



## Maintain Healthy Watersheds GIT Meeting August 8, 2022 [Meeting Materials](#)

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Jeff Lerner, EPA PPB  
Jason Dubow, MDP  
Debbie Herr Cornwell, MDP  
Angel Valdez, MDE  
Kara Ogburn, MDE  
Alison Santoro, MD DNR  
Scott Stranko, DNR  
Mark Southerland, Tetra Tech  
Bailey Bosley, USGS  
Scott Phillips, USGS  
Cassandra Davis, NYS DEC  
John Wolf, USGS

Steven Hohman, EPA  
Dan Murphy USFWS, Chesapeake Bay Field Office  
Mark Hoffman, CBC  
Laura Cattell Noll, ACB  
Kristin Saunders, UMCES  
Renee Thompson, USGS  
Bill Jenkins, EPA  
Sarah McDonald, USGS  
Peter Claggett, USGS  
Stephen Faulkner, USGS  
Amy Goldfischer, CRC  
Camille Liebnitzky, City of Alexandria  
Bonnie Bick, Mattawoman Watershed Society

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**11:00 AM**      **Welcome and Introductions** – *Jeff Lerner, HWGIT Chair, Partnerships Program Branch Chief within EPA's Office of Wetlands Oceans and Watersheds'*

Jeff started the meeting at 11:00 by welcoming members and interested parties and taking attendance.

**11:10 AM**      **Updates, funding opportunities and [STAR Science Needs](#)** - *Renee Thompson, USGS, CBP*

The meeting began with a review of upcoming conferences and meetings relevant to Healthy Watershed interests. In addition funding opportunities related to healthy watershed program missions were reviewed. Members were asked how they would like to receive that information: would you like these updates and funding opportunities to be sent to you via email or as a meeting topic?

### **Discussion:**

Members voiced their thoughts on sharing funding opportunities and creating a space to help states and organizations apply for funding. Jason Dubow suggested that CBP could potentially help States and other organizations get access to funding through capacity support. Scott Phillips noted that we really need to understand what it truly takes to apply to these funding opportunities and look into ways to increase success. Alison Santoro noted that during the Wetlands Workshop there was a lot of discussion on creating a grant hub. Folks at the workshop expressed wanting one place to find and apply for grants, this could potentially make it easier for organizations to apply for funds.

**Follow up actions:** The HWGIT coordination team will be following up on how the HWGIT can be a resource for members to help them take advantage of outside funding. This conversation will be

brought forward to other GIT chairs and coordinators as it is extremely relevant and timely. Renee and Sophie will also be sending emails out to states and other partners asking specific questions about taking advantage of funding, and if the HWGIT could help support their needs in accessing funding.

**Action: Members are asked to think about how they want to receive funding updates. If you would like to share any thoughts**

Science needs

In addition, Renee reviewed the [STAR Science needs database](#) and the updated Healthy Watersheds GIT items within the database (to view the HWGIT specific science needs filter “healthy watersheds” under the Primary Outcomes tab). There will be future opportunities to update the science needs as part of our ongoing adaptive management process. To view the updates presentation from the August meeting click [here](#).

**Action: Members are asked to review these for accuracy and completeness and provide any comments by August 30th.**

**11:20 AM      C Stream Intern Project Report Out- Bianca Martinez Penn, C Stream Intern**

The Diversity Workgroup CSTREAM Intern Bianca Martinez Penn’s presented her summer project which created a [presentation](#) and [StoryMap](#) outlining background and guidance on stakeholder engagement and the incorporation of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice considerations in healthy watersheds work. She also provided some recommendations for the HWGIT.

Bianca gave a short introduction and then shared with the HWGIT her driving research questions:

1. Have underrepresented communities been involved in work plan development and decision making?
2. How can we identify, track, and reduce disproportionate impacts?
3. How do we increase outreach and involve underrepresented communities to promote healthy watersheds?

From asking these questions she found that the values associated with maintaining healthy watersheds have too often not been adequately or consistently conveyed to local communities. Typically, only communities directly next to bodies of water understand the importance of healthy watersheds, which is often socioeconomically exclusive. In order to create effective diverse outreach, we must understand public perceptions of water quality, perceived barriers to implementing environmental solutions, and what types of outreach best connect with target audiences.

Bianca went on to share her StoryMap which shows intersections of state identified healthy watershed, percentage of people of color, percentage of low income, and the Diversity Workgroup’s organization layer to find locations where healthy watersheds intersect areas that may be more susceptible to EJ concerns and to identify potential partner organizations.

Bianca gave recommendations to the group on some next step actions. She suggested that we partner with organizations who have interest in connecting marginalized groups to healthy environments who intersect with healthy watersheds. We have an opportunity to include their leaders in our work to help keep healthy watershed healthy, while also helping engage and build relationships with groups who do not traditionally get a seat at the table.

Follow up actions: Renee and Sophie will be taking some time to investigate the organizations that Bianca recommended to the group and see if their leaders would be interested and joining our team or presenting at an upcoming meeting.

**Action: members are encouraged to review her product and recommendations and email Sophie ([swaterman@chesapeakebay.net](mailto:swaterman@chesapeakebay.net)) with any impressions, suggested next steps or other input.**

#### **Discussion:**

Jason Dubow asked about do we communicate to residents about their “good or bad” waters. Bianca answered that getting organizations who work directly with those communities to understand the issue is a great way to get that information across to people who live in those communities. They have direct relations with folks, and already have built trusted relationships. Bianca was asked if any aspect of her analysis surprised her. She said that large number of unhealthy watersheds surprised her.

