



## Communications Workgroup Monthly Call Minutes

June 6, 2018

### Participants

Catherine Krikstan, UMCES-CBP (Chair)  
Deb Klenotic, PA DEP (Vice Chair)  
Rachel Felver, ACB-CBP (Coordinator)  
Rebecca Chillrud, CRC-CBP (Staff)  
Jenny Beard, UMD  
Gregg Bortz, MDNR  
Irina Calos, VA DEQ  
Kim Couranz, NOAA-Fisheries GIT  
Cassandra Davis, NYS DEC  
Heather Dewar, USGS  
Adrienne Diaczok, MDE  
Michelle DiNicola, PA DEP  
Caroline Donovan, UMCES-IAN

Aaron Ferster, EPA  
Mary Gattis, ACB-LGAC  
Caitlyn Johnstone, ACB-CBP  
Phil Miller, DNREC  
Will Parson, ACB-CBP  
Shannon Powers, PA Ag  
Kristin Reilly, CCWC  
Matt Robinson, DC DOEE  
Kristin Saunders, UMCES-CBP  
Joan Smedinghoff, ACB-CBP  
Darius Stanton, CRC-Diversity WG  
Chad Thompson, WV DEP

### Calendar

To find holidays, conferences, community outreach events and communications initiatives, please visit (and add to!) our Communications Workgroup Google Calendar: <http://bit.ly/2F3RhWX>

### Meeting Materials

To find meeting agenda, minutes, presentations and other meeting materials, please visit our Communications Workgroup meeting webpage: <https://bit.ly/2lZ7a2O>

#### I. Welcome

#### II. Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week Update

- The event has been getting a lot of pickup on social media. More than 90 organizations and elected officials posted CBAW related content.
- Pennsylvania used our google drive of social media posts; map graphics for the regions; images from the google drive
- Delaware participated in a Choose Clean Water Coalition CBAW event; is creating a new photo contest around CBAW (will share winning photo with the workgroup); will be participating in Nanticoke wade-in
- Kristin Saunders: USACE has asked watershed states to choose priority regions/focus areas that could provide ideas for next year's CBAW

#### III. Communications Workgroup Retreat Update

- Retreat will be July 25<sup>th</sup> from 9:30-3:00 at the PA Fish and Boat Commission office in Harrisburg, Pa.

- Kacey Wetzel from the Bay Trust will be leading a training on social marketing and behavior change as it relates to communications
- In the afternoon, we will apply that training to Bay Program projects
  - SAV workgroup wants to target waterfront landowners to understand the benefits of SAV
  - Toxic Contaminants/Diversity workgroups have created a fish consumption advisory that they hope to get out so it will be most effective
- Meeting invite and draft agenda have been sent out. Please respond to the RSVP form by July 20.

#### IV. Chesapeake Bay Program Update

- CBP is currently in the midst of the Bay TMDL Mid-Point Assessment, or the evaluation of the two-year EPA milestones. Here are the upcoming meetings/releases that may be relevant to workgroup members:
- July 9<sup>th</sup>: PSC meeting at WashCOG building in DC
- August 7<sup>th</sup>: EC meeting in Baltimore. Will be bringing forth a directive on agricultural technical assistance;
- EPA plans to release final WIP expectations around June 15<sup>th</sup>
- EPA milestone evaluations/Mid-Point Assessment: no date yet; likely prior to July 31
- Reducing Pollution Indicator: two weeks prior to milestone evaluations/Mid-Point Assessment.
- Other press releases: State of environmental education; CBSAC blue crab abundance; oyster restoration; CBP/LGAC release on Army Corps plan will be sent specifically to municipal/state level associations

#### V. Communications Workgroup Improvements ([Presentation](#))

- Previously, we have spoken to GIT 6 and the Management Board about some of the challenges we face as a workgroup: having a clear role within the Bay Program; a clear mission that is supported by workgroup members; a strong membership base and consistent engagement; and additional resources
- From Management Board meeting: they confirmed our role in the partnership/organizational structure will remain the same; they decided that we do not need a sponsor to receive resources through the GIT funding stream, which funds projects proposed by GITs that support meeting the watershed agreement
- Current membership: we have a few state and federal agencies without consistent representation. We could also include more academic institutions like ODU
- Today, we will focus on two of these needs: **increasing engagement** and **defining our mission**
- **Increasing engagement:** *we proposed* potentially moving from our current schedule (monthly calls and twice-yearly in-person retreats) to quarterly in-person meetings.
  - Darius: the Diversity Workgroup recently made this change and it has been pretty successful so far. Suggests getting a sense beforehand of what locations would work best for members to be able to attend in-person meetings
  - Caroline: a quarterly schedule may mean that members do not participate in the workgroup between meetings and postpone work until just before each meeting
  - Heather: remote workers may struggle to attend any in-person meetings
  - Deb: in person quarterly meetings would be good, but monthly calls favor the fluidity of communications development and offer an opportunity for us to touch base more frequently
  - Catherine: we don't currently have the bandwidth to add two additional in-person meetings to our current schedule (monthly calls with two in-person meetings)
  - One option: four in person meetings and monthly calls focused on specific initiatives

