auston Smith, EPA, reminded the group that, last year, Ruth Cassilly, Durga Ghosh, and Auston Smith sent out preparatory emails at the beginning of the summer to jurisdictions, outlining updates needed for the QAPP standard formatting update or past topics that were covered in 2023 progress memos. A similar effort will happen this year.

- o **Action:** Ruth Cassilly, Durga Ghosh, and Auston Smith, will send out a 2025 QAPP update email in the next couple of weeks to outline possible updates and expectations for the 2025 QAPP process.
 - o As a reminder, the QAPP is due back to the Chesapeake Bay Program Office on September 1st, so it can be used as background for BMP, land use, and wastewater data. There will not be a QAPP standard update.
- 2024 Progress Update for Release of Final Scenario
 - o Auston Smith, EPA, mentioned that a press release went out yesterday for the 2024 progress update. Auston noted that the release was later than the anticipated May date, given that time was needed to update people in the Region 3 office. Auston hopes that we can continue to stick to the late April, early May press release timeframe. Additionally, during future progress releases, a more direct effort will be made to communicate the exact press release date to jurisdictions. The scenario was also released on CAST.
 - o **Helen Golimowski:** In addition to the scenario coming live, all of the CAST tools were updated as well. So, the trends over time all now have the 2024 progress in them. The compare planning targets tool has it, and the BMP targeting maps have also been updated with that most recent progress scenario.
 - o **Helen Golimowski (in chat):** The links to the updated tools are listed on this page: <https://cast.chesapeakebay.net/Home/Announcements>
- 2025 Progress Schedule
 - o The [2025 Progress Schedule](#) was recently released, outlining the major steps between now and when the progress scenario is released next year. Since the 2025 progress year is a target year, the schedule has been released as early as possible. The primary new step is that each jurisdiction will have their initial verification call with the Chesapeake Bay Program Office in early December, so that it is clear throughout the holidays and into January the final steps that remain to meet the early February deadline.
- Proposed change to BMP Submission Platform/Approach
 - o Auston Smith, EPA, brought up a proposed change to the current BMP submission approach, where a capability would be added to NEIEN for BMP submissions so that, rather than in NEIEN, it would occur in the CAST Interface. NEIEN would not go away immediately, but would be phased out as the new submission approach was implemented, to allow time for questions and feedback. This suggestion comes as management of the NEIEN tools and technology have become cumbersome and difficult to troubleshoot.
 - o **Bill Keeling:** You say we are going to change, and it's going to be a process, but that's real vague. Is the submission of XML going away? Can you provide more detail about this? Generally speaking, it's been taking us about two years to get our warehouse altered, and it looks like we are getting ready to do a major set of work to it. So, if

we're going to have the hood up, now would be the time to understand where we're headed.

- o **Auston Smith:** Understood. It's great that you have the hood up. We're going to be ensuring that this new system does work with your current one. So, as you are adjusting it, I think that this is kind of the perfect time to ensure that those gel accurately. The schema itself will not change, but it may be abbreviated to exclude certain data elements that may have caused confusion. Does that help? Others on the call, maybe Meghan or Jess, might want to provide additional insight. Certainly, we are not trying to reinvent the wheel as soon as you are done constructing yours.
- o **Megan Thyng:** I am on the line. I am happy to answer any questions. I think we can still accept XML submissions. I think we're trying to make this a change in the actual submission technology. So, utilizing Open Node as opposed to any other major changes. So, what we're trying to do is make this as similar as the current process is in the future, just avoiding the sort of outdated Open Node and NEIEN technologies that have been problematic for us and you all in the past.
- o **Tyler Trostle:** Two questions on that, mainly for Megan and Jess. When changing, we would continue to still go through our Open Node 2 servers as of right now, until potentially we change to a direct communication between that build out and our XML files. Is that what I'm understanding?
- o **Megan Thyng:** Yeah. Your question is that nothing would change immediately, right? That would still be a capability that we would support, yeah.
- o **Tyler Trostle:** Ok. We are kind of on the same page as Bill where we just built out everything reconnecting to our Open Node 2 server to allow us to directly do automation. My second question is, if you do build something out, are you going to build something out in a test environment where we can go ahead and test against directly into CAST?
- o **Megan Thyng:** Absolutely. I think we would work with you all to make sure that it's functional for everybody before we move to that as a single solution. So, this could take time.
- o **Tyler Trostle:** That potentially could have processing reports still sent back to us in the build-out?
- o **Megan Thyng:** Yes.
- o **Tyler Trostle:** Those are just a couple of things that I'm concerned with as I work with our contractor to continue to ensure our build out is correct. So, I'd be happy to work with you guys to test the next build out.
- o **Emily Dekar:** I think my questions are answered from what Tyler and Bill had just asked but, kind of on the same page, as long as we can still submit our XMLs like we have been, I don't care if they're going through NEIEN or CAST. I don't care what website I have to go to to submit them. We are also kind of in the process of doing some updates to our system. So, if something needs changed, now would be the time versus later on. We have a new database person at the moment, so they're

