Chesapeake Bay Program
Management Board
August 13, 2020

Program Update

CBPO Calendar

Aug. 18	Executive Council meeting
Aug. 19	Criteria Assessment Protocol Workgroup meeting
Aug. 19	Fish Passage Workgroup meeting
Aug. 20	Agriculture Workgroup meeting
Aug. 21	Stream Health Workgroup meeting
Aug. 24	Sustainable Fisheries GIT Executive Committee
Aug. 24	Water Quality GIT meeting
Aug. 25	Local Leadership Workgroup meeting
Aug. 26	Plastic Pollution Action Team meeting
Aug. 27	Scientific, Technical Assessment and Reporting (STAR) meeting
Sept. 2	Forestry Workgroup meeting
Sept. 2	Communications Workgroup meeting
Sept. 2	Land Use Workgroup meeting
Sept. 9	GIT Chairs quarterly meeting
Sept. 10-11	Chesapeake Bay Commission quarterly meeting
Sept. 15-16	Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) meeting
Sept. 16	Enhance Partnering, Leadership and Management GIT quarterly meeting
Sept. 16-17	Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) quarterly meeting
Sept. 17	Management Board meeting
Sept. 24-25	Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC) meeting

Updates

Chesapeake Executive Council to Meet "Virtually" on August 18 – The Chesapeake Executive Council (EC) will hold its annual meeting virtually on August 18. The EC members will sign a statement reaffirming the commitment of the partnership to embracing diversity, equity, inclusion and justice in all forms. They will also discuss the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought upon their respective jurisdictions and how the continued investment in Bay restoration can be used to help the economy and public health of the region. The meeting is also an opportunity for the EC members to hear from their Advisory Committees for citizens, science, and local government, elect a new chair, and provide brief remarks to the public and media. **Carin Bisland, 410-267-5732**

Results Released on Reducing Pollution to the Bay – On August 10, the Chesapeake Bay Program announced that the amount of nitrogen and sediment pollution entering the Chesapeake Bay continued to decrease, while phosphorus pollution slightly increased from the previous assessment period. Each year, the seven watershed jurisdictions report the practices they have implemented to decrease the amount of pollution entering the Chesapeake Bay. The modeling team at the Chesapeake Bay Program

runs this information through its modeling tools to generate estimates of how far our partners have come toward meeting their individual pollutant reduction goals as outlined in the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (Bay TMDL). As of 2019, those practices are estimated to have lowered overall nitrogen pollution by 11% and practices are currently in place to achieve 39% of the Bay TMDL nitrogen reductions, 49% of the Bay TMDL phosphorus reductions and 100% of the Bay TMDL sediment reductions**. Rachel Felver, 410-267-5740**

EPA Releases Evaluations of Two-Year Milestones – On Wednesday, July 29, EPA released its evaluations of final 2020-2021 milestones submitted by the six Bay watershed states - Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Delaware, West Virginia and New York – the District of Columbia and a set of federal agencies. In addition to the current milestone period, EPA's reviews also focused on progress reported during 2018-2019 milestone period**.** The evaluations are posted on the Chesapeake Bay TMDL website – https://www.epa.gov/chesapeake-bay-tmdl
Tom Damm, 215-814-5560, Dianne McNally, 215-814-3297

Advisory Committee Updates

Local Government Advisory Committee

The purpose of the LGAC is to advise the Executive Council on how to effectively implement projects and engage the support of local governments to achieve the goals of the Bay Agreement.

- New member: LGAC welcomes Virginia delegation member Amy Dubois, Chair of the Board of Supervisors for Mathews County and thanks former King George County Supervisor Ruby Brabo for her time on LGAC.
- LGAC Recommendations: LGAC Chair Ann Simonetti presented recommendations and priorities to the Maryland Chesapeake Bay Cabinet on July 21st. Ann will be presenting LGAC's 2020 Recommendations to the Chesapeake Executive Council on August 18th during the virtual annual meeting.
- Stormwater 101: Four Pennsylvania LGAC members moderated a Stormwater 101 for Local Elected Officials session during a virtual workshop for the PA State Association of Township Supervisors. In addition, several LGAC members are part of the planning committee for the September 24 Local Government Forum on building local community resilience against climate. This Forum is being jointly developed and implemented by LGAC and the CBP Climate Resiliency Workgroup.
- LGAC still seeks New York representative.

Questions about LGAC should be directed to LGAC Coordinator Jennifer Starr at jstarr@allianceforthebay.org. To be added to the Interested Parties list, please contact LGAC Staff at lgac@allianceforthebay.org.

