Communicating Chesapeake Bay science and management

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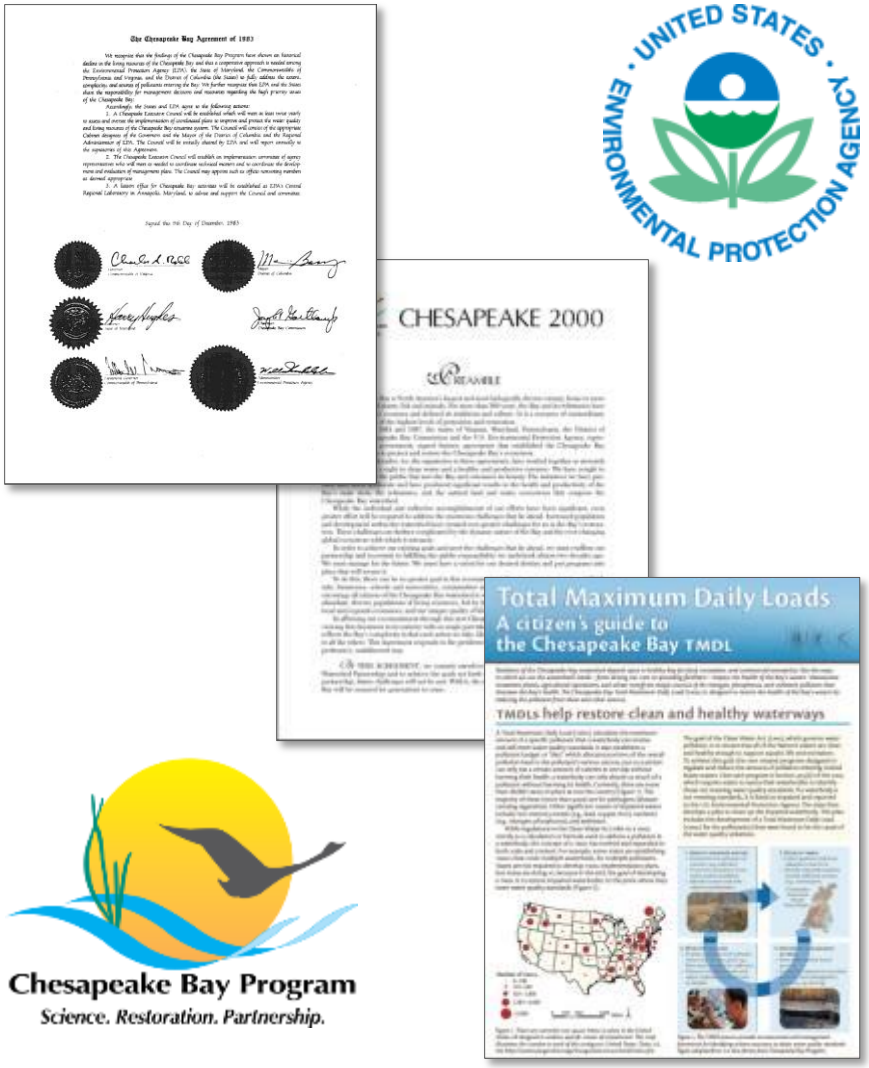
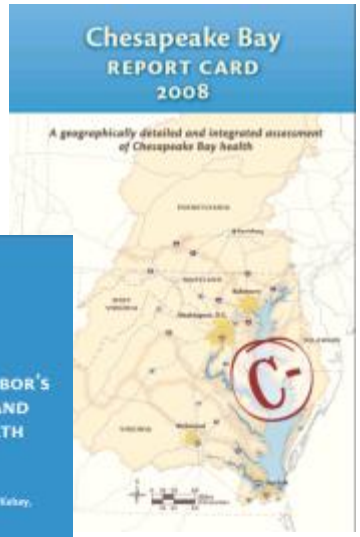
Chesapeake Bay is one of the most studied and managed estuaries

