Meeting Minutes

Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP)
Healthy Watersheds Goal Implementation Team
Healthy Watersheds Management Strategy

NPS Chesapeake Bay Office
410 Severn Avenue Suite 314 Annapolis, MD 21403
April 30th, 2015 10:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.

Meeting Participants:
Mark Bryer (TNC), *Chair*
Jason Dubow (MDP), *Vice-Chair*
Renee Thompson (USGS CBPO), *Coordinator*
Tuana Phillips (Chesapeake Research Consortium), *Staff*
Donnelle Keech (TNC)
Anne Hairston-Strang (MD DNR)
Julie Winters (EPA)
Bevin Buchheister (CBC)
Helen Stewart (MD DNR)
Amy Handen (NPS CBPO)
Diane Wilson (PA DEP)
Gene Yagow (VA Tech, STAC)
Greg Evans (VA DOF)
Mary Gattis (Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, Local Government Advisory Committee)
Nesha McRae (VA DEQ)
Tim Craddock (WV DEP)
Kristen Wolf (PA DEP)
Emilie Franke (CRC, Fisheries GIT)
Danielle Algazi (EPA Region 3)
Sally Claggett (USFS)
Kevin Byrnes (George Washington Regional Commission)
Marian Norris (NPS)
Nicole Sandberg (VA DEQ)
Todd Janeski (VA DCR)
Joan Salvati (VA DEQ)
Denny Puko (PA DCED)

Welcome and Introductions
Mark welcomed everybody to the meeting, confirmed participants, and provided a brief overview of the agenda.

Review of Healthy Watersheds Management Strategy
Mark Bryer reviewed the progress we've made so far in the management strategy (MS) development process and the next steps in the upcoming months. He also reviewed the Healthy Watersheds Management Strategy and four key management approaches. For more information, please refer to [Mark's presentation slides](#) (slides 1-16).

Other presentation points, comments or questions:
- The Communications Workgroup at the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) binned the 29 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement Outcomes into 5 themes: Abundant Life, Clean Water, Climate Change, Conserved Lands, and Engaged Communities.
  - Comment: These 5 themes were presented recently at a Management Strategies Open House Forum hosted by Maryland DNR. Several attendees felt the 5 themes were confusing.
  - Comment: the 5 bins were created as a communications strategy, as well as to make the CBP website layout and content more palatable for viewers.
  - Comment: a communication vehicle like this is needed.
- Comment: The order/language of the Tracking Framework Graphic does not really match the order/language of the text in the MS. The Workgroup that will work on refining the MS will address this.
- Renee and Mark explained how the Tetra Tech Contractor work provided a lot of the narrative text for the MS, as well as what occurred afterwards: a "mad sprint to the finish" to refine the draft.

Review of Partner and Public Comments to Management Strategies
Renee Thompson reviewed [the public and partner comments to date](#). She also proposed a process for responding to and incorporating comments into the Management Strategy.

Other presentation points, comments or questions:
- The last day of the Public Input Period is today (4/30). This means that we should expect a lot more comments to come in on the 11th hour.
- Comment: The USDA CREP Program efforts that are ongoing as part of the Riparian Forest Buffer Initiative can be used as an example or even opportunity to coordinate (e.g., we can identify CREP Program policies that limit healthy watershed protection).
- Comment: In VA, there is already a mechanism in place that exerts some positive influence on federal and state decisions/actions. The Executive Order, EIR, and EIS to be specific. We can leverage these mechanisms to help support healthy watershed maintenance.
  - We can also look at the federal policy guidance to federal agencies (e.g., NEPA).
- Should the Federal Highway Administration (FHA) be included in the list of federal partners we should engage with?

- Comment: I wouldn't be so quick to remove FHA off our list. We can include them and justify why they were included.
- Comment: I would encourage that we work closely with the CBP Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC) on the Land Use Management Strategies. Ask them: how do you want this information?

Action: A small team will work on incorporating the public comments and refining the Healthy Watersheds Management Strategy. Team members include: Renee, Donnelle, Tuana, Helen, Diane and Joan. As the team works together, if any thorny issues come up they will consult with the rest of the GIT on that issue. The revised strategy will be sent to the full GIT no later than the 19th, before the 22nd deadline to submit final drafts for Management Board fatal flaw review.

