



DIVERSITY OUTCOME

MARCH 2024 QUARTERLY PROGRESS MEETING

Diversity Outcome: Identify stakeholder groups not currently represented in the leadership, decision-making or implementation of current conservation and restoration activities and create meaningful opportunities and programs to recruit and engage these groups in the Partnership's efforts.

LOOKING BACK: LEARNING FROM THE LAST TWO YEARS

Celebrate Our Accomplishments & Best Practices

1. Since your last QPM, what key successes would you like to highlight to the Management Board?

In the past two years, the Diversity Workgroup (DWG) has worked to support progress across the Bay Program in implementing diversity, equity, inclusion and justice (DEIJ) practices. Resulting changes have occurred due to a combination of actions taken directly by the DWG and/or its staff and members, and actions influenced or supported by DWG that were achieved by other Bay Program groups and partners. Some of the notable successes achieved by the Bay Program include the following:

o **Shifting CBP Partnership Culture:**

- Removing the term "citizen" from the Watershed Agreement and the Stewardship Workgroup name as a move toward inclusion. This was a result of work of the Stewardship GIT, and the [former] Citizens' Advisory Committee subsequently followed suit with a name change to Stakeholders Advisory Committee. The CBP Governance Document was also updated in this way, and DEIJ-related guidance was added, such as focusing on diverse candidates to fill seats in leadership roles.
- Conducting a 2022 Diversity Survey of Bay Program partners and analyzing progress toward the diversity metric.
- Developing the CBP DEIJ Implementation Plan and advocating for and supporting the need to institutionalize the actions in the plan.
- The Stakeholders Advisory Committee intentionally increased the diversity of its appointed members and initiated stipends/honoraria for its members. This was the Advisory Committee's work (not the Diversity Workgroup's), but it aligns with the Outcome and contributes to the picture of successful measures across CBP as we all work toward and begin to realize a new partnership culture that embraces diversity, equity, inclusion and justice.
- Tracking Progress:
 - DWG contributed to the "Charting a Course to 2025" report which highlighted overarching DEIJ needs, reflecting a commitment to a more inclusive and representative partnership.
 - DWG has highlighted the need to establish an improved metric.

o **Providing Tools and Resources to Improve DEIJ in Practice:**

- DWG managed and completed two projects with GIT-funding support that contribute to CBP's awareness of best practices regarding DEIJ and means to serve more of our stakeholders:

- In 2022 the DWG completed a study entitled “Cultivating and Strengthening Partnerships with Underrepresented Stakeholders” which explored stakeholder experiences with CBP and provided recommendations on how to further engage with them; and
 - In 2023, DWG hosted a series of Equity in Grantmaking workshops, developed in response to audience needs, and produced a resulting resource hub with guidance for grant applicants (to be made available on the CBP website).
 - Additional training and professional learning opportunities such as Allyship Training were held.
 - DWG hosted a screening and discussion of the documentary "Eroding History," which raised awareness about the impacts of climate change on underserved communities and the associated loss of cultural heritage for coastal communities at risk.
- **Addressing Workforce Development:** The DWG has focused some of its efforts, in coordination with the Education Workgroup and NOAA staff (in the lead role), to establish and implement a new CBP Workforce Action Team. Actions included:
- DWG presented a webinar on opportunities for those returning from incarceration.
 - Intentions to increase active engagement with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) were informed through supporting the Alliance for Chesapeake Bay’s 2023 HBCU Summit for students to explore environmental career interests.
 - DWG maintains a supporting and guidance role in the latest GIT-funded project underway through the Workforce Action Team, to conduct a landscape analysis of workforce development programs and pathways, to develop recommendations for improving opportunities for growing a more diverse, robust, and larger workforce in Chesapeake Bay related environmental and sustainability fields.

Evaluate Our Progress

2. Are we, as a partnership, making progress at a rate that is necessary to achieve this outcome? Would you define our outlook as on course, off course, uncertain, or completed? Upon what basis are you forecasting this outlook?