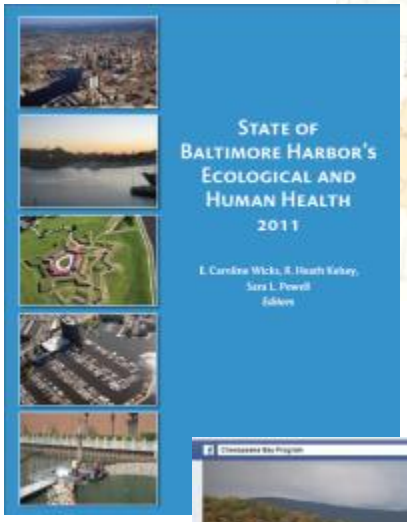
- Clean Water Act = 1972
- Chesapeake Bay Commission created = 1980
- 1st Chesapeake Agreement = 1983
  - Several updates to agreement including 2014
- U.S. EPA Chesapeake Total Maximum Daily Load = 2010
  - Watershed Implementation Plans = 2012



Communication strategy evolved with the science

- 1970s – Basic research
- 1980s – More and more data
- 1990s – More and more data, more and more management
- 2000s – Synthesis and integration
- 2010s – One-way and two-way communication (Web, social media)





What is a communication strategy?

- *Strategic communications helps an organization share a clearly defined message with everyone involved with that organization -- internally and externally. It is an intentional process that looks at what each audience within the group needs to hear from you.*

1. Define your message

Save the Bay!

2. Analyze your target audiences

3. Define your goal(s)

4. Explore outlets (print, web)

5. Create a time frame

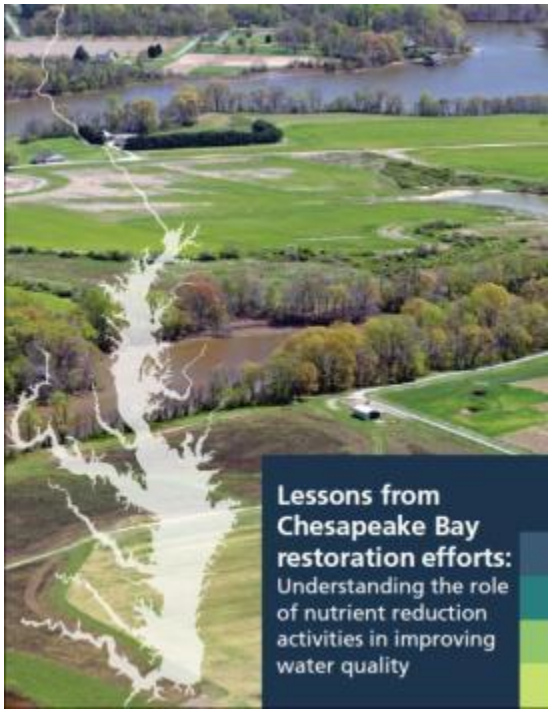
6. Identify ways for feedback

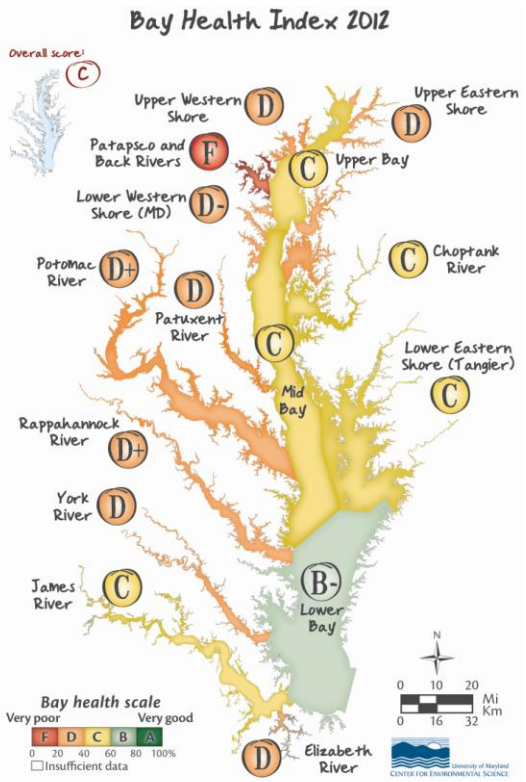
7. Get approval

8. Implement strategy

Examples of different communication strategies

- Strategic plan
- Product drives the process
- Products driven by management needs