Citizens' Advisory Committee

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) is charged with responsibility for representing residents and stakeholders of the Chesapeake Bay watershed in the restoration effort and advising the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership on all aspects of restoration.

- The CAC held their quarterly meeting virtually on May 21st. Members discussed impacts on Watershed restoration amid the COVID-19 health crisis and their annual recommendations to the Chesapeake Bay Executive Council.
- Leadership: CAC officers are Matt Ehrhart (PA), Chair and Julie Lawson (DC), Vice-Chair.

To be added to CAC's Interested Parties List, please contact: Adam Bray abray@allianceforthebay.org for program questions, contact Jessica Blackburn jblackburn@allianceforthebay.org

Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC)

The Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) provides scientific and technical guidance to the Chesapeake Bay Program on measures to restore and protect the Chesapeake Bay.

- ***Quarterly Meetings:***
  STAC hosted its first meeting of FY2020 on June 11th over web conferencing services. This meeting focused on reviewing draft products for the STAC effort "Achieving Water Quality Goals in the Chesapeake Bay: An Evaluation of System Response". STAC received a report-out from the workshop *Incorporating Freshwater Mussels in the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership*, updates on the SRS process, and prepared the STAC letter to the CBP Executive Council. STAC will hear from EPA ORD and Workgroup Chairs to increase STAC input on science needs within the region. Various talks were given on the impact of COVID on CBP goals, such as the agricultural industry and local government. Presentations from this meeting can be found on the June Quarterly Meeting Webpage.

  STAC's next quarterly meeting will be on September 15-16 over Zoom conferencing. The agenda is still under development, but STAC will continue to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on CBP goals and connections with STAC's "*Achieving Water Quality Goals in the Chesapeake Bay: An Assessment of System Response and Science Needs"* effort. STAC will also engage in a discussion on diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice as it relates to STAC membership and STAC workshop participation. Materials and call-in information will be made available on the September Quarterly Meeting Webpage.

- ***STAC 2020 Remaining Quarterly Meeting Dates***
  - September 15-16, 2020
  - December 14-15, 2020

- ***FY2020 STAC Workshops: Approved Proposals***
  STAC will be hosting four workshops in FY2020, listed below. Planning is underway for all of these activities and details will be released as planning continues.
  1. *Understanding Genetics for Successful Conservation and Restoration of Resilient Chesapeake Bay Brook Trout Populations*
  2. *Advancing Regenerative Agriculture: Exploring Barriers and Incentives to BMP Adoption*
  3. *Overcoming the Hurdle: Addressing BMP Implementation Through a Social Science Lens*
  4. *Assessing the Water Quality, Habitat and Social Benefits to Green Riprap*

  Information regarding past workshops, including agendas, presentations, and reports (as they become available) can be found on the workshop homepage.

- ***Upcoming Reports:***
  STAC is working to finalize the following six reports. Information regarding workshops held prior to January 2018 can be found on the STAC archived workshop homepage.

  1. Linking Wetland Workplan Goals to Enhance Capacity, Increase Implementation (FY2015)
  2. Assessing Uncertainty in the CBP Modeling System (FY2015)
  3. Comparison of Shallow Water Models for Use in Supporting Chesapeake Bay Management Decision-making (FY2015)
  4. An Analytical Framework for Aligning Chesapeake Bay Program Monitoring Efforts to Support Climate Change (FY2016)
  5. Chesapeake Bay Program Climate Change Modeling 2.0 (FY2018)
  6. Linking In-Field and Edge-of-Field Water Management to Soil and Watershed Health (FY2019)
  7. Incorporating Freshwater Mussels in the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership (FY2019)
  8. Satellite Image Integration for the Chesapeake Bay SAV Monitoring Program (FY2019)

  STAC Response to COVID-19: Challenges and Opportunities
  While COVID-19 restrictions will prevent STAC from meeting in person in the near future, STAC Staff and members have been exploring the advantages of virtual meetings, workshops, and project planning. Virtual meetings present unique challenges, as well as new opportunities to engage with STAC and the CBP Partnership. Web conferencing services provide interactive digital tools such as polling, instant 'reactions', file sharing, and 'breakout groups'. With STAC members from all over the Bay region, virtual meetings will bring together science and technical experts while reducing STAC's carbon footprint. Last year, STAC members traveled an estimated 33,000 miles to attend quarterly meetings and workshops. If we assume all STAC members have average to medium cars with 21 mpg fuel economy, STAC business emitted as much as four typical passenger vehicles in 2019. This past March, the STAC quarterly meeting was remote due to social distancing measures. Working from a conference room on the Smithsonian Environmental Campus with a small number of CRC and CBP partner staff, our March meeting emissions costs were 3.4% of last year's total emissions.