The Diversity Outcome is currently off course. This is due in part to a need for more timely, consistent and comprehensive analysis and tracking of diversity, equity and inclusion efforts across the Chesapeake Bay Program. The metric that is being tracked is toward a target to **increase racial and ethnic diversity representation in the CBP partnership to 25% by 2025.**

This indicator is inward facing, looking at the makeup of the Chesapeake Bay Program staff and leadership. It represents only one part of the Outcome. In 2016, 2019 and 2022, a diversity survey was disseminated to the partnership, with intent to continue every three years. The Bay Program established the 2016 data as the baseline and, in 2018, set the target to increase racial and ethnic diversity representation in the partnership to 25% by 2025. The most recent survey experienced a larger pool of voluntary responses overall and indicated a slight increase in the percentage of respondents who self-identified as people of color in the Chesapeake Bay Program compared to previous years; however, the data shows no statistically significant change in racial or ethnic diversity among the three surveys, averaging slightly less than 15%.

Both the Diversity Outcome specifically, and the Stewardship Goal more broadly, suggest the need to include involvement of other stakeholders and members of the public **in decision-making and carrying out** conservation and restoration activities. Progress toward this key component, the more outward-facing work, has not been tracked using a numeric indicator, and consequently has not received the attention it deserves in terms of implementation. Additional metric(s) should be explored for the future, determining an effective methodology for measuring success toward the overall intent of the goal and outcome.

3. How would you summarize your recent progress toward achieving your outcome (since your last QPM)? Would you characterize this progress as an increase, decrease, no change, or completed?

No Change for Current Progress

Looking at what the indicator tells us is one gauge of our progress. The indicator represents a way to measure one piece of the work toward this Outcome – the internal element, which is looking at the racial and ethnic diversity of the makeup of the Bay Program partners. In regard to that, the 2022 survey indicated a slight increase in the percentage of respondents who self-identified as people of color, but the measured change was statistically insignificant. In fact, we feel that the measurement instrument is flawed due to its voluntary nature, making it an incomplete dataset. Therefore, we would characterize our progress as having no change.

By asking additional questions in the most recent survey, we gained more insight into the demographic backgrounds of the Bay Program’s workforce than in the past. In the recent survey analysis, we found that survey respondents working in partnership roles in the last 10 years are twice as likely to be people of color than those who have been involved for 11 years or more. This indicates a greater racial and ethnic diversity in more recently hired employees that is not captured by our indicator. We also found that the LGBTQIA+ population is more than twice as prevalent in the last five years’ recruits as it was in older cohorts. Finally, female representation has increased over time, accounting consistently for more than half of participants recruited over the past 20 years. These findings further encouraged us to consider how we are measuring progress toward our outcome, both internally and externally.

Future Progress Requires New Indicators(s)

Understanding our full Outcome achievement requires the development of additional indicators that look at other important factors. The piece of the work toward Outcome progress that we are not yet measuring – and not making sufficient progress on – is the more external-facing piece, i.e., “improving opportunities to engage, include and involve groups who are not currently represented in implementation of conservation and restoration activities”. This part of the Outcome language is somewhat misleading, as it is not necessarily the work of the Workgroup to make those opportunities directly. The CBP is a convener, a means for partners to coordinate and collaborate. The most appropriate work for the Diversity Workgroup is to provide guidance – resources such as information on best practices or examples of successful efforts and programs, connections to funding or learning opportunities, etc. – so that partners who are working directly with audiences on conservation and restoration activities are able to do so in a manner that is more inclusive and equitable. We don’t currently have a means to measure this progress, but we see evidence of it at work. Some of the DWG guidance efforts have been outlined in question #1, above. The Workgroup’s efforts have contributed to aiding, guiding, and empowering the CBP and its myriad groups and partners toward shifting the culture of the partnership’s work so that it prioritizes and mobilizes toward improved equity and inclusion, both internally within the CBP and with its external audiences.

Lessons Learned

4. If our outlook is off course, what has been the most critical influencing factor or gap that needs to be addressed to accelerate progress?

The Diversity Workgroup is facing significant challenges primarily rooted in structural and capacity limitations, impeding its ability to effectively implement its designated Outcome statement.

