

## **Monitoring Meeting 3/19/25 Minutes**

### **Homework**

- ✓ Review the two example logic models and send your thoughts to Breck Sullivan ([bsullivan@chesapeakebay.net](mailto:bsullivan@chesapeakebay.net)).

### **Next steps & Updates**

- ✓ Breck and the team will update the Monitoring Team on the upcoming Management Board meetings (listed below) at a following Monitoring Team meeting.
  - ✓ WQSAM Outcome language will be continuously edited until early May.
- ✓ The Monitoring Team was an internal Bay Program meeting that has recently opened to our partners due to the need for a place to discuss the WQSAM Outcome and Beyond 2025 updates. If you have partners that would like to be part of these bi-weekly meetings, please contact Allison Welch ([awelch@chesapeakebay.net](mailto:awelch@chesapeakebay.net)).

### **9:00 AM: Welcome & Announcements**

Peter gave some announcements to the group and reviewed today's agenda. Those announcements included:

- STAR put together a GIT chairs meeting on Monday and Tuesday. There was a lot of creative brainstorming on the connectivity of our outcomes in the Beyond 2025 discussions. It was a productive conversation that opened some insightful questions.

Breck highlighted the dates for the upcoming Management Board (MB) meetings, as listed at the bottom of this document. She also reminded the group that the final recommendation for the WQSAM Outcome disposition is due today. Based on previous conversations here and with the MB, she is planning on sending the disposition as "Update" and wanted the group's approval. The group agreed.

Breck will send that result to the MB which will help inform the March 27<sup>th</sup> meeting, where the MB members are going to vote on the final disposition. If there is consensus, that will move onto the March 28<sup>th</sup> PSC meeting. If full consensus is not reached across all MB members, voting and non-voting, they plan to vote among the voting members, which are the jurisdictions and Chesapeake Bay Commission. This vote must result in a supermajority, which is a  $\frac{7}{9}$ . There is some uncertainty on what will happen if some jurisdictions choose to stand aside for the vote.

At the March 27<sup>th</sup> MB meeting, there will also be a chance for new outcomes to come forward. Some that the group have heard about are Soil Health, Oyster Abundance, and

potentially a fish habitat outcome focused on non-tidal. Those will get daylighted and discussed with the MB on the 27<sup>th</sup>. That information will be passed to the PSC on the 28<sup>th</sup> to get their feedback. If there is still disagreement over an outcome, it will be finalized on April 10<sup>th</sup>. Agendas should be coming out soon.

#### **9:10 AM: Outcome vs. Output vs. Activity** – Breck Sullivan (USGS)

- *Overview of the current definitions of outcome, output, and activity.*
- **Note:** *These slides are from a previous Habitat GIT Office Hours meeting. Breck showed slides 6-8 in this meeting.*

Summary: Breck used a few slides to share different logic models and emphasized that logic models will look different for different organizations and different needs. The steps in Breck's first example model are the inputs, what is invested into the work, then it moves to activities, the actions taken, then outputs, the products or results produced from the actions, and then ultimately the outcome or impact, which is the change or benefit of the work. Another visual shows resources/inputs, which goes into activities, which are both the planned work, then that goes into the outputs, which goes into the outcomes, and then the impact, in our case this is the impact on the ecosystem. Those final three are the intended results.

The Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) has a structural logic model and a theory of change logic model, which is the Strategy Review System. This theory of change model was built based off of the Kellogg Foundation. This model has some extended focuses but still goes from inputs, to outputs, to outcomes. This model includes both short- and long-term goals, which could factor in environmental changes or could be used to set milestones while working towards a longer goal. While these short- and long-term goals don't need to be included in the outcome, they could be mentioned in a sentence or two. There are also work plans and management strategies that will include this information, if not included in the outcome language.

**Q: Amanda Shaver:** I know there are some concerns about moving important things into outcomes or activities. Is that just with the workgroups working on the outcome or are they deciding to do a supplemental document in the agreement?

- **A: Breck Sullivan:** Unfortunately, there is no clear answer at the moment. There has been some discussion on a complementary document to the agreement. At the last MB meeting, Lee referenced that the CBP has lots of workgroups that don't have outcomes, and they are still funded and supported. Anna Killius has mentioned that outputs are more important because that's where the work is actually being done. We have heard good things about outputs and other things that may not appear in

outcome language still being priorities to the CBP. There has not been any clear instruction on how it will go yet. I am not sure if we are going to get a clear answer on that. I think that if we can structure a logic model and show where all of these pieces can fit, that will help the MB in their decisions. We'll need this team and your input to make sure we are getting everything we need.