  STAC Staff continues to conduct extensive research on web conferencing services and strategies in order to maintain the productivity of the committee, and we look forward to continuing our work to bring the latest science to the Chesapeake Bay management community.

For any inquiries, or to be added to STAC's Interested Parties list, contact STAC Coordinator, Annabelle Harvey (harveya@cheapeake.org)

Goal Implementation Team, STAR and Communication Workgroup Updates

Indicators

The following indicators were updated since the July Management Board meeting:

Indicator	*Statement of Status/Progress*	*Link*
Public Access	Between 2010 and 2019, 194 boat ramps, fishing piers and other public access sites were opened on and around the Chesapeake Bay. This marks a 65% achievement of the goal to add 300 new access sites to the watershed by 2025 and	https://www.chesapeakeprogress.com/engaged-communities/public-access

	brings the total number of access sites in the region to 1,333.	
SAV	According to preliminary data from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS), 66,387 acres of underwater grasses were mapped in the Chesapeake Bay in 2019. This is 51% of the Chesapeake Bay Program's 2025 restoration target of 130,000 acres and 36% of the partnership's 185,000-acre goal. Although the 66,387 acres mapped in 2019 is a 70% increase from the 38,958 acres observed during the first survey in 1984, it is a 17% decrease from the preceding 10-year average of 79,738 acres and a 38% decrease from 2018 when it was estimated that the Bay may have supported up to 108,078 acres of underwater grasses. Many factors prevented complete mapping of SAV acres in 2018 which resulted in an estimate calculated by combining mapped acreage (99,511 acres) with 2017 data (8,567 acres) for the region that was not mapped to estimate the acreage in the Bay.	https://www.chesapeakeprogress.com/abundant-life/sav
Blue Crab Abundance	Between 2019 and 2020, the abundance of adult (age 1+) female blue crabs in the Chesapeake Bay decreased 26% from 191 million to 141 million. This number is above the 70 million threshold which is considered to be the minimum sustainable level for female blue crabs in the Bay, but lower than the target of 215 million.	https://www.chesapeakeprogress.com/abundant-life/blue-crab-abundance
Blue Crab Management	Between 2019 and 2020, the abundance of adult (age 1+) female blue crabs in the Chesapeake Bay decreased 26% from 191 million to 141 million. This number is above the 70 million threshold which is considered to be the minimum sustainable level for female blue crabs in the Bay, but lower than the target of 215 million. Because of natural variability in annual blue crab populations, blue crab abundance fluctuates from year to year. For example, the 2020 abundance estimate of 141 million is a decrease from 2019, but similar to the 2018 estimate of 147 million female blue crabs.	https://www.chesapeakeprogress.com/abundant-life/blue-crab-abundance
Reducing Pollution Indicator (RPI)	As of 2019, best management practices (BMPs) to reduce pollution are in place to achieve 39% of the nitrogen reductions, 49%	https://www.chesapeakeprogress.com/clean-

	of the phosphorus reductions and 100% of the sediment reductions needed to attain applicable water quality standards when compared to the 2009 baseline established in the **Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (Bay TMDL)**. According to the **Chesapeake Assessment Scenario Tool (CAST)**, BMPs (pollution controls) put in place in the Chesapeake Bay watershed between 2009 and 2019 lowered nitrogen loads 11%, phosphorus loads 10% and sediment loads 4%. According to BMP and wastewater data from jurisdictions, and the watershed conditions incorporated in CAST, the reductions in estimated nitrogen and phosphorus pollution loads between 2009 and 2019 are mostly due to upgrades to wastewater treatment facilities. The reductions in sediment loads are primarily from the agricultural sector. Between 2018 and 2019, nitrogen loads decreased an estimated 0.5% compared to the average annual load change of 1.2%, phosphorus loads increased an estimated 3% compared to the average annual load reduction of 1.5%, and sediment loads decreased an estimated 0.6% compared to the average annual load reduction of 0.4%.	water/watershed-implementation-plans

Indicators that are likely to be updated before or close to the next Management Board meeting include:

- *Environmental Literacy Planning – update with 2019 data*
- *Student MWEE – update with 2019 data*

NOTE: an asterisk* denotes new indicators that have been approved through the Status and Trends workgroup under STAR. The Indicators Coordinator provides notification to the Management Board and to STAR of these new indicators; members of either group may request additional information or a presentation at a meeting on these new indicators.