The wording of the Outcome statement itself is deemed non-actionable, necessitating modifications in the future. The language implies direct involvement in “creating opportunities and programs to recruit and engage” groups not currently represented in the Partnership’s efforts. This is somewhat misleading, and causes many to interpret that the CBP aims to bring individuals into the fold of the meeting structure and

operations, which is not exactly the intent, nor is it of benefit to those individuals. The lack of a suitable structure within CBP to truly, meaningfully include the necessary stakeholders outlined in the Outcome statement is problematic. When interested “volunteers” endeavor to participate in CBP efforts, there is no effective avenue for their voices to be heard, as the decision-making and leadership roles are primarily focused on agencies who are Watershed Agreement signatories. In addition, the CBP is generally a convener, a means for collaboration and collective impact, rather than a body that implements prescribed efforts or programs with audiences directly. Therefore, the expectation set up by the Outcome language has been a source of some discord and frustration among partners and those seeking to find a niche for participation. Moreover, there’s a lack of understanding and guidance regarding meaningful engagement with underrepresented communities and organizations. The Diversity Workgroup has identified a need for assembling guidance and tools to assist other Workgroups in incorporating DEIJ principles into their outcome-specific work, and that will be a future action.

Our self-assessment of the actions planned for 2022-2023 shows achievement of many of the items, yet this work does not significantly contribute to tracking our overall progress. The action plan devised for the past two years does not align adequately with the Outcome language, but focuses more on what was identified as being needed for affecting change toward DEIJ goals on a broader scale. However, because we are tracking progress toward the Outcome, these mis-aligned actions don’t contribute significantly to that progress. Many of the actions were achieved by a small core group of staff. The Workgroup’s ability to enact change or take more action has been hindered by both a lack of active participation from Workgroup members and the inability of staff to attend to the coordination and relationship cultivation necessary to mobilize them. Attention has been given over the past year to building a professional community among the Workgroup members, and to assessing needs and opportunities to restructure the Workgroup to better accommodate future participation in implementing appropriate actions. While that detracted from working on additional actions in the plan, it was necessary to improve future operations.

Furthermore, the lack of reliable metrics to measure progress accurately, as explained in questions 2 and 3, above, has been a barrier to effectively analyzing gaps and identifying where or how to focus our efforts.

Finally, staff capacity limitations have exacerbated these challenges. Staff turnover within the Diversity Workgroup has disrupted momentum and direction, particularly with the Diversity Coordinator position vacant for more than a year. While dedicated individuals have served in various staff roles, the continual change in the last two to four years has meant periodic loss of momentum and some directional shifts. This has been further compounded by frequent, unexpected CBP requirements of our time and energy that are important (such as participating in the Beyond 2025 planning efforts), yet are peripheral to work toward the Outcome and erode staff availability to mobilize and tend to the actions outlined in our two-year plan. Limited resources and authority impede the Workgroup’s ability to support implementation of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) best practices effectively among CBP entities, including addressing structural changes and influencing partner policies.

5. Consider and reflect on the actions you intended to take during the past cycle. For actions that have not begun, or which have encountered a serious barrier, what is preventing us from taking action? Are these actions still needed?

Within the DWG’s action plan, there is currently only one “red” action, which is to “explore the possibility of creating or joining existing affinity groups for the workplace.” A 2023 DWG quarterly meeting included discussion of some good examples of workplace affinity groups, and sharing this information was apparently a beneficial effort, therefore we may pursue a means to share the examples in the future, to encourage replication at other workplaces. This is an example of the kind of work we feel we need to focus on in the future, which is providing examples, guidance, resources, etc. that other Outcome areas can utilize to be more able to implement DEIJ practices into their work to support their own success.

6. What have we learned over the past two years that we'll need to consider in the coming two years?

Over the past two years, the DWG has reflected on several challenges and highlighted needs from members working with DEIJ within the watershed. The following points should be considered for future development and management practices:

