Habitat GIT Fall 2022 Meeting – Meeting Minutes

November 15th | 12:30-4:40 ET

*All materials from this meeting can be found on the CBP Calendar (**LINK**)*

MEETING ATTENDEES (67): **Alan Weaver**, VA DWR; **Alex Vidal**, USFWS; **Alicia Berlin**, USGS; **Alison Rogerson**, DNREC; **Alison Santoro**, MD DNR; **Andrew Howard**, DNREC; **Anne Hairston-Strang,** MD DNR; **Becky Golden**, MD DNR; **Ben Sagara**, VA DWR; **Bill Jenkins**, EPA; **Brad Fink**, VA DWR; **Brittney Flaten**, DNREC; **Brock Reggi**, VA DEQ; **Brooke Landry**, MD DNR; **Carin Bisland**, EPA; **Cheyenne Owens**, USFWS; **Chris Guy**, USFWS; **Clinton Morgeson**, VA DWR; **Dave Goerman**, PA DEP; **Dave O'Brien**, NOAA; **Denise Clearwater**, MDE; **Doug Myers**, Chesapeake Bay Foundation; **Emily Zollweg-Horan**, NY DEC; **Gabrielle Roffe**, Chesapeake Conservancy; **Genevieve LaRouche**, USFWS; **Greg Barranco**, EPA; **Helen Golimowski**, Devereux Consulting; **Holly Walker**, DNREC; **Jennifer Starr**, Chesapeake Bay Alliance; **Jeremy Hanson**, Chesapeake Research Consortium; **Jonathan Leiman**, MDE; **Jonathan Niles**, The Nature Conservancy; **Jonathan Watson**, NMFS; **Justin Nowakoski**, SERC; **Karinna Nunez**, VIMS; **Katherine Brownson**, USFS; **Katheryn Barnhart**, EPA; **Katie Ombalski**, Woods and Waters Consulting; **Katie Stahl**, USFWS; **Katlyn Fuentes**, Chesapeake Research Consortium; **Kaylyn Gootman**, EPA; **Keith Bollt**, EPA; **Kristen Saacke Blunk**, Headwaters LLC; **Kristin Saunders**, UMCES; **Leah Franzluebbers**, USFWS; **Lori Maloney**, Canaan Valley Institute; **Mark Hoffman**, Chesapeake Bay Commission; **Martha Shimkin**, EPA; **Mary Andrews**, NOAA; **Matt Lawrence**, MD DNR; **Megan Thynge**, EPA; **Megan Fitzgerald**, EPA; **Mel Zimmerman**, Lycoming College; **Melissa Yearick**, Upper Susquehanna Coalition; **Michael Lagua**, NFWF; **Michelle Henicheck**, VA DEQ; **Mike Bednarski**, VA DWR; **Olivia Devereux**, Devereux Consulting; **Pamela Mason**, VIMS; **Renee Thompson**, USGS; **Rikke Jepsen**, ICPRB; **Robert E. Isdell**, VIMS; **Sandra Davis**, USFWS; **Scott Phillips**, USGS; **Stephen Faulkner**, USGS; **Tammy O'Connell**, MD DNR; **Woody Francis**, USACE.

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, UPDATES:

HGIT Co-chairs Gina Hunt (MDNR) & Bill Jenkins (EPA)

- **FISH PASSAGE ANNOUNCEMENT:** After 12 years in the position, **Mary Andrews** (NOAA) has stepped down as Fish Passage Workgroup Chair, effective October 31st, 2022. At this time, co-chair positions have been advertised and interviews are ongoing. The new co-chairs will be announced in December, and **Jim Thompson** (MD DNR) will be the acting workgroup chair during this interim period.
- **2022 GIT FUNDING UPDATES:** 11 project proposals have been selected for funding, with a total requested amount of $825k
    - Habitat GIT submitted five projects, four of which were selected for funding. The project that was not funded was the Structured Decision-Making project on shallow-water conflicts. The following are the list of habitat projects that were funded:
        - *"Determining the local effect of flow/stormwater runoff on SAV density and acreage and options for targeting watershed BMPs that project priority SAV area";* submitted on behalf of the SAV Outcome
            - **Technical Lead**: Brooke Landry (MD DNR, SAV Workgroup Chair); Brooke.Landry@maryland.gov
        - *"Literature Review: Building Climate Resilience in Stream Restoration Practices";* submitted on behalf of the Stream Health Outcome

