Maintain Healthy Watersheds GIT Meeting Minutes
June 14, 2021, 2-4pm

Attendees:

Renee Thompson, USGS, Coordinator
Jason Dubow, MDP, Vice Chair
Debbie Herr Cornwell, MDP
Sharon Webb, DNREC
Christine Conn, MD DNR
Scott Philips, USGS
Kristin Saunders, UMCES
Jeff Lerner, EPA HW Consortium
Sally Claggett, USFS
Mark Southerland, Tetra Tech

Peter Tango, USGS
Jennifer Starr, ACB
Scott Stranko, MD DNR
Anne Hairston-Strang, MD DNR
Steve Faulkner, USGS
Sequoya Bua-Iam, EPA
Katie Ombalski, Woods and Waters
Adrienne Kotula, CBC
Laura Cattell Noll, ACB

Welcome, Introductions and Updates - Renee Thompson, USGS Chesapeake Bay Program

Request for Chair nomination, ask members to bring this back their organizations, think about potential candidates with experience in watershed management, land use and conservation Renee and Nora to write one-pager announcing the opening with more details on the position. Renee introduced the rest of the meeting topics, including the preparatory work and sharing meeting for the STAC workshop and the Bay Program's adaptive management process.

SRS Land Use and Healthy Watersheds Outcomes Updates – Nora Jackson, CRC
The Land Use Options Evaluation outcome will be reviewed and updated during the next Local Action cohort cycle. Nora presented a timeline for the Healthy Watersheds cohort review and the management approaches for the Healthy Watersheds Outcome with examples of completed and in progress actions. *Link to Management Strategy, Logic and Action Plan*

- Renee- Quick plug for the idea to identify pilot jurisdictions interested in sustaining their healthy watersheds, could use existing local engagement efforts and direct them to a healthy watershed, helping the jurisdiction understand the ecological and public health benefits of maintaining their high-quality lands. Our role could be to figure out where those opportunities are.
- Laura- Does jurisdiction mean states and the district, or local governments or both?
  - It usually means the states and the districts but, in this instance, it means both, depends on the location. Should be more specific in the future.
- Kristin- And let's not forget to document the learning that has come out of our last two years. We want to reflect that in August.

- Renee- Work with Sherry Witt between now and August to make a meaningful agenda for the next HWGIT meeting, to get what we need out of this process.
- Jason- Suggest using a shared document for team members to add ideas for next steps
  - Great idea, will work with Sherry too, did something similar in the beginning of the last session. Creates a space for folks to provide input outside of a live meeting.
- Scott- use narrative analysis questions to get input- just having folks add their thoughts
  - Using jamboard today, could use something similar with the SRS questions

Improved Technical Service Delivery to Landowners: Achieving Multiple CBP Outcomes – Katie Walker, Chesapeake Conservancy

Katie shared findings from the FY19 GIT funded project to synthesize and share the knowledge technical service providers (TSPs) have on landowner financial assistance programs, landowner attitudes, barriers to adoption and effective incentives in order to accelerate BMP implementation on private lands. Overarching project aims to improve water quality and habitat across the Chesapeake watershed through a service provider and landowner relationship. This project underscores the needs to communicate and reduce duplicative of efforts to improve landowner delivery. Steering committee chose 3 geographies to provide workshops and invite service providers, a space for them to have conversations. Learned it's a continuum- and it's different for every region. Vision was to create transferability, lessons learned roadmap on where these collaborations are. We spend a lot of time thinking about where important places are, while that is important this addresses the "how" to conserve and restore them, focusing on strengthening collaborations among existing initiatives and projects, better understanding how to utilize their expertise. Report documenting the workshop findings will be available in August, and CC intends to continue working with the identified communities and start outreach for new geographies.
- Kristin- The timing is great because as the Chesapeake Bay Commission just asked USDA for over $700 million in additional funding to NRCS for technical service and implementation....so with better interdisciplinary technical service and more money, we can do anything!
- Anne- we're looking at a lot of staff transition in the next decade, so the extent we can set up robust training and collaboration networks will make a difference in how well we get trees in the ground.

