



Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.

Meeting Minutes

Chesapeake Bay Program Healthy Watersheds Goal Implementation Team Healthy Watersheds Management Strategy

Chesapeake Bay Foundation Merganser Conference Room
6 Herndon Avenue, Annapolis, MD 21403
December 16th, 2014 10:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.

Meeting Summary:

Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) Healthy Watersheds Goal Implementation Team members and interested stakeholders met on December 16th for a face-to-face meeting devoted to the management strategy of the Healthy Watersheds Outcome in the [Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement](#).

Healthy Watersheds Outcome: Sustain state-identified healthy waters and watersheds recognized for their high quality and/or high ecological value.

Meeting Participants:

Mark Bryer (TNC), *Chair*
Jason Dubow (MDP), *Vice-Chair*
Amy Handen (NPS CBPO), *Coordinator*
Tuana Phillips (Chesapeake Research Consortium), *Staff*
Donnelle Keech (TNC)
Anne Hairston-Strang (MD DNR)
Justin Hynicka (MD DNR)
Angel Valdez (MDE)
Dan Rosen (MDP)
Hedrick Belin (Potomac Conservancy)
Julie Winters (EPA)
Catherine Shanks (MD DNR)
John Wolf (USGS, CPBO)
Helen Stewart (MD DNR)
Margaret McGuinty (MD DNR)
Wink Hastings (NPS, CBPO)
Scott Stranko (MD DNR)
Andrew Roach (USACE)
Lee Epstein (CBF)
Laura Gabanski (EPA Healthy Watersheds Program)
Roy Weitzell (EPA Healthy Watersheds Program ORISE fellow)
Dan Murphy (US FWS)

Diane Wilson (PA DEP)
Gene Yagow (VA Tech, STAC)
Greg Evans (VA DOF)
Keith Lockwood (Norfolk USACE)
Kevin Anderson (TU)
Judy Okay (VA DOF)
Lindsay Dodd (Maryland Association of Soil District)
LJ Ingram (CHART-LLC.net)
Mary Gattis (Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, Local Government Advisory Committee)
Nesha McRae (VA DEQ)
Kevin Stallings (NC State)
Tim Craddock (WV DEP)
Tish Robertson (VA DEQ)
Kristen Wolf (PA DEP)
John Burch (DC DDOE)
Peter Claggett (USGS, CBPO)
Dianne McNally (EPA)
Sally Claggett (USFS)
Susan Spielberger (EPA)

Welcome and Introductions

Mark welcomed everybody to the meeting, confirmed participants, and provided a brief overview of the management strategies and development process.

Work Session on “Action!” Strategies

Donnelle Keech led the day’s activities and discussions on the healthy watersheds outcome’s “action!” strategies, or the activities needed to secure the health of waters and watersheds. She gave a presentation that reviewed the outcomes the Healthy Watersheds GIT is responsible for, and encouraged members to hone in on viable ideas within the “universe” of what we think is needed to protect healthy watersheds. Her presentation also highlighted three major points to consider: find the sweet spot, capacity is king, and a bird in the hand. She ended with three proposals for the action component of the healthy watersheds management strategy, and invited participants to provide feedback. These three proposals were:

- 1) Local Engagement
- 2) Reinforce existing advocacy
- 3) Influence key federal actors

For more information, please see Donnelle’s presentation slides [at this link](#).

Other comments and discussion points:

- There is vast overlap among management strategies. We want to hit more birds with one stone that we throw.
 - For more information on the management strategies and their respective GIT/Workgroup leads: [Management Strategy GIT Matrix](#)

- Participants discussed and agreed that using a practical approach is good in the short-term future, but we can't lose sight of the larger goal – we need to think big.
- A participant noted that each generation changes its perception of baseline for what is healthy and normal.
- Question: what do you mean by advocacy?
 - There are existing governmental and NGO programs of advocacy that aim to encourage and empower various actors to do certain things. One thing we can maybe do is promote and recognize these programs.
- Regarding the “reinforce existing advocacy” proposal, a participant noted that he thought of advocacy and legal/regulatory efforts as separate.

