



*LGAC Members Present:* Markus Batchelor, Richard Baugh, Daniel Chao, Mark Dobbins, Amy Dubois, Jasmine Gore, Penny Gross, Donna Iannone, Leo Lutz, Andria McClellan, Brianne Nadeau, Don Phillips, Lisa Schaefer, John Thomas, Emeritus Member Phil Briddell representing Michael Helfrich, Emeritus Member Ann Simonetti representing James Wheeler, Emeritus Member Bruce Williams representing Sheila Finlayson, and LGAC Staff: Ola-Imani Davis and Jennifer Starr

*Speaker/Guests Present:* Carin Bisland (EPA CBPO), Jessica Blackburn (CAC), Heidi Bonnafon (Metro-Washington COG), Katherine Brownson (USDA), Laura Cattell-Noll (LLWG), Meg Cole (STAC), Loretta Collins (UMD), John Cox (Lancaster Clean Water Partners), Megan Diehl (WV Region 9), Liz Feinberg (NFWF), Rachel Felver (CBPO Communications), Kate Fritz (Alliance), Beth Ginter (CBLP), Aaron Harris (Land O'Lakes), Amy Handen (EPA CBPO), Cara Johnson (CRC), Jake Kline (VA DEQ), Dave Maginnes (Maginnes Productions), Rebecca Lauver (Alliance), Ann Mallek (Albemarle County), Katie Morison (Hershey), Scott Phillips (USGS), Mauricio Rosales (Alliance), Kathy Stecker (MDE), Phil Stafford (MD DNR), Jim Sullivan (DE DNREC), Suzanne Trevena (EPA Region 3), John Wolf (USGS), Tree Zuzzio (PA DCED), Shea Zwerver (PA DCNR)

#### **Thursday, June 2nd, 2022**

##### **Call to Order: Greetings and Introductions**

Chair Jasmine Gore called the meeting to order at 10:05 am. She welcomed all attendees and LGAC Members introduced themselves.

##### **Business Meeting**

*Approval of March 2022 Minutes* – Bruce Williams motioned to approve the March 2022 meeting minutes, seconded by Donna Iannone.

*Executive Committee Report (Chair)* – As LGAC Chair, Jasmine shared that she has attended the May 2022 Principals Staff Committee Meeting as well as monthly Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) Management Board meetings. Major discussions in these meetings included dedicated attention to Advisory Committee recommendations

*Coordinator's Report (Coordinator)* – Jennifer began her report remembering the late Robin Rich-Coates, VA LGAC Member. She shared brief updates on the upcoming LGAC-hosted Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) webinar (July 12, 2022), 2022 Local Government Forum (September 29, 2022), fall/winter LGAC Quarterly Meetings and staff/CBP's ongoing communications efforts. She spotlighted LGAC Members who participated as National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) grant proposal reviewers, CBP Forest Buffer Workshop representatives, and *Wandering Waterways* bus tour hosts. Finally, she reviewed past LGAC annual recommendations to the Chesapeake Executive Council (EC) in preparation for a further discussion on 2022 recommendations.

*Action: staff to share opportunities to donate on Robin Rich-Coates behalf.*

*Local Leadership Workgroup Report (Chair)* – Chair Heidi Bonnafon shared the local leadership baseline survey was disseminated widely to watershed elected officials via trusted source networks in April 2022 and results will be presented August 2022. She also notified LGAC that phase II of the *Local Government Guide to the Chesapeake Bay* will include the addition of 3-4 educational modules, an online database of the materials and resources, and a series of train-the-trainer workshops on how to navigate the database and materials. She asked for LGAC's consideration of topics to explore for future modules.