Contact: Katheryn Barnhart, Barnhart.Katheryn@epa.gov

Fisheries Goal Implementation Team

The Sustainable Fisheries GIT focuses on advancing ecosystem-based fisheries management by using science to make informed fishery management decisions that cross state boundaries.

- Dredge Survey: Results of the blue crab 2020 Winter Dredge Survey were released by state jurisdictions, and are being compiled in the annual Advisory Report, expected to be released by CBSAC in July. The population maintains a healthy number of spawning-age female crabs.
- Catfish: The Invasive Catfish Management Strategy includes the following recommendations for the workgroup and management jurisdictions to implement: 1) conduct outreach and marketing campaigns 2) remove processing barriers, 3) conduct scientific research, and 4) use tributary-specific management approaches.

Contact: Bruce Vogt; bruce.vogt@noaa.gov

Habitat Goal Implementation Team

The Habitat GIT works to restore a network of land and water habitats to afford a range of public benefits and to support priority species.

- Leadership: The HGIT is seeking nominations for three volunteer leadership positions: HGIT Co-chair, Wetland Workgroup Co-chair, and Stream Health Workgroup Co-chair. The position descriptions were shared with MB members, the Habitat GIT, and Diversity Workgroup. Nominations are being requested by August 13.

- The Brook Trout Workgroup will have their annual meeting on Thursday, August 6. The workgroup plans to discuss member updates from the past year and the possibility of developing a restoration tracking tool.

- The Fish Passage Workgroup will have their annual meeting on Wednesday, August 19. The workgroup plans to discuss updates on the work being done by member states as well as on Maryland's culvert guidance and dam removal mitigation calculator.

- The Stream Health workgroup will hold their quarterly meeting on Friday, August 21. The workgroup plans to switch to a bi-monthly meeting schedule and will meet next in October. At the August meeting, the workgroup will discuss updates on work being conducted with USGS on identification of stressors to the stream ecosystem. The workgroup will also hear a presentation on freshwater mussels as a BMP by Joe Wood of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

- The Wetland Workgroup will hold their next bi-monthly meeting on Tuesday, August 18. They plan to discuss progress on the Logic and Action plan items made in the past year, as well as any anticipated changes to the L&A plan and Management Strategy in advance of the SRS process this fall. They will also hear presentations about the West Virginia Wetland Condition Assessment Tool and new living shorelines regulations in Virginia.

- The Understanding Brook Trout Genetics STAC Workshop held its first steering committee meeting on Monday, August 3. At the meeting, the group discussed potential invitees for the workshop as well as possible meeting times. The group decided to aim to hold the workshop in

person in mid-March but will remain flexible. The steering committee will come to a final decision on the workshop location in January.

Habitat GIT Contact: Julianna Greenberg and Megan Ossmann
(greenberg.julianna@epa.gov; ossman.megan@epa.gov)

Water Quality Goal Implementation Team

The Water Quality GIT works to evaluate, focus and accelerates the implementation of practices, policies and programs that will restore water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal tributaries to conditions that support living resources and protect human health.

The WQGIT held a meeting on July 27, 2020. A subset of topics is listed below:

1. WQGIT approved Matt Reis (DC Water) as the new chair of the Wastewater Treatment Workgroup.
2. WQGIT approved the task statement for the BMP Verification Ad-Hoc Action Team with the understanding that:
    a. A "deliverables" section will be added and,
    b. The statement can be modified, as needed.
3. WQGIT approved Chesapeake Bay Program's response to the STAC workshop on Chemicals of Emerging Concern (CEC) in Urban and Agricultural Landscapes.
4. WQGIT approved the following:
    a. Incorporate the additional nitrogen (N) and phosphorus (P) loads due to 2025 climate change conditions into Programmatic Milestones no later than the 2022-2023 milestones, with all actions to achieve those reductions in place by 2025.
    b. Include a narrative in the Milestones that describe the current estimated jurisdiction-specific nutrient loads due to 2035 climate change conditions.
5. The WQGIT leadership will create a narrative of all the climate allocation options actions and decisions to date. This will be sent to the WQGIT membership for their review. A survey will be sent to the group regarding the remaining climate allocation options in order to reach consensus during the August 24 WQGIT meeting.