- **Technical Lead:** Alison Santoro (MD DNR, Stream Health Workgroup Co-Chair); alisona.santoro@maryland.gov
- *"Monitoring Vegetation Condition Throughout the DelMarVa Peninsula";* submitted on behalf of the Black Duck Outcome
  - **Technical Lead**: Peter Claggett (USGS); pclagget@chesapeakebay.net
- *"Mapping Non-Tidal Wetlands in Areas with Outdated Wetland Maps";* Submitted on behalf of the Wetland Outcome
  - **Technical Lead**: Peter Claggett (USGS); pclagget@chesapeakebay.net

- Early next year, the HGIT team will investigate other avenues of pursuing Structured Decision Making and shallow-water conflicts, outside of GIT Funding, as this was previously identified by GIT members as a top priority for the Habitat GIT.
- The Scopes of Work are currently being drafted and the anticipated RFP release will be in February 2023.
- **ACTION: Since the Scopes of Work are not yet finalized, the project proposals are not available for public distribution at this time. If you have any additional questions or are interested in participating in these projects, please contact the Technical Leads listed above.**

HGIT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY:

HGIT Coordinator Chris Guy (USFWS)

- The HGIT Management Strategy is a living document that is regularly updated following each biannual HGIT and HGIT Chair Meeting. The current document has been uploaded to the HGIT webpage and can be found at this link.
- **PRIMARY PRIORITIES OVER THE PAST SIX MONTHS:**
  - *Structured Decision-Making (SDM) and shallow water opportunities*
    - A GIT Funding proposal was submitted on an SDM project in October 2022. This proposal was not funded, and the Steering Committee will meet in the coming months to discuss next steps.
  - *Wetlands Outcome Attainment Workshop and Action Plan*
    - More information on this topic can be found in the "**REPORT-OUT ON THE 2022 WETLAND WORKSHOP**" presentation notes below.
  - *Improve outcome tracking and reporting for the wetlands, black duck, stream health, and brook trout workgroups*
    - More information on this topic can be found in the "**NEW OUTCOME AND ATTAINMENT TRACKING SYSTEM**" presentation notes below.
- **UPDATES:**
  - **INDIRECT PRIORITIES:**
    - Infusing social science and ecosystem service valuation into our work
    - Ensuring Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) considerations in workgroup and HGIT decisions
    - Coordinating/working across the six Goal Implementation Teams (GITs), STAR, and federal, state, and local groups/efforts to leverage resources towards common goals
  - **DIRECT PRIORITIES:**
    - Shallow water habitat conflicts
    - Incorporating climate change into workgroup activities
    - More focus on creating habitat in urban portions of the watershed
    - Improve outcome tracking and reporting for wetland, black duck, and brook trout workgroups

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WORKGROUP UPDATES:

- **FISH PASSAGE** (*Mary Andrews, NOAA*)**:**
  - **OUTCOME STATUS**: from 2010-2022, 75 dam removals have been completed and 3,200 dam removal miles have been opened.
  - **CHANGE IN WORKGROUP LEADERSHIP**: After 12 years as workgroup chair, Mary Andrews is stepping down from this leadership role. Currently, the HGIT is seeking new co-chair replacements. The new chairs will be announced in December.
  - **GENERAL UPDATES:**
    - Plenty of IIJA funds for dam removal, fish passage, and road/stream crossing projects.
    - COVID-19 has slowed progress on potential projects, but IIJA funding has jumpstarted work again.
    - One of the largest limitations to project/outcome advancement is dam owner willingness to remove. However, IIJA funds may be able to pay for dam acquisition.
  - **UPDATES TO FISH PASSAGE TOOL**: the FY2021 GIT Funding Cycle awarded the Fish Passage Workgroup $65k to update the **Fish Passage Prioritization Tool**. This publicly accessible tool is used to calculate miles opened for fish passage. This project will include upgrading to a new IT platform and include updates such as the ability to download data sets and miles opened to data layers. Also adding Environmental Justice data to the tool.
  - **PUBLICATION**: *Recommendations for Aquatic Organism Passage at Maryland Road-Stream Crossings*; published May 2021. **LINK**
  - **COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: For additional questions regarding topics discussed in this presentation, please contact Mary Andrews (**mary.andrews@noaa.gov**). For other questions related to the workgroup, please contact Jim Thompson (**jim.thompson@maryland.gov**).**
    - **Kristin Saunders** recommended that **Mary** contact **John Wolf** re: pulling the DEIJ data layers into the Fish Passage Prioritization Tool. He's been working with the Diversity Workgroup to see what available data is helpful for Bay Program outcomes and is also well-versed in story-mapping.
      - **ACTION: Mary Andrews will contact John Wolf and send him a list of Environmental Justice layers that the project steering committee are considering and will request feedback.**
- **BLACK DUCK ACTION TEAM (BDAT)** (*Alicia Berlin, USGS*)**:**
  - **OUTCOME PROGRESS:**
    - **2014 Baseline**: 566,477 acres
    - **2022 Progress**: *Still Unknown*
    - **2025 Goal**: 717,749 acres
    - **Restoration goal**: 151,272 additional acres needed
  - **SUCCESSES & CHALLENGES:**
    - Used remotely sensed wetland inventory maps to determine the energetic carrying capacity of HUC12 watersheds and compared this to energy demand.
    - Model indicates areas where there's sufficient and insufficient wetland quantity/quality to support the desired number of black ducks in each HUC12 watershed.
    - Also indicated how much of the habitat is in conservation status, to show areas sufficiently protected and areas needing additional land protection, as well as the areas where wetland habitat needs to be restored or enhanced.
    - Estimated food availability among five main wetland cover types used by overwintering American black ducks: subtidal, fresh water, high marsh, low marsh, and mudflat.