**11:40 AM      Land Use Methods and Metrics (LUMM) [Outcome](#) Indicator Conversation – Peter Claggett and Sarah McDonald, USGS, CBP**

Peter Claggett reviewed the Land Use Methods and Metrics Outcome indicator (data and maps). These products are derived from CBP’s land use/land cover (LULC) data. His presentation can be viewed [here](#). Peter showed the group the proposed indicator maps. The proposed 2022 indicators are:

- Impervious Cover (2017/18) and Impervious Cover Change (2013-2017)
- Tree Cover (2017/18) and Tree Cover Change (2013/14 – 2017/18)
- Natural Land (2017/18) and Natural Land Change (2013/14 – 2017/18)
- Forest (2017/18) and Forest Change (2013/14 – 2017/18)
- Community Tree Cover (2017/18) and Developed Tree Cover Change (2013/14 – 2017/18)

When it came to using natural lands, Peter gave some thoughts on potentially dropping it as an indicator. Natural lands include harvested forest, so if a parcel of land goes from forest to harvested forest it does not show up as change if your measuring is natural land as it is still technically natural land. You are leaving off a crucial part of the story.

The HWGIT has a responsibility to make sure that the interpretations of the metrics for watershed health are valid. The HWGIT also has to answer the question: Are the metrics consistent with, and/or complement, the Chesapeake Healthy Watershed Assessment?

After his presentation Peter opened the floor to discussion on the proposed metrics.

Jason asked if the effective impervious cover statistic could be weighted in some way by the effectiveness of state level storm water management requirements. Peter noted that there are a couple studies out there, but none sufficient enough to come up with a weighting system, but it is something that might be worth looking into. Alison Santoro commented that UMCES has a grant from CBT’s Pooled Monitoring program to study the effectiveness of ESD on watershed metrics. Kristen asked in the chat: Once you map the impervious cover change, can you analyze or see where areas are vulnerable to tipping past a threshold (for instance, thresholds brook trout habitat, or tidal shoreline vulnerability for wetlands and shallow water species? Peter answered that we do have that ability to look at vulnerable areas. Thresholds were talked about, and Jeff mentioned that in Minnesota they are using thresholds to guide where they want to protect healthy watersheds. In the chat Stephan Faulkner commented: Any metric that includes change through time (e.g., timber lands that typically grow back to forest) is going to be complicated to interpret. The time delay in impacts in clear-cut Year One vs clear-cut Year 20 varies by other factors and this lag-effect concept is not well integrated into the BMP/restoration

metrics. The group had more discussion on the pros and cons of keeping in vs taking out natural land. The group decided that they were not going to make any decisions this month, but rather wait until October.

**We will be continuing this indicator conversation in October and members were asked to review the presentation and provide input and feedback on the indicators and which are important for healthy watersheds.**

**Follow up actions:** GIS team and Healthy Watersheds GIT Staff will work to create some narrative interpretations of these indicators explaining the relationship to healthy watersheds and/or communities the group will focus on thresholds, signals of change, and indicators that demonstrate vulnerability or urgency to share with the GIT.

**12:05 PM      Draft Visualization of Hi-resolution LU/LC data and LUMM indicators as well as additional targeting and visualization efforts – John Wolf, USGS**

John Wolf also unveiled a demonstration visualization tool that allows users to interact with the [Land Use Methods and Metrics indicators](#). The visualization examples are intended to show how this information could be presented more and an exploratory context, as opposed to an explanatory. The interactive maps, tables and charts can be summarized at different geographies and display acres and percent [land use/land cover](#). **Members are encouraged to interact with the platform and send any comments, questions or feedback to [jwolf@chesapeakebay.net](mailto:jwolf@chesapeakebay.net) or [swaterman@chesapeakebay.net](mailto:swaterman@chesapeakebay.net).**

**Next Steps:** make decisions about the presented indicators from the perspective of healthy watersheds to provide feedback to Peter, Sarah, and John.

**12:35 PM      MDHWA Final Results and Next Steps - Renee Thompson, USGS**

The meeting was running low on time, so this conversation got tabled until October.

**12:55 PM      GIT Funding Projects: Current and Future - Sophie Waterman, CRC and Renee Thompson, USGS**

Renee and Sophie talked about GIT funding projects that the HWGIT is considering putting forward for 2022-2023. The project ideas include Helping a Locality Protect Healthy Waters, A Habitat Tipping point community outreach project utilizing high resolution land use/land cover and other decision support tools and a Protected Lands data visualization project. You can view those project ideas [here](#). If you have any feedback on the GIT funding ideas or would like to develop your own idea, please contact Sophie ([swaterman@chesapeakebay.net](mailto:swaterman@chesapeakebay.net)). Please keep in mind that GIT funding projects must address components of the Outcome's management strategy and logic and approved two-year [Logic & Action Plan](#) by responding to identified needs, gaps, factors, planned actions or barriers that have been identified. Must include a defined deliverable with a clear end serve as a catalyst for expanded or future action. Must be a unique project.

Some key GIT funding dates to keep in mind:

- August 9 - Idea Sharing Meeting
- August 16 – Chesapeake Bay Trust Online System Table 1 Training Video released + Trust Office Hours Announced (for Q&A)

- September 1 - Draft Table 1 due - one project idea per outcome
- September 28 - Project Ideas Scoring Meeting

**1:15 PM      Adjourn**