The WQGIT will hold a conference call on August 24, 2020. A subset of topics to be discussed includes:

- Climate Allocation Options
- Pilot Study to Develop and Use FieldDoc for BMP Planning, Tracking, and Reporting
- STAC Multi-Functional Buffers Report
- BMP Verification
- CAST 2021 Workplan

Contact: Lucinda Power, power.lucinda@epa.gov

Healthy Watersheds Goal Implementation Team

The goal of the Maintain Healthy Watersheds Goal Implementation Team (GIT 4) is to maintain local watershed health across a range of landscape contexts. With this goal, GIT 4 intends to bring attention to the challenge of protecting streams and watersheds that are healthy today. This initiative complements the "dirty waters" approach which focuses on restoring impaired waters.

- The HWGIT staff are working on the development of two Chesapeake Healthy Watersheds Assessment (CHWA) products, communicating use and interpretation of the CHWA with a Storymap and a visualization tool for the data.
- HWGIT Coordinator and members of the GIS team attended a coding training hosted by SESYNC, for the purpose of for the continued management of CHWA database.
- HWGIT staff met with the contractor team for the FY19 GIT funding project for the implementation of the CHWA in Maryland's Tier II watersheds, and are continuing work on FY18 project on the Development of improved methodology for data collection of a Chesapeake Bay Protected Lands indicator

Contact: Renee Thompson; rthompso@chesapeakebay.net

Foster Stewardship Goal Implementation Team

The Fostering Stewardship GIT promotes individual stewardship, supports environmental education for all ages, and assists citizens, communities and local governments in undertaking initiatives to achieve restoration and conservation in the Chesapeake region. It aims to build public support of restoration efforts and increase citizen engagement and active stewardship.

- Chesapeake Conservation Partnership
    - The Chesapeake Conservation Partnership held a virtual Steering Committee meeting on June 26th, 2020. Steering Committee Members worked to update the 2020-2021 Logic & Action Plan.
    - The workgroup continues to add Chesapeake Conservation Success Stories to its new platform success.chesapeakeconservation.org. Management Board Members can email Olivia Wisner (wisnero@chesapeake.org) if they have a Conservation Success Story that they'd like to be developed
- Citizen Stewardship Team
    - Workgroup Chairs Kacey Wetzel and Suzanne Etgen have been working closely with Amy Handen (EPA) to brainstorm ways to integrate social science into the Chesapeake Bay Program.
    - The Stewardship workgroup has continued work on the web-based tool to house and promote the use of the stewardship index data set. This project (generously supported by GIT funding) will ensure the development of a hub for social science tools and information for the Chesapeake Bay Program.

- Education Workgroup
    - In response to its Quarterly Progress Meeting in May, the Education workgroup is updating its 2020-2021 Logic and Action Plans for the Student, Planning, and Sustainable Schools outcomes.
    - The Education Workgroup has begun work on its GIT funded project to develop the Regional Outdoor Learning Network (ROLN). ROLN aims to 1) increase communication across partners and local implementation networks to support environmental literacy, including

more and better designed MWEEs and 2) increase the number of teacher-supported systemic environmental literacy programs occurring in priority school districts.
    - The Education Workgroup has been working closely with the Chesapeake Bay Program Web Team to update elements of baybackpack.com, an Environmental Literacy teaching resource for formal and non-formal educators in the watershed.

- Public Access Planning Team
    - In response to the current health crisis, the Public Access team will not be hosting it's regular spring workgroup meeting.

Diversity Workgroup

- Next meeting: The next Diversity Workgroup meeting will be in September (date TBD). The workgroup's Steering Committee met in July to discuss potential agenda topics. Current ideas broadly include discussion on the effects of COVID-19 and how the pandemic is affecting our work, what Chesapeake Bay organizations are doing to intentionally address systemic racism, and how CBP Goal Implementation Teams and workgroups are implementing recommendations from the CBP DEIJ Strategy.
- Cultural Humility Training: The Diversity Workgroup is continuing to work with Skeo Solutions to provide Cultural Humility trainings for members of the partnership. Trainings will be virtual and will occur in September and October. Skeo is also working on several tools and resources that will allow the partnership to better integrate DEIJ language and considerations into workplans as well as the CBP Governance Document.
- On July 16, the Principals' Staff Committee (PSC) finalized the CBP Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) Statement and approved it for signatures by members of the Executive Council (EC) with a formal announcement set for the August 18 Annual EC Meeting.
- On July 30, the PSC agreed through consensus to sign a PSC DEIJ Action Statement by August 7, 2020 that includes actionable next steps the PSC agrees the CBP partnership will take to begin to implement the EC DEIJ Statement and based on recommendations from the CBP DEIJ Strategy.

Diversity workgroup contact: Tuana Phillips; phillips.tuana@epa.gov

Contact: Olivia Wisner; olivia_wisner@nps.gov

Enhance Partnering, Leadership and Management Goal Implementation Team

The goal of the Enhance Partnering, Leadership and Management GIT is to continually improve the governance and management of the CBP Partnership.