- Bioenergetics models used can be simplified into two major components: energetic demand and energetic supply.
- Then modeled how sea level rise using SLAMM and WARMER and land use change impact available habitat over time.

- **ON THE HORIZON:**
  - Development of tracking system for wetlands and black ducks
  - Blackwater 2100 - a collaborative, multi-agency project implementing several projects focused on piloting innovative climate adaptation strategies for increasing tidal marsh resilience, including tree removal and Phragmites control in marsh migration corridors, thin layer deposition of sediments on disintegrating marsh, and tidal creek extension at a waterlogged transitional marsh site.
  - USGS continues to model the relationships between changing food resources, water quality, and climate impacts on waterbird use of the Chesapeake Bay.
  - Explore merging BDAT with the Wetland Workgroup
  - Contributing to the Wetland Crediting STAC workshop & report
  - Supported GIT proposal on monitoring vegetation condition throughout the DelMarva peninsula using multi spectral imagery.
- **CHALLENGES:**
  - Tracking of restoration acres toward the outcome present on agricultural lands may not necessarily be viable black duck habitat.
  - Reconciling black duck outcome (151,272 acres) of primarily tidal marsh and wetlands outcome (85,000 acres) of primarily restored agricultural land.
  - Can we use The Decision Support Tool (DST) to guide restoration efforts to align these two outcomes? Will it work given climate change and land change pressures?
  - Do we decrease the number of black ducks supported in the Black Duck Outcome or do we increase the acreage of quality wetlands restored in the wetland outcome?
- **PLAN MOVING FORWARD:**
  - Continue ongoing habitat restoration work
  - Improve understanding of wetland loss and gain for wintering black ducks and other waterfowl
  - Determine best restoration techniques to create quality black duck habitat in priority areas
- **SRS**: The Black Duck Outcome is currently in the middle of the Strategic Review System process.
  - <u>The new action plan will include:</u>
    - Merging BDAT with Wetland Workgroup to provide efficiencies and collaboration towards achieving both outcomes simultaneously
    - Determining whether the SAV Outcome can be an indicator for the Black Duck Outcome
    - Identifying additional HGIT support for the BDAT
  - <u>Will request MB support with:</u>
    - Increasing staffing support
    - Increasing support for the wetlands outcome (which directly benefits the black duck outcome)
  - *More information on the 2023-2024 Action Plan will be covered at the 12/8 Management Board meeting.*

- BLACK DUCK DECISION SUPPORT WEB APPLICATION (arcgis.com)
- **COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: For additional questions regarding the Black Duck Action Team, please contact Alicia Berlin (**aberlin@usgs.gov**).**

- **BROOK TROUT** (*Stephen Faulkner, USGS*)**:**
  - **CONTINUING PROJECTS:**
    - *Restoring a native fish (Blue Ridge Sculpin) to Catoctin Mountain Park* (USGS, NPS, MD DNR) (**LINK**)
    - *Understanding and managing brook trout declines in Shenandoah National Park* (USGS, NPS)
    - *STAC Genetics and Rising Temperatures Workshop Reports* (**LINK**)
    - *EcoDrought in North Atlantic Appalachian Region: Native brook trout in Shenandoah National Park* (NPS, USFS, MD DNR, Trout Unlimited)
    - *Hydrology + geomorphology for stream fish habitat* (Briggs et al. 2022)
    - *AI/ML for brook trout ID and headwater streamflow*
  - **CHALLENGES:**
    - Metrics needed to quantify conservation actions protecting current brook trout habitat
    - Need to develop reporting framework for collection/quantification of watershed restoration activities
    - Additional capacity needed to engage/coordinate large-scale priority action items
  - **NEW PROJECTS:**
    - **FY2021 GIT Funding Project**: "*Facilitating Brook Trout Outcome Attainability through Coordination with CBP Jurisdictions and Partners*". Project involves working with CBP/EPA Data Center Team to develop a tracking/reporting application. Trout Unlimited has been hired as the contractor and the project is in progress.
    - **UMBC ICARE PROGRAM**: "*Temporal Effects on eDNA Dynamics to Inform Brook Trout Management Practices*". Project will focus on predicting fish biomass with eDNA concentrations and more specifically - how changes in temperature, season, distance downstream affect brook trout shed rate, eDNA concentration. Professor is Dr. Tamra Mendelson and UMBC M.S. Student Aiman Raza.
  - **COMMENTS/QUESTIONS**: **For additional questions regarding the Brook Trout Workgroup, please contact Workgroup Co-chairs Stephen Faulkner (**faulkners@usgs.gov**) and Katie Ombalski (**katie@woodswaters.com**).**

