



Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.

Diversity Workgroup Meeting Minutes

September 10, 2020 – WebEx Meeting

Meeting Objectives

- Celebrate the signing of the [CBP DEIJ Statement](#) and discuss how our workgroup could support CBP leadership in meeting timebound commitments in the [DEIJ Action Statement](#).
- Hear from leadership of the CBP Principals' Staff Committee (PSC) on the new DEIJ Statement and accompanying DEIJ Action Statement.
- Hear an update on ongoing projects and efforts to meet actions in our [2020-2021 workplan](#).
- Learn about the new Chesapeake Bay Environmental Justice and Equity Dashboard.
- Discuss what a DEIJ indicator could look like in the UMCES Chesapeake Bay Report Card.
- Share updates and announcements during a round robin.

Meeting Attendees (* indicates Steering Committee members):

Name	Organization	Name	Organization
Tuana Phillips	Coordinator, EPA	Sky Swanson	UMCES IAN
Jim Edwards	Chair, EPA	Rochelle Altholz	VA DCR
Wendy O'Sullivan	Vice Chair, NPS	Melissa Fagan	CRC
Mariah Davis*	Choose Clean Water Coalition	Trena Ferrell	NASA
Ola Davis*	Alliance for the Bay	Shannon Sprague	NOAA
Ruby Stemmler*	ecoLatinos	Allison Acevedo	PA Dept of Environmental Protection
Trystan Sill*	MD DNR	Noelle Chao	AAWSA
Brittany Hall*	NPS	Bre'Anna Brooks	Chesapeake Bay Trust
Gaby Roffe*	NPS, Chesapeake Conservancy	Edgar Freeman	MD DNR
Kesha Braunskill*	DE Forest Service	Richard Allen	MD DNR
Caitlyn Johnstone*	Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay	Lauren Taneyhill	NOAA CBPO
Clare Sevcik*	DE DNREC	Michelle Ramirez	MD DNR
Francesca King	AAWSA	Shea Zwerver	PA DCNR
Amber Doherty	National Aquarium	Jason (CJ) Swartz	PA DCNR
Erin Sullivan	EPA	Reggie Harris	EPA
Lora Harris	UMCES	Bo Williams	EPA
Meryem Karad	VA Office of the Governor	Alex Fries	UMCES IAN
Christine Keels	CSOSA	Rosa Mendez	NY DEC
Grae Brummit	AAWSA	Jennifer Starr	Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
Jeremy Hanson	Virginia Tech	Jess Blackburn	Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
Jordan Gougler	NY DEC	Julie Lawson	DC Mayor's Office
Katherine Stahl	FWS, CCC	Laura Cattell Noll	Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
Kristin Saunders	UMCES	Mary Gattis	Bay Journal

Welcome, Introductions, and Review of Meeting Objectives

See presentation slides 1-3 [here](#)

Jim Edward and Wendy O'Sullivan provided welcoming remarks and reviewed meeting objectives. Tuana Phillips went over the shared agreements for the meeting. Steering Committee and workgroup members introduced themselves.

Presentation and Discussion: We Have a DEIJ Statement! So, What's Next?

See presentation slides 4-19 [here](#)

As a workgroup, we celebrated the announcement of the [DEIJ Statement](#) signed by the Executive Council in August. Jim, Wendy, and Tuana also went over each of the five commitments made by the Principals' Staff Committee (PSC) in their accompanying [DEIJ Action Statement](#).

Participants on the call discussed the role the workgroup will play to support the partnership in reaching the five PSC commitments. There was a lot of discussion regarding the following commitment:

Within three months of the signing of the DEIJ Statement, explore a process for a community advisory board composed of environmental justice leaders and representatives from organizations led by people of color and other underrepresented groups.

Participants noted the following:

- For this Board, we should consider folks who live in the Chesapeake Bay watershed who are environmental justice experts. E.g. people who serve on the National Environmental Justice Advisory Committee (NEJAC)
- Compensation would be great
- The Board should exist at the same level as the existing CBP advisory committees
- It can be challenging to control who is on it if members are appointed (e.g. by governors)
- There is concern about the message this would send if we have a Citizens Advisory Committee that is meant to be representative of all residents in the watershed. We must be clear on why we are creating a separate board.
- Have folks considered the integration of EJ principles into all work done? Having a side group can devalue the work.
- Perhaps, the advisory board should have liaisons that serve on more than one advisory board. I would admit, that's expecting a lot from them.
- Perhaps not call it Community Advisory Board but Environmental Justice Advisory Board?
- Process and procedure is a large part of how CBP operates. Whether we choose to separate or incorporate an EJ board, I propose we develop a concrete plan/process for how work is undertaken, how advice is given to CBP and other GITs, and how EJ board will communicate and connect across all workgroups. Not planning maintenance is a difficulty of most environmental efforts (for instance, allocating efforts for maintaining invasive species or upkeep of failing trees in tree cover programs), and we don't want that to happen with an EJ board. We need to plan to make sure that however the board happens, EJ work or concerns that come up for other boards/workgroups is not deflected or continuously pushed onto the EJ board. We need integration into all aspects of CBP work for there to be meaningful change.