A Local Government Guide to the Chesapeake Bay – Laura Cattell Noll, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay

Laura introduced the recently published educational modules designed to inform and empower local leaders. Designed for local elected officials to learn more about watershed issues through the lens of economic development, public health and safety, infrastructure maintenance, and finance and education. The modules cover a basic introduction to the watershed and Bay program and cover several topic areas, previewing Module 5 which focuses on preserving local character and landscapes. She also provided an overview of the collection of resources available, where to find them and how to use them.
- Jason- Thoughts about the current strategy for getting local leaders to read and engage with materials?
  - Been in touch with MD municipal league, education lead on a webinar and a local elected official presenting with lots of time built in for questions. Magazine article highlighting the case studies- really broad and different depending on the region.

- Jason- Local governments often focus on what they must do with federal or state requirements. Wondering about the ways of communicating and timing, when the outreach is done it's connected with the initiatives?
  - Yes the timing is important, that's where GIT members come in- looking for suggestions.
- Jason- Could you tell us more about the ERG local planner project, if that is connected to this project?
  - Next phase of this is to organize three workshops for local government planners throughout the watershed, project is just starting. Targeting networks of local government planners rather than individuals
- Steve- Don't work with local officials in a professional capacity, workgroup identified a disconnect between who the local folks are, need to make sure we're connected.
  - Things get lost in translation. The local action cohort has been focusing on putting together the pathways of communication.
- Scott- Is there a way for us to focus on lagging outcomes through our messaging to local governments? Those things that are falling behind also benefit your communities, a way to prioritize.
  - Kristin- Scott, that is a really great thought to bring forward in the July Management Board meeting - because when we focus on forest buffers and wetlands and what to do to accelerate them, we also need to talk about the messages, including to locals. Don't lose the idea!
  - Workgroup is too small to make progress on 31 messages to local governments all at ones so using "themed" meetings focusing on tree canopy, DEIJ, climate resilience. Land use will be in November.
- Anne- keep looking for ways to bring this down to places- bring spatial planning resources to them. Some have tools and resources, some don't. Location and context matter. Need to have environmental priorities as part of their solutions.
  - Scott- We could build out aspects of the Watershed Data Dashboard to include more spatial data/tools to reach additional partners.
- Rebecca- I am sure you have thought about a plan for keeping the module information update. Who is responsible for that? For example, trees - FWG?
  - At this point the modules are very general so we hope they will be up to date for several years. The LLWG will be responsible for updating/adding as needed.
- Katie- To Scott (and others) - in thinking about adding local government perspective in geospatial prioritization efforts, my first suggestion would be to think if there are metrics/parameters than can be applied watershed-wide or if those layers would best be produced at a local scale with very intense engagement from stakeholders. Some of the mapping/prioritization efforts that you brought up from the Conservancy happen at the Chesapeake scale, while some are taken down to a more local level. I would just consider that question first -- at what scale does that addition make the most sense.
  - Scott- Scale is really a tough issue because depending on the decision maker, the scale will vary. Some federal agencies are making basin-side decisions so they can don't need a really fine scale. On the other hand, local governments and NGOs want the scale at the parcel level for decisions. A tool where a user can zoom in and out would be helpful to multiple users.

Rising Water Temperatures STAC Workshop Updates – Nora Jackson, CRC

Nora reviewed the background and overall goals of the workshop and shared the strategy and initial framework for the synthesizing existing information on watershed characteristics and rising water temperatures. Attendees provided input on discussion questions via Jamboard, what landscape factors make a watershed more vulnerable or resilient to stream temperature changes, and how can we can recognize signals of changes.

- Scott- For monitoring, we're trying to articulate, which of these characteristics would you need monitoring of change over time? which of these characteristics would you need monitoring over time?
- Steve- Scale is important, different variables are differently weighted. Risk and vulnerability may mean different things to different people, other disciplines, terminology can be a big issue. (defining is important!)
    - Not intended as a functional model, just a brainstorming exercise. Need to include definitions for risk and vulnerability.
- Anne- And how do we build capacity to engage spatial tools with social and infrastructure partners?
    - Scott- we could build out aspects of the Watershed Data Dashboard to include more spatial data/tools to reach additional partners.

Closing comments

The next HWGIT meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 9 where we will have a
- Healthy Watersheds adaptive management exercise for the 2021-2023 cycle
- EPA's Healthy Watershed Consortium Grant Program updates
- Tetra Tech on the Maryland Healthy Watersheds Assessment (October 2021)
- Begin to discuss how we can utilize the Healthy Watersheds Assessment framework to communicate and indicate progress on our outcome on Chesapeake Progress.