

CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM LAND USE WORKGROUP

Meeting Minutes

February 3rd, 2021 | 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Meeting Materials: [link](#)

This meeting was recorded for internal use to ensure the accuracy of the meeting minutes

Summary of Actions and Decisions

Decision: LUWG approved the January meeting minutes.

Action Requested: The LUWG asked for feedback on the highlights and “asks” of the Management Board.

- Email Peter Claggett (pclagget@chesapeakebay.net) with ideas on how to communicate data to localities. At next LUWG meeting he will go over this information.
- KC suggested considering looking at what tools exist now and what people are using and build off the existing tools instead of building new ones.
- Renee has a draft list of [reports, websites and tools](#) that she started last August, and she will share that with Peter as a starting list.

Meeting Minutes

1:00 Welcome, Roll Call, Review of meeting minutes, Action Item Update – KC Filippino, Hampton Roads Planning District Commission

Decision: LUWG approved the January meeting minutes.

1:05 Update on High-resolution Land Cover and Hydrography Production – Rachel Soobitsky, Chesapeake Conservancy
Rachel provided a brief update on the production and review status of the high-resolution land cover and hydrography data.

Discussion Summary:

Lisa Beatty from PA DEP will give Rachel their regional contacts today. Peter Claggett suggested that it would be useful to get the bank height information just to see how the two data sets relate to one another. We would need the original raster data to do the comparison. KC asked if the missing LiDAR data from the Middle Peninsula in VA has been found, but Rachel said she hasn't heard anything as to whether they had found the data. PA asked if they had received all of the LiDAR data requested in January and CC confirmed that they had received it.

1:15 Evaluating Solar Field Land Use Characteristics in the Field – Mark Dubin, University of Maryland Extension

Mark provided an introduction to the field campaign he's initiated to evaluate the land use characteristics and context of solar fields in Maryland.

Discussion Summary:

For interior land management the pervious/ impervious refers to solar panels that were placed on sites that used to be a different use (parking lot etc.). This represents about 1% of the sample size (13 sites

altogether). Mark clarified that the percentages were based on the samples observed so far, not the total number of solar fields and it is not based on acreage.

- Lee Epstein asked if there were any examples of any active animal agriculture or tall grass management under some of the panels. There wasn't any ag occurring under the panels at this time but there is a set of panels located in between two boiler houses. Even though the panels are in the poultry yard, it's not an active production system.
- Was there an evaluation of what prior land use was? When out on site we are looking at the land use adjacent to the solar panels. Frequently they are crop fields that were converted. We do see situations where they were removed from ag production previously (wastewater treatment, school grounds, etc.).
- Sally Claggett inquired if letting grass grow tall to create pollinator habitat was intentional. The sites with tall grass are basically sage grass, and there wasn't evidence that it was used for pollinators. It's there to prevent succession of trees and shrubs shading the panels. Additionally, you see variations in mowing based on location of the panel.
- How precipitation runoff the pervious and impervious sites? We saw situations where they were using a panel system with gaps between panel segments which would allow for water to run in between. Thus far we haven't seen any erosion rills from the panels. These panels normally have a low slope, but in areas with more slope you might see more erosion.

There will be more robust data sets that will span MD. It would be interesting to know if there are any other states attempting something similar to this survey. VA is getting more permits for solar panels on a regular basis. If there are any other analysis out there, please share. Lee Epstein mentioned VA is clearing forests to install large solar sites. Additionally, VA has some state point data on solar panels but it's just rudimentary information. The CC has built this AI to identify solar fields but need to run QA/QC first to make it more accurate. Rachel is going to send Mark Dubin there data up to 2021.

Sally asked if there is any loading associated with solar fields. Peter said this is why Mark is doing this work because we want to know how to roll up the solar fields they map and start tracking them. We could be doing CAST runs for counties who are removing forests and replacing them with solar. Right now, it's being mapped as impervious or cropland/ turf grass for pervious. We are not informing any decisions for future. Peter said this is for CAST 2021.

Mark will have completed the survey by the end of the month, weather depending. When asking for consensus from WQGIT, approval on how to roll up solar fields will be included. Rachel said that from visually inspecting AI output across the bay, she sees a lot of Agriculture fields converting to solar fields, more than deforestation.

1:30 Status and Review of Land Use for 14 Prototype Counties – Peter Claggett, USGS
Peter provided an update on the status and review process for the 2017 land use data under development for 14 Prototype Counties.

Discussion Summary:

The 14 counties are not complete for this meeting because of a few issues:

1. The segments provided by UVM did not line up.
2. When we started, UVM did not think they would need to provide image segments.
3. UVM spent a lot of time fixing the alignment of these polygons.

The counties should all be done by February 12th to present to the AgWG on February 18th. If the data can be approved in March, then in late March/ early April, this can go before WQGIT for consensus.

Additionally, the 2013 land use data needs to be revised so people can review the change between 2013 and 2017 before this changes goes into CAST 2021.

Cassandra Davis had a lot of interest in the prototype for Chenango County and inquired if there will be a review period. Once the prototype is done, a link will be provided to the viewer so people can see the changes. However, in conjunction with other plans, we are not putting the land use data through a formal review process like the land cover data because the land use data is based on suite of rules for the whole watershed. Instead, people can provide comments and if similar issues keep appearing, then we are prepared to review the land use. LUWG and AGWG will approve the methodology that lead to the results in those 14 counties. Once that is done, we will apply it to all the counties Bay wide. We are not going to go back to all the counties and individually reviewing the land use. The tab and viewer will be posted ahead of time in February so we have time to review before the March meeting.