Sticky Note Ninja Activity

During this activity, participants use sticky notes to write immediate thoughts, questions, and answers in response to the following instructions:

- 1) What questions do you have about these proposals?
- 2) Do you think that these proposals are in the “sweet spot?” Can we play to the strength of the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership and make a meaningful impact?
- 3) What barriers and assets come to mind? Who will do this?

The sticky notes were placed under one of four “buckets:” Local Engagement, Reinforce Existing Advocacy, and Influence Key Federal Actors, and Other. The participants' sticky note answers can be found in **Appendix 1** of this document.

Other comments and discussion points:

- Some participants felt as though they would rather brainstorm the specific programs and projects to achieve the outcome; they would rather think more concretely than broadly.
- A participant noted that strategies are going to vary based on different places and different watersheds.
- It was noted that the Chesapeake Bay Program's Principal's Staff Committee decided at their December meeting to separate the Biennial Workplan from the Management Strategy to instead have it be complete in mid to late 2015. The Biennial Workplan is the section of the Management Strategy that articulates the specific GIT and partner actions.
- Another participant noted that way the Management Strategy process is set up is analogous to the way the Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs) are set up.

Break Out Groups Discussion:

After lunch, participants in the room and phone broke into three groups to discuss two strategic ideas:

- 1) Local engagement
- 2) Increasing effectiveness of federal, state, and regulatory efforts.

Donnelle encouraged participants to do the following during the break outs:

- Think about the unique, synthetic contributions that the Chesapeake Bay Program can make for a greater strategic lift.
- Think big, but then go into the details.

- Consider specific, existing programs.
- Ask: how would that get done, and who would be involved with getting it done?

Notes from “Increasing effectiveness of federal, state, and regulatory efforts” discussions:

- Where are most important parts of a watershed to keep it healthy?
 - The Chesapeake Bay Program is capable of identifying the most important areas to maximize. The Goal Team helped sponsor a Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) workshop, and the findings are summarized in a [STAC report](#).
 - Direct and support local government, land trusts, and NGOs to do this.
- State-based strategy is needed since states used different criteria for healthy watersheds
 - Which state programs contribute? Focus on vulnerable watersheds – the CBP has a vulnerability layer.
 - Should fill in what local gov’t need support on.
 - Promote at higher level or program.
 - Develop and promote state-wide Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) with revenue sharing option.
 - State programs that support local economics and growing areas.
 - Which healthy watershed can be protected through regulation? Vs. voluntary?
 - Is there a gap between healthy watersheds? There are habitats that fall in the middle between “healthy” and “needs to be restored.”
 - Mitigation programs directed to healthy watersheds – MS4?
 - There are regulations in place for maintaining and non-degradation. Yet there are a lot of “violations.” Enforcement of existing regulations.
- EPA, et al. -> big federal push on HW protection, a big TMDL push.
 - EPA has the Healthy Watersheds Program.
 - Dovetail with Large Landscape Conservation Collaborative and similar programs focused on land conservation.
 - Communication strategy
 - Enforcement
- Support local engagement through mitigation requirements
 - Resource/low-tech. Sponsor events in communities.
 - Corporate sponsorship
- TMDL link
 - VA’s healthy watersheds approach A – I criteria
- There needs to be federal leadership on protection. Is there a regulatory hook (anti-degradation?) to push federal agencies to react in a big way? (a la TMDL)
 - What’s the corollary to the TMDL?
 - Big focus
 - Is this feasible?
- Communications – healthy watersheds are lost without action. Reality is we are currently reactive, not proactive.
 - Information sharing
 - Drinking water
 - Currently a black hole of weakness in CBP
- Expand EPA HQ Healthy Watersheds Program into other Fed agencies (FERC, FHA?)

- Why is it in someone's benefit to take action?
- What's the moonshot?
 - All fed agencies united with a common objective to protect healthy places (land protection and mitigation)
 - All local gov't act (create/implement policies/ordinances) protective of healthy watersheds
- Public health; court order
- Diversify message about why it matters. Need a common message. Where do things intersect?
 - Show what happens if we lose all healthy watersheds at once.
 - Show where it's happened already
- Other comments:
 - Wordle for healthy watersheds
 - Drive state/fed restoration mitigation to healthy watersheds
 - What's the crisis? Maybe we don't need one?
 - Executive Order on healthy watersheds for federal agencies.
 - CBP/Watershed Agreement is important lever.
 - WHO will do all of this??