- **SAV** (*Brooke Landry, MD DNR*)**:**
  - **OUTCOME**: *Sustain and increase the habitat benefits of SAV in the Chesapeake Bay. Achieve and sustain the ultimate outcome of 185,000 acres of SAV Bay wide necessary for a restored Bay. Progress toward this ultimate outcome will be measured against a target of 90,000 acres by 2017 and 130,000 acres by 2025.*
  - **OUTCOME PROGRESS:**
    - The Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) Outcome is off course. Gains from 2020 to 2021 are positive, indicating an on-course trajectory, but these gains don't yet offset the recent major declines of underwater grasses observed in 2019. Additional years of positive trajectory will help clarify whether this recent 67,470 acre gain in 2021 is the start of a new positive trend toward higher levels of SAV across the Bay, but it is unlikely that the 2025 goal of 130,000 acres will be reached.
  - **CHESAPEAKE BAY SAV WATCHERS PROGRAM**: www.chesapeakebaysavwatchers.com
  - **SAV SENTINEL SITE PROGRAM**: https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/programs/ monitoring/sav-monitoring-program

- **SAV MONITORING PROGRAM**: https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/programs/_monitoring/sav-monitoring program
- **2021 GIT-FUNDED PROJECT:** *Modeling Climate Impacts on SAV in Chesapeake Bay*
  - This is a STAR/SAV Workgroup Collaboration
  - Contracted to VIMS (Chris Patrick's team) with a sub-contract to Jon Lefcheck (SERC)
  - Will be complete early next year
- **2022 GIT-FUNDED PROJECTS:**
  - **SAV WORKGROUP:** *Determining the local effect of flow/stormwater runoff on SAV density and acreage and options for targeting watershed BMPs that protect priority SAV areas.* RFP will be released early 2023.
  - **COMMUNICATIONS WORKGROUP**: *Advancing Social Marketing Through Three Pilot Programs.* RFP will be released early 2023.
- **PRIORITIES FOR 2023:**
  - Implement SAV Sentinel Site Program
  - Expand SAV Watchers Program
  - Finalize SAV/Climate Project
  - Oversee SAV/BMP Project initiation
  - Work with Communications workgroup on CBSM efforts
  - Expand SAV Restoration Efforts (capacity, mitigation, plantings, research, etc.)
  - Push forward recommendations made to the PSC re: satellite data
  - Continue evolution of aerial survey to incorporate satellite data
  - SAV Regulatory review work with states to determine which recommendations to push forward
- **COMMENTS/QUESTIONS**: **For additional questions regarding the SAV Workgroup, please contact Workgroup Chair Brooke Landry (**brooke.landry@maryland.gov**) and Vice-Chair Becky Golden (**rebecca.golden@maryland.gov**).**
  - **Carin Bisland:** All, the factsheets that have the baseline information were updated with new information last year as part of the outcome attainability exercise. Baseline information is part of each outcome factsheet. **(LINK TO FACTSHEETS)**

