



Scientific, Technical Assessment and Reporting (STAR) Meeting Minutes

June 28, 2012 10am – 2pm
Chesapeake Bay Program Office, Joe Macknis Memorial
Conference Room (Fish Shack)
Annapolis, MD

<http://www.chesapeakebay.net/calendar/event/18388/>

Participants:

Bill Dennison – UMCES	Mark Bennett – USGS	Peter Tango – USGS/CBPO	Lisa Hernandez – UMCES/CBPO
Adam Davis – CRC/Fisheries GIT	Scott Phillips – USGS	Sean Corson – NOAA	Jacqueline Johnson – ICPRB
Nita Sylvester – EPA/CBPO	John Wolf – USGS	Mike Fritz – GIT 4	Mike Land – NPS
Jennifer Greiner – USFWS	Lewis Linker – EPA/CBPO	Doug Stang – NYSDEC/EBTJV	Bruce Vogt – NOAA
Kevin Sellner – CRC	Megan Thyne – EPA/CBPO	Katherine Antos – EPA/CBPO	Carin Bisland – EPA/CBPO
Bruce Michal – MD DNR	Greg Allen – EPA	Scott Schill – CRC/GIT 6	Molly Harrington – CRC/WQ GIT
Tim Wilke – CRC/GIT 6	Emilie Franke – NOAA Intern	Hali Kerr – NOAA Intern	Amanda Pruzinsky – CRC/STAR Staffer

Action Items

- Next STAR meeting is Thursday July 26th, 2012 10am – 2pm in the Joe Macknis Memorial Conference Room (Fish Shack) Main topic: Human Health
- Toxic Contaminants Report – Scott Phillips distributed (via email) the draft outline for the report *Extent and Seriousness of Toxic Contaminants in the Chesapeake Bay and its Watershed*
Requested feedback to Scott July 12th
Requested to work with the GITs to create a plan to complete this report
- August 2nd, 2012 Management Board Meeting
 - GIT Goals – Carin Bisland distributed the current list of goals and evaluating questions and requested suggestions. The GITs and STAR are working on their presentations for the MB meeting.
 - Harris Creek – Bruce Vogt has distributed an email for this action item: “Review and provide input on Draft Management Board presentation illustrating Cross-GIT opportunities in Harris Creek.” The Sustainable Fisheries GIT will present their work from Harris Creek to the MB and proposal for coordination across goals teams. Input should be sent to Bruce.
- Brook trout – Formed a team to work on brook trout restoration tracking indicator recommendations (more information below). The timeline for this project is a year with initial recommendations in Fall-Winter.
- STAR Workgroups will work on the indicator questions/concerns raised by MB member during the 4/11/12 conference call (more information below).

Minutes

Welcome – STAR Chair Bill Dennison (UMCES), Vice Chair Mark Bennett (USGS), Coordinator Peter Tango (USGS)

Updates:

- Scott Phillips – Toxic Contaminants Report Draft in July
Scott distributed (via email) the draft outline for this report and requested feedback by July 12th
- Carin Bisland – The GITs are to present their goals at the August 2nd Management Board Meeting – Carin presented the current list of goals (more information below)
- Bruce Vogt – The Sustainable Fisheries GIT will be presenting their work at Harris Creek and the suggestions for collaboration among other GITs at the Management Board Meeting on August 2nd
- Bill Dennison – Moderate water quality and hopeful!

Possible Topics for future STAR meetings:

Delmarva Groundwater
Intervention Case Studies
Storm Effects
Report Card Analysis
Toxins
Lessons Learned

Brook Trout restoration tracking indicator – Doug Stang (NYSDEC/EBTJV) and Jennifer Greiner (USFWS)

Doug gave a presentation about the efforts being done for the restoration of brook trout populations and supporting habitats, specifically identifying measures of success via efforts of the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture (EBTJV) – a recognized Fish Habitat Partnership. He discussed the importance of scales and patch metrics and the difference that it will cause in measuring success and targets. Doug and Jennifer requested an ad hoc team be developed for recommendations on tracking and reporting recovery indicators. They would like the team to focus on a recovery indicator that has an appropriate scale, is cost effective, detects meaningful change, and allows for project-based accountability of actions.