## Chesapeake Bay Program Update

Carin Bisland, Branch Chief, Partnerships and Accountability Branch, EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Office (CBPO)

Carin provided the following updates from the CBPO:

- **BIL funding:** \$238 million allocated to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for Chesapeake Bay watershed communities over the next 5 years including \$47.8 million in FY 2022 funds. \$40 million will fund Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction grants, Small Watershed grants and Most Effective Basins grants while the remaining will advance CBP priorities including alleviating environmentally overburdened communities.
- **Conowingo Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP):** EPA provided review of the Conowingo WIP in January 2022. Concerns have been expressed over lack of financial commitments to meet the required \$53 million in funding for implementation. EPA will continue discussions with jurisdictions to identify ways to address the Conowingo's nutrient loads.
- Dr. Kandis Boyd is the new director of the EPA CBPO.

*Action: Staff to share the "History of the Conowingo Dam" document, prepared by the Citizens Advisory Committee, and the press release of the new EPA CBPO Director with Members.*

## Discussion of LGAC 2022 Recommendations to the Chesapeake Executive Council (EC)

LGAC Members discussed considerations for 2022 EC recommendations including:

- **Workforce Development (recruitment, retention, development and education)**
  - Impacting the green and blue workforce by facilitating involvement in related fields beginning in grade or vocational school;
  - Developing a state-by-state list of in-demand green and blue jobs, possibly developed by state secretaries, along with the certifications needed to break into those fields in order for localities to pinpoint workforce gaps and create informed communications and outreach on those jobs needed specifically in their communities;
  - The education and expansion of regenerative agriculture;
  - The expansion of a conservation or Blue/Green job core;
  - Focusing the resources for Blue/Green jobs including the education, training and certifications that can be received especially targeting environmental justice communities;
  - Increasing the capacity of existing workforce development programs;
  - Identifying and expanding on the definition of blue/green jobs (example: street sweepers help communities meet their total maximum daily load (TMDL) goals, as well as efforts from local farmers, septic professionals and landscaping professionals, etc);
  - Addressing the challenge local governments face in the recruitment and retention of green/blue jobs due to salaries. Perhaps there are ways a state can incentivize participation in those fields such as paying down/off student loans in return.
- **Funding**
  - Sustaining the flow of federal funding that localities are currently receiving and have historically asked for (in regards to funding from the American Rescue Plan Act and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law) as well as increasing the timeline for existing funding opportunities;
  - Creating guidance on new federal funds and how to access or use these funds more efficiently;
  - Creating an accessible database of federal, state and private funding opportunities for local governments to not only know what is out there but to understand how to better connect their efforts and leverage these opportunities to achieve multiple benefits.
- **Other**
  - Continuously updating local, state and regional precipitation data to address flooding concerns caused by water quantity;
  - Invasive species impact on tree cover;
  - Adjusting the communication of "Bay issues" to states not closely associated with the Chesapeake Bay in favor of priorities around local waters;
  - The impact of state regulated stormwater fees on local communities.

LGAC Members also suggested that recommendations focus on the larger picture with specific concerns thus ensuring a lasting significance over the coming years. They also considered the idea of the EC letter including consistent messaging overtime that also addresses the progression of past recommendations overtime. Finally, LGAC Members emphasized coordinating with the other Advisory Committees to identify the overarching themes identified in their collective 2022 recommendations.

### **STAC Report: Overcoming the Hurdle: Addressing Implementation of Agricultural BMPs Through a Social Science Lens**

*Loretta Collins, University of Maryland - Chesapeake Bay Program*

Loretta shared the discussions and recommendations from the July 2021 Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) workshop. The goal of the workshop was to address the underlying socio-economic characteristics and engagement approaches that will result in necessary changes to farm management practices to achieve nutrient and sediment load reduction goals, while also fostering viability within the agriculture sector. Expert attendees were invited to communicate their visions of resilient and profitable farms, explore diverse real-world experiences, derive actionable solutions and translate these into concrete recommendations. Recommendations included increased support from the CBP to support cross-sector collaboration, resource sharing, scalable incentivized programs, a crediting system for certain best management practices (BMP), the dissemination of success stories, an engaging communications strategy, and future quarterly workshops in relation to agricultural or conservation professionals to build and manage projects feasibly and efficiently.