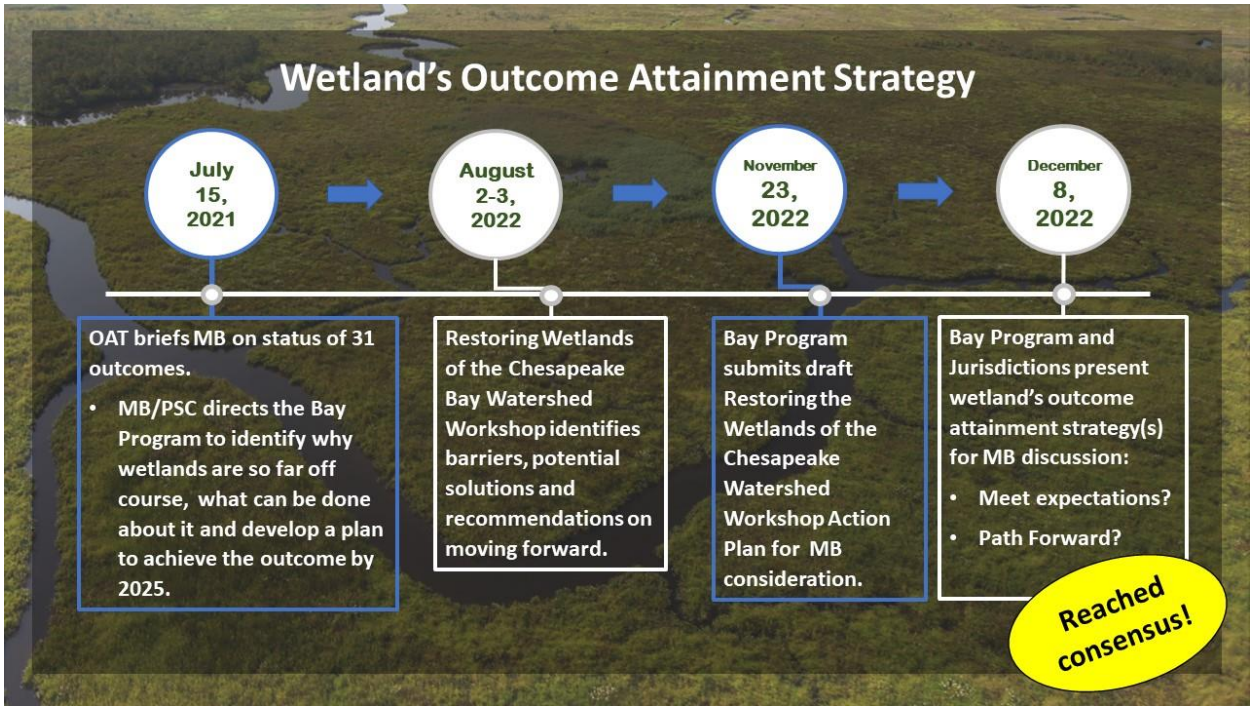
- **STREAM HEALTH** (*Alison Santoro, MD DNR*)**:**
  - **STREAM HEALTH OUTCOME:** *Continually improve stream health and function throughout the watershed. Improve health and function of ten percent of stream miles above the 2008 baseline for the watershed*
  - **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**:
    - **Chessie BIBI**: analysis for measured and modeled data is complete, and the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin (ICPRB) will release the draft report soon
    - **FY2020 GIT Funded Project:** *Management Approaches to Reduce Stressors of Stream Health.* Report completed by CWP in June 2022 **(LINK)**
  - **IN PROGRESS:**
    - **FY2021 GIT Funded Project:** *Data Review and Development of Multi-Metric Stream Health Indicators.* TetraTech has recently completed the draft framework and identified data sources. Preliminary results are expected in Spring 2023.
    - **STAC WORKSHOP:** *State of the Science & Practice of Stream Restoration in the Chesapeake: Lessons Learned to Inform Better Implementation, Assessment and Outcome*. Workshop will be held March 21-23, 2023. (**LINK**)
    - **STREAM RESTORATION PERMITTING SURVEY:** Survey is being edited and will be ready for distribution soon.
  - **PLANS FOR THE FUTURE:**

