



Protected Lands Workgroup
October 2023 Meeting

Wednesday, October 25 3:00 – 4:00pm
Meeting Location: Virtual

Google Meet joining info
Video call [Link](#)
Or dial: (US) +1 731-435-3160
PIN: 643 120 139#

Attendees		
Ashley Rebert	Ashton Berdine	Aurelia Gracia
Ben Alexandro	Anthony Bobo	Britt Slattery
Chase Douglas	Cheryl Wise	Jamal Childs
John P Rowe	Lorenzo (Filling in for Katie Brownson)	Michelle Campbell
Steve Storck		

Summary

In this meeting, participants began with introductions and reviewed the purpose of the meeting. They then delved into updates from the Management Board Meeting, with a specific focus on the Protected Lands Indicator and the conservation goals related to wetlands and forest lands. The discussion shifted towards exploring ideas for priority regional actions, such as creating hot spots for grants and mapping projects. The importance of collaboration and clear actions within the action plan was emphasized, highlighting the need for effective coordination among stakeholders.

Additionally, insights from the upcoming CCP Annual Meeting were discussed, with an emphasis on the importance of gathering feedback and learning from conservation partners. This annual meeting serves as a platform to bridge individuals across the watershed, enabling knowledge-sharing and networking opportunities. The participants expressed their anticipation for engaging conversations centered around equity, wildlife habitat, forests, and other key priority areas. The aim is to incorporate these insights into their long-term actions.

The meeting also included updates on the GIS Action Team, which is responsible for improving data collection and addressing gaps in the PADOUS dataset. Plans were made to establish a GIS community of practice, comprising individuals from each state, to collaboratively enhance the accuracy and

completeness of the data. Furthermore, the participants were encouraged to share the news about the upcoming data release and brainstorm ways to leverage the information effectively.

To conclude, the meeting covered a wide range of topics, including updates, discussions on action plan ideas and insights from the CCP Annual Meeting, and updates on the GIS Action Team. The next steps discussed involved planning for the next PLWG meeting, including determining the date, time, location, and suggesting agenda topics for the upcoming session.

3:00 PM Introduction (Wuill)

- Everyone introduce themselves. (Name, Organization, and Position)
- Recap the purpose of today's meeting.

3:05 PM Updates from Management Board Meeting (Aurelia)

- Share relevant updates and feedback regarding the Protected Lands Indicator.
 - We should look at water quality in relation to protected lands
 - Our outcome aims to conserve an additional 2 million acres in the watershed. However, there are subgoals to conserve wetlands and forest lands.
 - At the moment, we do not have numbers for the subgoals. It is hard to separate the two types because in a lot of cases they are overlapping.
 - We are currently focusing on rolling out the communication for the indicator.
 - The management board meeting was the last step before the numbers are presented publicly. The web text is to be published on the Chesapeake Bay progress. We also have an analysis and methods document that goes into details on how the data was collected and the interpretation of it.
 - When it comes out, we will send out a notice of it to the workgroup members and interested parties.
- Address any questions or concerns arising from the updates.
 - Ben Alexandro: Is the dashboard by Blue Raster coming out at the same time?
 - Aurelia: It will be coming out later than the indicator. The dashboard will be built on the data and communication materials released.
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3:15 PM Discussion on Action Plan Ideas (Aurelia & Wuill)

- Review some of the previously mentioned ideas/focus areas
- Continue the discussion on ideas for priority regional actions over the next 1-2 years.
 - Faren walter's idea: She is particularly focused on creating a hot spot for giving out more grants for people on the ground. But she needs assistance from people on the ground to see where those hot spots are.

- Britt: Chesapeake WILD folks want to move forward on a less perfect and less technical approach to identifying areas of improvement.
- This is something we can think about when it comes to our action plan.
 - Aurelia: Hosting partner sessions to look for hot spots or a mapping project where the hot spots are mapped in the bay.
 - Ashley: I think this is a great project. Pennsylvania would be interested in facilitating opportunities for collaboration with WILD or Faren.
 - Ben Alexandro: The Chesapeake Atlas would be a good starting point for this action item. At the annual meeting, one of the things we want to do is look at the data and what does bubble to the top in terms of high priority conservation across state lines.
 - Aurelia: Does any one have any thoughts as to whether they like the idea or not?
 - Cheryl Wise: There might be some overlap between this idea and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources work with a similar project.
- Britt: Stepping back, we will continue to discuss what possible actions will go into the action plan. Internal staff will be working on a skeleton plan and bring it back for feedback from the workgroup. We can set our own timeframe.
- Aurelia: I agree with Britt. I think it is easier to come with some draft ideas and have everyone react to that.
- Ben Alexandro: I think it is important to have a clear divide between what we will be doing in this plan versus what states and state departments will be doing specifically. This workgroup alone is not actualizing a lot of the work state departments are doing.
- Britt: One thing I would like to suggest is to keep this as clean as possible. Focus on the collective actions, how are we moving the needle. In some ways, how are we making some things happen to make it easier for the states to get done what they are doing? We will need to identify the lead for each action. If we don't, those are generally the actions that don't get done. Some workgroups take the approach of making an action that is general on a regional level and allowing the state partners to insert their own actions that are specific to their own state. Example, an action regarding wetlands would be vague enough to allow states to set their own specifics.
- Aurelia: Do these previous management approaches call out to anyone or are there additional ideas?
 - Management Approach 1: Accelerate protection of lands in accordance with current science through collaboration across sectors to align all partners and resources needed to meet and exceed the Outcome target, working toward protecting 30% of the watershed by 2030 (an additional 2.4 million acres above the 2025 Outcome target).
 - Management Approach 2: Improve public health through increasing green spaces in under-resourced communities; and address equity, diversity, and inclusion through community-focused efforts.
 - Management Approach 3: Provide watershed-wide conservation data and analysis to help identify potential conservation priorities and focus on where increased benefits can be achieved.