trying to learn our system, and it's been a struggle. So, I get a little nervous when people say we're going to change things because it is working the way it's working right now. But, I don't care what website we go to. As long as we can still submit our XMLs, I'm happy.

- **Jess Rigelman:** Yeah, it would just be a different location. You could submit XML. One thing that we are thinking about doing is simplifying the schema. There are dozens of elements in the NEIEN schema that many of you don't report because they're not required. So, in this new system, we would like to remove those elements so that when the old one goes away, we're not accounting for a bunch of stuff we don't need to. So, that would really be the only change if you were using any of those optional elements. But, until we get all of that worked out and everyone agreed what we could or couldn't remove, we would have both systems in place. I think, in general, other than submitting to a different location, that would really be the only thing that we would have to work through potentially.
- **Bill Keeling:** I understand the idea of removing stuff that's not used, but there is a movement out there, in terms of tracking BMPs, to marry other things like aesthetic improvements and/or human well-being, resilience, and other things that currently are not part of the schema that some people think should be part of the schema. So, I just want to be clear. I'd hate for us to, at one point, remove something that later on someone says we need to put back in. So, I don't know where the Bay Program is going with all the alternative things that could be measured or people think could be measured via BMP reporting. But, I do know that movement is out there.
- **Auston Smith:** Absolutely. I am largely aware of that effort. The habitat tracker is a great example of that. The Urban Stormwater Workgroup's Beyond Bean Counting effort is another good example of how QAPP efforts are trying to be categorized. So, maybe quantifying external ecosystem services would be easier or doable, even feasible. I'm supportive of that movement. I think, to support that, it sounds like it would be a NEIEN or CAST Schema update as far as what you, the jurisdictions, would provide in the data input. Maybe it's a totally new practice. We would need to discuss that, obviously. On a lot of the forest buffers that you have recently installed, maybe you have a lot of apiaries, you're beekeeping. So, I'm just spitballing, but generally just trying to speak a thumbs up of that, Bill.
- **Bill Keeling:** To me it's more of we can track whatever you want as long as we know what measures or parameters we need to collect. If we need to start collecting something, that has to be planned for. Currently, I couldn't tell you if there's apiaries anywhere right now. So, I don't really know, and I wouldn't know exactly what parameters to report. All of that has to be laid out in the schema. So, I'm just going off some questions I've seen floating around. There's this concept of a one stop shop for reporting everything, and I don't know that that's realistic.
- **Tyler (in chat):** Megan/Jess, please keep us in PA in mind when you build a test environment. I'd be happy to offer us up as the guinea pig on testing connections from OpenNod2 into CAST directly. Thanks.

- o **Megan (in chat):** Definitely, and thanks for the offer.
- o **Olivia Devereux:** I haven't heard that movement, Bill, and I didn't know people were thinking that way. But, thank you for letting us all know that that seems to be a movement. I haven't heard mentioned.
- o **Bill Keeling:** I've heard about integrating the 305B integrated report with BMP reporting and other ideas. I know that one is not going anywhere. That process is cumbersome and involved enough as it is, without adding BMPs to it. So, I think there are misconceptions out there in the world about what can and can't be done or is or is not being done. Just be aware is all I am saying. If at some point we have to do this through a NEIEN/BMP schema, let's just be cognizant that we may need to be collecting things we currently are not.
- o **Auston Smith:** So, similar to the July to September period for NEIEN that we are about to be in, as this movement may or may not make updates, we would want to be sure to stay nimble to update the current schema that we'd be using on whatever platform to collaborate with that, to support it. Agreed.
- **July Meeting Cancellation**
 - o Auston Smith, EPA, noted that, since he will be out of town for the July meeting, he suggests canceling the July WTWG meeting. Discussions on the upland buffer crediting and the NEIEN appendix will occur in August instead.
 - o **Action:** Caroline Kleis, WTWG Staffer, will send out a cancellation for the July WTWG meeting.