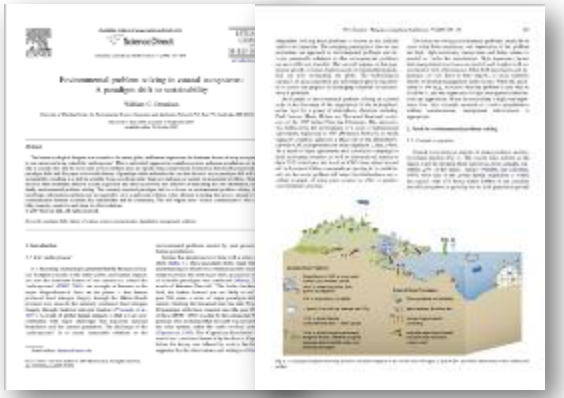




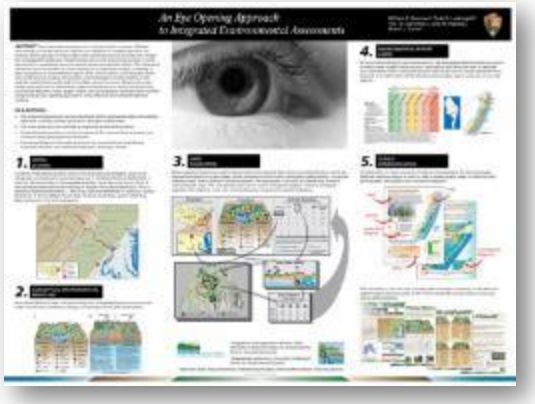
Developing a variety of communication products

Newsletters

Science Journals

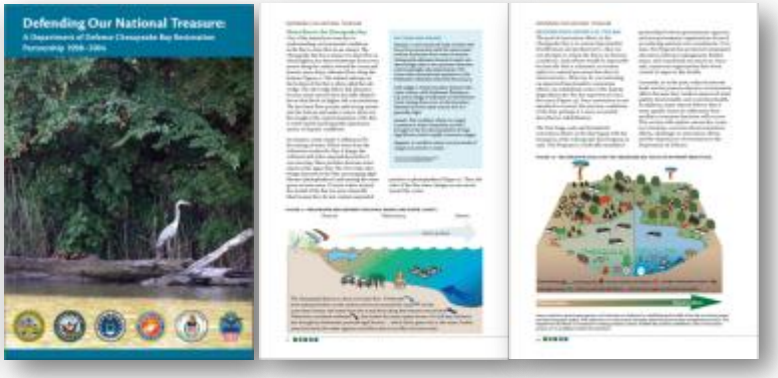


Posters



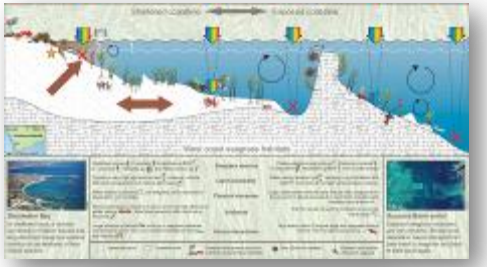
Reports

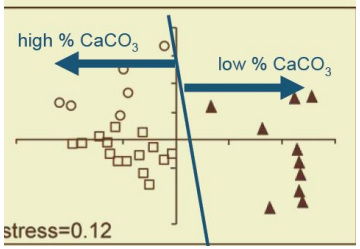
Books



Visual elements for communication

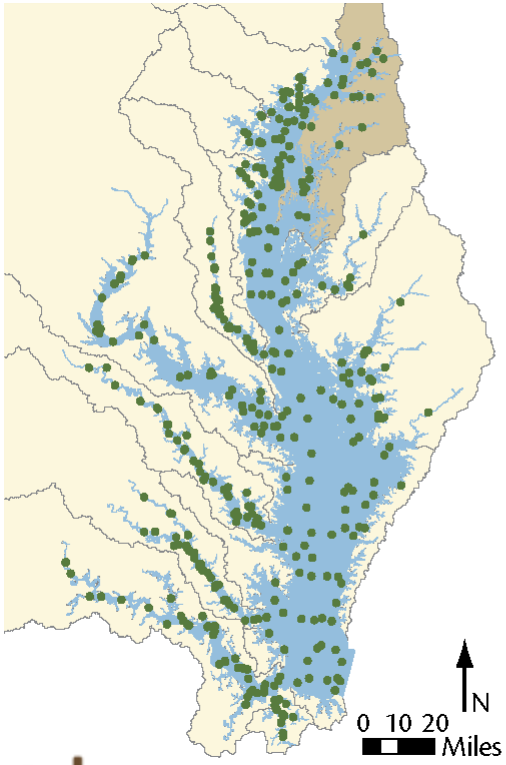
- Conceptual diagrams for context and synthesis
- Maps for geographic context
- Photos that describe methods, study sites, processes and relevance
- Video clips that capture complex system dynamics and processes
- Tables and figures for scientific data

