



Communications Workgroup Monthly Call Minutes

April 4, 2018

Participants

Catherine Krikstan, UMCES-CBP (Chair)
Deb Klenotic, PA DEP (Vice Chair)
Rachel Felver, ACB-CBP (Coordinator)
Rebecca Chillrud, CRC-CBP (Staff)
Jenni Beard, UMD
Gregg Bortz, MD DNR
Kim Couranz, NOAA-Fisheries GIT
Michelle DiNicola, PA DEP
Alexandra Fries, UMCES/IAN
Kelley Galownia, VCN
Caitlyn Johnstone, ACB-CBP
Chris Klarich, Delaware Nature Society

Phil Miller, DNREC
Will Parson, ACB-CBP
Shannon Powers, PA Ag
Kristin Reilly, CCWC
Kristin Saunders, UMCES-CBP
Joan Smedinghoff, ACB-CBP
Darius Stanton, CRC-Diversity WG
Taylor Stark, CCWC
Jennifer Starr, ACB-LGAC
Guy Stephens, UMCES-CBP
Chad Thompson WV DEP

I. Welcome

II. Campaign Debrief: Choose Clean Water Coalition Lobby Day

- Choose Clean Water is a coalition of 239 nonprofit groups across the watershed. Each year they organize a Chesapeake Bay Day on Capitol Hill and try to organize meetings with all members of Congress in the watershed
- This year the lobby day was March 21st, which was the big snow day
- Lessons learned from our January retreat on approaching the press:
 - Sending a short snippet providing highlights in the body of emails rather than copying in the entire press release makes the press more likely to read it
 - Media advisories were sent out multiple times before the event, beginning two weeks beforehand. Provided consistent updates with the members of Congress who were planning to attend
 - Sent a dropbox full of images and videos from the event- this was particularly helpful for press that couldn't attend because of the weather
 - Did a pre-event interview with Maryland public news service
- Provided CCW members with a comm toolkit that provided suggested tweets/facebook posts/images so those who couldn't attend could still show support
- Had lots of interaction on twitter with the members of Congress who attended the lunch: many responded, retweeted, and made their own comments. Taking pictures of members with their constituents is a great way to get interaction from them
- Challenges:
 - The weather proved to be an issue. Many members closed their offices, so they had around 20-25 meetings instead of the scheduled 46, and press was reluctant to show
 - Omnibus bill passed the next day, which overshadowed any press from this event

III. Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week ([Presentation](#))

- Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week (CBAW) was designated in 2016 by the Chesapeake Bay Commission; initially included Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia
- This year will be the third CBAW, falls the week of June 2-10
- Previous years:
 - 2016: event was hosted by Chesapeake Bay Commission
 - 2017: events were hosted on Virginia Conservation Network Website, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay hosted a big event- back to the Bay day
- Goal: work on building support and consistent branding going forward
- For this year, we need:
 - Coordinators for each state/jurisdiction
 - A website to host events- ideally will be hosted on a watershed-wide website
 - Overall theme- One Chesapeake, puzzle pieces coming together to form the Chesapeake watershed
 - Shared messages- focus on a different jurisdiction or river basin each day of the week
- PA DEP is planning to have a Chesapeake Bay watershed event every day of CBAW and will be working to get senior staff to attend. Only concern- if we do a daily theme, events planned in advance may not fit those themes
- VCN is willing to host the events calendar again if we can't find a watershed-wide group to do so
- Choose Clean Water will commit to providing toolkit materials for social media posts and will work with their state leads to find facts to highlight about each state
- Delaware is working on increasing the number of volunteers engaging in clean water activities, would be interested in partnering around that
- VCN will send this out to their water list serve and other interested parties. Don't have the capacity to create their own event, but will ask partners to host and will help to promote
- **ACTION:** We will convene a smaller meeting of interested parties to discuss further: Caitlyn Johnstone, Joan Smedinghoff, Deb Klenotic, Kelley Galownia, Kristin Reilly, Chris Klarich. Please reach out to me if you are not on this list but would like to be involved!