**9:25 AM: Review of Feedback from Last Monitoring Team Meeting – Breck Sullivan (USGS)**

- *Breck will go over the feedback received in the MentiMeter poll and via email.*

Summary: Breck presented on the current state of the Water Quality Standards Attainment and Monitoring (WQSAM) Outcome. Breck reviewed the current outcome language and mentioned some of the previously discussed weaknesses.

Breck also reviewed the results from an earlier poll at a Water Quality Office Hour Meeting. In this poll, there were mixed results on whether we needed to keep monitoring in the outcome language and Breck reviewed the reasons behind those two opinions. On the side supporting including monitoring in the language, they wanted to emphasize the importance of monitoring, and on the side against, they believed monitoring was an activity rather than an outcome. Next, Breck showed the results for including results and trends, where there was more support.

Breck also mentioned how the MB had mixed results on whether they were interested in broadening the scope of the outcome. Among those who were interested, they were concerned about the resource needs, so they'd like to find a way to use existing programs to broaden the scope.

Some of the major takeaways from the results of last week's MentiMeter poll were needing to weave in attainment, assess all established Bay criteria, rate progress based on tidal and non-tidal, include SMART elements in the outputs (this is still up for discussion with the MB but seems to be the consensus across the goal teams), and build out a logic model for the outcome.

Next, Breck showed the draft logic model that she created for the WQSAM Outcome. She broke it up into short, intermediate, and long-term outcomes. The long-term outcome being the outcome language and the others being steps along the way. The long-term outcome is "attainment of established water quality standards in the Chesapeake Bay and reduction of nutrients and sediments in the watershed, contributing to a healthier ecosystem." This is aiming to weave in attainment and consider tidal and non-tidal. This outcome isn't SMART. Breck is assuming that the outputs could be made SMART rather

than the outcome. Peter shared that attaining the standards is a SMART goal, just missing the time bound.

The intermediate outcome is “increased understanding of the impacts of management actions on water quality, nutrient levels, and sediment trends.” The short-term outcome is “improved monitoring and assessment capabilities for tracking assessment of water quality standards.” This could be considered to include in the outcome language or logic model.

Some of Breck’s outputs are “enhanced monitoring systems and tools, data reports on the effectiveness of management actions, and biannual public reports on estuary and watershed trends.” Right now, the outcome is annual. How can we consider biannual or other time periods? Non-tidal trends are reported biannually while tidal trends are reported annually.

Breck’s activities are “implement new monitoring technologies and utilize partner approved assessment methods and data collection and management.” Inputs were focused on funding, technical expertise, tools, and partnerships needed to make the work happen.

This is Breck’s draft logic model to help understand where the group should go with the WQSAM outcome and how they can incorporate the important aspects of the work.

**Comment:** *Kaylyn Gootman:* My first thought is that we want to be intentional about using what we have instead of looking into new technologies, especially given the current landscape.

- **Response:** *Breck:* That’s a good point. We definitely want to make sure we are highlighting leveraging existing networks, like we did in our two-pager.

**Comment:** *Jeremy Hanson:* When I look at this breakdown, it makes sense to view the long-term outcome as the goal itself. Achieving water quality is already what the goal says. Then, we could connect that to the WIP outcome too. It doesn’t fit as neatly but there are similar short term and intermediate with WIP as well.

- **Response:** *Breck:* I am definitely struggling with the outcome based on the logic model fitting into the goal. We can focus more on those short and intermediate level outcomes. We want to make sure we tie that into the actual attainment of water quality standards because that’s not in the goal language so far.

Next, Breck went over Virginia Department of Environmental Quality’s example logic model which are as follows:

- **Outcome:** Evaluate the ability of current water quality monitoring networks to characterize living resource habitats within the Bay and its tidal tributaries. Support jurisdictional partners who report on the attainment of applicable Bay DO criteria, by collaborating on development of consistent assessment methodologies that use all available data by 2030 and in every even numbered year after.
- **Outputs:** Establish a partnership-agreed-upon approach to assessing all Bay DO criteria by 2028 for reporting by 2030. Evaluate and make recommendations to ensure current water quality monitoring networks are fully able to characterize all living resource habitats of the Bay and tributaries by 2028.
- **Activities:** Re-evaluate temporal, spatial, and parametric coverage of monitoring networks every 5 years to determine if needs are met for assessment of applicable Bay criteria. Report trends in water quality every 3 years.