Action: The Workgroup that convened in December for a work session on the Land Use Options Evaluation (LUOE) Outcome may reconvene in the next two weeks to refine the LUOE Management Strategy. As the strategy is refined, if any thorny issues come up the group will consult with the rest of the GIT on that issue. The revised strategy will be sent to the full GIT no later than the 19th, before the 22nd deadline to submit final drafts for Management Board fatal flaw review.

Additional Refinements to Healthy Watersheds Management Strategy
Donnelle Keech led the GIT through an exercise to directly link the content under the Management Strategy "Gaps" section with one or more of the four management approaches. Donnelle captured changes on a PowerPoint presentation slide. The changes will be incorporated in the Healthy Watersheds Management Strategy draft.

Other presentation points, comments or questions:
- Comment: Under tracking, the "prioritization for protection" piece does not fit in with the rest of the document. I am going to propose that we exclude that.
- Comment: local governments don't know that their watershed is healthy. Dissemination of information is a gap.
- Comment: In VA, local governments are consumed by regulatory compliance such as the TMDL. This is another gap.
- Comment: I suggest that we have two management approaches: one on outreach/engagement, and another focused on tracking. Under the former strategy we would include local, state, and federal outreach/engagement.
- Comment: there are new tools coming up that are available and useful to build context for which choices would be more powerful.
- Comment: Gaps under federal leadership are not articulated. Maybe we could pull from language in one of the public comments, specifically one comment that came from a GIT member who works at CBF.
  - We should also maybe consult with our federal partners for some truth testing.
- Comment: In VA, there is no state infrastructure set up right now that could gather the knowledge and data acquired by citizen groups. This is part of a resources gap that is linked to the management approach on supporting State efforts.

Action: The Healthy Watersheds MS Draft Team will better articulate the gaps under the "increase federal leadership" management approach, as well as continue working on refining the "Gaps" section in addition to other sections.

Land Use Options Evaluation Outcome Management Strategy
Jason Dubow provided an overview of the LUOE MS, which includes both an evaluation of policy options and implementation of strategies to reduce existing land conversion rates. Jason also reviewed the management approaches of the MS. For more information, please refer to Jason's presentation slides (slides 17-21).

Other presentation points, comments or questions:
- Comment: I am a little concerned with respect to the survey. Messaging and terminology will be important. Asking local governments about information pertaining to reducing "land conversion" in particular is where I fear we could get responses saying "we can't do that."
  - Comment: We need to make sure the survey questions are neutral.
  - Comment: The Center for Watershed Protection has done similar work in the past, maybe we can extract some of the phraseology that they used to communicate some of the same things.
  - Comment: Maybe this is something a contractor could help us develop.
  - Comment: There is negative connotation with the term "land conversion" and we should be wary of that. Instead I try to use the phrase "retaining land for water quality purposes."
- Comment: By only surveying local governments we may be missing an opportunity to ask legal councils and others who may help to identify local policies that are effective in reducing land conversion rates.
- Jason went over some comments received from the CBP's Communications Workgroup. The draft as it currently stands lists the management approaches in the following order:
  1) Determine the spectrum of existing land use "policy options, incentives and planning tools."
  2) Gather, summarize and place on the CBP website existing studies and reports on the costs, benefits and effectiveness.
  3) Survey local governments and interest groups to determine which "policy options, incentives and planning tools" have been most effective at reducing land conversion rates.

  The Communications Workgroup suggested that we instead complete it in the following order:
  1) Conduct a professional survey of local government and interest groups to determine which "policy options, incentives and planning tools" have been most effective at reducing land conversion rates
  2) Conduct a comprehensive review/study to determine the spectrum of existing land use "policy options, incentives and planning tools."
  3) Create an online repository of such examples, including studies and reports of the costs, benefits and effectiveness of such examples.