10:10 Overview of Agroforestry EPEG Status and Recommendations – Ruth Cassilly, UMD/CBPO (15 min.)

Ruth Cassilly, UMD/CBPO, informed the WTWG on the status of the work of the Agroforestry Expert Panel Establishment Group (EPEG) on their consideration of the NRCS CPS Alleycropping 311 and Silvopasture 381 for CBP BMP status and provided insight on the anticipated EPEG report recommendations from the group.

Discussion:

Bill Keeling: I am trying not to be a stickler, but there is a protocol. I thought the EPEGs were to determine whether a panel was needed. But, all of the things that evidently the EPEG is deciding, like how the reductions are credited and what reductions will occur, we are just skipping the experts. Or is the EPEG saying they are the experts? I don't believe that's following the protocol for the Expert Panels.

Ruth Cassilly: Mark might want to add in here, but we do have a precedent in the Ag Stormwater Management BMP. That was also added without an expert panel, and it was done through the EPEG group. They met and recommended methods of crediting for that BMP, and there was no expert panel formed because it was determined that the protocols followed were similar enough to how we're already crediting. We are using existing land use reduction loading efficiencies to provide the reductions and, to be honest, the people that we have on the EPEG would be the

same people who would make up the Expert Panel. They were carefully chosen and vetted and approved by the workgroups. So, we have a pretty good group of experts who are making these decisions, which will be provided in the report. So, that was the rationale for going this direction to try to get this in. If we have Phase 7 happen before we get this approval, it will pretty much put everything off for years. I know we have other EPEG coordinators here on the call, so if anybody wants to add anything to that answer, please chime in.

Bill Keeling: The other thing I am having trouble with is remote sensing. How do you detect where this is versus what's somewhat degraded forest? I'm just trying to figure out how all the land use would actually be determined from progress year to progress year.

Ruth Cassilly: It's not taking it out of the Ag footprint, so the BMP reported acreage would be determining how many of these acres are actually in CAST receiving a reduction efficiency. I should probably go forward because we have some things I think still to come that will answer your questions, Bill, at least right now in terms of how we are planning on moving forward with this if it gets approved.

Mark Dubin: Bill, the example that Ruth was mentioning was the Agricultural Stormwater Management BMP. I had coordinated an EPEG for that back before Phase 6. So, the EPEG report determined that an Expert Panel wasn't needed. They felt they had sufficient information and existing processes that they put forth. So, that was approved, and it's currently in Phase 6, and states have been reporting to that and getting credit. So, we do have a very good example that's been done historically. So, hopefully that gives you some more confidence in the process.

Chris Thompson: Thanks for the review of the EPEG report. I am sorry I don't know the answer to this question, but are there standards for manure injection? Is it an accredited practice?

Ruth Cassilly: Yes. It is. Mark?

Mark Dubin: Yes. We did have an Expert Panel that looked at manure injection incorporation practices for crediting. That was done prior to the release of Phase 6. So, it's currently in there, and a copy of that report is available online on the Agriculture Workgroup webpage.

Dave Montali: Basically, the two practices that the EPEG intended to evaluate won't stand up on their own, is that correct? It just said the NRCS practice you can't report that because you're adding requirements to it. I just want to make sure I understand that right, because it seems like it's going to be very difficult for a non-regulatory ag state to pursue that.

Ruth Cassilly: There will be requirements. The main requirement being that you have to establish a minimum percent canopy cover. So, the practices are essentially the same and is what a lot of states are already implementing. But, instead of not having any requirement on the density of trees that you would have for a silvopasture, there will be one in order to get crediting. So, it will be a minimum requirement, and the state will have to track if you have a minimum requirement for trees. Now, it will be based on the requirements that NRCS is already recommending for the canopy cover that allows forages to grow. So, we're not going to go establish an 80% canopy cover that does not coincide with allowing healthy forages to grow. So, the literature we are looking at is showing a minimum for silvopasture that is somewhere between 25-50% canopy cover, depending on whether you have warm season grasses or cool season grasses. So, we would try to stay in line with that, which does line up with the current NRCS definition and the state definitions currently.