Breck liked that this logic model was time bound. These suggestions are great to consider. She also liked the highlighting of priorities around attainment. Something to consider would be incorporating the non-tidal trends and assessments. Great example!

**Q: Kaylyn:** Could you speak more about the time frames in the activities section, specifically the 5-year mark and 3-year trends?

- **A: Amanda Shaver:** The state does a monitoring strategy evaluation every five years, so it was pulled from there. We report every six years on the trends. I think every three years could fill some gaps where we're reporting every two years in the integrated report. I think that every year is not as meaningful. We need to put some time between the reporting to speak more broadly to overall ecosystem change.

**Comment: Peter Tango:** Thank you all for putting this together. To me, it's unclear when we say, "system outcome," does it all have to be a Bay outcome? For example, you have a management related outcome, which to me is more of a social system outcome rather than a biological system or chemical system outcome. When we say we're going to evaluate the networks and report attainment, it seems activity centric. Are we supposed to just be talking about the fish, birds, water, trees, and ecosystem components or are we going to consider the management ecosystem into the outcome? That is similar to what we've talked about through the years with capacity building, professionals, tools. I know that maybe not everyone is thinking that way but that is something we should consider in the outcomes and activities.

It seems like indicator development or method developments like land cover, have multi-million-dollar contracts as a function of being part of the agreement. They feel that without those management-oriented ecosystem elements in the agreement, they may not have

gotten that support. Likewise, we've had the monitoring capacity raised and continued investments from the review of the monitoring program and the PSC request about 10-20 years later to review our program. There is something to saying that if it's in the agreement it has elevated its place in discussions and time invested by partners and leaders.

**Comment:** *Breck Sullivan:* In this example, they include re-evaluating our networks. While we have done it on a 10-year basis, we have never included it in our language. That could be a way to highlight the management side of it. I also feel like the sentence on supporting judicial partners who report on the attainment is more of a management outcome. That is a good example of that.

**Comment:** *Matt Stover:* I like Virginia's example. We are on the same page for a lot of things. Our biggest concern is the same one they mentioned, which is being able to assess all DO criteria and tie things back to our regulatory responsibilities of assessing things every two years. That is something I want to highlight, especially because we have to do it as it is part of the Clean Water Act and the regulatory process.

- **Response:** *Kaylyn:* I know we are looking at this a little differently because of the state of the agreement and the state of the world right now. I am excited to hear these ideas and your feedback. This is an awesome opportunity to be able to bring in these pieces, like the jurisdictional perspective from you and the states and the value added of the partnership. I like what Breck showed in her example about making sure the monitoring and programmatic pieces are being embedded into the language. I think we have a good start. It's great to see examples from different people and merging them to meet everyone's needs.
- **Response:** *Ken Hyer:* I feel like what Breck and Virginia presented are following the same structure and approach. I am glad to see we are on the same page about where everything falls into place in the logic model. We'll need a couple more discussions and word smithing to get us all on the same page about the language in the model. That seems doable to me. If we were disagreeing on the structure, that would be a mess. Since we have a similar structure, we just have to build out the details. We're on a great track.

**Homework:** Review the two examples. Think of suggestions for the logic model, outcome language, outputs, or activities. This can be sent to Breck or presented at the next Monitoring Team meeting.

**10:00 AM: Adjourn**

**Other Notes:****Upcoming Management Board (MB) and Principal Staff Committee (PSC) Meetings**

March 27<sup>th</sup> – MB Meeting: “MB completes Outcomes Assessment, flagging gaps and possible novel outcomes; discusses possible changes to Goals based on Outcome status; discusses structure and governance strategy and progress.”

March 28<sup>th</sup> – PSC Meeting: “Approve proposed changes to Vision, Preamble, and Principles; review MB Outcomes update and provide feedback; discuss process for addressing public feedback.”

April 10<sup>th</sup> – MB Meeting: “Approve final Outcome Disposition and novel Outcomes; begin updates to revise Outcome language.”

**Attendance:**

Allison Welch (CRC), Emily Young (ICPRB), Peter Tango (USGS), Caroline Kleis (CRC), Gabriel Duran (CRC), Rebecca Murphy (UMCES), Amanda Shaver (VA DEQ), Jeremy Hanson (CRC), Breck Sullivan (USGS), Tish Robertson (VA DEQ), Ken Hyer (USGS), Melinda Culter (MDE), Mark Trice (MD DNR), Becky Monahan (MDE), Matt Stover (MDE), Tom Parham (MD DNR), Kaylyn Gootman (EPA).