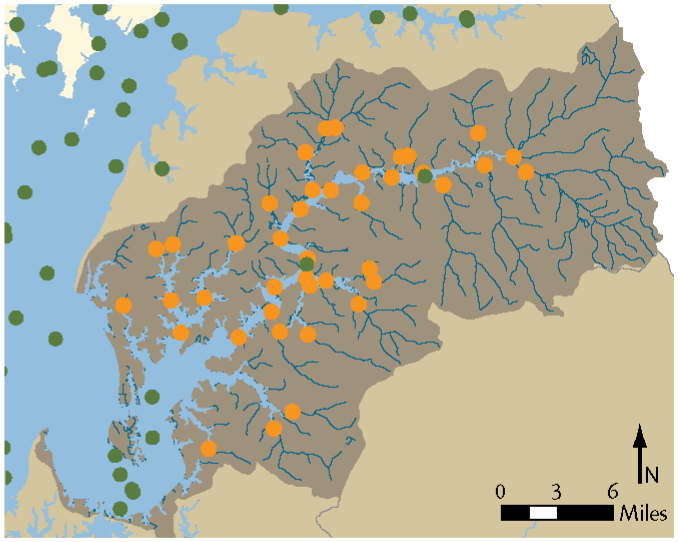




Challenges of a multi-state, multi-partnership communication strategy

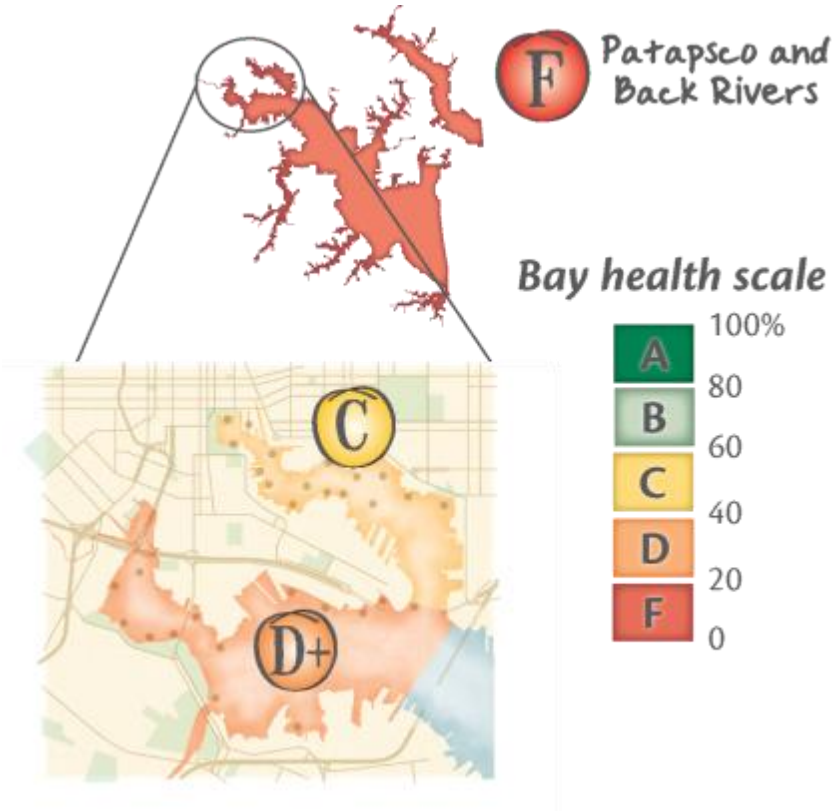
- Data synthesis
  - So much data
  - Variety of temporal and spatial scales