        - **FY2022 GIT Funded Project:** *Literature Review: Building Climate Resilience in Stream Restoration Practices*. RFP will be released early 2023.
        - **DEIJ*:*** engage with under-served, under-represented communities to increase participation in stream health concerns; plan to begin work in 2023.
    - **COMMENTS/QUESTIONS**: **For additional questions regarding the Stream Health Workgroup, please contact Workgroup Co-chairs Alison Santoro (**alisona.santoro@maryland.gov**) and Sara Weglein (**sara.weglein@maryland.gov**).**
        - **Scott Phillips:** USGS published a journal article of the factors affecting stream conditions, here is a summary we just prepared. **(LINK TO ARTICLE)**
        - **Doug Myers** recommended that the upcoming STAC workshop define "biological uplift" as either a change in the BIBI or in a different, measurable metric.
- **WETLAND** (*Pam Mason, VIMS*)**:**
    - **OUTCOME:** Create or reestablish 85,000 acres of tidal and non-tidal wetlands and enhance function of an additional 150,000 acres of degraded wetlands by 2025.
        - Since wetlands are critical habitats, this outcome influences the attainment of many CBP goals, and as such, needs to continue to be a high priority for the CBP.
        - **PROGRESS:** while progress has increased, outcome outlook is off course and will most likely not reach the 2025 goal.
    - **SUCCESSES:**
        - *2022 Restoring Wetlands of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Workshop*. WWG collaboration with HGIT. Wetlands Action Plans due to the Management Board in December 2022.
        - *2022 STAC Workshop: Evaluating an Improved Systems Approach to Crediting: Consideration of Wetland Ecosystem Services"* (formerly known as "Evaluating a Systems Approach to BMP Crediting") hosted in March 2022. Report to be completed by Dec 2022.
        - *Climate Resiliency & Wetlands Combined Workgroup Meetings*: joint workgroup meeting in December 2021.
        - *GIT Funded Marsh Migration Model Study*. Final report submitted Sept. 2022.
        - *Wetlands CBP GIS Collaboration*: Worked with GIS folks to provide wetlands guidance on mapping.
        - **GIT Funded Work:**
            - 2021: Wetland Mowing Impacts. Still seeking a contractor.
            - 2023: Support for USGS improved non tidal wetland mapping
    - **CHALLENGES**: lack of capacity in both workgroup members and staff
    - **POLICY DEVELOPMENTS:**
        - 2022 Restoring Wetlands of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Workshop → Action Plan
        - New living shorelines law in VA may help promote/accelerate implementation.
        - WOTUS the Clean Water Act may exclude some wetlands from federal jurisdiction.
    - **FISCAL DEVELOPMENTS:** Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), NOAA, NFWF, FEMA, and other funding
    - **PLANS FOR THE FUTURE:**
        - Focus on themes and actions identified & summarized in the Wetlands Workshop Action Plan
        - Focus on contract with Devereux Consulting for new wetlands accounting system
        - Refine the outcome to define creation vs. restoration vs. enhancement
        - Work with STAR and CRWG to define historic wetlands loss and identify opportunities to restore/conserve/create wetlands within this historic loss and as it related to climate change
    - **COMMENTS/QUESTIONS**: **For additional questions regarding the Wetlands Workgroup, please contact Workgroup Co-chairs Pam Mason (**Mason@vims.edu**) and Todd Lutte (**lutte.todd@epa.gov**).**
        - **Kristen Saacke Blunk** requested a copy of the RFP for the Wetlands Mowing Impacts project.

- **Pam Mason:** This RFP is currently closed and cannot be distributed at this time. The RFP is undergoing revisions and will be readvertised in the near future.

REPORT-OUT ON THE 2022 WETLAND WORKSHOP:
Chris Guy (USFWS)

- The *2022 Restoring Wetlands of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Workshop* took place on August 2-3, 2022. The meeting minutes and other materials for this event can be viewed at **this link**.
- **WORKSHOP GOAL:** The goal of the workshop was to bring key people together to identify and understand major barriers to wetlands, identify innovative approaches, and develop and action plan.
- **WORKSHOP FOCUSED ON THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:** Where have we been? Where do we want to go from here? How do we access funding? And how are we going to get there?
- **THEMES THROUGHOUT WORKSHOP:**
  - Develop cohesive strategy for tidal and nontidal wetlands across the watershed to include site selection and priorities that take into consideration 10 goals and 31 outcomes associated with the Chesapeake Bay 2014 Agreement.
  - Dedicated increased long-term capacity is needed to accelerate efforts because of the time and complexity to complete wetland restoration projects; grant funded capacity does not retain and grow expertise resulting in constantly relearning.
  - Outreach and design are priority areas to grow capacity to increase the pipeline of projects and advance them to implementation.
  - New and increased funding should be directed to the states to build wetland capacity. This is critical to be able to access and leverage increased federal funds that will be available.
- **TIMELINE:**



- **LINKS TO MORE INFORMATION:**
  - **2022 WETLANDS WORKSHOP**

  - 12/8 MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING
  - WETLANDS ACTION PLAN
- **COMMENTS/QUESTIONS**: **For questions/comments related to the workshop and/or the Wetlands Action Plan: please contact Chris Guy (**chris_guy@fws.gov**), Cheyenne Owens (**cheyenne_owens@fws.gov**), Katlyn Fuentes (**fuentesk@chesapeake.org**).**
- **To Join the Wetland Workgroup: please contact Pam Mason (mason@vims.edu) and Katlyn Fuentes (fuentesk@chesapeake.org).**

BLUE CARBON UPDATE:

Bill Jenkins (EPA)