Chesapeake Bay Program Strategy Review System

ChesapeakeDecisions was launched in July 2019 in support of the Strategy Review System (SRS). ChesapeakeDecisions is a tool that promotes transparency and guides the Chesapeake Bay Program's Goal Implementation Teams (GITs) and Management Board members through the Strategy Review System; a structured process that applies adaptive management to our work toward the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*. All SRS documents, including schedules and materials relating to the Quarterly Progress Meetings, can be found on ChesapeakeDecisions.

The Clean Water Cohort is currently going through the SRS process. Their Quarterly Progress Meeting will take place on August 13, 2020. The Climate Change and Resiliency cohort will be the next cohort to undergo the process—starting in September 2020.

Contact: Doreen Vetter, vetter.doreen@epa.gov

Quarterly GIT 6 Meeting – Summer 2020

The GIT 6 Summer Quarterly Meeting took place on June 17, 2020 as a conference call. Agenda topics included: A discussion on the draft Organizational Analysis Data Collection and Communication Plan, Strategy Review System (SRS) process and facilitation updates, Governance Document Log of Revision updates, and workgroup updates. Contact: Dave Goshorn, david.goshorn@maryland.gov

FY 2020 GIT Funding

The GIT Funding Advisory Team (GIT FAT) met with the GIT Chairs on August 5, 2020 to address concerns raised about the process and decide on a path forward. Updates on the path forward and the annual Project Scoring/Ranking event are forthcoming. Contact: Greg Allen (Coordinator), allen.greg@epa.gov or Chantal Madray (Staffer), madray.chantal@epa.gov

Budget and Finance Workgroup

The Budget and Finance Workgroup (BFWG) Summer Quarterly Meeting will take place on July 29, 2020 as a conference call. Agenda topics will include budget impacts as a result of COVID-19, Finance Forum consulting hours progress/updates, and Conowingo Finance Report updates. Contact: Jim Edward (Co-Chair), edward.james@epa.gov; Dr. Elliott Campbell (Co-Chair), elliott.campbell@maryland.gov or Michelle Guck (Coordinator), guck.michelle@epa.gov

Local Leadership Workgroup

The Local Leadership Workgroup (LLWG) Summer Quarterly Meeting will take place on August 25, 2020 as a conference call. Agenda topics will include: a review of the Management Strategy and past two years, an assessment of gaps and lessons learned, and a discussion on how to improve efforts in the next two years. The Workgroup is working toward developing cross-outcome watershed educational materials for elected officials through a FY19 GIT-funded project and is excited to start sharing these, and other vetted resources, in collaboration with trusted sources. Contact: Laura Cattell Noll (Coordinator), lnoll@allianceforthebay.org or Matt Pennington (Chair), MPennington@region9wv.com

GIT 6 Contact: Chantal Madray, madray.chantal@epa.gov

Scientific, Technical Assessment, and Reporting Team

The purpose of STAR (Scientific, Technical Analysis and Reporting) is to facilitate productive deployment of scientific resources, to provide timely, quality information to managers, and to expand communication between workgroups.

Criteria Assessment Protocol (CAP) Workgroup

The CAP WG is scheduled to meet in August for a climate themed meeting. Discussion will be around analyses done about temperature influence on the ability to meet criteria, 2016 - 2018 water quality standards attainment indicator results, and the future of existing criteria.

Data Integrity Workgroup

- Maryland Chesapeake Bay Monitoring Summary:
  The Maryland Department of Natural Resources shut down the Chesapeake Bay long-term water quality and habitat monitoring programs on March 13, 2020 due to the COVID-19 shut down and mandatory stay at home policy implemented by Maryland Governor Larry Hogan. During the shut down, staff that could telework, process and review existing data, conduct data analysis and update critical documents, did so. Field staff also conducted data verification and worked on Quality Assurance Plans.
  By the middle of May, the Department developed rigorous Field Operation guidelines that included detailed descriptions on social distancing, wearing personal protection equipment (PPE) and following strict protocols on how to work in the field while ensuring staff safety to the greatest extent possible under the pandemic circumstances. These procedures were approved by the Maryland State House and staff were ultimately allowed back in the field in late May.
  The May Chesapeake Bay Mainstem monitoring cruise was conducted the week of May 25. Staff also began the implementation of shallow water monitoring, tributary and nontidal network sampling. All QAPPs are up to date and data already collected has been reviewed and quality assured, with data analysis continuing. Maryland's Chesapeake Biological Laboratory, the analytical lab that processes and analyzes our tidal chemical parameters (nitrogen, phosphorus, sediment and chlorophyll), was able to reopen and begin processing samples in June, ensuring that all water quality samples that are collected are able to be processed within the proper holding time. All Bay-related tidal and non-tidal monitoring is being fully implemented in Maryland. There was an approximate two and a half month gap in our monitoring programs, the longest gap since most of the Bay monitoring program began in 1985. Although the monitoring gap is significant, our statisticians and academic partners are looking at the impact on assessing long-term water quality trends and characterizations, if any.

