

Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership's 2017 Chesapeake Bay TMDL Midpoint Assessment

Backgrounder

Introduction & Purpose

- The midpoint assessment provides the Partnership with the opportunity to step back and assess how the Bay TMDL and WIP implementation are making a difference, if it's all working as intended, and if there's a better way we can implement our priorities and achieve our goals.
- **The ultimate goal is to make implementation more streamlined and the challenges to implementation more understandable for the partnership as we move towards 2018 and 2025.**
- An essential focus throughout this process is optimizing implementation of the jurisdictions' WIPs, and ensuring we're on track for the development of the Phase III WIPs.
- Although the 2010 Chesapeake Bay TMDL calls for this assessment, it was the **partnership that identified the priorities back in October 2012 that would be addressed over the next several years:**
 - Through the October 22-23, 2012 Water Quality Goal Implementation Team (WQGIT) meeting, the partnership outlined the overall priorities and schedule for the midpoint assessment. In December 2012, the Principals' Staff Committee approved the guiding principles of the midpoint assessment.
 - Based on these priorities, the partnership is going to review the latest science, data, tools and BMPs, incorporate as appropriate into the decision-support tools that guide implementation, and consider lessons learned; and help jurisdictions prepare Phase III WIPs, which will guide milestones and implementation from 2018 to 2025.
 - **We continue to address and implement these priorities as a partnership, with clear decision-making roles and processes articulated.**
 - The WQGIT adopted governance protocols which will guide decision-making at the GIT and Workgroup levels.
 - A midpoint assessment project management and tracking tool has been developed to ensure the partnership and other stakeholders have access to the overall schedule, status updates on priorities, and an understanding on the timing and roles for critical decision points.
 - We have strong jurisdictional leadership across partnership workgroups and teams that are responsible for addressing and implementing priorities.
- **Midpoint Assessment priorities capture a range of strategic, programmatic issues** – the modeling component is just one part of the larger picture to assess progress and implement restoration commitments.

- For example, we have an increasing emphasis on evaluating and explaining long term trends in Bay and local water quality conditions, and are exploring ways to adapt implementation strategies to incorporate these findings.

➤ **The partnership is on track to meet midpoint assessment commitments due to:**

- Early involvement in strategic issues to build awareness and buy-in
- Information sharing at critical points
- Active involvement in decision making processes
- Availability of EPA resources to facilitate key activities, like workshops and expert panels

Decision Points on Key Midpoint Assessment Strategic Issues/Priorities

Embedded throughout this process is (1) support for WIP & Milestones implementation; (2) evaluation of progress (EPA oversight); and (3) incorporation of monitoring data in our assessments and plans.

- ❖ **Incorporate BMP expert panel and workgroup recommendations**, with a focus on adding BMPs and updating current BMPs to enhance the evaluation of progress (**Underway and Ongoing**)
 - To date, the Partnership has approved over 180 BMPs.
 - Nutrient Management, Stormwater Performance Standards and Retrofits, Urban Stream Restoration, Cover Crops, and Conservation Tillage are heavy-hitter BMPs that have already been addressed in the past two years.
 - Manure technologies and oyster restoration are two efforts underway that are high priorities of the Bay jurisdictions.
 - For a listing of BMPs under Partnership review, please visit: http://stat.chesapeakebay.net/?q=node/130&quicktabs_10=3
- ❖ **Enhance decision-support tools**, as appropriate, to enhance the evaluation of progress and crediting of actions on the ground (**Underway, completion estimated by end of 2015**)
 - Data inputs (e.g. land use and historical BMP implementation data) were finalized and entered into the decision support tools in **October 2015**, before calibration began.
 - Model calibration is expected to occur after this time and the draft Phase 6 decision support tools will undergo partnership review and fine-tuning during **2016 through spring 2017**.
 - Several enhancements have already been made in partnership-driven tools, at the request of the jurisdictions, such as the Chesapeake Assessment Scenario Tool (e.g. cost functionality) and the development of BayFAST.
- ❖ **Complete final changes to partnership's decision support tools** based on partner review and set Phase III planning targets for 2025 (**December 2017**)
 - **Specific issues, such as Conowingo, climate change and the James River Chlorophyll-a criteria, will likely have an impact on the Phase III WIP planning targets.**

