



*LGAC Members Present:* James Barnhart, Markus Batchelor, Richard Baugh, Daniel Chao, Patty Bubar, Mark Dobbins, Amy Dubois, Sheila Finlayson, Jasmine Gore, Penny Gross, Josh Hastings, Michael Helfrich, Donna Iannone, Leo Lutz, Andria McClellan, Brienne Nadeau, Don Phillips, Robin Rich-Coates, John Thomas, Ann Simonetti, James Wheeler, Emeritus Bruce Williams representing Jake Day, Emeritus Phil Briddell, and LGAC Staff: Ola-Imani Davis and Jennifer Starr

*Speakers/Guests Present:* Douglas Austin (CBP), Carin Bisland (EPA), Jessica Blackburn (Alliance), Laura Cattell Noll (Alliance), Tracy Clarke (EPA), Meg Cole (Chesapeake Conservancy), Jeff Corbin (Restoration Systems), Mike Foreman (UVA), Kate Fritz (Alliance), Pat Gleason (EPA), Amy Handen (EPA), Annabelle Harvey (Chesapeake Conservancy), Nora Jackson (EPA), Paula Jasinski (GreenFin), Danny Lapin (Otsego County), Lara Lutz (Bay Journal), Megan Lehman (DEP), John Maleri (DC DOEE), Peter Marx (CCWC), Shannon Moore (Frederick County), Joanna Ogburn (Ogburn LLC), Will Parson (CBP), Matthew Pennington (WV), Tuana Phillips (EPA), Phil Stafford (DNR), Wendy Stringfellow (Forever Maryland), Kathy Stecker (MDE), Jim Sullivan (DE DNREC), Renee Thompson (USGS), Ashley White (CCAP), Justin Williams (VA DEQ)

#### **Thursday, March 18, 2021**

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

Chair Ann Simonetti called the meeting webinar to order at 10:02 am and welcomed Members, presenters, and invited guests to day one of the LGAC Quarterly Meeting.

##### **2021 Local Government Forum Preparation - Building Regional Collaborative Partnerships**

*Amy Handen, Local Implementation Programs Coordinator, EPA and Joanna Ogburn, Coordinator, Envision the Choptank*

To introduce the topic of the 2021 Local Government Forum: *Building Regional Watershed Partnerships*, Amy Handen described collective impact in regards to social science. Defining it as an intentional way of working together and sharing information for the purpose of solving a complex problem, the concept of collective impact maintains the goal of long-term commitments from a multi-sector group and the resolution of a specific issue according to the partnership perspective. Amy also explained how collective impact can be important to local governments, emphasizing how challenges often span multiple jurisdictions, long term relationship building enhances the ability to address a wider array of complex issues, greater long term change is influenced, and funding sources tend to lean towards initiatives with long term success in mind. To conclude, Amy presented the rough draft Problem Statement that will be explored during the Forum in June.

Joanna Ogburn discussed the collaborative initiative, "Envision the Choptank," which is a collective of individuals, organizations, and local entities, that seek to provide swimmable, fishable waters, and enhance the health and productivity of native oysters in a way that best meets the needs of surrounding communities within the Choptank watershed. According to their 3-year plan (2019 – 2022), the 4 goal areas of the partnership are to conserve natural resources, restore habitat and clean water, engage communities, and strengthen and expand the partnership. In working with local entities, Envision the Choptank has created a workgroup for local governments and underserved communities while maintaining priorities to engage in comprehensive plan updates, provide more technical assistance related to restoration projects, and improve coordination across departments and agencies.

LGAC expressed interest in the idea and process of a partnership as it related to building local comprehensive plans. Members also discussed the growing local problems with trash and litter and the need to collaboratively address this issue.

*Action: Staff to invite trash experts and examples for the next meeting and to consider the development of a recommendation around trash to the Chesapeake Executive Council.*

### **Federal Update - Chesapeake Watershed Restoration Efforts**

*Peter Marx, Federal Affairs Contractor, Choose Clean Water Coalition*

Peter Marx reviewed the incoming Biden Administration, including the current congressional delegation, FY21 Ominous Funding Bill, the potential new Bay Czar, and Region 3 EPA Administrator, Michael S. Regan. He also shared America's Conservation Enhancement Act, passed in 2020, which will reauthorize the EPA Chesapeake Bay Program (\$90-92 million annually), the creation of the Chesapeake WILD habitat restoration program under the US Fish & Wildlife Service (\$15 million annually), and reauthorization of the National Parks Service's Chesapeake Gateways Program (\$3 million annually).