- Without a tangible sense of what we're trying to achieve and where we are in terms of making progress toward that, it is very difficult to determine necessary interventions or steps needed to make more of a difference. We need to set strategic, meaningful targets and identify effective means to measure them. The Diversity Workgroup will focus more significant energy in the next year toward exploring additional metric(s) to track the key components of our work and an effective methodology for measuring success toward the full scope of this Outcome. The components to track might include the following:
 - Measure workforce/Partnership diversity (currently tracked toward the set metric) – improve definitions (who “counts” in the survey?), improve the survey instrument to be more comprehensive and statistically viable, and include a way to assess equity of compensation.
 - Track the diversity of the external audiences outside of the Partnership, and determine how to measure trends (increase in diversity) over time. Who are we involving in the implementation of conservation/restoration/stewardship activities and other Partnership efforts?
 - Explore the possibility of measuring/tracking the effect of the Diversity Workgroup's efforts toward assisting other CBP entities in incorporating DEIJ into their work. We need to understand how we can best influence our partners toward more equitable practices, and that might include assessing both whether guidance, tools, advice etc provided were used, as well as whether actions taken as a result have been successful.
- There is a need for increased diversity of the workforce in environment-related jobs. The CBP has established a new Workforce Action Team to help consider and coordinate workforce efforts across the various Outcomes. Part of this work includes an assessment of existing workforce programs and opportunities, and of needs for developing programs to address gaps. This includes determining gaps both in terms of specific fields (are we missing programs and personnel in particular kinds of environmental jobs?) and in terms of underrepresented communities and job applicants (how diverse is the workforce in these fields? are training, hiring and retention practices inclusive?). The DWG should increase its participation and coordination with the Workforce Action Team to help advise and assure that DEIJ principles and interests are adequately applied, such as assuring that workforce development efforts include methods to provide support and increase the retention of these applicants within the environmental field.
- There is a need for a more structured approach to outreach activities across CBP, and for a better understanding of effective means for co-development of efforts with intended audiences. This calls for coordination with and reliance on entities likely outside of the CBP who have established relationships with the audiences we intend to reach. More effective delivery from trusted messengers will provide better results. In addition, several geospatial tools exist to help guide decisions on where to focus resources, and they are not being utilized enough for this purpose. Some guidance and technical assistance can make a significant difference in assisting more equitable use of funding and effort to reach historically underserved and overburdened communities where environmental gains and people needs can be addressed together.
- The commitment to DEIJ should be carried out more strongly among individual partner entities, for a more widespread approach and more significant impact. However, gaining support for DEIJ initiatives from leaders in various agencies and organizations can be a challenge, even among those who now

have a dedicated DEIJ position in place. CBP as a partnership has made commitments to DEIJ, and partners should be carrying that back to their agencies and assuring that their own practices and workplace culture aligns with the overall commitments of the Partnership. The lack of authority to put in place the recommendations made by the Workgroup presents a barrier. A path forward needs to be identified for supporting partner agencies and organizations and holding themselves and each other accountable to carrying out programmatic means toward our collective DEIJ commitments.

- In 2022, the Management Board agreed to begin an annual DEIJ exchange, and the federal and state agency partners reported on their DEIJ efforts (late 2022). That did not occur in 2023, and should be restarted in 2024, as it would help all partners to have better knowledge and understanding of what is being done toward our DEIJ commitment, and serve to boost additional investment.

ASSESSING OUR EFFORTS AND GAPS

Factors

7. Summarize here any newly identified influencing factors, and why they were added to your Management Strategy. If any factors have been deleted, are they the result of our actions, and what have we learned as a result?

Note: The Management Strategy review and revision is set to occur after this stage of the biennial review, so a thorough analysis has not yet happened. These are some preliminary thoughts.

- Over the past two years, it has become evident that there is a disconnect between what the Diversity Outcome calls for and what the CBP can do within its capacity, as explained earlier in this document. Considering that the CBP is a convener, influencer, and provider of guidance and resources, the Outcome expectation is incompatible with the authority and capability of the DWG. The work of the Workgroup necessarily should shift toward providing more tools, guidance, best practices, training, and more that will better enable the entities within the CBP Partnership to incorporate measures to include and work hand in hand successfully with more diverse audiences toward achieving conservation and stewardship action on the ground.
- Access to funding is a factor that affects who can adequately participate in watershed conservation and stewardship activities. If funding is not equitably available to all, then some who need the support are left out, and we can't afford to leave anyone behind. DWG has the ability and responsibility to understand the landscape of grantmaking opportunities particularly through the CBP and its federal and state partners, as well as other sources, and to share and advise the Partnership toward better practices to improve accessibility. Our region has experienced recent evolution of equitable funding programs, with many grantmakers making changes toward equity. The DWG's GIT-funded project (Equity in Grantmaking) that took place in 2023 has contributed to progress, and has developed some guidance for both grantmakers and applicants. However, there is still more to be done, and the landscape changes continually, so it is an ongoing need that the Workgroup can strive to fulfill for our partners. With new EPA Environmental Justice funding programs, a role for DWG may be in helping to increase awareness of the programs and how to apply, and helping to funnel potential applicants to the designated intermediaries who can provide assistance.
- The Workgroup does not have power to change hiring policies or decisions, but we can influence the practices of our partner agencies and organizations regarding recruitment, hiring, and retention. Some ways we can do this may include: providing resources for equitable hiring; increasing awareness of available trainings; providing examples of appropriate job descriptions and more modern, progressive advertising methods; and advising partners on how to go about analyzing their processes, encouraging and identifying ways to track data on applicants and who was hired to determine if the intended result is achieved.