For more information the presentation is available at
http://www.chesapeakebay.net/channel_files/18388/doug_stang_-_june_28th_presentation_-_brook_trout.pdf

Discussion:

- Question – What are the major threats to brook trout populations? Habitat loss and reduced aquatic habitat connectivity. Some habitats have reduced (or no) capacity to sustain brook trout; others that are occupied are degraded and suffer from a lack of connectedness to other habitats needed for long-term sustainability. There is a need to develop a different set of measures for tracking success that includes occupancy, presence of suitable habitats, and connectivity of suitable aquatic habitats.
- The Main Healthy Watersheds GIT shares interest in protecting the streams that brook trout inhabit. Formerly, they have worked on health characterization and threat characterization and agreed to work closely on this project.
- Doug explained that the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture Science and Data Committee is open and welcome to individuals that would like to become involved.

- The timeline for this is a year with initial recommendations in Fall-Winter.
- STAR requested a list of priority areas in order to relate groups and goals of other organizations and CBP.
- A task group will be formed under STAR to draft recommendations by December 2012, with representation as follows:
 - Peter Tango
 - Katie Foreman
 - Nita Sylvester
 - Scott Stranko
 - Protect & Restore Vital Habitats GIT rep (Doug Stang)
 - EBTJV Science and Data committee rep (TBD)
 - Maintain Healthy Watersheds rep (Mike will check)
 - Sustainable Fisheries rep (Bruce said he would gauge interest)
 - Forestry Workgroup rep (Sally will check)
- Questions: Who is the lead for planning this workshop and pulling together the Steering Committee?
TBD

Streams Workshop 2013 – Jennifer Greiner (USFWS)

Request for Streams Workshop and a product developed for CBP Restoration Guidance. Jennifer discussed possible topics and draft outcomes for the proposed workshop, tentatively called “Call the Plumber: Fixing the Chesapeake’s Streams.” Proposed sponsors: STAR, Vital Habitats GIT, Healthy Watersheds GIT.

Possible Topics:

Stream Functions Pyramid as framework for effective project planning

Habitat value: Targeting Brook Trout Restoration in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed – Mary Hudy

Water Quality value: Stream Restoration as a BMP in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed – Tom Shuler

Stream Health Index – Going Beyond Benthic (floodplain connectivity, bank stability)

Climate Impacts on Streams and Aquatic Organisms

Draft Outcomes:

- 1) **Planning:** Work with Bay Program partners to identify factors for ranking stream restoration and protection projects within the Bay watershed (consider Stream Functions Pyramid, Fish Passage Prioritization tool, Aquatic Habitat Prioritization group, Healthy Watersheds, Land/Water interface work of GIT 1, etc.)
- 2) **Design:** Develop and Discuss ways to provide local partners with clear guidance to protect streams from impacts during: a) construction; b) structure maintenance and repair; c) storm water management activities; d) stream restoration activities; e) stream mitigation.
- 3) **Delivery:** Strengthen Partnerships for Stream Restoration and Protection by determining complementary roles of CBP GITs and partners, aligning priorities and leveraging funding.

Discussion:

- Mid-January 2013 timeframe is suggested for the workshop.
- Add “Reporting and Monitoring” and “Information Sharing” to the outcomes
- Recommended “Scoping” workshop first in order to narrow the questions down and support a more robust second workshop.
- Tom Schuler may be willing to make a presentation on the BMP Technical Panel
- Work to draw from: The VA program INSTAR, Margaret Palmer's review of stream restoration, Lisa/Katie's report on "Lessons Learned on BMPs" (not due until end of calendar year)
- If this workshop turns into a two day event, it was recommended that STAC hosts it
- STAR will work with GITs 2 and 4 to host phase one (scoping issues/info exchange) of a possible two-phased workshop on stream restoration planning, design, implementation, and monitoring.
- Suggested steering committee members:
 - Jeff Horan
 - Tom Schueler (?)
 - Kevin Sellner
 - Greg Garmin
 - NFWF rep
 - EPA Region
 - 3 rep EPA HQ rep – Possibly from the Healthy Watersheds Initiative - TBD
- Questions: Who is the lead for planning this workshop and pulling together the Steering Committee?
TBD

Approach to Assessing and Communicating Progress toward Water-Quality Standards and Thresholds – Scott Phillips (USGS)

Request for a STAR Synthesis effort for an Integrated Approach to Assessing and Communicating Progress toward Water-Quality Standards and Thresholds. He went over many aspects including the current information we have, 2-year milestones, reporting of BMPs, trends in nutrients and sediments, new techniques, tidal enhancements, and lag times. He then discussed communication of the water-quality story including what information can be provided now and opportunities that are in our future. He discussed planned improvements for integrated reporting including the decision framework, expanded watershed monitoring and trends in loads, the STAC “Lag times” workshop, the STAR “Lessons learned” report, and monitoring and attainment of standards. Lastly, he went over the PSC decisions and next steps.