### **Chesapeake Bay Program Updates**

*Carin Bisland, Branch Chief, Partnerships and Accountability Branch, EPA CBPO*

Carin Bisland provided updates on:

- The Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) Action Team, its membership, and its internal/external implementation plan through December 2021.
- The Chesapeake Bay Program's (CBP) Climate Change Action Team's membership and vision to update and communicate the Executive Council's (EC) position on current science-based understandings which will reinforce the negative impacts of climate change on the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed communities and natural resources.
- The Conowingo Watershed Implementation Plan, describing completed outreach efforts, comments received, and the next steps to draft the final implementation plan to be brought back to the Principal's Staff Committee (PSC) for approval. Upon approval, the WIP will ultimately be sent to the EPA for final evaluation and posted alongside the financial strategy and comment responses by summer 2021 (proposed).

*Action: Staff to share the Chesapeake Progress website.*

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

*Delaware* met alongside Maryland Members.

*District of Columbia* has experienced a buildup of trash and the Public Works Department is stretched thin due to increases related to the pandemic. DC officials are asking community volunteers to practice neighborhood cleanups and are taking a closer look at the jurisdiction's bag tax implementation. DC also reported that Anacostia restoration programs have begun returning. Finally, Daniel Chao is proposed to continue to serve as DC Vice Chair.

*Maryland* discussed its upcoming Peer to Peer Learning Exchange, a 2-day bus tour proposed for October 7-8, 2021, and the plan to consider COVID safety standards moving forward. MD also reported environmental justice efforts in Montgomery County to release a Request for Proposal (RFP) to install stormwater management practices in underrepresented communities identified as having impaired waters, no previous installations, and highlighting demographic needs by mapping equity. Finally, MD will nominate Bruce Williams to serve as MD Vice Chair.

*Pennsylvania* discussed cleanup efforts due to the increased amounts of trash since the pandemic. PA also has interest in a Peer to Peer Learning Exchange in the fall of 2021 and suggested to include MD and VA officials for them to see what is going on in PA. Finally, PA briefly discussed their Stormwater 101 panels and funding for municipalities to implement sewer and water infrastructure projects.

Virginia nominated Jasmine Gore as LGAC Chair and Richard Baugh as VA Vice Chair. Regarding environmental justice initiatives, VA discussed grant opportunities with energy efficiency and weatherization as well as the co-benefits of tree canopy within communities containing a high impervious surface area. There is pending legislation for VA local governments to place more standards on local tree canopy as well as the creation of a treebank.

West Virginia is looking to increase energy efficiency and references the Trees Act established in January 2020 to connect electric providers with non-profits that focus on tree plantings. This will allow the provider to offer funding for tree canopy with the goal to lessen stress on energy production and promote an energy sustainable community.

### **Land Use and Healthy Watersheds Goal Implementation Team Needs**

*Renee Thompson, Geographer, U.S. Geological Survey*

Renee Thompson described the goal of the CBP's Healthy Watershed Goal Implementation Team to sustain state-identified healthy waters and watersheds recognized for their high quality and/or high ecological value, with the outcome of a 100 percent of state-identified healthy waters and watersheds remaining healthy. She demonstrated how the Chesapeake Bay Open Data Portal can be used to identify and filter vast geographic data from around the Watershed.

Members recommended tutorial incorporation/additional training sessions on how to use these tools so local governments can use without the need to hire contractors.

*Action: Staff to share the data dashboard and Mentimeter link.*

### **Watershed Education Modules Update**

*Paula Jasinski, President, Green Fin Studios*

Paula Jasinski provided final updates on the Watershed Educational Materials for Local Elected Officials project. She reviewed each of the seven modules and their multimedia features. The next steps for the modules include finalizing the modules, launching on the CBP website, and conducting external outreach. Possible future modules consist of sea-level rise and tidal flooding, deeper exploration of human health implications, more videos including interviews, webinar walk-throughs and discussions, tailoring modules state by state, certificates of completion, and a logo/symbol as a marketable "seal." Paula thanked LGAC Members for their revisions and comments.