Challenges of a multi-state, multi-partnership communication strategy

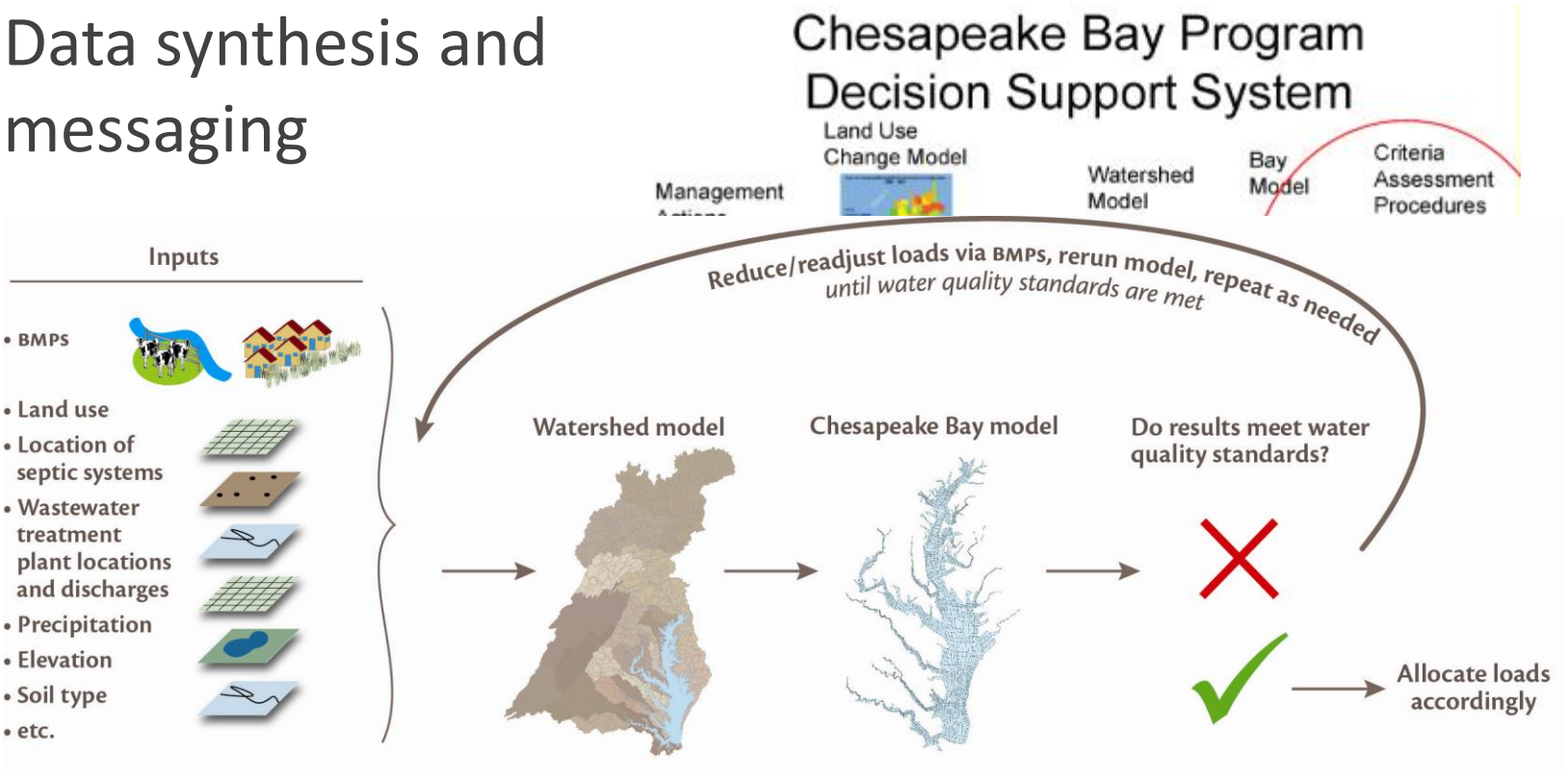
- Messaging
  - Conflicting messages
    - Sometimes inaccurate/confusing messages being received
    - Information not always presented in a timely fashion
    - Information generally relates to the 'whole bay'. Not enough information about local waterways
  - Regulation vs management
  - Science is complex
  - Report card fatigue




Hamilton Leads Els by One in British Open
The Washington Post
Bay Pollution Progress Overstated

Challenges of a multi-state, multi-partnership communication strategy

- Data synthesis and messaging



Final thoughts

- As science evolves, so does the communication strategy that connects it to the public
- The current strategy is constantly under revision
- Part of the adaptive management cycle
- Next big technological advancement for environmental science or communications?

If you look at the various strategies available for dealing with a new technology, sticking your head in the sand is not the most plausible strategy.

--Ralph Merkle

Acknowledgements

- UMCES
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- US Geological Survey
- Virginia Institute of Marine Science
- Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
- Old Dominion University
- Mid-Atlantic Tributary Coalition (Riverkeepers, watershed organizations, etc.)