Eric Hughes (in chat): Bill, here is a link to the Agroforestry EPEG membership list, which was approved by the AgWG at our July meeting last year. This list doesn't list all credentials but can be used as a reference to see who is building these recommendations. Additional folks have been brought into the fold over the last 10 months in a support/advisory capacity, so we have even *more* expertise on the team now than when we started.

<https://www.chesapeakebay.net/files/documents/Agroforestry-EPEG-Draft-Membership.pdf>

Bill Keeling: I'm unfamiliar with agricultural tree canopy planting. There's an urban version, but I'm trying to find my latest NEIEN appendix. I'm unfamiliar with any such BMP being reportable. There's tree planting.

Ruth Cassilly: It is. So, there's urban tree planting, and then we just call it tree planting, and it's implied that it's agricultural tree planting.

Bill Keeling: Correct, but that's tree planting. That's establishing a forested condition. Tree canopy is just along the fringe of the forest and providing benefit to the canopy coverage area on the fringe. Again, I don't see an agricultural tree canopy BMP.

Cassie Davis (in chat): Tree planting includes any tree planting, except those used to establish riparian forest buffers, targeting lands that are highly erodible or identified as critical resource areas. Enter units of acres or percent. Here is the definition for Ag Tree Planting in CAST

Auston Smith (in chat): P6 NEIEN Appendix:

<https://cast.chesapeakebay.net/Home/TMDLTracking> Under the Progress Reporting Header

Olivia Devereux: That's correct, Bill. I believe Ruth just has the sense of the BMP in there, but it is not the official BMP name for non-urban tree planting.

Ruth Cassilly: Correct. I was just trying to distinguish that it's different from the urban tree planting BMP and, you're right, it does not say agricultural tree planting in the official BMP definitions. Cassie put a helpful comment in the chat. So, thank you, Cassie.

Mark Dubin: I was going to add on to your earlier question there from Dave, and you did touch on this. The EPEG group has been very closely in conversation with NRCS, and NRCS is part of the EPEG as well. So, they're looking at coming out with some upgrades or changes to those standards. So, that's been part of the consideration of where that's going with the EPEG as well.

Ruth Cassilly: Yeah. Thanks for reinforcing that, because the expected NRCS definition will include rotational grazing, and that's expected to come out within the next year. Actually, sooner than that, but I am being conservative. I don't know if we had another hand, but I think it went down. Thank you very much for the time, and thanks for the comment and the input. Hopefully those will go in the minutes, and we will definitely consider those when we are putting together this report for you all to review. So, I appreciate it.

Eric Hughes (in chat): Great presentation, Ruth. This will be coming to the AgWG next Thursday, 10:00-10:40, for anyone interested in continuing the discussion.

<https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/event/agriculture-workgroup-meeting-june-2025>

Action: WTWG members with additional input or concerns on the Agroforestry EPEG recommendations and path forward should email Ruth Cassilly (rcassilly@chesapeakebay.net), Auston Smith (Smith.Auston@epa.gov), Eric Hughes (Hughes.Eric@epa.gov), and Caroline Kleis

(Kleis.Caroline@epa.gov). The group will distribute the report when it's done, and final approval will take place at a subsequent WTWG meeting.

10:25 **State Communication of Progress Towards the Bay TMDL** – Olivia Devereux and State Partners (80 min.)

Facilitated by Olivia Devereux, Devereux Consulting, the WTWG heard from various state partners on the ways in which states communicate their progress towards the Bay TMDL (data visualization tools, progress dashboards, etc.):

New York- Cassie Davis, NYSDEC, provided an overview and demonstration of the Upper Susquehanna Watershed Progress Dashboard that is used to share CAST progress, information from nontidal network stations for monitored water quality, and BMP implementation.

Discussion:

Kevin Du Bois (in chat): Cassie, that's impressive!

Olivia Devereux: Cassie, that was really amazing. Thank you for sharing! Who are the users or visitors to the site? I'm sure anybody can go to the link and see it, but who do you publicize it to? Is it for just the managers at DEC and Upper Susquehanna Coalition, or is it for a broader audience? Do you use it when you go out and talk to stakeholders and local areas, soil water conservation districts? Tell us a little bit about how it's used.

