

DRAFT

Goal Implementation Team 4 - Maintain Healthy Watersheds Key Messages

The GIT4 has accepted the recommendation of the GIT4 Communications Workgroup to present the case for healthy watersheds using *key messages* that infuse consistent and effective language into formal and informal presentations. Our goal is to develop a compelling narrative about Healthy Watersheds and persuade leaders within CBP and EPA to support performance accountability metrics for healthy watershed protection, establishing HW as a prominent and essential component of Bay recovery efforts.

Target audiences¹:

- Local Government Advisory Committee
- Citizens Advisory Committee
- Science and Technical Advisory Committee [maybe – do we consider them already on board?]
- Nick DiPasquale, Director CBP, EPA
- Jeff Corbin, Senior Advisor on Bay and Anacostia River, EPA

The follow key messages are presented using a “key message” and “proof point” architecture. Think of is as headlines follow by supporting details.

Key messages are a tool for developing strong and consistent presentations, letters, talking points or other communications pieces – this document is not a communications piece in and of itself, and is not intended to be presented as it to audiences.

¹ as identified in recommendations, and refined based on suggestions from Margaret Enloe

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SUPPORTING CURRENT HEALTH

Healthy Watersheds are the lands and waters that underpin the current health of the Chesapeake Bay – without these intact forests and woodlands, clean streams, and functioning wetlands the current condition of the Bay would be much worse, and the challenges to restoration much greater.

- [insert here: our best measures, maps, statistics, statements illustrating or describing the extent and distribution of “healthy watershed” features in the Bay watershed]
- Even in its current degraded and diminished state, the Chesapeake Bay is remarkably productive and deeply cherished. When we see indicators that are low or declining [fill in], we can thank *Healthy Watersheds* that things aren’t worse!²

KEEPING HOPE ALIVE

Healthy Watersheds provide the clean water that gives us hope that we can reduce pollution, repair ecological damage, and restore the Chesapeake Bay to good health.

- Ecosystem services provided by *healthy watersheds* are expensive or even impossible to replace
- Restoration - while essential to reduce pollutant loads and repair damage already done – is expensive.
- As *Healthy Watersheds* are degraded or lost, the price tag for Bay recovery goes up and the ecological certainty of success goes down.

ON THE ROAD TO FAILURE

Restoration without corresponding focus on maintaining *Healthy Watersheds* is like filling a bucket without a bottom -- but that is exactly what we are doing around the country and in the Chesapeake Bay.

- Benefits of *Healthy Watersheds* are real, but typically ignored or undervalued because they are not included in our market-based accounting systems which we use to understand costs v. benefits, or short term v. long term gain
- The critical contribution of maintaining *Healthy Watersheds* to Bay recovery is undervalued by CBP partners because it is not included in CBP “accounting”
- [fill in: numbers or anecdotes that credibly illustrate this imbalance in investment in restoration v. maintaining healthy watersheds]

AN INNOVATION KEY TO SUCCESS

Maintaining *Healthy Watersheds* as the foundation of the Bay’s current level of health must be a component of successful Chesapeake Bay recovery efforts.

- **The CBP should incorporate measures and incentives into tracking/accounting, to recognize maintaining *Healthy Watersheds* as a critical, high-impact contribution to Bay recovery.**
- GIT4 has already started work to address the scientific and practical issues that must be addressed.... [fill in: plain language the best describes current thinking about accountability metrics for conservation, “reasonable assurance” index?]