GIT 4 STRATEGY

1/22/2013

[This version edited per 1/17/2013 GIT4 conference call]

Purposes of this document:

1. to present a 2013 GIT 4 strategy using the CBP's adaptive management approach, including a review of prior-year GIT4 activities;
2. to articulate a specific, measurable outcome with which to manage and account for progress toward the GIT's overarching goal;
3. to list 2013 healthy watershed protection activities including:
   a. specific actions that GIT 4 member agencies will take *separately* in 2013 toward achievement of the GIT's overarching goal and specific outcomes;
   b. specific actions that GIT 4 will take *collectively* toward achievement of the GIT's goal and outcomes.

Consensus guiding principles:

1. manage adaptively: reflect on the GIT 4 goal, identified key factors affecting achievement of the goal, selected strategies, and progress toward desired outcomes; consider lessons learned from prior-year activities;
2. proceed incrementally; this is not intended to be a comprehensive or perfect strategy;
3. include *both* the key actions that individual partner agencies (state, federal and NGO) will take separately *and* the key actions that the GIT will take together, collectively;
4. the emphasis of collective actions should be to support and enhance partner (primarily *state*) healthy watershed identification and protection programs;
5. partners differ from each other in terms of program priorities, needs and resource constraints on participation in the listed collective activities, therefore inclusion of a collective action in this strategy does not assume that all partners will necessarily dedicate staff or other resources to every listed collective activity;
6. measurable outcomes and activities should not create new, expensive monitoring demands;
7. partners should creatively apply existing, available programmatic tools and resources toward the GIT's goal.

CONSENSUS OVERARCHING GIT4 GOAL

Maintain local watersheds at optimum health across a range of landscape contexts.

CONSENSUS OVERARCHING GIT4 DESIRED OUTCOME

State-identified healthy waters remain healthy.

Key factors affecting achievement of the goal and outcome:

1. landscape condition, including forest cover, impervious surface, and connectivity between terrestrial and aquatic habitats;
2. flow regimes and channel stability;
3. land conservation;
4. private sector land use practices, including forest and stream corridor protection and stormwater runoff management;
5. government program implementation, including Clean Water Act anti-degradation, local code and ordinance enforcement, and land protection;
6. accountability, including use of metrics for tracking and reporting stream and watershed health, threats, and protection status;
7. knowledge level of key constituents and decision makers, including local governments, local watershed groups and other key interest groups.

Consensus GIT 4 key overarching (multi-year) strategies:

- **Strategy 1: provide a forum** for mutual learning and exploration of scientific and management issues;
- **Strategy 2: develop information resources**, including health and protection status tracking capabilities, and otherwise **support communications** about healthy watershed identification and protection;
- **Strategy 3: promote the science** that supports better characterization and protection of healthy watersheds.

REFLECTION ON PRIOR YEARS' GIT4 ACTIVITIES

Strategy 1: Provide a forum

- o Quarterly GIT meeting agendas thus far (2011- 2012) have included discussion of CBP partners' and other healthy watershed identification and protection programs, including:
  - Fairfax County, VA
  - Lancaster County Planning Commission, PA
  - Watershed Assessment Program, NOAA
  - Mattawoman Creek watershed, MD
  - Deer Creek in Harford County, MD
  - Vermont Healthy Watershed Assessment
  - Wisconsin Healthy Watershed Assessment
- o Other GIT 4 agenda topics in 2012
  - State anti-degradation program reviews
  - STAC Workshop on "crediting conservation"
  - Healthy Watershed tracking project development

- Communications Strategy
- Decision Framework for adaptive management of GIT 4 activities
- Chesapeake STAT for public accountability
- Watershed Health Indicators

- **Strategy 2: Develop information resources/Support communications**
  - VA, PA, MD and NY in 2012 contributed to a first-draft collective mapping of state-identified healthy watersheds
  - GIT 4 leaders in 2012 communicated the GIT 4 mission, strategies and work plan to the CBP Management Board, Citizens Advisory Committee, Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee
  - GIT 4 Communications Workgroup led a Healthy Watersheds session at the 2012 Chesapeake Watershed Forum. Session participants rated the session a 4.2 on scale of 1 – 5, and said the session raised their subject matter knowledge level from 3.0 to 4.0 also on a scale of 1 – 5.
  - GIT 4 staff distributed key publications from EPA's national Healthy Watershed Initiative:
    - "Identifying and Protecting Healthy Watersheds"
    - "Economic Benefits of Protecting Healthy Watersheds: A Literature Review"

- **Strategy 3: Promote the science**
  - GIT 4 collaborated in 2012 with the CBP STAC to hold a workshop that generated recommendations for improvements to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model to better reflect the differential nutrient and sediment processing/retention rates of natural landscape features, including wetlands, streams and riparian forests. Recommendations were communicated to the WQ GIT for action.