Cassie Davis: I try to have it be mostly available for the Upper Susquehanna Coalition members, which are the soil water conservation districts, and then we had it in one of the Upper Susquehanna Coalition newsletters that goes out broadly to a larger audience. It's available on our New York State DEC website for Chesapeake Bay, so anyone that's looking up New York State DEC Chesapeake Bay Watershed will be directed to that link. I'm always trying to get more users. I feel like I am probably the biggest user at this point, which is typical when you make a dashboard. But, I'm always trying to promote it and have it be more accessible. I think my number one best case use for this is if someone's applying for a grant or a program, and they need to access this data and they want to find it quickly. I think that would be the most important. So, if they're applying for a project in the HUC 12 and they just want to know how much progress they've made or where their gaps are, I think that's where it could be used.

Auston Smith: On the last screen of the dashboard that you were showing, you had a lot of layers visible. I was wondering if one of the layers you have the ability to show or incorporate in some way was significant wastewater facilities or even non-significant?

Cassie Davis: We can definitely include that data. It's available. We also have this tool called the DEC info locator that is a statewide tool, and that's where I've mined a lot of these shape files, like the aquatic toxicity. I can just clip it to the Chesapeake Bay, so I could put the wastewater treatment plants on there. I think that could happen. I don't know if our audience would be as interested in those, and it does come up as a waste load in the bottom pie chart. So, they are able to see if wasteload is a larger source.

Dylan Burgevin (in chat): Cassie this Dashboard is great! Definitely gives me some ideas for Maryland. How much effort do you need to put it into annual updates?

Cassie Davis: I purposely set this up to have as minimal updates as possible, because we don't have a large group here in New York State DEC. Basically, the key is to have everything be CSV tables and to link your shapefiles to the tables. That way, I will never have to go into ArcGIS to update the dashboard. I update the tables that are associated with ArcGIS, which is why I opened up by saying don't delete your CSV tables that are associated with your ArcGIS dashboard tables. So, I just overwrite the tables every year, and those tables come from CAST, and then I wrote an R script that will just put them into the format I want. Same with the USGS NTN data. That will put it in the format I was, as well as the data from Emily Dekar and the Upper Susquehanna Coalition. She sends me the same format annually. So, same thing, I have an R script that formats that data, and then I take those outputs and I just drag them into GIS. It says "do you want to overwrite this file"? I say "yes", and then it's done. So, really less than a day to update everything.

Dylan Burgevin (in chat): Amazing! Thanks so much.

Pennsylvania- Scott Heidel and Tyler Trostle, PA DEP, gave a presentation on the tools Pennsylvania uses to communicate progress towards the Bay TMDL, including a heat index map of BMP latitude and longitude, dot density maps, power BI report/dashboard, and additional mapping tools. Kate Beats, PA DEP, provided the group with a list of strategies used to communicate these tools and support Countywide Action Plans and local action. These included, but weren't limited to, a Healthy Watersheds, Healthy Communities story map, Clean Water Academy web-based training modules, a monthly e-newsletter, and CAP Action items for the week. Kate concluded by showing the Countywide Action Plan snapshots, highlighting a mechanism for CAPs to show qualitative and numerical goals and progress, and showing the ways in which these snapshots have evolved to most effectively communicate progress.

Discussion:

Auston Smith: Thank you, all. Scott, on one of the slides that you were sharing, it had a color map of the different classifications that some of your tributaries had. "HQ" sounds like high quality, but what was "EV"?

Scott Heidel: "EV" is exceptional value. So, that's our highest designation. That's where you have your Class A Brook Trout streams and things like that. High quality is, again, natural reproducing, trout, etc., but high quality and EV can also, believe it or not, be applied to warm water fisheries. So, if you have an exceptionally high-quality warm water fishery and the way that's measured is through biological life assessment, if your bugs and your fish diversity and richness is off the charts, it would get that special protection.

Auston Smith: Understood, thank you. It's really useful to see that spread across the portion of the watershed.

Olivia Devereux: I was really interested, Kate, in something you showed where you showed the document that had loads and target and, tell me if I interpreted this incorrectly, but I believe you said it was confusing, which was not your expectation when you put it together. So, you're

working on a revision. That is really helpful information. If it's confusing to your stakeholders, it would be confusing to any other states' stakeholders. Can you tell us a little bit more about what didn't work with that so we can all learn from that lesson? I know in CAST we frequently present the same kind of information in that way. So, hopefully, we can learn from you and make it more clear.