  It was critical to implement the May Chesapeake Bay Mainstem monitoring cruises in May in order to track the 2020 summer hypoxia conditions. The Hypoxia Forecast was released on June 17 and called for a smaller than normal "dead zone" due to slightly less nitrogen entering the Bay from January - May from the nine major River Input Monitoring stations and the point source loads from below the fall line. The dissolved oxygen monitoring results from the May cruise confirmed less than average hypoxia compared to previous May cruises. The cruise-by-cruise Maryland hypoxia results during May - September will be available on the Department's Eyes on the Bay website.
- Virginia Chesapeake Bay Monitoring Summary:
  The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality suspended monitoring for all its programs on March 17 in response to the mandatory social distancing policy implemented by Virginia Governor Ralph Northam. During the shutdown, staff focused on mandatory Standard Operating

Procedure (SOP) training, Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs) and SOP review and participation on committees to develop field procedures on how to best implement sampling under COVID-19 conditions. Field staff also conducted data verification and review of Quality Assurance and Quality Control sample results. All QAPPs have been submitted to the Bay Program and approved or are under review. After consulting with DEQ regarding the university's policies implemented in response to COVID-19 and at the direction of the governor, Old Dominion University also suspended field sampling in May. Virginia's shallow water monitoring conducted by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science and River Input Monitoring conducted by the US Geological Survey continued uninterrupted. VIMS also picked up additional sites in the York River to allow for continuous monitoring in the tributary.

On May 4, DEQ resumed single party field operations after developing rigorous field operation guidelines that included detailed descriptions on social distancing, wearing personal protection equipment (PPE) and following strict protocols on how to work in the field to maximize staff safety. These procedures were developed in conjunction with regional directors. Once the single party runs were implemented, DEQ turned its focus on boat sampling protocols. After rigorous review, our field staff were allowed to reinstate boat sampling the second week of June. Regions initiated sampling for Bay tributary runs after testing equipment and boats for any mechanical issues due to the two to three month hiatus.

Stage Three of getting DEQ's Bay Program back on track was the development of close quarter sampling protocols developed in coordination with regional directors and currently under review by our leadership team. Once these protocols are approved, the non-tidal program at DEQ will resume.

ODU also developed its sampling protocols and purchased PPE during April and resumed monitoring on the mainstem in May.

There was an approximate two and a half to three month gap in our mainstem and tributary monitoring programs, which should not affect our ability to determine long-term trends due to the long period of record (25 plus years) for these programs. No gaps were introduced to our shallow water monitoring program data or for data collected at most sites under the nontidal program.

STAR

At the July STAR meeting, UMCES IAN team briefed STAR members on the latest progress on the 2020 UMCES Chesapeake Bay Report Card, and had a discussion on how GITs can help fill the data gaps for empty report card indexes. Additionally, a representative from each of the outcomes under the Clean Water Cohort (the Forest Buffers, Toxics Contaminants Policy and Prevention, Toxics Contaminants Research, Water Quality Standards Attainment and Monitoring, and 2017 and 2025 Watershed Implementation Plans outcomes) provided their SRS Quarterly Progress presentation planned for the August Management Board meeting. Participants at the STAR meeting provided constructive feedback on each presentation. Next STAR meeting will be held on August 27.

Modeling Workgroup

The Modeling WG continues to develop potential approaches to allocate climate change risk nutrient loads in support of WQGIT decision making. In addition, the Virginia DEQ led James Chlorophyll Assessment is being supported through the provision of watershed, airshed, and tidal Bay model inputs under 2025 climate conditions for a number of scenarios. Good guidance on fine scale watershed model development (CBP Regional Hydrology Model) was provided at the July 7-8 Quarterly Review meeting. The next Modeling WG Quarterly Review will be held on October 6-7.