Dave Montali suggested summarizing the new 2017 data provided by Peter and comparing to the 2017 Progress data in CAST- 19 to see the big changes. According to Peter, this could and could not be helpful. CAST currently uses a true up process and that creates some dramatic changes in acres. You will see some stark difference between new 2017 land use acres and 2017 Progress in CAST 19. If there is a way to remove the true- up, then the land use in CAST will look more like what we are mapping for Ag and those changes will reflect the changes in CAST. Peter proposes that we first make the decision if 2017 is good and accurate regardless of CAST. Then LUWG can discuss doing away with the true- up process (Jeff Sweeney and/ or Olivia Devereux should do the CAST runs for this).

1:45 New Viewer for 2017 High-res Land Use and Land-Use Change Data – Rachel Soobitsky, Chesapeake Conservancy

Rachel provided an introduction to the new 2017 land use viewer, enabling CBP Partners to examine and compare the data with 2017 aerial imagery and the former 2013 high-res land use. In addition, Rachel provided a high-level overview of how the 2013 land use data will be revised so that it's comparable with the 2017 version.

Discussion Summary:

Rachel went through steps to using the Viewer. A link and password will be sent out to everyone once the Viewer is available. All the information will be sent in one email (tabular data, viewer link and password, instructions).

2:00 Update on the Land Use Methods and Metrics Outcome – Peter Claggett, USGS

Peter presented highlights on the Land Use Methods and Metrics Outcome before presenting them to the Management Board on February 11th.

Action Requested: The LUWG asked for feedback on the highlights and “asks” of the Management Board.

- Email Peter Claggett (pclagget@chesapeakebay.net) with ideas on how to communicate data to localities. At next LUWG meeting he will go over this information.
- KC suggested considering looking at what tools exist now and what people are using and build off the existing tools instead of building new ones.
- Renee has a draft list of [reports, websites and tools](#) that she started last August, and she will share that with Peter as a starting list.

Discussion Summary:

At the MB level there is a lot of interest in this SRS outcome. The big ask is to continue the monitoring we've been doing. Although it's expensive to extend the contract through 2030, a short record of data is not going to tell you what you need to know. The other big piece of the discussion is the communications piece. What is lacking from the current communications strategy?

Renee Thompson suggested that one issue is that we are creating this big umbrella of tools and information, but we need to figure out how to get this information to the groups that are going to use it and are most affected by this. What organizations are leaders or a champion on this issue? We don't have that back and forth to filter through what information is the most important.

- **VA:** they have been working more and more with local planning commissions. The biggest issue for them is whether it can be used and if it's a useful tool for the immediate needs for localities. What we do need is more action and not more tools.
- **DOEE:** the TMDL is a good selling point because you get everyone to listen. But it is good to expand because it is good for people to see how tools can be used in other areas. We need to take advantage of the time we have to flush out how those tools can be developed and used as part of the package.
- **PA:** A communication piece for someone who isn't a tech person would be helpful in promoting this to our local jurisdictions. For those who work closely with or for local governments, it would be helpful to know how to communicate this information in a way that resonates with those folks.
- **CBF:** the key to getting the public and local lawmakers to understanding this information. George Onyullo (DOEE) added that it is also important to focus on local drivers. For example, if you tied wetlands to flooding it would make a difference because flooding is the local driver.
- **NY:** Data accessibility is really important too and a great tool is the Data Dashboard. It is really helpful to continue to update dashboards. Renee Thompson (USGS) added that they are trying to work towards integrating more data and resources on the Data Dashboard.

Lisa Beatty asked to see any communication piece before it's sent to the public. Mark Symborski suggested that if you can tie the data to local needs of jurisdictions it would be the best way to utilize this information. For the producers of the data, it may be helpful to get more information on what the local needs and issues are. It would great to start compiling a list, so we know what to prioritize to be more strategic with how we communicate this information. George Onyullo suggested listing all the business cases and tie them to local issues, and it should be easy to look at the data. Another suggestion is to consider looking at what tools exist now and what people are using and build off the existing tools instead of building new ones.

2:30 Wrap-up/Upcoming Meeting Schedule – KC Filippino, Hampton Roads Planning District Commission

The March meeting will be key for evaluation of the 14 prototype counties and stay tuned for a potential date change in April to avoid conflicts with the Modeling WG.

2:45 Adjourn

Next conference call: March 3rd (1:00pm-4:00pm) - Land Use Workgroup Meeting.

Call Participants

Hilary Swartwood, CRC

KC Filippino, HRPDC
Karl Berger, MWCOG
Peter Claggett, USGS
Cassie Davis, NYSDEC
Lisa Beatty, PA DEP
Ted Tesler, PA DEP
Travis Stoe, PA DEP
Lori Brown, DNREC
Alana Hartman, WV DEP (second)
Dave Montali, Tetra Tech
Mindy Neil, WV DEP (lead)
Matt Gallagher, DOEE
Jason Keppler, MDA
Debra Sward, MDP
Nicole Christ, MDE
Shannon McKenrick, MDE
Rachel Soobitsky, CC
Jacob Czawlytko , CC
Lee Epstein, CBF
Sarah McDonald, USGS
Arianna Johns, VA DEQ
Norm Goulet, NVRC
Allie Wagner, NVRC
Mark Dubin, UMD
Renee Thompson, USGS
Katie Brownson, USFS
Sally Claggett, USFS
Mark Symborski, Montgomery County
George Onyullo, DOEE

Affiliation?

Gopal Bhatt
Tori Nelson
Pat McCabe