

Fish Habitat Quarterly Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 16 2017 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
Materials: <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/calendar/event/24885/>

Participants:

Bruce Vogt	Donna Bilkovic	Edna Stetzar	Emilie Franke
Geoff Smith	Gina Hunt	Jennifer Greiner	Jonathan Bland
Lisa Havel	Margaret McGinty	Mary Fabrizio	Paige Hobaugh
Peter Tango	Rachael Peabody	Tom Ihde	

Main Takeaways:

- The FHAT submitted a revised workshop proposal to STAC. The proposed workshop will evaluate factors influencing fish habitat function for representative species of multiple habitats in the Bay and develop qualitative criteria to measure the significance of these factors and mitigation methods.
 - On May 11th, the FHAT will present their achievements, challenges, and next steps to the CBP Management Board. This is a great opportunity to adaptively manage our efforts and redirect our focus.
 - Team members will continue advancing workplan actions by:
 - Populating the TetraTech Executive Summary,
 - Developing a priority species list
 - Convening to discuss impervious surface impacts on tidal fisheries
 - The team will reconvene in late March/early April to develop our presentation to the CBP Management Board and complete our workplan review.
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Meeting Discussion:

I. Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee Workshop Proposal

The Fish Habitat Action Team (FHAT) developed a 2-day workshop proposal for the 2017 Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) workshop proposal process. Proposals are currently being reviewed by STAC and are anticipated to be selected at the March 14th STAC quarterly meeting. Team discussed STAC Workshop proposal and STAC pre-review questions.

- Team members suggested bringing in more freshwater experts such as:
 - Greg Garmin (VCU)
 - John Odenkirk (VDGIF)
 - Don Orth (VT)
 - Paul Angermeier (VT)
- To improve the proposal, team members suggested that we:
 - Describe the roles and expertise of the steering committee
 - Clarify that the table of representative species will be refined by the steering committee prior to the workshop and the current listing will be subject to change based on expert input.
 - Define “watershed” and “habitat function” within the proposal.
 - Change the title to include “Mainstem, tidal and non-tidal”
 - Refine the first question in the objectives section as it the question is currently too broad and expansive in scope.
 - This question should specify the representative species and the habitat types that we select for the analysis
- To improve the workshop, team members suggested that we:

- Emphasize our research needs and information gaps as well as proactive measures that can be taken to minimize the detrimental effects of factors influencing (ex. Rate endocrine disruptors and subsequent effects)
- Develop a list of prioritized recommendations (as done in the Forage Workshop)
- **Action:** Contact suggested freshwater experts for participation in the workshop and refinement of the freshwater representative species.
- **Action:** Team will review proposal objectives and representative species and send recommendations to Kara.

II. Strategy Review System

The Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) is initiating their Strategy Review System (SRS), which is a biennial review of the 31 outcomes under the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement. Workgroups and Action Teams will present an overview of workplan progress at a designated meeting within the 2-year period. As the Fish Habitat Action Team, we will be responsible for providing the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) Management Board with an overview of our progress at the first SRS meeting on May 11th.

- In 1-2 weeks, a template of questions will be distributed to the teams to utilize when developing their presentation. We expect that the template will include questions on progress, challenges and suggestions for adaptively managing based on the first year of working on our workplan actions.
- Jennifer suggested that we start with the positives (successes and research), discuss uncertainties and challenges, and close with questions for the Management Board.
- **Action:** Kara will be sending out a doodle poll to the Fish Habitat Action Team (FHAT) in the near future. This doodle poll will help us to identify a date for an in-person meeting to complete our review of the Fish Habitat Workplan and structure our template responses and presentation to get the most out of the biennial review.

III. Workplan Review

The Fish Habitat Action Team reviewed progress made toward the fish habitat workplan and address suggestions from the fish habitat breakout session at the December full Sustainable Fisheries GIT meeting.

- Development of a Priority Species List
 - Our first action item on the workplan is to develop a priority species list for the FHAT. At this time Delaware has provided their priority species. We need to have the remaining jurisdictions provide their priority species. We will utilize these lists along with expert opinion to develop a composite list of indicator species for the team.
 - If funded, the STAC Workshop proposal will inform this list of FHAT priority species.
 - Develop a list of resources and literature that informed our decision in the STAC Workshop report/appendices.
 - We should consider structured habitat vs. water column habitat when designating representative species.
 - Ensure that we include key species that are not mandated under state plans. Use Workshop to draw focus to other species. However, data availability will be an issue for species that are not key to States.
 - **Action:** Jurisdictions will submit a list of their priority species to Kara.
- TetraTech Project Continuation
 - The TetraTech projects used a literature review approach to populate habitat stressors and threats for lesser-studied species in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed into two matrices – one which focused on [adult life stages](#) and a second which focused on [egg and larval life stages](#). While the matrices are informative and beneficial for scientists, they are not as conducive for

other audiences nor do they allow for ease of comparison over the species.

- To address these issues, team members suggested developing an executive summary which will utilize the TetraTech matrices to compile relevant habitat stressor information in a format which allows for easy comparison of stressors to all of the selected species.
- To continue the development of this product, FHAT members will volunteer to populate the executive summary matrix utilizing the TetraTech matrices. Members were asked to select one or more species and begin populating the executive summary for their selected species. Members agreed that we will only be utilizing the TetraTech matrices to populate the executive summary at this time, and will later incorporate expert opinion.
- **Action:** FHAT members will select a subset of species from the [poll](#) and populate the executive summary for their selected species.
- *Impervious Surface Action Item*
 - Workplan Action item: “Build on significant advances by Maryland DNR on how land use change is impacting tidal fish communities by developing and applying thresholds of impervious cover Baywide.”
 - Maryland experts agreed to meet with Virginia experts to discuss impervious cover challenges and if their approach is feasible/applicable for Virginia’s needs.
 - **Action:** Rachael, Gina, Margaret and Donna will convene for a call to discuss Maryland’s impervious cover research and potential applications in Virginia.

IV. Next Steps

- Members will reconvene in a month to complete review of the workplan and develop presentation for the May 11th CBP Management Board meeting.
- **Action:** Respond to the [poll](#) to provide your availability for our meeting to prepare for the SRS.