



Communications Workgroup Monthly Conference Call Minutes

September 6, 2017

Participants

Catherine Krikstan, UMCES-CBP (Chair)
Stephanie Smith, ACB-CBP (Coordinator)
Joan Smedinghoff, CRC-CBP (Staff)
Greg Barranco, EPA-Partnership GIT
Kim Couranz, NOAA-Fish GIT
Margot Cumming, CRC-Habitat GIT
Caroline Donovan, UMCES-IAN
Rachel Felver, ACB-CBP
Laura Free, EPA-SRS Small Group
Bill Hayden, VA DEQ

Caitlyn Johnstone, ACB-CBP
Deb Klenotic, PA DEP
Phil Miller, DE DNREC
Leila Mitchell, NYS DEC
Will Parson, ACB-CBP
Jennifer Starr, ACB-LGAC
Darius Stanton, CRC-Diversity Workgroup
Guy Stephens, UMCES-CBP
Tom Wenz, EPA-Water Quality GIT

I. Welcome ([Updates](#))

- Our monthly calls will be on the first Wednesday of the month, from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.
- Stephanie Smith will be leaving the Bay Program for a new position at the National Academy of Science. Rachel Felver will take her place as Workgroup Coordinator.

II. Vice Chair Vote

- Deb Kenotic was voted in as Vice Chair.

III. Goal Implementation Team Funding Update

- Our two projects were not selected for funding.
- We were asked if this could be handled internally—it can't
- We tried to put in proposals that reflected the needs of the GITs
- Going forward they're going to reevaluate how they look at proposals not affiliated with a GIT

IV. Work Plan Development

- How critical are these priorities?
- Filled in who would be lead on these actions, discussion notes
- Focus on three goals
 - Help set annual priorities for the Bay Program's Communications Office
 - Promote current communications best practices to foster professional development and growth among members.
 - Continually improve the form and function of the Communications Workgroup.
- **Action:** Joan will send out the updated excel spreadsheet once comments/edits have been incorporated.
- **Action:** Joan will create and send out an online member expertise survey.
- **Action:** Joan will share CBP editorial calendar on Chesapeake Network group page.

V. GIT Communications Needs ([Strategy Review System](#), [Requests for the Communications Workgroup](#))

- Biennial Strategy Review System: A process to adaptively manage achievement of our [2014 Watershed Agreement Outcomes](#).
 - Group outcomes that are related, but not a part of the same Goal Implementation Team
 - Times outcomes to present when fresh data is available

- Use regularly scheduled Management Board meeting to accomplish specific objectives
- Explain logic behind actions that workgroups are taking
- Communications requests
 - Healthy Watersheds, Protected Lands, Brook Trout and Fish Habitat Outcomes: Incentivized conservation at the local level and improved communication with local government officials.
 - Would we be consulting or creating products?
 - Coordinate with current efforts
 - How does this go along with Mary Gattis' efforts to educate local governments?
 - Nicki Kasi is working on creating materials for the Phase III WIPs
 - **Action: At a future meeting: get an update on Mary's and Nicki's efforts, see how the workgroup can fit in**
 - EcoLogix report identifies three main messages for local governments: public health and safety, infrastructure, economic benefits
 - Mary is working on existing content (not creating content), coordinators and staffers are working on putting together all the materials they have
 - The role of the workgroup: making sure that whatever content is generated is appropriate for the audience, help with the messaging
 - **Action: Let these groups know that the Communications Workgroup can serve as a sounding board.**
 - If people have found effective ways to reach out to trusted sources, please share with the workgroup (content or channels)
 - Oyster Outcome: Communication that underscores the regional, national and international significance of the Chesapeake Bay Program's tributary-based oyster restoration strategy and disseminates scientific findings about spat set on alternative (non-shell) reef substrate.
 - More science needs to be done
 - **Action: Catherine will schedule a meeting with Fisheries GIT coordinator, staffer and workgroup liaison after white paper is complete.**
 - Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Outcome: Communication that promotes the benefits of underwater grasses and garners support for a sustainable submerged aquatic vegetation monitoring program.
 - Scheduled a meeting with the SAV Workgroup
 - Changing public understanding of what SAV is and why it can be helpful
 - Misconceptions: SAV is a harmful algae bloom
 - Nuisance instead of beneficial habitat

VI. Calendar

- National Estuaries Week runs from September 16 to September 23
 - NY: will mention in newsletter
 - CBP: will do something, definitely on social media
- Pollution Prevention Week runs from September 18 to September 24
- Habitat GIT: study looking at wetland buffering from storm surges, see "To Soften a Hurricane's Blow..." below.

Next meeting: Wednesday, October 4, 1:00-2:30 p.m.

“To Soften a Hurricane’s Blow...”

A recent study was published in Nature to evaluate the benefits of wetlands in hurricane storm surge situations. The authors used insurance industry models to evaluate measurable impacts to infrastructure, if existing wetlands had instead been open water during the storm surges of Hurricane Sandy. The results of the modeling show that wetlands effectively prevent damages if they are found in large patches or if patches are surrounding expensive assets. Furthermore, the study highlighted that Hurricane Sandy damages in MD, DE, NJ, and VA – states with the most conserved wetlands on the eastern seaboard – were 20-30% lower than they could’ve been had there been no wetlands on the coast.

The press release did touch on connections with hurricane Harvey, noting that the study looked at wetland protection from storm surges not from rain caused flooding, which is the root cause of the flooding in Texas. However, the press release mentioned that Harris County, TX - an area hit hard in the recent storm – has lost 30% of its marshlands since 1992. This figure suggests that placing a priority on wetland conservation may have lessened the damages from Hurricane Harvey.

Press Release: https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2017/09/please-hammer-dont-drain-em/538731/?utm_source=atfb

Full Article: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-017-09269-z>