- (smaller, action-team type calls)
  - If travel is a concern, we could stick to two in-person and add two longer conference calls
  - Kristin Reilley: CCWC and VCN both are trying to expand efforts in regards to in-person meetings and trainings; perhaps we could combine efforts
  - Another option: longer quarterly meetings and shorter monthly calls that have a set agenda, more free-flowing discussion
  - Kristin Saunders: having conversations more often than once per quarter really helps to maintain relationships and collaboration
- We have compiled these options into a [survey](#). Please fill out the survey to indicate which meeting schedule you would prefer.
- **Defining our mission.** The communications workgroup was established for two main reasons: foster communications across the partnership and provide communications to groups within CBP. It has been hard for us to do this and have it work for both external and internal CBP office partners. *We proposed* that our mission include: continuing our shared messaging and providing a space for skill-sharing and professional development; and adding helping GITs to complete the communications actions defined in their two-year workplans.
  - The GITs create these two-year workplans to define how they will address their outcomes from the Watershed Agreement. The GITs are in the current process of revising these workplans. The plans are becoming more streamlined and are now including specific communications actions that would allow us to have a clear role. These workplans can be found on [chesapeakebay.net](http://chesapeakebay.net), under Our Work, or on [chesapeakeprogress.com](http://chesapeakeprogress.com)
  - We will share a list of which jurisdictions are signed on to which outcomes
  - This would provide an opportunity for forming smaller action teams based on different projects and interests. Members could pick and choose where they would be able to help out the most
  - This would also allow the workgroup to be more beneficial to both the Bay Program office and the jurisdictional partners
- Other member ideas for improving the workgroup
  - Topic-focused action teams
  - Meetings that are working sessions: we could all bring our laptops and work on shared social media at the meeting, for example

## VI. Shared Messaging: July and August ([Presentation](#))

- June: UMCES Chesapeake Bay Report Card was released on June 15<sup>th</sup>. Key messages: Bay health is improving; record SAV numbers; dolphin watch/improvements for critters; expanding the report card in the future
- July: River Health. Let's highlight the progress that our rivers are making! Several river report cards have been released recently that show how far we've come. Links to supporting materials can be found in the attached presentation.
  - Would be a good opportunity to tie in the Chesapeake Monitoring Cooperative. Makes it local, helps to include rivers that don't have a report card. Anyone interested can contact Caroline Donovan.
  - Connect this to recreation, fish consumption. People will be getting outdoors in the summer, make it fun.
  - Related hashtags: #RiverReport #CometotheWater #StreamHealth #CleanWater #progress #RaisetheGrade
- August: National Water Quality Month
  - August 5<sup>th</sup>: National Oyster Day

- August 7<sup>th</sup>: EC meeting

## VII. Local Engagement and Phase III WIP Discussion

- Deb Klenotic, deputy communications director at the Pennsylvania Dept. of Environmental Protection (DEP), led a discussion on how state agency communications are involved in local engagement in the Phase III WIP process.
- The DEP Chesapeake Bay Program Office coordinates stakeholder participation in Phase 3 planning. Steering Committee and work group meetings are open to the public. In addition, they've held two public stakeholder meetings which yielded many useful suggestions. Enlisting professional meeting facilitators ensured open, productive dialogue.
- There are seven Phase 3 planning work groups: Agriculture; Forestry; Funding; Local Area Goals; Stormwater; Wastewater; and Communications and Engagement (C&E).
- Local Area Goals led development of a Community Clean Water Toolbox to enable plan development at the county geographic level. It rolled out last month to four counties that are pilot-testing it. It provides the essential data and information for each county to enable planning to reduce nutrients and sediment in local streams and rivers.
- C&E is the newest Phase 3 plan work group, formed in April. Deb created a process plan called "Teaming Up on Chesapeake Bay Watershed Communications" to clarify how the DEP, Dept. of Agriculture, and Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources Communications Offices will partner with the C&E work group to enable integrated communications.
- The state agency Comms Team will develop an umbrella broad strategic communications plan for Pennsylvania's efforts in the watershed. Within these parameters the C&E work group will develop local connections, communication channels, and content aimed at county and sector stakeholders. For example, they're customizing a template from CBPO to identify co-benefits of meeting the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement goals to present to each of the four counties pilot-testing the Toolbox.
- The state agency Comms Team and C&E work group are collaborating on a public webinar to county leaders, state legislators, and the media scheduled for July. They're partnering on finding, developing, and sharing local success stories and on other projects as well.
- What are other states doing for local engagement?
  - Delaware: love the idea of the webinar. Would like to hear more details and see how Delaware might do something similar. Deb: PA is currently looking into speakers. It's a good opportunity to tap regional/local speakers rather than agency secretaries
  - Mary Gattis, LGAC: LGAC helps states with strategies for local engagement. They've been discussing plans with Maryland, including a series of five meetings with local stakeholders and a booth at MACO. Plan to incorporate local water quality monitoring and connect with the Chesapeake Monitoring Cooperative
  - Virginia: Va. is not as far along in the WIP process. They're currently working with planning districts. They have their first set of meetings in a couple of weeks and are working on a newsletter to send out to planning/soil/water/conservation districts to remind them of state needs and ask what their needs are. They really like Pa.'s toolkit – don't have the capacity to do that right now but would love to talk more about it at some point.

## VIII. Wrap Up

**Next meeting:** July 25 in-person meeting, Harrisburg, Pa.