LGAC Members shared their thoughts on the workshop's outcomes as well as a reminder to consider audience demographics when communicating this data. In reference to local governments, information shared should speak to successful projects that can be reinterpreted as a model in their communities.

### **Collaboration Programs with Agricultural Supply Chain Corporations**

*Mauricio Rosales, Agriculture Projects Manager, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, Katie Morison, Manager, Responsible Sourcing, The Hershey Company & Aaron Harris, Sustainability & Animal Care Specialist, Land O'Lakes*

Mauricio, Katie and Aaron discussed the collaboration between the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, and corporate partners, Hershey and Land O'Lakes. The partnership was developed to support local dairy farmers in implementing on-farm BMPs with a goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help improve water quality within the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The group further supports farmers by incorporating economic incentives for these BMPs and project assistance ranging from riparian buffer plantings and animal waste storage system installations. Notably, the partnership worked with a Lancaster Amish farm to install buffers and restore a heavy use animal area thus reducing harmful nutrients from entering into their neighboring streams. LGAC toured this farm later that day.

### **Little Conestoga Blue/Green Corridor Project**

*John Cox, Senior Advisor, Lancaster Clean Water Partners*

John Cox described the restorative plans for the Little Conestoga Blue/Green Corridor, or a 2.5 mile stretch of creek that passes through four municipalities including Lancaster City, Lancaster Township, East Hempfield Township, and Manheim Township. With a watershed permit from the PA Department of Environmental Protection for inter-municipal coordination and a Memorandum of Understanding also developed between them, the four municipalities agreed to coordinate the project collectively, providing portion funds for engineering, support for grant applications as needed, and strategies for pollution reductions as well as long term maintenance and management of both the creek's restoration and trail development. Construction on the stream is expected to start in 2022, with an estimated project completion in 2026. LGAC toured sites along the Little Conestoga later that day.

**Friday, June 3rd, 2022**

## **Welcome**

Jasmine welcomed LGAC Members and guests to day 2 of the LGAC Quarterly Meeting.

## **Jurisdiction Breakfast Meeting Report-Outs and Member Updates**

*District of Columbia* discussed its 2025 priorities including environmental education, green jobs, diversity, equity, inclusion and justice, and tree plantings to name a few. They identified opportunities to do some strategic thinking as the new chair of the EC is the EPA Regional Administrator. They also reported that the District will be working with neighborhoods facing high rates of gun violence to establish environmental education programs to get residents involved in green projects specifically within the Kingman Island Ranger Workforce Development Program.

*Delaware* shared their interest in a Peer to Peer Learning Exchange Tour in the fall of 2022 and support for a recommendation based on workforce development which includes the education, training, and expansion of the green workforce. They also shared the state's preliminary thoughts for ARPA usage.

*Maryland* reflected on the Spring 2022 *Wandering MD's Waterways* bus tour between Baltimore and Tilghman Island, reported Patty Bubar's transition out of Montgomery county to a state representative, and thinking of future delegation appointments, the effects of administration changes at the MD Department of the Environment.

*Pennsylvania* discussed the Spring 2022 *Wandering PA's Waterways* bus tour within the Susquehanna watershed and suggested that staff invite elected officials from a wider target area next time. Leo Lutz shared that he took the "Adopt-a-Block" program idea, learned from Daniel Chao and DC, back to Lancaster County and was happy to see how many communities had adopted this program and the interest in replicating it.

*Virginia* welcomed Jake Klein, VA Department of Environmental Quality, and new jurisdiction representative to the VA delegation, reflected on the Spring 2022 *Wandering VA's Waterways* bus tour along the Commonwealth's Eastern Shore and urged staff to address the delegation's vacancy at a later date. They showed support for the discussion around 2022 EC recommendations but also suggested adding a focus on opportunities to create a green/blue job core as part of the letter. Andria McClellan shared their adopt-a-drain program and resilience incubator, *RISE*, that addresses new technologies around oyster growth. Richard Baugh reported that he has rejoined the Harrisonburg city council as its elected member.