- In recent years, numerous traumatic racially-motivated events have fueled a growing awareness of social issues and an urgency to act. This enhanced social consciousness has highlighted the need for significant systemic change and has changed the landscape of our interactions, both professionally and on personal levels, toward a desire to do better and find effective solutions. While the commitment to DEIJ in the CBP has helped to shift the culture of the Partnership and unite us toward improving how we approach our work, there is still a mountainous set of tasks before us. The learning curve is steep for many, and it's important that we provide resources for CBP staff and partners to meet them where they are. Racial injustice cannot be solved easily or quickly. It is challenging for passionate staff and partners to limit our focus, yet to make a meaningful impact, we have to put our collective energy to best use, zeroing in on the things we can affect within our sphere of influence for both environmental and human benefit.

8. Prioritize and summarize here the factors best tackled as a Partnership (or GIT/workgroup), that have the greatest impact to achieve our outcome.

To achieve our desired outcome, these are the factors best tackled as a Partnership:

- The Outcome language, metric/indicator(s) and action plan all will need to be better aligned to function effectively to help us plan, implement and track appropriately to make progress toward the Outcome. The role of the Workgroup will necessarily shift to one that will focus on providing guidance and other resources to aid the CBP entities in their DEIJ efforts, in coordination with and in support of the DEIJ coordinator (consultant/contractor) and the CBP DEIJ Implementation Plan.
- Funding assistance is needed across many levels of work in Bay efforts. Even agencies and larger organizations with staff resources struggle to acquire and manage funding through grant programs. As a Workgroup, a role we can play is helping to increase awareness of funding opportunities and resources for assistance such as training and intermediary organizations. We can help to support developing more localized technical assistance/ service provider efforts and assist with connecting potential partnerships as needed.
- In terms of employment, a key priority is the elimination of bias and the promotion of inclusiveness in recruitment, hiring, and retention practices among CBP partners. This involves a concerted effort to collaborate with partners in implementing DEIJ considerations for all positions within the partnership. CBP partners can assist one another by sharing effective practices and solutions to challenges faced.
- It is crucial to involve the advancement of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice across all facets of organizational culture and work. Attending to all of these elements helps to create a more inclusive, welcoming workplace where everyone can thrive – thus increasing the likelihood of retaining more diverse staff. Collaboration among GITs, workgroups, and other teams within CBP is recommended to advance DEIJ goals in the work associated with other Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement outcomes. This is “everyone’s work” across the Partnership, and the Diversity Workgroup and the DEIJ coordinator can assist by providing guidance, training, tools, etc. to help the partners know the best ways to do this well, overcoming fear or reticence due to inexperience.
- External/nexus factors must also be considered, particularly the effects of climate change and additional public health considerations, especially on historically marginalized, underserved communities who have borne a disproportionate burden of environmental injustices. It's essential to be mindful of influences from policy and economic factors, such as student debt, recognizing their potential impact on our goals.

Gaps

9. For those high priority factors summarized above, what is getting in the way of addressing them or what gaps continue to exist despite the current efforts to address those factors?

The Diversity Workgroup operates with limited resources, capacity and authority; an inability to effectively track recruitment and retention data; and inability to address structural changes necessary to implement DEI best practices—especially regarding hiring practices and pathways, but this also applies to engaging with target audiences appropriately/effectively. With no means for substantive influence on Bay Program partners’ policies and operations, the Workgroup can only offer guidance.

In addition, as explained above, the Workgroup needs to explore alternative methods to improve accuracy of the measurement method to determine diversity of the CBP members (toward the current metric) including reviewing the process and survey tool used for collecting and analyzing the data.