Jason asked the rest of the group to offer their feedback.
- Comment: I think the order the Communications Team suggested makes sense, however I also think it would be useful to go ahead and create an online repository. This information is needed now so I think we can go ahead and put it up and update it later if needed. We will treat it as a "living" website.
- Comment: In regards to the Contractor Support Request, I would suggest that you don't make it overly prescriptive and allow room for creativity.

Review of Landscape Level Pilot Demonstration Project in the Rappahannock River Basin
The Maintain Healthy Watersheds GIT was able to work with EPA CBPO to secure 50k last fall on behalf of the VA Department of Forestry (DOF) to lead a study related to "crediting conservation" in the Rappahannock River watershed, George Washington Planning District. Greg Evans (VA DOF) gave an update on this project, which will assess growth trends in the region and evaluate the spatial variability of forest ecosystem service value. By simulating the loading impact of the alternative development scenarios and comparing the cost of additional urban BMP implementation to offset the loads, the aim of the project is to demonstrate the cost-benefit relationship of forestland retention. For more information, please refer to Greg's presentation slides.

Other presentation points, comments or questions:
- Comment to Greg: You should give this presentation to the Water Quality Goal Team. I think it would be good to have them aware and involved early in the process.
- This work is significant because it is being led by a state.
  - Comment: This is true, but it is more of a dual role. Local governments will have to change how they do business.
- Question: are you using the same resolution as what is put into the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model?
  - Yes. We are using 1-meter data from a mixed bag of datasets. We are trying to get the best data available from localities.
- Question: Is there any water quality monitoring element in this project?
  - If we get a chance to start Phase 2 of the project, we want to start capturing data and doing that sort of stuff.
- Comment: I trust that you will be able to integrate your data with VA's aquatic monitoring program, INteractive STream Assessment Resource (INSTAR).
- Question: What exactly is being delivered?
  - 1. Associated load increases from each scenario (the three scenario are: status quo, green infrastructure, and another model that is in-between). 2. Low, medium, and high cost BMP assessments that would offset loads from each of the three scenarios. 3. A literature review.
- Comment: VA is reluctant to call land protected unless it is in an easement.
  - Comment: In addition, although the land is protected by an easement the trees may not necessarily be protected themselves.

Action: The Goal Team will check-in with this project later this year.

Cross-GIT coordination / Tracking Workgroup Evolution
Renee gave an update on cross-GIT coordination and the ongoing evolution of the Tracking Workgroup. For more information, please refer to [Renee's presentation slides](#).

Other presentation points, comments or questions:
- Comment: By utilizing our resources and taking advantage of what is available out there, we can help address the Management Strategy gap regarding limited state resources/data.
- Question: Can we learn from the EPA Healthy Watersheds Program?
  - EPA has worked exclusively with individual states. However, there may be models and national datasets they have used that we can learn from.
- Question: How do we handle all states having different criteria for healthy watersheds?
  - This will be a challenge. However, at the same time this Workgroup is about acquiring the data. The data will be applied differently depending on the goal or what we are analyzing.
- Question: Is anybody from the Water Quality GIT involved?
  - We want to integrate water quality into our work. Reaching out to them may help them see the links.
- Comment: BMPs are used as a surrogate for water quality and land use. For healthy watersheds, however, I am uncertain whether we have the right data or knowledge to say "what is passing versus what is failing." The linkages aren't as tight as they should be.
  - This is great fodder for the Workgroup.

Action: If somebody is interested in joining this Tracking Workgroup, please contact Renee (rthompso@chesapeakebay.net).
Action: Renee will send out the list of original Tracking Workgroup members. The rest of the GIT will be asked to make recommendations. A diverse group of people is ideal (e.g., people who work in fisheries, and not just healthy watershed people).

Workplan
Tuana Phillips provided an overview of the Workplan development process and timeline. The Workplans will capture information such as the key action steps, expected completion date, partner responsible and estimated funding. The GIT will have to develop them by the fall of 2015.

Other presentation points, comments or questions:
- Comment: State staff will want a lot of time to show the Workplans to their supervisors. It will be a bit challenging because staff will work on them and may get a "reality check" from their bosses.
- Question: How is this going to relate to the milestones?
  - Not all of the work will be related to milestones, but some of it will be. We do not know now how it will all work out just yet.