Kate Beats: Absolutely. So, the current challenge really focused on the fact that the planning target and the reduction goal, depending on which audience you were talking to, had a very different meaning because the CAP goals are different from the reduction goals. In the CAPs, what we did was we created if then statements- If we had this, staff, funding, technical support, etc., we could do this. That's what part of that numeric goal is. So, these are saying, in the perfect scenario, this is what we could accomplish. Again, being realistic. Of course, if we had a hundred staff, we could do everything. If we had all the money, we could do it all. It was the realistic idea of if we could get another staff person in who could do engineering and design, we could do this many more projects than we currently do. So, it was that disconnect between the planning target and the reduction goal definitions that, every year, we would have to re explain to our county partners who get this every two years because, in that interim, they had forgotten what the difference was again. So, we were constantly having to explain that, and then we try and make sure we keep it a two-way street. So, this past late winter/early spring my team did a fairly extensive survey. I'm amazed we got as many responses as we did, and we heard back from our county partners that one of the things that they would like to see updated is the snapshot, because it's not as useful to communicate what's going on. So, it was primarily definitions from the technical versus the CAP. So, apples and oranges from terms of progress and, in terms of goals, was really kind of the crux of it, which is still a difficult situation to have. But, we are working our way through it.

Olivia Devereux: Very helpful to hear that, thank you.

Kevin DuBois (in chat): Do you include outreach on actions conducted through the Kittatinny Ridge Sentinel Landscape that support water quality?

Kate Beats: I did want to address the one question that's in the chat regarding the Kittatinny Ridge Sentinel Landscape group. So, that actually just kicked off, and I'm going to be the DEP representative on that. So, we are currently in the process of tying in the efforts through the Sentinel landscape program into the Bay work, and part of that discussion in the near future is going to be how they're going to be reporting what they do. So, we're going to be adding in another data reporter for Scott to keep track of.

Other Partners-Time was made for additional partners to provide verbal updates on communication of progress toward the Bay TMDL

West Virginia

Samuel Canfield: West Virginia, as you alluded to, Olivia, is more straightforward and narrowly directed. So, we still work a lot off of word of mouth with our partners, which can be through different workgroups throughout our eight counties for our Bay Program. But, a major communication pipeline is our West Virginia Tributary Team meeting, which includes as many of

our partners as possible, which is around 25 or so partnering groups, which can be around 50 some individuals, give or take. We utilize different tools, ranging from statewide tools that also inform our Bay tools in some amount. But, we try to focus on the Bay tools that are produced. Just recently, Dave Montali had presented on the Model Loads Reduction Indicator and the Bay TMDL Indicator, and the Method tool, looking at the non-tidal network for West Virginia and looking at the measured versus model load. So, using just the various tools that have been produced. We also are trying to use the targeting portal with all the other Bay tools and tell our different partners about them, because some of those tools have very different information. But, trying to get them into the hands of the partners that may utilize them. It's still, again, word of mouth. A lot of it. But, that is our process at the moment.

Discussion:

Olivia Devereux: Samuel, when you say word of mouth, you mean personal communication in terms of announcements at meetings and that sort of thing, right?

Samuel Canfield: Yes, Olivia, sorry about that. That reminds me, we do have our West Virginia Chesapeake Bay specific webpage as well, which is updated. Our WIPs are put on there and the milestone updates and different highlights as well. So, that is updated periodically. But, yes, the word of mouth is individual communications a lot of times.

Olivia Devereux: Yes, thank you. That's helpful to hear how it works, and every state has their own culture, I think. Certainly, communication works similarly, but there are also some differences. So, thank you for sharing that, Samuel.

Delaware

Holly Walker: Similarly, we are a headwater state. We have three counties that are in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed in our state. It makes up about a third of our state, overall, so it is kind of similar to what Pennsylvania had said. It is primarily an agricultural setting for our Chesapeake Bay Watershed portion. So, there's a lot of direct connection with our partners. So, every year we do our big watershed implementation plan and annual progress meeting. This usually occurs in the winter, usually sometime around January/February. We bring in all of our partners, and we do a big overview of the progress we've been making, how we're standing with certain BMPs, how we're meeting our goals. It's kind of a meeting where we allow our partners to talk to us and give feedback through that portal. Actually, we are starting to gather the second part of that. In the warmer months, we tend to have a newsletter that we put together and, again, we'll update any new additional information on how we are doing, what things are coming out, any progress reports that are coming out, so that our partners are being able to engage in that way. Then we also kind of have sector meetings and partner meetings in which we communicate this information as well. We are a relatively new program. Specifically, we've had Chesapeake Bay stuff here in the state for a while, but our Chesapeake Bay Implementation Program here at DNREC is a relatively new one. We've only had it for about two or three years now. So, we have a relatively new team, but part of that team is a bunch of people who are on this call now who are fantastic data and GIS experts. So, we're actually working internally on some similar types of things to what New York was presenting, in terms of having dashboards to

