

CBP Monitoring Program Updates #1. July 1, 2013.

(This message is from Peter Tango, Chesapeake Bay Monitoring Coordinator, USGS@Chesapeake Bay Monitoring Program. ptango@chesapeakebay.net)

Today's entry is the first in a series shared communications with the Bay community regarding adaption and sustainability of our Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) water quality and SAV monitoring programs. Near and long-term budget challenges exist in supporting the present monitoring frameworks designed to address CBP priorities. The following entry is an update of recent CBP meeting discussions, funding status, and directions of the work underway toward developing near and long term options and recommendations in addressing these budget challenges.

Background

- All the partnerships' shared monitoring networks have reached a level of maturity, stability, and longevity where they are paying back on the long term financial investments made by the partners for years and decades.
- For the two and half decades of the partnership, the states, EPA, and other partners have been systematically increasing their investments in these monitoring networks, driven by the expressed needs supporting shared management decision making.
- However, over the past 3-5 years, the underlying funding base has been slowly eroding as state partners experienced the effect of the economic downturn and were forced to make significant across the board funding cuts, including to their contributions to the shared monitoring networks.
- Recently, the federal partners have had their budgets cut back in response to the economic downturn, the rising federal deficit, and the resultant sequestration which is expected to last for years.
- The Partnership is facing making decisions on competing Bay restoration priorities within a shrinking collective budget.

Challenge to the Partnership

- Address the FY2013 shortfalls in full EPA federal funding of the existing water quality and SAV monitoring networks and take on the longer term challenge for how to sustain these networks through the next major decision point—2025.

Recent Meeting Highlights May/June 2013.

- For federal FY13 budgets of the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) tidal, nontidal and SAV monitoring programs, shortfalls have been projected.
- As of today, the still tentative U.S. EPA Federal FY13 shortfall amounts are \$944K in the combined tidal and nontidal water quality monitoring programs and \$163K in the submersed aquatic vegetation (SAV) program.
- The CBP-Science, Technical Assessment and Reporting Team is coordinating with its SAV, tidal and nontidal work groups and their representatives from across the CBP jurisdictions, federal and state agencies, river basin commissions and academic institutions on a nearterm (4-6 week timeline) plan.
 - Guiding Principles are being developed to address the present FY support gap.
 - A selection of CBP STAC members are being invited to assist in this short duration process.
- Presentations on the impending short fall and initial discussions on addressing the cuts have been made during the past month at CBP tidal and nontidal workgroup, CBP-STAC, and CBP-STAR meetings; the SAV programming issues were presented to the CBP Management Board in June 2013.
 - You may reference presentations for TMAW, NTWG, CBP-STAC, STAR and the Management Board meetings through the May and June 2013 calendar entries of the CBP calendar at <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/calendar>
- CBP-STAC has been requested by STAR to guide a longer term monitoring review toward options and recommendations on sustaining water quality and SAV monitoring programming.
- The next suite of CBP meetings discussing the funding gap in the water quality and SAV monitoring programs and development of gap closure options are:
 - Tidal Monitoring and Assessment WG 10AM-noon, Wednesday, July 10th, 2013 at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service building in Annapolis, MD.
<http://www.chesapeakebay.net/S=0/calendar/event/19481/> for meeting and call-in information
 - Nontidal WG 1PM-3PM, July 17th, 2013, Suite 305A, CBPO, Annapolis, MD.
<http://www.chesapeakebay.net/S=0/calendar/event/18867/>
 - CBP Water Quality Goal Implementation Team, July 8, 1:30-3:30PM
<http://www.chesapeakebay.net/S=0/calendar/event/18973/>
 - CBP Management Board, July 11th, afternoon.
<http://www.chesapeakebay.net/S=0/calendar/event/18756/>