



Communications Workgroup Monthly Conference Call Minutes

August 3, 2017

Participants

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Stephanie Smith, ACB-CBP (Coordinator)
Joan Smedinghoff, CRC-CBP (Staff)
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I. **Welcome ([Updates](#))**

II. **[EcoLogix Report for the Local Leadership Workgroup \(Report\)](#)**

- Report: how best to reach out to, train, and engage local officials in local actions that will help the Bay restoration effort
- Local leaders need to know how Bay goals can help meet local priorities
 - Local priorities are the portals through which local officials are able to address Bay goals
 - Working through trusted sources (e.g., Maryland Association of Counties, Virginia Association of Counties)
 - Peer-to-peer learning, combined with local field trips, is the best way to engage with elected officials
 - Tell a story, have a powerful narrative
 - Work through partners' conferences (e.g., annual MACO and VACO conferences, Susquehanna River Basin Commission annual meetings, WashCOG)
- Phase I (2015)
 - Interviews with 18 local officials and experts
 - Engage by being highly tailored to local situation
- Phase II (2016-2017)
 - Four focus groups, 100+ people total
 - Follow-up interviews with some participants
 - Internet-based research
 - Final report, seek input
- Content and how to frame, deliver it: top three priorities for local elected officials
 - Economic development
 - Infrastructure maintenance and financing
 - Public health and safety
 - Natural resource connections to all of these topics
- What have we learned?
 - Local leaders want to do their part for the Bay, but their mandate is to address local priorities and resources are limited
 - They don't see restoring the Bay as a driver for their actions
 - Natural resource topics that link to economic development

- Drinking water protection
 - Flood prevention
 - Outdoor recreation
 - Agritourism, natural resource/ecological tourism
 - Peer-to-peer, small site scale field trips
- Content: local best practices are the link to both local priorities and Bay goals
 - Every local priority is different, but there are patterns that could help Bay communications
- Delivery mechanisms
 - Three levels of leadership structure
 - Bay-wide (key partner: Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay)
 - Statewide (e.g., MACO, VACO)
 - Local
 - Learning modes: in- person and online
 - Trusted partners: 23 organizations listed in report's appendix, spanning six Bay states and D.C.
- Example 1: Nelson County, Virginia
 - Wanted to create new businesses and jobs in keeping with their rural character
 - Online survey for residents: rank economic strengths of county
 - Highest rating: pristine rural setting (84%)
 - Overall quality of life (68%)
 - Natural resources (63%)
 - Tourism (63%)
 - Example of bringing value to community through natural assets
 - Peer-to-peer exchange of stories: equal exchange, instead of one county telling others how to be better
- Example 2: Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
 - Mayor's priorities → examples of approaches to address Bay goals
 - Blight and beautification → tree planting + maintenance
 - Crime and safety → tree planting + green infrastructure program
 - Education and youth → youth training, job and career program in green infrastructure, flood mitigation, horticulture, urban forestry
- Cost estimates
 - \$100,000/year to set up effort
 - Not including \$ to adequately staff and distribute messages
 - Best ways to fund this would be through Bay Program
- Measuring progress:
 - Participation rate
 - Knowledge increase
 - Local elected officials' reports back to us on how this influences their decisions and actions
- Peer-to-peer exchanges, site visits
 - Leads would vary based on locality
 - University extension: experts on funding for farmers
 - Site visit: take county supervisors on tour to see how a stream buffer program works, have representatives from multiple counties so peer-to-peer exchanges can take place during visit

- How to do this in light of funding uncertainties
 - Do as much at the Bay Program as possible
 - Groups like MACO and VACO have structures for educating local officials
 - E.g., Academy of Excellence: more expansive curriculum, get certificate saying they are proficient in local government processes
 - Utilize existing resources
 - Larry Land at VACO open to allowing this in their annual conference, module in local elected official curriculum
 - Weave water sources into lessons about e.g. financing
 - Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience for students
 - Weave in these (basic) messages
 - Need to make connections to local officials to fund these programs
 - Built-in field trips: take elected officials on MWEEs so they can learn the lesson and see how/why these programs are important
 - Shannon Sprague has mentioned need to make that connection
- How best to coordinate this program? Make it as streamlined as possible, report should help focus and give a framework for this
 - Working with Mary Gattis, Local Leadership Workgroup—important to make this a really well-coordinated program