- Management Approach 4: Expand conservation financing and additional resources for accelerated land protection as well as to sustain and enhance organizational capacity for agencies and land trusts.
 - Management Approach 5: Recommend conservation policy options to reach targets for protected acreage and conserved ecosystem services.
- Aurelia: Do any of these approaches call out to you or any new ideas?
 - Ashley: I think the work in Pennsylvania falls into a lot of these approaches. We're also going to be starting to rewrite our outdoor recreation plan.
 - Cheryl: There is a lot of work at MDNR that falls within these approaches.
- Aurelia: Is there a specific issue that is difficult to address?
 - Cheryl: For program open space, we are very well-funded. The funding question varies depending on the program and the department. For me and my role, the capacity to get projects out the door is an important focus.
 - Ashley: For PA, it is probably funding. We can generally fund 50% of the projects we receive on an annual basis. This grant round saw a reduction in funding because of the real estate market right now. Funding, properties aren't getting any cheaper, and the money can't quite go as far.
 - Aurelia: I'm just wondering what is the most challenging, what goal we want to aim for but how do we get there?
- Members share their thoughts, insights, and proposals.

3:40 PM **Learning from CCP Annual Meeting (Anthony)**

- CCP Annual Meeting Background (Ben)
 - Ben: Very excited for the annual meeting coming up on NOV. 8th and 9th. If you are coming, please call NCTC to reserve your room and stay over. We think it will be a great event. This event bridges together folks across the watershed to share knowledge and networks to see what are the big things coming down the pipe. For example, sharing some innovative ways some of our members are doing conservation. We're going to have some conversations split up by region so we can look at equity, wildlife habitat, forests, or some of the other key priority areas. We are also gonna have some great conversations about the CBP looking to get to 2025 and beyond 2025. We want to make sure conservation and equitable conservation is foundational. The 2nd day we will be looking at tools and mini sessions to look at things folks can take away and learn from.
- Discuss key insights and takeaways we're hoping to gain from the Annual Meeting that can contribute to our long-term actions.
 - Anthony Bobo: What would we like to learn from or what we learn from the CCP annual meeting that we can take into our action plan? What would we like to hear from that group?
 - Aurelia: CCP has access to a lot of different types of conservation partners. We want to use that time to get feedback from them, learning about any particular themes or actions to be concerned about. This will allow us to bring it back and discuss it with the workgroup. We'll be able to discuss it and go over any actions that we can consider.
 - Chase: We will be making sure to take notes and share those with attendants.

- Anthony: You might hear something that we can take back to the protected lands workgroup. I want to encourage us to wear our PLWG hat while we are there for those few days.
- Aurelia: For the November meeting, we will be recapping what we learned at the CCP annual meeting and work on developing the action plan.
- Identify the workgroup members who will be attending the CCP Annual Meeting.

3:50 PM GIS Action Team (Aurelia)

- Provide a reminder of the appropriate contacts for John Wolf's GIS Action team.
- Aurelia: one thing I forgot to mention was that at the MB meeting we went over lessons learned. One of the things we want to do to improve the data collection (fill in the gaps in PADOUS) is to have a group of people from each of the states. We do have a list of GIS folks that we will be helping to stand up. It will be a GIS community of practice. We will still be collecting data from PAD-US but we would use the team to double check it and fill in the gaps from the data sources. We are going to contact the folks on our current list to start up the community of practice.
 - Steve Storck: One point of clarity. We use PAD-US for the data structure, the state data is the primary data we use. We want to work with the states to use their data as much as possible and fill in any gaps when necessary. Around 40% of the data we have have unusable dates of establishment.
- Ben: Quick plug! Can we have the members commit to sharing the news when it comes out and if anyone has any ideas on how to capitalize on the numbers being shared?

3:55 PM Next Steps (Wuill)

- Determine the date, time, and location (if applicable) for the next PLWG meeting.
- Suggest agenda topics for the upcoming meeting.