Notes from local engagement discussions:

- Information/approach to engage locals
 - Will vary by geography
- How do we address political will? Political will is huge barrier.
 - How do we increase political will in sweet spot?
 - Regulatory requirements: Ches Bay Program is not suited well to do.
- Engage: those who care, those who don't
 - Help improve information flow and knowledge is useful with actors who want to take the right action. But this would not be helpful for those who are not interested.
 - Online network and alert system
 - Technical assistance
- Reasons can be anything, not just caring re: watersheds
 - Strategy based on local concern. What do local actors care about?
 - Connect to local values.
- Full range of local actors is important.
- Organized, state-level healthy waters program?
- Crisis creates opportunity – how to prepare/support to take advantage of.
- What is included in “right information” for locals?
 - Data? Science?
 - Media, advocacy tools
 - Benefits communities get from nature, articulate value of nature.
 - Ton of information. Really need sustained nature of support/assistance
- Get local land trust more involved
 - LTA – building capacity
- Local tourism offices, ex. rural towns in MD
- Grass roots education campaigns

- Asset: build on successes
- Comprehensive Plans: vision there, decisions don't follow, not translated into actions.
 - Political pressure
 - Model language
 - Bay Program can identify what model community / protection looks like.
- Incentives?
 - Hammer? Regulatory/legal.
 - Or voluntary?
 - A combination of the two (regulatory and voluntary).
 - Create markets (ecosystem service markets).
- Training – tech expertise in HW
 - Local officials
 - Public
 - Underpin the “why?”
- Targeted healthy watersheds (vulnerable)
- Other ideas:
 - Tool kit/ toolbox (comprehensive plan, zoning, purchase land)
 - Provide advocacy materials
 - Market ecotourism
 - Watershed academy model
 - Mobile NGO idea
 - Reallocate resources to hands-on T.A.
 - Get 500 people to show up to anything and something will pass or not.
- Federal /state alignment
 - Healthy watersheds = important; unified voice
 - State programs don't have to be regulatory. They can focus on technical assistance.
- Supports local advocates, environmental and other civic (groups involved with overcrowding in schools, traffic issues).
- Leadership within CBP (we did it in TMDL)
- Touch people personally by relating to things like health of kids, future, water quality.
- Comprehensive approach: restoration, conservation
- Idea: recognition program for healthy watersheds. Like Tree Cities. Recognize programs because of what they have, give them ownership and a spotlight.
- What is the “right information”? Be sure that we accommodate local's desire for flexibility.
- Take another look at Factors Influencing – so far focus is on human.
- What about threatened, healthy, impaired?
- Factors of concern to locals (economics, etc.) must be identified
 - Does market research address this?
 - How can we make the link between healthy watersheds and issues of local concern, e.g. drinking water
- Consider how to link healthy waters messaging/programs dealing with impaired waters
 - e.g., monitoring programs to address healthy watersheds, not just impaired.
- Roundtables in Virginia are good forum for information gathering (identifying needs) and dissemination.

- Universities, PDCs may be better conduit than states for knowledge transfer/capacity building than states. They have reach and are trusted.
- K-12 education may have role to play. Link to environmental education Outcome?
- Watershed associations, riverkeepers, etc. have tended to focus on impaired waters.

Existing “Protection & Restoration Efforts”:

- Tie to other outcomes/GITs, i.e. Protected Lands, Land Use, Brook Trout, Forestry
- What’s not working as well as it could? CREP is too narrow.
- PA DEP healthy waters program may be worth replicating.
- Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund (NFWF) focus on restoration is a limitation.
- Need to understand better HOW to influence federal programs.
 - Environmental Impact reviews don’t seem to work.
 - What role does/should Executive Order play?
- Apply Adopt-a-Stream concept to large landscapes?
- Role of private land management in healthy watersheds needs to be considered,
 - E.g., forest management, agriculture operations. Opportunity for connection to Citizen Stewardship? Forestry workgroup?
- Soil and water conservation districts (in MD) mostly focused on agriculture. Resources are tight so expanding scope of work will be a tough sell.
- Forestry workgroup identified maintaining existing forest as a significant gap. Need to connect with Forestry Workgroup on this, CREP, private landowner role, interrelationship between stormwater and loss of forest

Final remarks and next steps

- Next step: develop a credible Management Strategy first draft by the middle of January.
- If the solution were easy and obvious this would have been done a long time ago.
- This is an audacious goal. We need to ask ourselves: how do we shoot for the moon?