III. **GIT Funding ([Request](#) | [Proposals](#))**

- There has been a lot of request/discussion about need for communications help by the GITs to help meet outcomes
- Two potential projects
- Engaging with private landowners
 - Private landowners have been explicitly or implicitly listed as a target audience for many outcomes
 - E.g. wetlands, protected lands
 - Need to learn more about this audience
 - Priorities
 - Values
 - How to engage with them
 - Segment audience (many types of landowners)
 - Inventory and study of existing materials for landowners
 - See if their messages match outcomes of research into private landowner best messages
 - Gap analysis to see where materials need to be created
 - Purpose is not to create materials
 - People can take this information and talk to landowners
 - “Shovel ready” for a communications campaign
 - Working with GIT 6 Enhancing Partnerships, Leadership and Management
- Social marketing and the Citizen Stewardship Index
 - Stewardship Index: see how many people are doing certain stewardship behaviors (e.g., picking up dog waste, not fertilizing, etc.)
 - Inventory and audit of behavior-change campaigns
 - See how efficient/effective they were
 - Guide of best practices

- Have social marketing expert create campaign
- Learning experience for Communications Office/Workgroup
- Allow us to conduct future campaigns on our won in future
- Work with GIT 5
- GITs are currently ranking projects
- One of the workgroup leadership team will be project lead
 - No extra time for workgroup members
- Stewardship project looks specifically into stewardship index behaviors
 - Could be expanded to other outcomes
 - Stewardship Index: has actual data for behaviors, including potential for adoption
 - Go through the process with one behavior, be ready to adopt this methodology for other behaviors
 - Behaviors chosen might have cross-outcome benefits
 - Highlight how this will help create a *methodology* to be applied to other outcomes
- Coordinators and Staffers will score the proposals
- GIT chairs will make recommendations to Nick DiPasquale who makes final decision
- Project prioritization due August 4
 - Trust administers funding
 - Outside group reviews project proposals, may send back for refinement
- Social marketing for residential homeowners to change how they manage their lawns/yards
 - Does that include landscape companies that provide yard care services to those homeowners?
 - Stewardship Index targeted homeowners, not the landscaping companies

IV. [Retreat Recap and Next Steps \(Retreat notes\)](#)

- Goals
 - Introduce participants to attitude surveys and the role polling data can play in targeting communications.
 - Develop a two-year work plan
 - Elect a new vice chair
- Messaging exercise
 - Creating messages from Citizen Stewardship Index behaviors using Spitfire messaging box
 - Ex: Putting fertilizer on your lawn
 - Putting fertilizer on your lawn
 - Using pesticides (e.g., mosquito spray or rat poison) in or around your home.
 - Picking up other people's litter when you see it.
 - Picking up your dog's waste and disposing of it in the trash. How to use this?
 - How to use this?
 - Go through messaging box with people who provide content and those who rely on us to get their messages out
 - Get people thinking in terms of messaging box
 - Have them provide info in form of box
 - Take lessons-learned from retreat presentations to tailor our messages
 - Good exercises, don't want the messages to just sit there and not be used
 - How to target to local officials who are concerned about public health and safety? (e.g., connect dog waste messages to public health and safety)

- Work plan brainstorm
 - Participants brainstormed actions that could help us achieve the goals in our work plan and modified or added detail to the examples that appeared in the draft work plan distributed before the retreat.
 - Participants then used voting dots to indicate which actions they would like to see prioritized over the next two years.
 - **We will discuss the work plan at our September meeting.**
- Did we achieve our goals?
 - Didn't elect new vice chair
 - Retreat went well and was successful, except for not electing new vice chair
 - In process of creating work plan
- Other comments
 - Ask workgroup members to chip in for help/support; people to bring to-go mugs, coffee, etc.
 - Thank you to the planning team (Catherine, Kelley, Kristin, Joan, Rachel and Stephanie)!
 - We've created campaigns at two retreats, but haven't done anything with them. Would be nice to vote on them at the retreat, and then at the following call, say how each organization has implemented it.

Next meeting: [Wednesday, September 6 from 1:00-2:30](#)