



Public Access Workgroup
Fall 2023 Meeting

Monday, November 13 · 10:00am – 12:00pm

Meeting Location: DNR Tawes State Office Building
580 Taylor Ave, Annapolis, MD 21401, USA

Google Meet joining info

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/izf-fikv-eed>

Or dial: (US) +1 567-236-0865 PIN: 525 837 777#

Participants

Aurelia Gracia	Lisa Gutierrez	Erik Zlokovitz	Britt Slattery
William Urvina	Mark McLaughlin	Mark Ho	Mike Krumrine

Summary

The Public Access Workgroup meeting was held to discuss various topics. They reviewed the current Bay Program documents and the status of the 2025 goals. This included discussing the Strategy Review System (SRS) process, recent schedule changes, and the progress of each action outlined in the Logic and Action Plan. The group also started reflecting on the strengths and challenges of the past two years through the Narrative Analysis.

The meeting then shifted focus to thinking beyond 2025. The workgroup began brainstorming to determine what the public access goal should be beyond the stated deadline. They considered the historical aspect of public access, which was previously reported as a percentage. The choice of 300 new sites as the average progress was discussed. Furthermore, the attendees explored the possibility of land acquisition leading to increased water access and the coordination needed between different jurisdictions.

The conversation then turned towards tracking different types of water and land access. For example, swimming areas were mentioned by one attendee, and they went over how Maryland had stopped tracking them due to changes in regulations. The workgroup discussed how other jurisdictions are currently tracking swimming areas and the challenges of collecting data from municipalities. The importance of tracking improvements to access sites was also highlighted.

The workgroup also explored the idea of collaboration between the public access workgroup and the protected lands workgroup. They discussed the need for better coordination at the

federal level and the possibility of setting goals for partnerships between state jurisdictions and the federal government. The idea of an annual meeting to identify overlaps between different workgroups and gather feedback was suggested.

Water trails and camping were additional topics of discussion. The attendees talked about tracking water trails within the watershed and expressed interest in expanding the tracking efforts beyond physical access. They also considered using GIS data to recommend locations for water trails and the documentation of camping areas.

Lastly, the attendees expressed the need for a dataset on underserved communities to target their efforts effectively. Various datasets were mentioned, including the Maryland Park Equity Mapper and the Green Space in Equity tool.

The meeting concluded with the identification of potential goals, projects, and initiatives for the upcoming years, and the scheduling of the next Workgroup meeting.

10:00 AM Welcome

- Logistics
- Round Robin Introductions – (Name, Organization, and Position)
- Brief overview of purpose for today's meeting.

10:15 AM Review Current Bay Program Documents and 2025 Goal Status

- Review the Strategy Review System (SRS) process and discuss schedule changes.
- Logic and Action Plan: review and report on the status of each action.
- Review the Narrative Analysis: reflection of 2-year progress including strengths and challenges.
- Discussion about the current inventory process and how it could be improved.
 - Interactive GIS collection, format, closed sites, other types of water access.
 - Have not been collecting information on closed sites. For this 2023 data collection we are going to add an area to indicate any closed sights. It will be the same fields in terms of data as the new sites.
 - We would like to track a change of use as well, not only closures.

11:00 AM Thinking Beyond 2025

- Brainstorming - What should the public access goal be beyond 2025?
 - Public access has been a part of the agreement since the beginning of the chesapeake bay program
 - Before, it was reported as a percentage.
 - The choice of 300 was an average of some of our progress in the past
 - Erik: Looking at land acquisition and how it can lead to more water access is something that will be looked at within Maryland DNR

- Lisa: There are some things that Maryland has stopped tracking (like swimming areas). Whenever there was a bad rain storm or a sewage spill, the department of environment would dictate that swimming areas should be closed. This led to more swimming at your own risk areas. How are other areas tracking swimming areas?
- Mark Ho: Collecting data from municipalities that have access points is hard to track. Adding improvements to sites is something I'm glad is being tracked now.
- Britt: Would it be beneficial for the public access workgroup to join in the process of collecting a GIS action team for the protected lands workgroup?
 - Lisa: I would like to see more coordination between the different efforts at the federal level. If the land units that are being acquired within other jurisdictions, how can there be better consideration of what is needed within that jurisdiction. Do we set a goal for having an example of a partnership between a state jurisdiction and the federal government? For example, looking at a project surrounding the underground railroad that spans multiple jurisdictions.
 - Britt: The centered effort in collecting public access sites might have us miss some of the opportunities to make connections with other effort and workgroups. One thing I am thinking about to connect some more dots is to have an annual meeting to see where all of the workgroups under git 5 overlap and get some feedback from everyone under the git.
 - Mark: Does this workgroup monitor how many water trails are within the watershed?
 - Lisa: In Maryland we do track that but it is not a part of the public access goal. This is something that we can consider for beyond 2025. Do you track that within your jurisdiction?
 - Mark Ho: We do not but there is interest at the county level.
- Mike Krumrine: I think tracking watertrails is a great idea. Within Delaware, we do track that information.
- Britt: If in the future, we might want to think about broadening what is tracked and encouraged through the bay program. A lot of it was tracked with water quality in mind. I'm wondering if there is something we want to talk about when it comes to marrying some of the efforts to expand beyond physical access.
 - Lisa: There have been talks in the past about partnerships. I agree we should look at expanding that.
 - Mark Ho: Is there a way to use GIS data to make recommendations for where water trails are located and where they should be created?
 - Lisa: Yes that is a great idea!
 - Mark Ho: Do you document camping?
 - Lisa: Within Maryland, yes we did document camping/camping areas. However, in recent years not many jurisdictions have been adding to that number of camping areas. This is something we can revisit and see.
- Lisa: One thing we would need is a dataset of underserved communities. Is there a baseline somewhere that we can use to target our efforts?

- Britt: There are some datasets. There is the Maryland Park Equity Mapper. There is also Green Space in Equity tool and it is bay wide.
- Discussion on potential products, studies or resources the workgroup could produce or focus on.
- Identify potential goals, projects, and initiatives for the upcoming years.

11:45 PM Wrap up

- Other business or items for group discussion
- Decide on a date, time, and location for the next Workgroup meeting.