*West Virginia* shared their 250 Trees for 250 years initiative and how half of their target amount of trees have been planted already, including 130 Pawpaw trees in the town of Paw Paw. They also reported the Eastern Panhandle is identifying hazard mitigation strategies, implementing a program to exemplify Region 9's MS4 infrastructure while amplifying Chesapeake Bay issues, and growing a green infrastructure and workforce development program initiated in partnership with NFWF and Blue Ridge Technical College.

## **Correctional Conservation Collaborative: Achieving Pennsylvania Forestry Goals through Workforce Development**

*Beth Ginter, Executive Director, Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Council (CCLC) and Shea Zwerver, PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)*

Beth and Shea discussed the PA Correctional Conservation Collaborative (CCC), a program developed by the DCNR serving as a workforce pipeline for incarcerated individuals to gain employable skills and certifications needed to gain careers in the natural resource and conservation industry upon returning to their communities. Using a grant obtained from the Chesapeake Bay Trust, the CCLC began an expansive project in 2020 to

- Analyze, assess and refine the CCC program, to allow for expansion across PA and the Bay watershed
- Research and gather information about other corrections-based and workforce development efforts in the Bay region and across the country
- Use research to inform and develop a series of reports, contact lists, checklists, assessments, a training manual and curriculum, and other supporting materials to facilitate expansion of the CCC

Interviews were conducted widely to identify additional needs and challenges to this program and its curricula while a mapping assessment was conducted to identify areas the program could be expanded to in order to pair correctional

facilities with restoration sites adequately. Results of this research will be shared with the goal of recruiting new prison sites, informing future training, and building employer awareness of the program. This model has been replicated in VA and currently seeking opportunities in MD and WV.

### **Riparian Rangers: Riparian forest buffer maintenance through trained volunteers**

*Rebecca Lauver, PA Forests Projects Coordinator, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay*

Rebecca shared the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay's Riparian Rangers program and its effort to provide planting support to PA communities. Developed in 2019, the program gathers volunteers to be trained in the implementation, maintenance, outreach and resources available to riparian buffer management. Specifically, rangers conduct monthly visits to a recently planted site beginning in March through October to ensure the vitality of new trees and conduct additional checks in the event of hazards such as flooding. The program has reached Lancaster, York, Chester, Lebanon, Cumberland, Adams, and Franklin Counties so far using a volunteer base developed through communication with local volunteer organizations, environmental stewardship groups, and the Alliance's general audience. Formal "Branches" of this program exist in York, Juniata, Cumberland, Snyder/Union, and Dauphin/Lebanon Counties with "Branch Leaders", or specially trained volunteers, who formally lead and coordinate Riparian Rangers efforts on a regional scale.

The Riparian Rangers program will continue to grow its volunteer base and Branches in neighboring counties. LGAC amplified the significance of this program.

### **Accelerated Conservation and Restoration Global Information System (GIS) Mapping Tool (still in beta format)**

*Scott Phillips, Chesapeake Bay Program Coordinator and John Wolf, Land Change Studies' Assistant Director, U.S. Geological Survey*

Scott and John introduced the Chesapeake Bay Program's beta GIS mapping tool and its ability to serve as a science-based approach to help target and accelerate CBP outcomes. Using and amplifying existing mapping resources, this tool can identify focus areas where multiple benefits such as water quality improvements, fish and habitat improvements, climate resiliency, land conservation, and overall benefits to the community can be achieved. Scott and John led a demonstration of the resource and its accessibility. They are also in the process of identifying specific management priorities thus welcoming local governments to work with them to develop a visual analysis of areas in question along with their data criteria.

LGAC Members found interest in this information but look for a roadmap to best utilize this information in a time efficient manner.

### **Final Thoughts/Actions from this Meeting**

*New Business* – no new business.

*Future Agenda Items* –

- Consider a discussion on Conowingo for an upcoming meeting including a conversation about dam removal.
- Research workforce development/green job training models for future LGAC discussion.
- Research freshwater mussels and invasive species attacking tree canopies for future meetings.

**Adjourn at 12:00pm**