- The partnership will discuss the possibility of using 2025 land use projections for the Phase III WIPs.
 - The Land Use Workgroup is the lead for bringing this through the partnership review and approval process.
 - The use of 2025 projections for Phase III WIPs is expected to come before the WQGIT in spring 2016.
- ❖ Based on input from the CBP partnership, **EPA provides expectations for scope and content of Phase III WIPs (June 2017)**
- ❖ **Develop draft and final Phase III WIPs** based on criteria for scope and content that may vary across jurisdictions due to implementation progress (**Draft WIPs and Final WIPs due June 2018 and December 2018, respectively**)
- ❖ **Modify the TMDL, if and, as necessary (2019)**

Schedule for Midpoint Assessment Strategic Issues & Priorities

2015 – The “Year of Development”

- June 30, 2015: Draft verification programs and historical data cleanup due from the Bay watershed jurisdictions.
- September 2015: Draft report on Phase III WIP Stakeholder Assessment.
- September 30, 2015: Final historical data cleanup due from the Bay watershed jurisdictions.
- October 2015: All (draft final) data inputs due to the CBP Modeling Workgroup for initial Phase 6 Watershed Model calibration. This includes BMP Panel efficiency recommendations; land use classifications; local land use data.
- November 1, 2015: Federal agencies submit 2016-2017 two-year milestone implementation forecasts to EPA-CBPO and jurisdictions.
- November 16, 2015: Jurisdictions submit revised BMP verification program quality assurance plans to EPA.
- December 20, 2015: Draft Phase 6 model complete and prepared for the January Modeling Quarterly review.

2016 – The “Year of Review”

- January 2016: Final report on Phase III WIP Stakeholder Assessment & Action Plan.
- January 2016: EPA notifies the jurisdictions of decisions on approval of their revised BMP verification program plans.
- January 2016 – December 2016: CBP Partnership review of Phase 6 modeling tools; key scenarios run.
 - January 13-14, 2016: STAC workshop on CBP Conowingo modeling approach for Phase 6.
 - January/February 2016: STAC workshop on general CBP assessment approach to climate change.
 - February 2016: STAC peer review of Phase 6 Watershed Model.
 - June 2016: STAC peer review of Water Quality Sediment Transport Model.
 - August 2016: STAC review of CBP climate change modeling approach for Phase 6 modeling tools
- January – May 31, 2016: Rolling review of local land use data and submission of high resolution land cover data from the Chesapeake Conservancy.

- May 2016: Decision on whether to set Phase III WIPs on 2025 forecasted conditions.
- June 2016: Decision on Phase III WIP Planning Target Methodology.
- October 2016: Approval of updated information for the Phase 6 Watershed Model (e.g. Phase 6 BMP Panel efficiency recommendations; final land use dataset).
- December 2016: Presentation of final Lower Susquehanna River Watershed Assessment study.

2017 – The “Year of Decision”

- January 2017: All CBP partnership models final and ready for Partnership management application.
- Winter-Spring 2017: CBP partnership decision on a series of policy matters (e.g. Conowingo dam, climate change, and James River Chlorophyll-a) that affect the Phase III WIP planning targets and expectations.
- June 2017: EPA presents final Phase III WIP expectations, including expectations for jurisdiction and Federal Agency milestones development for 2018-2025 (after several rounds of review by the CBP partnership).
- December 2017: EPA releases final Phase III WIP planning targets after approval of methodology by CBP partnership.

2018 – Phase III WIP Development and Implementation

- January 2018: 2018 – 2019 two year milestones due.
- Spring 2018: EPA completes evaluation of whether state jurisdictions achieved “60% by 2017” goal.
- June 2018: Draft Phase III WIPs due to EPA from Bay watershed jurisdictions.
- December 2018: Final Phase III WIPs due to EPA from Bay watershed jurisdictions.