help us internally look at these kinds of BMP practices, where they're located, what progress, these sorts of things. It's not quite ready to be out yet, so we didn't want to present on that, but it is something that we're working on and, obviously, this is generating conversations about a public portal or a more partner specific portal. But, definitely those internal ones that we're developing are for us and for our partners that are strategically trying to plan and trying to target different areas. As you said, we've had a really great GIS group here that puts a lot of information into it. So, we're still kind of creating that platform, but we're working toward it and, for right now, it's mostly through meetings, through direct interactions with our state partners, and just really trying to communicate to our communities.

Discussion:

Olivia Devereux: Thank you very much. I appreciate that, Holly, and I would love for others to jump in if they like. I don't want to put anyone else on the spot, because I didn't ask them in advance. But, it's interesting to see the variety of communication methods and what works in each state. It is always my hope that the members of the partnership can learn from each other for how to move things forward. This is really a good discussion. Are there any other questions or comments that people want to bring up about what works, what doesn't work, or observations about how other states are doing something similarly or differently?

Holly Walker: I just want to say thank you really quick for putting this together, because it is good to see how other people are presenting this information. While I think we're all kind of working internally with what works best for our states and jurisdictions, it is good to kind of get some more ideas as well and see how some of these things may or may not work for us, but also kind of review these ideas.

Department of Defense

Olivia Devereux: Kevin, I love that you put some questions in the chat that got answered throughout. DoD has its own newsletter that goes out related to the Chesapeake Bay, but there may be other examples that any of you want to share or if you had a crash and burn experience where you thought something would work and it didn't work. That's helpful to know, too. I think one of the things that I struggle with on communication is the planning targets, because there seem to be so many ones that are different between the unaccounted additional loads, the Conowingo, the state basins or CBSegs, however you want to think about that. So, there are always challenges, and it's great to hear about that.

Kevin DuBois: Thanks for the shoutout there, Olivia. We do produce an annual progress report every year where we talk about not only progress on water quality goals and highlight installation success stories, but we talk about the other goals and outcomes of the Watershed Agreement as well. So, I can put a link to that in the chat if anybody's interested. But, for DoD, it's really interesting. This year, we've really had to retool how we communicate about meeting the goals and outcomes of the Watershed Agreement, consistent with the priorities of the Secretary of Defense for mission readiness and warfighter lethality. So, I tell lots of people that, at least at the DoD, we're learning a new language on how to communicate what we do

consistent with those priorities. So, when you pick up the 2024 annual progress report, which we are still working on, you'll see a very different communication methodology.

Discussion:

Kevin DuBois (in chat): DoD Annual Progress Reports are found here: <https://www.denix.osd.mil/chesapeake/dod-cbp-annual-progress-reports/>

Eric Hughes (in chat): Fantastic presentations!

Kevin DuBois (in chat): You will see the communication changes in the upcoming 2024 APR. Not yet published.

11:45 **Recap of Actions and Decisions** (5 min.)

11:50 **Adjourn**

Next Meeting: August 7th from 10:00-12:00PM

Participants

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Samantha Cotton, DNREC
Emily Dekar, USC
Ruth Cassilly, UMD/CBPO
Kathryn Beats, PA DEP
Dave Montali, Tetra Tech
Cassie Davis, NYSDEC
Bill Keeling, VADEQ
Scott Heidel, PA DEP
Tyler Trostle, PA DEP
Doug Austin, EPA
Olivia Devereux, Devereux Consulting
Samuel Canfield, WVDEP
Jeff Sweeney, EPA
Jeremy Hanson, CRC
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Christopher Thompson, LCCD
Sushanth Gupta, MWCOG
Natahnee Miller, PA DEP
Bo Williams, EPA
Alicia Ritzenthaler, DOEE
Kevin DuBois, DoD

Acronym List

AgWG: Agriculture Workgroup

MDA: Maryland Department of Agriculture

NYSDEC: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

PA DEP: Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

QAPP: Quality Assurance Project Plan

WTWG: Watershed Technical Workgroup