Appendix 1: Sticky Note Answers

Local Engagement:

- How does local engagement proposal link with other outcomes addressing local engagement?
- What does success look like? How have we ‘won’ on this?
- Barriers – Development pressures. Assets – lack of public utilities.
- Asset – Recession. Good time to purchase/easements on land
- Yes... why: CBP is a funnel for info to the public and local actors with a friendly face and partnerships established with NGOs etc. already. Just need to crystalize the info into relatable and necessary packaging.
- Local engagement: info available. Need to influence desire to use info.
- What is the bridge to unite all of the local actors to meet the goal?
- What is the existing or needed (if not existing) inventory of the 4 lists?
- How can varying local funding/budgets be considered?

- Sweet spot? Maybe on communications, not currently a strength.
- Sweet spot, but how is the engagement from local side addressed?
- Role of watershed groups – river keepers?
- Sweet spot given composition of CBP
- Local and federal actors mentioned, but what about state?
- Online network and alert system of people: meetings, information, photos, mobile app, etc.
- Barrier = lack of legal requirements to protect healthy watersheds or its watershed
- What is “info” looking for?
- Need to consider incentives too
- What have we learned from past efforts?
- Define your vision of who are the local actors?
- How to influence competing priority for development
- Provide information on customer understanding of healthy watersheds
- Engagement. What is the right information?
- Provide info of constituent motivators for enhancing watershed health
- Does this include incentives?
- Which “outcomes” are we trying to improve?
- Enforcement!
- From my position I have zero influence on local governments. How does this group advocate in that arena?
- In sweet spot if local politics comply – or adopt vision and needed action to conserve healthy watersheds
- They have a lot of ‘things to fix’ and not as much time/\$ to focus on ‘what to keep’
- This can meet info and knowledge needs – but how can we change/win hearts and minds of local political leaders?
- Not in sweet spot. States have been trying to influence local. How will this improve that effort?
- Understanding the level of awareness of healthy watersheds vs. attitudes and behaviors related to their importance
- Sweet spots (include citizen scientists for training/technical)
- Asset – local engagement has potential application to multiple outcomes
- Need #1 a full accounting of all assets: P-2-P, TA, training, info access. Also need #2 gap analysis
- Need a coordinator for peer-to-peer, pt. of contact to distribute tech. assistance. CBP partners have expertise, but...?
- Could be if it targets local leaders to consider environment in a stronger, more formal way
- Need to really support/engage/guide those NGOs with ability to protect land
- Sweet spot: improved knowledge and awareness of constituent needs, understanding and willingness to assist will better enable ability to achieve outcomes
- Maybe in sweet spot. Changes of elected officials?
- Not in sweet spot because at this point in time too unwieldy to understand depth/breadth of need and who needs what --- need to get there.

- Local engagement. Yes – Technical support for local Green Infrastructure strategy (some already have it).
- Barriers – political will at local level
- Barrier – not all people know what a watershed is; nor do they know their actions have an impact on Chesapeake Bay Watershed health
- Capacity: build on local desire for healthy rural economy and livable communities – Healthy Waters are part of Quality of Life
- Barriers – “local” is too broad to address
- Barriers: - competing initiatives for time, attention, funding
- Asset/capacity #3: local residents/groups eager to do occasional efforts like tree planting, stream cleanup. They improve places close to home; not abstract.