- It is important to make sure the process by which we make inclusion happen is not a process that excludes organizations who have not been a part institutionally
- We should be open to including members who are younger in their career.

Remarks from Principal Staff Committee Leadership

The Honorable Matt Strickler, 2020-2021 Chairman of the CBP PSC and Secretary of Natural Resources for the Commonwealth of Virginia introduced Dr. Janice Underwood, Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer, Commonwealth of Virginia.

Notes from Dr. Underwood's remarks:

- In some ways the COVID-19 pandemic has created a barrier for meaningful engagement.
- A lot of groups have begun reaching out to her and she has been able to build relationships as she continues to meet with such groups. She offered to help be a bridge between those groups and the CBP.
- She noted it is important to build a genuine coalition of allies and not just "check the box."

Presentation and Discussion on Workgroup Updates: Celebrating Progress and Looking Ahead

See presentation slides 20-30 [here](#)

Discussion during the previous agenda items went over their allotted time period, therefore we had to skip this agenda item. However, Tuana was able to follow up with members over email to share the PowerPoint slides and provide an update on the status of the workgroup's proposed Goal Implementation Team (GIT) Funding project.

Presentation: Chesapeake Bay Environmental Justice and Equity Dashboard

See John's presentation [here](#)

See a link to the dashboard [here](#)

John Wolf provided a high-level overview of the *Chesapeake Bay Environmental Justice and Equity Dashboard* including its potential application to address cross-GIT management questions.

For questions or feedback on the dashboard, reach out to John at JWolf@chesapeakebay.net

Diversity in the Chesapeake Bay Report Card

See presentation [here](#)

Alex Fries and Sky Swanson provided an overview of the Integration & Application Network (IAN) and their Chesapeake Bay Report Card. IAN is hoping to include a diversity or DEI-related indicator in the next iteration of the Report Card. To figure out what this indicator could be, Alex and Sky used mentimeter to ask workgroup members and meeting participants the following questions:

- How do you define environmental justice and how is it different from diversity?
- What are your goals for diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed?

- What kind of metrics are you interested in exploring?

Participants' input in the mentimeter were not captured as part of these meeting minutes, however Alex and Sky noted that they got a lot of great feedback and thanked everyone for their input.

Notes from the chat:

- This is a great exercise! Speaking to the first question/responses... I would argue that Diversity is not the goal and is a (important) step toward equity. Equity requires recognition of the underlying or root causes of disparities within our society. Equity is to promote justice and fairness within procedures, processes and distribution of resources. Diversity acknowledges that individuals are unique and different (which should be celebrated). It does not include inclusion, equity or EJ until we intentionally take authentic action.
- Increased access impacts and outcomes on Bay via feeder rivers, creeks etc.
- Each metric should be linked to an outcome. We call those measures that matter.
- More interactive opportunities for children and teens to participate in this exercise to get their opinion on the topic.
- Some definitions I mentioned are pulled from the following: https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/CB-Watershed-DEIJ-Guide_May-2019.pdf

Round Robin: Updates from Members & Attendees

- Trystan Sill (Maryland DNR) noted that DNR's Chesapeake and Coastal Service unit has started its own DEIJ Task Force.
- Rico Newman (Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs) provided an update on a five-year study that will look at the build up of toxic contaminants.
- Bre'Anna Brooks (CBT) noted that there is an upcoming capacity building training that will be offered. It is related to organizational leadership and leadership culture. It is open to non-profits and will be led by the Green Leadership Trust.
- Meryem Karad (VA) noted a newly codified EJ Council for VA. VA also has a new interagency working group which will help with communication among agencies.
- Allison Acevedo (PA) shared that PA is starting a new DEIJ committee. They recently started hearing experiences from employees about diversity at work. They also started an informal interagency group on EJ. It has been helpful to create ties between EJ and diversity. It is not a task force but includes people from several agencies and the idea is to make connections and work together.
- Shea Zwerver (PA) is temporarily stepping in for Emily Hendrickson. She is part of a DEIJ committee at DCR which has three subcommittees. They are thinking about adding a new committee to explore new partnerships. They are also looking at grants (e.g. tree canopy grants and where to focus efforts).
- Ruby Stemmler (ecoLatinos) noted that this year's Festival del Rio will be virtual. They are inviting organizations to join and be a part of it.

The Way Forward & Closing Remarks

Jim and Wendy provided closing remarks.