- **COASTAL RESILIENCE & CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION:**
  - **GOALS:**
    - Work with a local Chesapeake Bay coastal community to help solve its coastal resilience issues.
    - Identify/assess co-benefits associated with coastal resilience solutions.
    - Incorporate/investigate natural infrastructure options that have blue carbon sequestration potential.
  - **PROCESS**: co-develop research and engage community throughout
  - **COMMUNITY**: Working with under-served, under-represented, and/or vulnerable communities
- **WHAT IS BLUE CARBON NATURAL INFRASTRUCTURE?**
  - Coastal, saline vegetated systems that:
    - Provide protection against wave energy and erosion to improve coastal resilience
    - Sequester carbon in plant structures and sediment
    - Provide additional co-benefits like water quality improvement
- **COMMUNITY OF FOCUS: Crisfield, MD**
  - Historically under-served and vulnerable community
  - Coastal-resilience and flooding issues
  - Many natural infrastructure/blue carbon opportunities
  - Community has existing work and partners
- **COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS:**
  - **June 2022:** Identified the community's coastal resilience goals, sources of flooding, and impacts of flooding. Project team begins mapping which coastal adaptation strategies are appropriate for consideration in each priority area.
  - **October 2022:** selected flooding hazards to assess and discussed adaptation pathways.
- **POTENTIAL NATURAL INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGIES:**
  - **Physical strategies**: marsh restoration/conservation, living shorelines, SAV restoration, etc.
  - **Policy Strategies**: converting land to open space, zoning ordinances, future development planning, etc.
- **POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL CO-BENEFITS INCLUDE**: nature and wildlife enjoyment, tourism and recreation, stormwater management, and water pollutant filtration
- **UPCOMING PLANS FOR 2022-2023:**
  - Natural infrastructure literature reviews and suggestions
  - Community engagement
  - Social science
  - Blue carbon review, data consolidation, etc.
- **For additional questions related to this presentation, please contact Bill Jenkins (**jenkins.bill@epa.gov**).**

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STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS WITH UNDERREPRESENTED STAKEHOLDERS:
Gabrielle Roffe (Chesapeake Conservancy)

- **PROJECT GOALS:**
  - Understand needs/barriers/priorities of organizations led by and serving underrepresented and underserved communities
  - Gather voices and feedback from the community
  - Define what meaningful community engagement means for the CBP Partnership and how it will function across the Partnership
- **SERVING CONVERSATIONS:** Chesapeake Conservancy hosted six "Sensing Conversations" sessions to gather feedback on engagement of underrepresented communities within the CBP. The goal of these conversations were to develop and open baseline understanding of where we came from, what the current status is, and what the future will look like.
  - **ASSET MAPPING & NEEDS ASSESSMENT CATEGORIES:** social capital, financial assets, and stories
- **INTERNAL CBP DISCUSSIONS:**
  - **THEMES ACROSS GROUPS:**
    - *Community representation and values of engagement*
    - *Communications and commitment*
    - *Health and wellbeing*
    - *Capacity and assets*
  - **CBP COMMENDATIONS:**
    - CBP staff show high levels of interest in engaging underrepresented for value-driven purpose.
    - CBP Partnership entities possess many assets as identified through "Asset Mapping" activity.
    - Staff show interest in learning and shifting practices to be more inclusive.
  - **CBP OBSERVATIONS:**
    - Need communication and clear expectations to reduce confusion amongst folks as to the purpose of CBP community engagement.
    - Workplace culture affects ability to create long-term, trusting relationships with diverse communities.
    - Lower-level staff seek clear direction from leadership in defining CBP community engagement.
- **COMMUNITY GROUP DISCUSSIONS:**
  - **THEMES ACROSS GROUPS:**
    - *Conservation ethic & intersectionality*
    - *Funding & capacity*
    - *Participation & partnership*
    - *Accountability*
  - **COMMENDATIONS:**
    - Communities see value in Chesapeake Bay Restoration and are eager to be involved.
    - Communities see potential for resources from entities such as the CBP Partnership at grassroots levels.
  - **OBSERVATIONS:**
    - Intent of community engagement and integration of feedback unclear to community members
    - Concern re: lack of value in engaging when community voices seem to go unheard
- **CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP:**
  - Establish values around community engagement
  - Activities designed to define/understand CBP values around community engagement

  - Conversations on intent & impact to inform a strategy for community engagement
  - Spectrum of Community Engagement and the continuum of racial equity
    - **INFORM → CONSULT → INVOLVE → COLLABORATE → EMPOWER**
- **GOAL OF COMMUNITY FORUM:** foundational trust building and relationship building with the Chesapeake Bay Watershed communities with CBP staff, leadership, and community leaders.
- **RECOMMENDATIONS:**
  1. Explore mechanism for funding equitable participation
  2. Determine how community organizations can benefit from CBP
  3. Explore equitable grantmaking solutions
- **COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: For additional questions related to this presentation, please contact Gabrielle Roffe (**groffe@chesapeakeconservancy.org**).**
  - **Denise Clearwater:** Is there a final report available?
    - **Gabrielle Roffe:** The final report has been completed but hasn't been published yet. This will be posted to the website soon.