LGAC enjoyed how digestible the modules appeared and encouraged them to be consistently updated.

*Action: Staff to share the Bay 101 video as well as the Watershed Educational Modules upon official release.*

### **Friday, March 19, 2021**

Chair, Ann Simonetti welcomed Members and invited guests to day 2 of the LGAC Quarterly Meeting.

### **Trading and Offsets of Nutrients in the Watershed**

*Jeff Corbin, Senior Vice-President for Water Quality Markets & Mitigation, Restoration Systems*

Jeff Corbin described nutrient trading and offset programs with a focus on providing a foundation for establishing market-based incentives to help achieve CBP's nonpoint source reduction goals. Offering examples of trading initiatives based on usage of land, Jeff described credit buyers and usage, new certification regulations, and the evolution of these programs and beyond.

*Action: Staff to share the YouTube video about trading programs.*

## Bay Barometer

Will Parson, Multimedia Manager, Chesapeake Bay Program

Will Parson provided an overview of the 2019-2020 Bay Barometer: *Health and Restoration in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed*, and its general content. The Bay Barometer is to be released in spring 2021.

*Action: Staff will provide the 2019-2020 Bay Barometer and its features to Members upon release.*

## Business Meeting

- Approval of December 2020 Minutes – Penny Gross moved to approve the December 2020 Minutes, seconded by Richard Baugh. All in favor.
- Officer Elections
- Chair – Richard moved to elect Jasmine Gore as LGAC Chair, seconded by Penny Gross.
  - VA Vice Chair – Richard Baugh elected as VA Vice Chair.
  - DC Vice Chair – Daniel Chao elected as DC Vice Chair.
  - MD Vice Chair – Bruce Williams elected as interim MD Vice Chair until Mark Dobbins can fulfill the role in summer 2021.
  - PA Vice Chair – Leo Lutz elected as PA Vice Chair.
  - At-Large Vice Chair – Don Phillips elected as At-Large Vice Chair.

Penny Gross moved to accept the slate as presented, seconded by Sheila Finlayson.

- Approval of LGAC Bylaws and Strategic Plan – Bruce Williams moved to approve the amended LGAC Bylaws, seconded by Penny Gross. Updated LGAC Strategic Plan accepted.
- Executive Committee Report (Chair) – Ann reflected on her service as LGAC Chair. She announced her resignation from LGAC following her departure as Chair. Leo Lutz motioned to nominate Ann as an LGAC Emeritus Member, seconded by John Thomas. All in favor.
- Coordinator's Report (Coordinator) – Jennifer updated Members on 2021 meetings and LGAC and staff involvement. She reported staff will revisit the Watershed Currents newsletter format and content, Member participation during the STAC proposed Workshop (COVID-19 and funding impacts), and Member participation as reviewers of the 2021 Small Watershed Grants RFPs.

*Action: Staff to follow up with Member availability to participate in the STAC Workshop, or as NFWF SWG reviewers.*

- Local Leadership Workgroup Update (Chair) – Shannon briefed Members on the LLWG logic and action plan recently approved in early 2021. Reviewing the goals and outcomes, the workgroup has received feedback to include additional coordination with jurisdiction representatives. 2021-2023 focuses are to continue to increase the knowledge and capacity of local elected officials, encourage better state and regional collaboration, partner with local government trusted sources, create opportunities to work with the Bay Journal and continue conversations around DEI, land use, tree canopy, and circuit riders.

## New Business/ Future Agenda Items

LGAC Members expressed interest in revisiting the topic of trash.

*Action: Staff to solicit ideas from LGAC Members on future agenda items.*

## Final Thoughts/ Suggestions on this Meeting

Members reflected on the past year attending virtual meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic. Incoming Chair Jasmine Gore shared her final thoughts and offered her gratitude to Ann for her service as previous LGAC Chair.

**Adjourn at 12:04 pm**