FOCUSING ON THE NEXT TWO YEARS

Actions And Needed Support

10. Describe any scientific, environmental, fiscal, or policy-related developments that have already or may influence your work over the next two years.

- **Scientific:** Scientific data have revealed that there are inequities among community exposure to environmental risk. Communities of Environmental Justice concern are more likely to be at risk of flooding due to climate change, more susceptible to heat island effect, in closer proximity to pollutants and contaminants, etc. As the Bay Program implements its management strategies, it should consider how to maximize benefits of implementation (e.g., increased resilience, job creation, protection of public health) for communities that have been historically underserved or overburdened.
- **Fiscal needs and developments:** Access to funding remains an important factor that affects who can adequately participate in watershed conservation and stewardship activities. Many grantmakers in and serving the Bay watershed have been making changes toward equity in their funding programs, and those efforts continue to evolve. Significant resources are now available through new EPA Environmental Justice funding programs, nationally, with a dedicated intermediary in this region. DWG has the ability and responsibility to understand the landscape of grantmaking opportunities particularly through the CBP and its federal and state partners, as well as other sources, and to share and advise the Partnership toward better practices to improve accessibility. A role for DWG may be in helping to increase awareness of the programs and how to apply, especially to the EPA EJ programs, helping to funnel potential applicants to the designated intermediaries who can provide assistance.
- **Policy-related developments:** In the past few years, the federal government has established new Executive Orders (DEIA, Environmental Justice/ Justice 40 (*) and Climate Change) and passed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which includes provisions about ensuring funds are spent in historically underserved communities. These policies and directives line up with and support the [CBP Executive Council’s 2020 DEI Statement](#) and the ensuing [DEI implementation Plan](#). While the Implementation Plan was accepted and committed to by the Principals’ Staff Committee, its activation and actual implementation has been off to a very slow start, suffering from lack of promoting it and guiding its use, coincident with a host of staff turnover across CBP. The Plan should be institutionalized across CBP, with clear and consistent guidance and coordination to aid awareness of its content and direction, and responsibilities to take action. The larger scale Federal policies are in place, we have a Partnership-wide commitment to DEI and a plan to guide it – now we need to actualize it and address DEI matters in all areas of work at all levels of government and with our non-government partners. DEI must be integrated into all elements of CBP’s work, including how, when, what, and to whom we

communicate. Overall, the partnership still has much to learn about how to approach different DEIJ issues and needs.

* The Justice 40 Initiative sets a goal that 40 percent of overall benefits of certain Federal climate, clean energy, affordable and sustainable housing, and other investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution, as part of [Executive Order 14008](#) (2021) on Climate (see [Securing Environmental Justice And Spurring Economic Opportunity](#)). In April 2023, President Biden also signed [Executive Order 14096](#) on Revitalizing Our Nation's Commitment to Environmental Justice for All.

11. Based on these developments and the learning discussed in the previous sections, summarize any new actions you are planning to address these gaps over the next two years.

- The Workgroup has considered alternative methods to improve accuracy of the measurement method including reviewing the survey tool as well as the process for collecting and analyzing the data. We will work with the indicators team and GIT 6 (Enhance Partnering, Leadership and Management Goal Implementation Team) toward improving the measurement of the current metric and exploring additional indicator(s) as needed.
- The work of the Workgroup necessarily should shift toward providing more tools, guidance, best practices, training, and more that will better enable the entities within the CBP Partnership to incorporate measures to include and work hand in hand successfully with more diverse audiences toward achieving conservation and stewardship action on the ground. The DEIJ learning curve is steep for many, and the appropriate terminology and recommended practices seem to be constantly changing, making it hard to keep up. It is challenging for passionate staff and partners to limit our focus, yet to make enough impact, we have to put our collective energy to best use, zeroing in on the things we can affect most in the shortest amount of time, within our sphere of influence toward environmental and human benefit.
- Access to funding is an important factor to continue to address. We will build on the Equity in Grantmaking project (2023) to make the resources developed more available. With new EPA Environmental Justice funding programs, a role for DWG may be in helping to increase awareness of the programs and how to apply, and helping to funnel potential applicants to the designated intermediaries who can provide assistance.
- The Workgroup can take steps to influence the practices of our partner agencies and organizations regarding recruitment, hiring, and retention. Some ways we can do this may include: providing resources for equitable hiring; increasing awareness of available trainings; providing examples of appropriate job descriptions and more modern, progressive advertising methods; and advising partners on how to go about analyzing their processes, encouraging and identifying ways to track data on applicants and who was hired to determine if the intended result is achieved.