Integrated Monitoring Network

IMN will be convening in September to discuss potential action items for the 2020 - 2021 Water Quality Standards Attainment and Monitoring (WQSTAM) Logic & Action Plan, which illustrates the link between the factors that could impact the partnership's ability to achieve the WQSTAM outcome. At the August 13th Management Board (MB) meeting, the outcome will present its findings from the 2018 - 2019 Logic & Action Plan to highlight successes, challenges, and requests for action from MB members.

Integrated Trends and Analysis Team (ITAT)

ITAT members continued their ongoing research to better identify major drivers of water quality change and recently presented work on clustering and classification of nutrient export patterns at the Chesapeake nontidal network stations (Joel Bostic, UMCES), open water DO analysis using shallow water data in comparison to long-term monitoring data (Breck Sullivan, CRC), and water quality analysis for the South River (Cuiyin Wu, CRC). ITAT also gave a demonstration of the updated shinyapp in R for Baytrendsmap which maps the results computed from Generalized Additive Models using the Baytrends package. The workgroup plans to give additional demonstrations of the tool so if interested, please contact Jennifer Keisman (jkeisman@usgs.gov).

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Communications Workgroup

The Communications Workgroup provides strategic planning and expert advice to support the communication needs of the Chesapeake Bay Program partners, and spur public action through consistent messaging, expanded media coverage, use of multimedia and online tools, comprehensive branding and promotion, outreach to stakeholders, and coordinated internal and external communications.

Communications Workgroup:

The Communications Workgroup held its monthly meeting on August 5. We coordinated shared messaging around National Water Quality Month and International Day of the World's Indigenous People (August 9). Rachel Felver provided the workgroup with a preview of the upcoming Executive Council meeting on August 18. We also heard from Michelle DiNicola and Deb Klenotic, both from Pennsylvania DEP, about their recent story map: Healthy Waters, Healthy Communities.

Communications Office and Web Team:

On July 8, the Communications Office released the 2019 data on underwater grass abundance in the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal tributaries. The Bay experienced a 38% drop in abundance.

On August 10, the Communications Office released the latest information on the reducing pollution indicator, which tracks nutrient and sediment pollution to the Chesapeake.

The 2020 Executive Council meeting will take place on August 18. This year's theme is Healthy Bay, Healthy People, Healthy Economy. Members will sign a statement supporting the partnerships efforts related to diversity, equity, inclusion and justice. They will also discuss Bay restoration efforts in the face of COVID-19 and how a continued focus on Bay restoration can help economic recovery efforts, public health and underserved communities.

The Communications Office published the following blogs in July:

- Chesapeake Bay blue crab population remains healthy and sustainable, despite population decline: Management efforts continue to ensure protection and sustainability of Chesapeake Bay blue crabs
- Three Chesapeake beaches reflect the history of desegregation in the United States: Access to public beaches is as meaningful now as ever
- A harmful algal bloom caught red handed: As pollution persists, so do mahogany tides
- Above average river flows impact underwater grasses: Abundance declines after several years of growth
- Fireflies shed light on the benefits of a natural yard: As a sign of summer, fireflies light up the Chesapeake watershed
- Environmental education adapts to virtual learning: Parents can help their children continue to experience nature
- A fresh perspective on revitalizing Maryland's Eastern Shore: A young Eastern Shore native emerges as a leader in community enrichment
- Moths pick up the night shift: The fascinating features and critical role of these nocturnal insects
- A Latino environmental organization pivots to COVID-19 relief: ecoLatinos is serving communities as they navigate new health risks
- The art of wooden boatbuilding is alive and well at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum: Knowledge and traditions handed down over generations help shipbuilders create a new replica of the historic Maryland Dove
- Making the outdoors more accessible to the Chesapeake's Latinx communities: National Park Service Chesapeake Bay Office and Corazón Latino launch new partnership to make public access sites more inclusive

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Recent Meetings and Events

July 14	Federal Facilities Workgroup meeting
July 15	Criteria Assessment Protocol Workgroup meeting
July 16	Principals' Staff Committee Conference Call
July 16	Agriculture Workgroup meeting
July 20	Climate Resiliency Workgroup meeting
July 20	Sustainable Fisheries GIT Executive Committee

July 23	Scientific, Technical Assessment and Reporting (STAR) meeting - Clean Water SRS Cohort practice presentations
July 27	Water Quality Goal Implementation Team meeting
July 29	Budget and Finance Workgroup quarterly meeting
Aug. 5	Communications Workgroup meeting
Aug. 5	Forestry Workgroup meeting
Aug. 5	Land Use Workgroup meeting
Aug. 6	Watershed Technical Workgroup meeting
Aug. 12	Toxic Contaminants Workgroup meeting