Reinforce existing advocacy:

- Look at forest restoration strategy – Baywide GI
- In Sweet spot – if all parties view value and purpose of regs (no wiggle room)
- Capacity – seems to be dwindling all the way around. Will those show strings stretch?
- Yes – assist with messaging consistency, policy priorities.
- Coordination of multiple actors and issues, with different agendas is a problem
- Asset = state regulatory/legal power for special environmental resources of concern
- Establish state-level healthy waters program. Join science and policy staff. Provide regulatory control or voluntary assistance.
- Barrier – cycle of politics elections can change the fate of plans and progress
- Sweet spot: yes if focused on communication and coordination
- Barrier – seen as having unrealistic expectations
- Yes, should be happening already. BUT: the direction of state agencies/regulators change slowly and environment changes with every administration...
- Yet another workgroup but needs an organized way to mat existing resources and expertise to support individual agencies reach one goal.
- Issues are varied and extensive. Should we focus on particular ones to best effect the healthy watersheds goal?
- What are the existing advocacy messages?
- How do people know what to advocate? What are the needed actions? (to get to healthy watersheds)
- What corporate sponsors can be tapped as watershed advocates?
- Barriers – political will at local level. One more federal mandate.
- Assets – multi-state network. Barrier is it hasn’t been used well for protection.
- Local Decision not always science driven – advocacy needed to influence
- Local decision and state policies
- Define regulators that can be affected.
- Advocacy include both legal/regulatory and voluntary efforts?
- “advocacy” limitations of governmental partners
- Round 2: most in the sweet is “reinforce existing advocacy.” Feds being downsized, local actors (i.e. politically influenced) leave jobs, but local residents stay put.

- Assets = a lot of very productive, hardworking people, a few doing the work of many – we get stuff done!

Influence key federal actors

- How can we influence federal actors?
- Limited effect of federal agencies on watershed protection.
- Asset = EPA Healthy Waters Program and Bay Executive Order
- Asset = Clean Water Act, anti-degradation framework
- Sweet spot – establish policy, guidelines, regulations, etc. to protect Tier II watersheds
- Sweet spot
- Not in sweet spot yet – lack of strategic thinkers who can implement
- Sweet spot – yes, could definitely use FOD to influence
- Are the feds really going to go after poorly-managed farms?
- EPA Healthy Waters Program – collaborate/network with other federal agencies? How? Plans to do so?
- Where are the boundaries for authority for agency action?
- Include other branches of EPA – e.g. Drinking Water
- If issue is local why looking at federal?
- FHA has told us they don't get involved – need link to CB requirements
- Are feds willing/able to accept recs?
- Should the agricultural agencies be included since there are many ways they influence water quality?
- Federal actors need to be approached for policy interests
- Is the magnitude of a “win” from a key Fed worth the enormous effort?
- Federal – include healthy watersheds as part of TMDL strategy (reasonable assurance?)
- Who determines or what criteria are used to determine successful preservation?
- Capacity – approach through EPA Healthy Watershed Program and leverage TMDL goals
- Yes meets need and partnership can play important role.
- Yes is sweet spot (I support Jason's comment to separate advocacy and regulations)
- The “effective, sustained knowledge transfer system” fits the sweet spot equally needed by local, state, and federal stakeholders.
- Federal actors – sweet spot considering composition of CBP
- Barrier – advocacy is not generally endorsed by CBP
- Assets: agencies often function in keystone – decisions cascade.
- Opportunity: integration of focus on water quality/TMDL/restoration vs. protection/habitat aspects of healthy watersheds

Other category:

- Need to see/understand how watersheds function (Anne) but we also need to understand how “the Actors” work.
- Protection framework: policy, local conservation, state programs, fed programs, education/advocacy
- Change the word ‘advocacy.’ It will scare people.

- Is this everything in the MS? What about specific state actions?
- How do these questions recognize management strategies from other outcomes?
- Goal = BIG scale can be small?
- Are we utilizing an existing network of healthy watersheds?
- Are we shooting for 1 unified strategy or 6 separate state strategies (like milestones)?
- Assets – specific recognition of management strategy of other outcomes
- Barrier – influence of “federal actors” question is posed in manner that is too confining.
- Assets – leverage CBP GITs, support where multiple outcomes apply
- Competing societal goals
- \$\$
- Barrier: science doesn’t know always what will hurt a healthy water
- Collaborate means to work to word a common goal without regard for who gets credit
- Collaborate extensively with other GITs to develop strategies