For more information the presentation is available at
[http://www.chesapeakebay.net/channel_files/18388/scott_phillips - star_june 28th presentation - assessing_water-quality_progress.pdf](http://www.chesapeakebay.net/channel_files/18388/scott_phillips_-_star_june_28th_presentation_-_assessing_water-quality_progress.pdf)

Discussion:

- For our current water-quality standards, we must effectively communicate the difference between threshold and water quality specifically for our assessment of clarity and chl-a.
- Lessons learned – What we have seen from management actions and what we expect to see in water quality responses?

- Communicate lag time and the expected short term improvements.
- Include atmospheric deposition in the story lines. There have been significant reductions in this dimension of loading.
- Communicate the truth about the challenges, but also the improvements (hope w/out sugar coating)
- It was suggested that some of the data be broken into sections instead of presenting the entire Bay in order to demonstrate areas that are making progress

Health and Restoration Indicators – 5 Quick Questions of Responsibilities and Review – Nita Sylvester (USEPA)

Nita Sylvester led the decision in understanding STARs role in addressing several CBP indicator questions. As a result of indicators-related information presented to the CBP Management Board (MB) for their 4/11/12 conference call and the questions/concerns raised by MB member during the discussion, a list of items required a follow-up by STAR.

1. Tidal Workgroup: In addition to looking into the continued utility of the current phytoplankton indicator (per concerns raised by Jackie Johnson), ask them to determine if the removal of that indicator in the current Habitats and Lower Food Web category of the indicators framework (within the larger "Bay Health" category) will create a gap that needs to be filled or if reporting only on SAV and bottom habitat (B-IBI) is sufficient for that category.
 - Tidal Workgroup will work on addressing this question.
2. STAR (not sure which workgroup; may need to work in conjunction with the Habitat GIT): determine the feasibility of being able to continue to update the tidal wetlands abundance indicator.
 - Wetlands Workgroup will present this questions to the states
 - NOAA and Peter Claggett are going to help with the recommendations to the Wetlands Workgroup
 - Question – Is there a replacement for this indicator? To be determined.
3. STAR (Peter Claggett will need to work in conjunction with the Forestry Workgroup): review the new data for the forest cover indicator
 - STAR - Agreed to work on this
4. STAR (not sure which workgroup - perhaps tidal workgroup): determine feasibility of developing a new indicator for tidal water temperature to pair with the river flow indicator in the "natural factors" category of the indicators framework (within the larger "Factors Impacting Health" category).
 - Tidal and Non-tidal Workgroups
5. STAR (not sure which workgroup - perhaps non-tidal): determine if it the current mix of indicators in the "Watershed Health" and the "Factors Impacting Health" categories are sufficient.
 - Watershed GIT and Non-Tidal Workgroup

For more information about the MB meeting and the indicator overview is available at http://www.chesapeakebay.net/channel_files/18388/nita_sylvester_-_health_and_restoration_indicators.pdf

Review of the GIT Goals list – Staffer/Coordinator Meeting integration with STAR (Carin Bisland et al.)

Management Board (MB) about the goals that the GITs are working on. The GITs have been working hard to organize and evaluate their goals in order to make their presentations to the MB effective. Carin went over the GITs goals and the evaluating questions that they have come up with so far and asked for input.

Suggestions:

- Use explanatory language
- Look at other literature about creating effective goals (don't reinvent the wheel) – One specific suggestion was “Smart Goal Evaluation Statement”
- Hierarchy – Make it clear what the GITs' primary goal is
- Focus on the GITs instead of the WGs
- Make sure the goal teams include interests of all jurisdictions and remind the MB of partners that are not present at the meeting. Also, explain that although the Executive Order is federal we are still interested in these goals on a smaller scale.
- Combine evaluating questions 2 and 3
- The evaluating questions should be used to help the MB focus their questions (the MB should not be answering these questions for each GIT)
- Should include details to the evaluating questions
- Overall Structure on the GIT Presentations at the MB Meeting
 - Provide evaluating questions with details
 - Presentation by each GIT
 - Clarifications?
 - Heartburn?
 - Need feedback?
 - Gaps?
- Obtain a point of contact between meetings for feedback and track-ability