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2013
STATE, FEDERAL, AND NGO INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES

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Commonwealth of Pennsylvania:
1. Continue to track the Managing Communities metric as a performance measure within DCNR's Bureau of Forestry. This measure evaluates how well municipalities protect their forested watersheds through the use of forest protection ordinances, dedicated staff, and forest management planning.
2. Continue to work with NRCS to prioritize Farm Bill program funding to benefit forested watershed lands through programs such as EQIP, CSP, Healthy Forests, and others.
3. Work with counties and municipalities to prioritize the use of open space funding under Act 13 to protect healthy watersheds.
4. Prioritize the use of open space funding from a variety of sources to protect healthy watersheds.

5. Explore use of DEP Growing Greener funding for healthy watershed protection by local community groups and municipalities.
   - o "Renaissance Watersheds" have both high value and degraded reaches and work with locals to restore and protect appropriate reaches.
6. Continue use of DCNR's Land Choices education and outreach program that trains teachers and municipal officials in sustainable land-use practices, including watershed protection.
7. Explore Implementation of a statewide Forest Conservation Easement Program to protect healthy watersheds with clean water or safe drinking water funding. Model after the successful "sponsorship" programs in neighboring states that reduce interest rates for additional land protection and restorations.

State of Maryland:

1. Explore potential for use of healthy watershed protection action as a growth offset
2. Update the Watershed Resource Registry to improve protection of Healthy Watershed values through regulatory and non-regulatory decisions.
3. Document the connections between healthy watershed protection and source-water protection and human health.
4. Determine if a refined healthy watershed identification map would benefit state agency program implementation and coordination.
5. Develop a plan for updating the "Surf Your Watershed" website as a way to improve public communication of healthy watershed condition, management needs and protection status.
6. Develop and implement communications to local communities:
   a. guidelines to support integration of healthy watershed protection into local comprehensive plans
   b. focus on what localities will lose if they develop healthy watershed "X"
   c. focus on economic argument (protection is cheaper than restoration)
7. Initiate interagency coordination to discuss the development of a Tier III antidegradation designation for highest quality waters and watersheds
8. Collaborate with NGOs, such as The Nature Conservancy, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, and others, to coordinate protection and communication efforts.
9. Continue interagency coordination for further development of the Biological Recovery Initiative, in partnership with EPA, to evaluate restoration priorities based on measures of recovery potential.
10. Refine Maryland's land conservation tracking system in support of the NPS Landscope initiative.
11. Issue a report through the Marcellus Shale Safe Drilling Initiative Advisory Commission that documents Best Practices needed for avoiding unacceptable risks to public health, safety, the environment and natural resources. Draft for public review April 30, 2013.

12. Implement DNR Fisheries new Mattawoman Creek ecosystem protection initiative.

Commonwealth of Virginia:

1. Resolve healthy watershed identification map for use in public communications
    a. Qualify identification as "ecologically healthy waters" to avoid confusion over persistent impairments in identified waters
2. VCU: complete a classification of VA healthy waters as a function of development threat and provide those data to the CBPO for use in public communications
3. Integrate a designation of "healthy streams" within the VA ProbMon assessment database
4. Explore (in Chowan pilot) how to use CWA 319 for healthy watershed protection: develop a protection plan addressing 319 program "a-i" criteria
5. Collaborate with EPA Region 3 to guide healthy watershed protection in the Rappahannock basin
6. Evaluate overlap between identified "healthy waters" and the Commonwealth's 303(d) listed waters.
7. Partner with NGOs to seek sustainability of funding for a healthy watershed protection plan.
8. Coordinate with Trout Unlimited on the EBTJV in the Shenandoah basin to acquire new data and support protection projects.

Chesapeake Bay Commission:
- Follow through on the "crediting conservation" issue with release of a report in the spring of 2013 on the possible options for addressing land conservation in the context of the Bay TMDL

Federal Agencies:

EPA Region 3

R3 Water Protection Division:

1. Clarify and reinforce how EPA uses antidegradation designations for healthy waters.
2. Integrate healthy watershed protection into EPA water programs
    a. Explore potential to strengthen antidegradation implementation
    b. Explore potential integration of healthy watersheds into source water protection programs (under way within the Potomac Partnership)

Environmental Assessment and Innovation Division:

1. Integrate healthy watershed protection into mitigation banking and the CWA Section 404 program
2. Provide technical assistance to PA and WV to complete landscape-scale green infrastructure assessments
3. Provide technical assistance to Frederick County, MD, to complete a green infrastructure assessment
4. If funding is available, use Potomac Highlands Implementation Grants to fund conservation easements and restoration projects through collaboration with EBTJV and others
5. Explore potential to use CWA programs to protect flow in healthy watersheds
6. Consider SRBC evaluation of shale gas development impacts on flow
7. Add information on state-identified healthy watersheds to NEPAassist, so that NEPA project reviewers will be made aware that a proposed action is within a healthy watershed
8. Partner with USFWS in the Highlands and work with LCCs to promote healthy watershed projects.

