



Maintain Healthy Watersheds GIT Meeting Minutes

April 12, 2021, 2-4pm

Attendees:

Nora Jackson, CRC, Staffer
Jason Dubow, MDP, Vice Chair
Angel Valdez, MDE, Chair
Ben Coverdale, DE DNREC
Katie Brownson, USFS
Julie Mawhorter, USFS
Kristin Saunders, UMCES
John Wirts, WV DEP
Briana Yancy, CRC
Tuana Phillips, EPA
Britt Slattery, NPS
Todd Janeski, VA DCR
Mark Southerland, Tetra Tech
Anne Hairston-Strang, MD DNR
Cassandra Davis, NY DEC
Megan Ossmann, CRC
Sequoia Bua-lam, EPA
Justin Shapiro, CRC

Peter Tango, USGS
Scott Stranko, MD DNR
Sara Painter, WeConservePA
Bonnie Bick, Mattawoman Watershed Society
Nancy Roth, Tetra Tech
Lee Epstein, CBF
Debbi Herr Cornwell, MDP
Marisa Baldine, CRC
Katie Ombalski, Woods and Waters
Tom Butler, CRC
Kelly Maloney, USGS
Steve Faulkner, USGS
Andrew Szwak, Land Trust Alliance
Sally Claggett, USFS
Peter Claggett, USGS
Jennifer Starr, ACB
Renee Carey, Northcentral PA Conservancy
Jeff Lerner, US Endowment for Forestry and Communities

Announcement

We are looking for nominees for Maintain Healthy Watersheds GIT Chair position as Angel Valdez, MDE has informed us of the need to step down. Jason Dubow will remain as Vice Chair. Recommend anyone interested reach out to Renee and Nora. Looking for diversity in representation, someone from the local or state level.

DEIJ Community Organizing- Sara Painter, WeConservePA and Renee Carey, Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy

Sara and Renee shared their findings from the creation of a DEIJ organizing committee, Multiple states responded to their call to action in 2020, and since then members meet to talk about why DEIJ work is important to them and their work in conservation. Mostly members of the land trust community with conversations around what land conservation looks like now, what groups are involved and linking community and conservation. Wanting to create meaningful change, form

connections, learn from each other. Worked with Marcelo Bonta, national conservation DEIJ expert, looking at the theory of change from a personal/individual level, in a group/interpersonal level, then at a systems/organization level and how change occurs at each level. The larger group breaks down into smaller groups working on specific tasks such as programming, structure, partnerships, and strategic planning. The role of WeConservePA is to create this space for people to come together, and support others already doing this work.

Questions and Comments

- Anne- I want to try the Walkable Watersheds approach in MD (Skeo Solutions developed it in VA) for planning where tree plantings can help meet community needs- parks, safe streets, flooding, <https://www.walkablewatershed.com/> It takes longer to include community in the planning but it is critical they have a respected opinion in the process. The point is getting trees in places where people will value and care for them.
- Mark- Skeo is doing a project in Columbia MD for Atholton neighborhood, which includes Harriett Tubman "school", in coordination with communication ecology institute.

How to incorporate DEIJ (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice) in to our workplan- Tuana Phillips, EPA and Briana Yancy, CRC

Briana presented an overview of work going on with DEIJ and steps the partnership is taking to embrace DEIJ in all areas of the program. Tuana provided some examples of projects including a DEIJ focus, and concluded with a discussion on how to incorporate DEIJ in Healthy Watersheds work, and identifying what resources or support are needed from the Diversity Workgroup.

Questions and Comments

- Jason- Identify co-benefits of our work with underrepresented communities
- Anne- There's good urban heat island/tree canopy work being done by Mike Alonzo at American University and Matt Baker at UMBC. We're very interested in any spatial modeling on tree planting opportunity that addresses DEIJ principles.
- Sara- Support would look like time set aside so people can read, watch, learn
- Jason- Raise the importance of healthy waters and healthy watersheds in all communities, and focused outreach to BIPOC-owned farms regarding land use change issues
- Katie- It would be interesting to know to what degree state-identified healthy watersheds overlap with historically underrepresented and low-income communities. What are the DEIJ implications of focusing mostly on watersheds that are healthy?
 - Sara- might have a GIS project that could answer that question
- Nancy- As we develop the Maryland Healthy Watersheds Assessment, we have been talking with John Wolf about how to incorporate data from the dashboard to overlay DEIJ information with other metrics of watershed health and vulnerability.
- Anne- We're looking at economic opportunity as well as environmental- how can we build jobs such as supplying or maintaining woody biomass fuel for heat/energy with new clean technology renewable energy with local fuels
- Tuana- An article you might find interesting, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1470160X2031133X>. Here is a summary of their findings: Stream health in Virginia is correlated with several indicators of human well-being. Stream health in Virginia is negatively related to overall human mortality rate. Stream

health in Virginia is positively related to percentage of White residents. Causal links between ecosystem health and human well-being warrant further study.

- Jason- thinking about the Patuxent river area in MD and equitable access. It's a tier II waterbody with some recreational access but would be an interesting analysis. Not everyone enjoys the same access to recreational amenities.

Action: Renee Thompson and Nora Jackson will present on some of the ideas mentioned during this meeting (outlined in the bullets above) at a future HWGIT meeting in Fall 2021. They will highlight how the Diversity Dashboard, Healthy Watersheds Assessment and other data and resources can be used to answer questions related to the intersection of watershed health, public health, and DEI issues.

Land Use outcome adaptive management update – Nora Jackson, CRC

Nora reviewed the dates and scope of upcoming work with Strategy Review System. LUOE review has been rescheduled to the next cohort. The HW cohort begins reviewing and updating our management strategy and logic and action plan in June.

Questions and Comments

- Angel- As the Chair for the past 6 years, it'd be really good to bring in a candidate with a fresh perspective, not as entrenched in Bay program. You can learn a lot as the Chair and get lots of support from staff.
- Jason- Suggest hearing updates from Jeff Lerner and the HW consortium
- Anne- Important to spread the word on healthy watershed metrics and work that's been done here out to more people. Bay lands and tributaries meeting on May 4, 11:30. Anne to send more info to Nancy.
- Kristin- Local engagement team, comprised of people across the program, issues of land use and land conversion. Recent discussion at the MB was focused on how to get this information to the decision makers at the local level, elected officials, planners, community advocates. There's going to be a big push around local engagement and issues related to tree canopy and land use policies, ultimately the local engagement strategy looks across the whole agreement at where engagement is necessary to accelerate work on the ground. We are looking to tap into existing partnership networks and resources. Asked MB to connect us with people doing local engagement, an area moving forward we're going to be leaning into this effort more. Also, think about experience in local engagement as you consider chair positions.

Next Meeting: [Monday, June 14, 2-4pm](#)