IV. Messaging the Midpoint Assessment

- The date for the release of the Midpoint Assessment is still up in the air- sometime in late May/early June
- There will be a press release, media call and fact sheets, which will have EPA's results of their evaluation
- We want to make sure we're not providing numbers without context or background. We want to showcase the partnership, tell the story of the work jurisdictions are doing, and discuss plans for the next phase of the WIPs. **ACTION:** Rachel will be reaching out to each jurisdiction's contacts to discuss this context/background/story section
- Messaging challenge: the evaluation is based on the current model, but a new model that came out in the past few months will be used going forward for evaluations. How do we explain this and how this may alter some evaluations going forward? Want to make it clear that the model is based on input from the CBP partnership and info from jurisdictions and local governments, not just the EPA
- Choose Clean Water Coalition will be creating a response plan to the Midpoint Assessment through their TMDL workgroup. Anticipate having a tailored, state-by-state response. Coalition members are focused and interested on the MPA results, will want to know specifics. Providing these numbers and resources to the NGO community will allow them to better help and respond

V. Wild and Scenic Rivers Act ([Presentation](#))

- This year is the 50th anniversary of the Wild and Scenic River Act. Unfortunately, there aren't any Wild and Scenic Rivers within the watershed. One of our workgroup members wondered why that's the case and what the process for designating a Wild and Scenic River would entail
- The most common process is Congressional designation, where Congress authorizes a study and can then choose whether or not to designate based on the findings of the study. Getting Congress to authorize this study involves significant advocacy/lobbying, which many of our workgroup members can't participate in. Habitat GIT can't advocate but would be interested in providing facts/info to any advocacy group that is interested in pursuing designation
- Is this something advocacy members are interested in, or do they know of any current efforts by groups to designate?
 - Kelley: Rappahannock has lots of attention, press coverage, and supporters. Friends of the Rappahannock could potentially be interested.
 - MD has scenic and wild river system in state, but hasn't heard of any current efforts to get designation at federal level
- Kristin Saunders has worked on designation processes in the past: lot of work and time involved. Designating the Harriet Tubman park, which they thought was straightforward, took 15 years. Also, Congress is currently shying away from new designations because of landowner perception that the designation increases federal oversight. Maybe if we're interested, we can have someone come speak to our workgroup from the Wild and Scenic agency.
- Maybe to celebrate the anniversary, we can highlight the rivers within the watershed that are designated at the state level. This could be included for Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week
- Kristin Reilly will discuss with CCW workgroup to see if it's something any members are working on or would be interested in

VI. Update on Workgroup Goals and Concerns for Management Board ([Presentation](#))

- Rachel and Deb will be presenting to the Management Board on the communications workgroup and some of the challenges that we're facing. Many of these challenges are common across CBP workgroups and GITs
- Main challenges:
 - Mission: we're tasked with support to the Bay Program Office and external partners, but don't have the capacity to serve both. We don't often get requests for support from internal or external partners
 - Membership: we haven't been able to get members from all partner agencies and organizations, haven't always been able to get communications professionals, and don't always get consistent attendance
 - Partnership role: our relationship to the Management Board and the GITs is somewhat unclear. Publications are often released without going to the Comm WG or only coming to us at the very end
 - Resources: members have limited resources to contribute to the workgroup and we are ineligible to receive GIT funding
- Needs:
 - Clearly defined mission supported by the workgroup
 - More of the right people at the table and consistent attendance
 - Clear role within Chesapeake Bay Program's organizational structure
 - Additional resources to support comm products and projects
- Top need is our mission, and finding a clear mission that works for our members and the Management Board
- We would like to act as more of an advisory committee. Advisory committee members from the jurisdictions are appointed by governors, which could potentially get us the missing people at the table

VII. Call for Retreat Planning Committee Volunteers

- Next retreat is in July! We need volunteers to help plan this retreat. Tentatively in PA
- Volunteers: Margot, Joan, Deb, Catherine, Rachel, Rebecca
- **ACTION**: We would love to get more volunteers that weren't involved last time! Please email me if you are interested. This is not a very time-intensive process

VIII. Open Discussion

- PA DEP is holding environmental excellence awards on the 24th
- Will has a new video out on oyster restoration and one on fish passage, which will come out with the updated fish passage indicators. World Fish Migration day is coming up April 21
- MDNR will be announcing SAV report before end of the month, as well as winter crab dredge results

Next meeting: Wednesday, May 2, 2018 | 1 to 2:30 p.m.

- Campaign Debrief: List-building (Kristin Reilly)
- GIT Project Update from the Diversity Workgroup; Enhancing Partnering, Leadership and Management Goal Team; and Maintain Healthy Watersheds Goal Team
- Expedition Chesapeake