EPA HQ:

- Propose and implement a grant program for implementation of the Healthy Watershed Initiative
- Lead an effort among federal agencies to identify programs and resources that can be used to protect state-identified healthy watersheds

USNPS @ CBPO: incorporate map layer of state-identified healthy watersheds into Landscope Chesapeake

USGS @ CBPO: GIS Team support for GIT4 development of HW tracking capability

USFWS @ CBPO: GIT2 Chair collaborate on linkage of GIT4 protection activities to Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture

Non Government Organizations:
   TNC
      1. Provide GIT 4 leadership as the GIT 4 Chair
      2. Provide GIT 4 leadership as the GIT 4 Communications Workgroup Chair

3. Complete pilot assessment of healthy watershed protection provisions in sampled Virginia counties

ACB

1. Support healthy watershed session at the 2013 Chesapeake Watershed Forum [RFP for Forum session is due out in January, 2013]
2. Support GIT4 communications activities through the CBP Communications Office [See Eastern Brook Trout Video at: http://www.chesapeakebay.net/videos/clip/from_the_field_linking_land_and_water_in_brook_trout_conservation
3. ACB also volunteers help in other outreach communications for this plan as part of ACB's new strategy to increase the level of informational/educational activities presented for Chesapeake Network and Forum participants. This current initiative is tentatively being called "Forum Plus" and will consist of regional forums and/or issue debates interspersed throughout the year, web simulcasts of workshops already occurring (Stormwater Retreat, Summit), and innovative electronic presentations akin to TED talks.

DRAFT GIT 4 *COLLECTIVE* 2013 ACTIVITIES

Strategy 1 - Provide a forum:
1. **Output and Activity:** Convene four quarterly GIT 4 meetings in 2013 to collaborate on GIT 4 projects and share learning

   Planning Question: Are there particular areas of emphasis for which we want outside speakers in 2013? Case studies or example programs?

   Suggestions for Discussion:

   - State vulnerability assessments relevant to state-identified healthy watersheds
   - Discuss State's planned use of 319 Non-Point Source grant funding for healthy watershed protection. (Use of 319 funds for protection is encouraged in the new 2012 national 319 program guidance)
   - Discuss how healthy watershed threat and protection assessments can support the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture
   - Discuss TNC-funded College of William and Mary project to analyze local provisions for healthy watershed protection

Strategy 2 - Develop information resources and support communications
   (listed in priority order)

1. Host a session or workshop on healthy watershed themes at Chesapeake Watershed Forum, building on success at 2012 Forum
2. GIT 4 Chair give presentation to LGAC (consider timing, reference success story from the CAC)
3. Provide messages and resources to CPB Communications staff as part of their "emergency" communications strategy (media placements on/ in reaction to weather or other situations that make CBP's work particularly relevant in the moment)
4. Coordinate with the CBP Communication Office to pitch blog and/or video concepts for development.
5. Assess the utility of the following two potential activities:
   a. Share presentations, slides, pictures, graphics, to help *partner agency staff* prepare presentations, reports, etc. with effective healthy watersheds messages.
   b. Develop a healthy watershed "toolkit" for local champions, with focus on local benefits (drinking water, backstop for pollution reduction, cost avoidance, tourism, brook trout, etc.) (scope this out with LGAC)

Strategy 2 continued, other activities:
1. Complete the collection of state-identified healthy watershed data layers and publish them on the CBP web site and through Landscope Chesapeake
2. Develop a proposal to make healthy watershed protection initiatives eligible for NFWF small watershed grants (need initial scoping with Nick DiPasquale)
3. Use the GIT4 forum to collaborate with the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture (EBTJV) to explore ways to:
   a. Provide local models of healthy watershed protection to EBTJV constituents
   b. Amplify public communications to raise local awareness of the existence of and protections for healthy watersheds inhabited by brook trout
4. Collaborate with EPA Region 3 for mutual (EPA- State – NGO) support on healthy watershed communications, including communications within EPA R3

Strategy 3 - Promote the science:

Output 1: A healthy watershed tracking framework developed, populated and maintained to publicly account for healthy watershed identification and protection

Activities:

1. Use the GIT4 forum for discussion of state healthy watershed tracking practices and exploration of ways to improve and communicate the information
2. Use the GIT4 forum for discussion of how the adequacy of protection could be assessed
   a. Consider William and Mary pilot project
   b. Consider examples of index development for application to individual watersheds
   c. Consider examples of report card development for individual healthy watersheds

3. Use the GIT4 forum for dialogue about whether and how the EBTJV could be an opportunity to do some pilot-level work on threat and protection assessment for EBTJV-identified target waters, through collaboration with GIT2 and with CBP STAR support

Output 2: A GIT4 recommendation concerning possible incorporation of protected land values into Bay TMDL accounting

Activities:

1. Coordinate with the Water Quality Goal Team to follow up on the 2012 STAC Workshop Report recommendations. (WQ GIT lead)
2. Collaborate with the Chesapeake Bay Commission to evaluate the potential to incorporate protected land values into Bay TMDL accounting. (CBC lead)