12. Have you identified new needs, or have previously unmet needs, that are beyond the ability of your group to meet and, therefore, you need the assistance of the Management Board to achieve?

The following items are flagged for Management Board's awareness and general support:

- **The capacity issue explained in this document is a vital need.** The Diversity Workgroup (DWG) has been without a dedicated coordinator since the position was vacated at the end of January 2023. While we appreciate the staff resources we have that are supported by CBP and partners, it is insufficient to adequately achieve the work necessary to make progress toward this Outcome and to support DEIJ efforts across the Partnership. The Stewardship Goal Team Coordinator and two staffers who serve the DWG are spread very thin, covering the overall GIT itself as well as its five Workgroups with seven Outcomes spanning a wide array of topics. Workgroup co-chairs employed by the National Park Service

and Morgan State University are serving in the role as a voluntary add-on to their full-time primary positions. The DWG work has in the past been served by its own coordinator, and the work is important enough and complex enough that this should continue.

- **The Outcome is not the same as the DEIJ Implementation Plan.** The Implementation Plan is separate from the DWG's work toward the Outcome, but the two are related and necessitate alignment and coordination with each other. As called for by the Executive Council's Directive and by the Implementation Plan, DEIJ is everyone's work across the entire CBP. Yet that requires guidance, leadership, and coordination. Activating the CBP's Implementation Plan is currently supported by a consultant on contract for 10 hours per week for a very short term. While this is helpful, it is also an insufficient amount of capacity. The DWG leads and the consultant are endeavoring to work together, to identify how to divide and conquer in complement to each other while avoiding duplication. Understanding and assuming that resources are limited, we envision that the two coordination roles could potentially be merged and conducted by a dedicated position, with a highly skilled person in the position, elevating the entire body of DEIJ work to the attention and level of ability needed.
- **Partners should share their efforts.** In 2022, the Management Board agreed to begin an annual DEIJ exchange, and the federal and state agency partners began reporting on their DEIJ efforts. That did not occur in 2023, likely due to staff vacancies and changes in coordination and oversight of DEIJ for CBP overall, for the Diversity Workgroup, and for GIT 6 (Enhance Partnering, Leadership and Management Goal Implementation Team). The information submitted in 2022 was collected in a spreadsheet, though it is unclear whether more was done to share, promote and celebrate this work among the Partnership. We encourage CBP leadership to reinvigorate and support this effort, as it would help all partners to have better knowledge and understanding of what is being done toward our DEIJ commitment, and would serve to boost additional investment.

13. What steps are you continuing, or can you take, to ensure your actions and work will be equitably distributed and focused in geographic areas and communities that have been underserved in the past?

- DWG will focus more attention going forward on making guidance materials, decision-making tools and other resources more prominently available across the CBP entities and partners to enable them to be more effective at integrating DEIJ principles and practices in their work. One example is the various geospatial tools available that can overlay underserved or environmental justice communities with environmental information (data on water quality, tree canopy, green space availability, etc.) to help target resources where work is most needed. DWG can help to promote the awareness and use of these and other tools among the Partnership to enhance efforts toward multiple Outcomes.
- DWG is helping others to consider how CBP stewardship and outreach efforts can be enhanced to be more equitable and to achieve greater results. The Stewardship indicator has been focusing on individual stewardship practices that occur through daily behaviors and volunteerism. While these are helpful behaviors that contribute to environmental improvement, it is only part of the picture of what needs to be done to make a significant difference. Not everyone living in the watershed has the luxury or ability to participate in stewardship as defined by the actions used in the indicator. We are looking into ways to expand what we mean by stewardship so it is more inclusive, and how it is communicated to residents and represented in our progress tracking methods. We are also working together to identify efforts needed to move up the "ladder of engagement" toward community-scale actions and community-based programs supporting sustainable living practices, and how we can track this progress; and to enlist more help from local champions to aid progress toward stewardship.