TARGETED OUTREACH FOR GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE (TOGI) WILLIAMSPORT URBAN HABITAT PLANNING PROJECT:

Dr. Mel Zimmerman (Lycoming College)

- **TOGI PROJECT OVERVIEW**:
  - Project funded through CBP GIT Funding
  - Emphasis to provide green infrastructure that also benefits habitat priorities for the Bay Program
  - Focus on range of diverse communities at risk from weather extremes and climate change affects, including communities that have faced environmental injustices
  - Develop green infrastructure concepts and help find funding sources for implementation
  - **TARGETED COMMUNITIES:**
    - Cambridge, MD
    - Williamsport, PA
    - Upper Mattaponi Tribe, VA
    - Mattaponi Tribe, VA
- **WILLIAMSPORT, PA**: population of 28,000
  - Ideal size for project, had existing contacts within the TOGI Steering Committee, and is an area which historically hasn't received much outside investment
  - Site selection was made in 2019-2020, and the Steering Committee was organized 2020-2021
- **PROCESS**: ***Listening Session → Green Infrastructure Design Workshop → Final Report***
- **CONFLICTS IN PROGRAMS/CONSIDERATIONS DURING THE PROJECT:**
  - Change in city governance
  - City under MS4 stormwater initiative
  - Lycoming County completed County Action Plan (CAP) to address sediment, nitrogen, and phosphorus loads as part of state goals for reduction to Chesapeake Bay by 2025
  - COVID/pandemic protocols for public meetings
- **PROJECT FOCUS AREAS**: Expanded community garden and park space on vacant lots and Little League Boulevard with improved connectivity to downtown
- **TODAY:**
  - Community garden has gained lots of traction with support from University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC).
  - Concept design for Little League Blvd. needs more support from the City

- The TOGI final report was completed in May 2022 and has been **posted to the CBP HGIT page**.
- **COMMENTS/QUESTIONS: For additional questions related to this presentation, please contact Dr. Zimmerman (**zimmer@Lycoming.edu**).**

NEW OUTCOME AND ATTAINMENT TRACKING SYSTEM:

Olivia Devereux (Devereux Consulting)

- **This presentation contains preliminary results and as such cannot be distributed. The following is only a brief outline of the presentation. For additional questions pertaining to this presentation, please contact Olivia Devereux (**olivia@devereuxconsulting.com**) and Helen Golimowski (**helen@devereuxconsulting.com**).**
- **HABITAT TRACKER PROJECT: https://habitat tracker.net/**
    - Project initiated in Fall 2021 under the recommendation of the CBP Management Board
    - **PURPOSE:** Develop a tracking tool to assess progress towards the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Agreement's Vital Habitats' goal for the Wetland and Black Duck Outcome. This tool will also include tidal and nontidal areas of the watershed.
    - **DATA PROVIDED BY:** Ducks Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, state/federal partners, etc.
- **HABITAT TRACKER CONVENIENCES:**
    - Users upload tables in standard format with required and optional data fields.
    - Users generate pre-defined reports of parameters and reports are available as downloadable Microsoft Excel files.
    - Allows an upload of data from NEIEN once annually.
    - Allows replacement of GIS data including physiographic region, SAV, and tidal/nontidal areas to update all data attributes that rely on those.
    - Data can be parsed by year, state, and HUC-12.
- **EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS THAT CAN BE ANSWERED WITH HABITAT TRACKER DATA & REPORTS:**
    - How many acres of wetlands are newly created (trend over time)?
    - How many acres of wetlands are in nontidal areas?
    - How many projects include a plan for an environmental literacy component?
    - How many acres of wetlands are in tidal areas near SAVs and expected to support black ducks?
- **CONCLUSIONS:**
    - The Habitat Tracker will progress toward achieving the Wetland and Black Duck Outcomes
    - Input from subject matter experts will help refine functionality of the Tracker
    - Persistent effort is required to elicit data
    - Tracking can help incentivize wetland goals and show the impact of wetlands
- **COMMENTS/QUESTIONS:**
    - **Gina Hunt:** Will the data providers continue to provide data well into the future? Or will new efforts need to be made every time the tool needs to be updated?
        - **Olivia Devereux:** The contract ends in March or April 2023, and there should be a follow-on to continue support and hosting the tool, thereby filling the role as a Habitat Data Manager.

UPCOMING HGIT MEETINGS:

- **HGIT CHAIRS MEETING:** the next HGIT Workgroup Chairs meeting will be on **3/8 from 10:00-12:00 ET**. This will be a **virtual** meeting and the calendar hold has already been sent out.
- **HGIT SPRING 2023 MEETING:** the HGIT Spring Meeting will be held the **week of April 24th** and the calendar hold will be sent out as soon as the dates have been solidified. We anticipate this meeting being a **hybrid** meeting, with the in-person meeting location in New York.