**Stream Health Workgroup**

Meeting Minutes

4/21/16

CBPO, Conference Room 305

**Participants:**

Rich Starr, USFWS (Chair)

Kyle Runion, CRC (Staff)

Jennifer Greiner, USFWS

Denise Clearwater, MDE

Jim Haggerty, USACE

Mark Southerland, AKRF

Catherine Krikstan, UMCES

Neely Law, CWP

Mark Melino, NWFW

Scott Stranko, MD DNR

Stephan Williams, DE DNR

Serena McClain, AR

Bill Seger, MDE

Kirk Mantay, SRF

Alana Hartman, WV DEP

Dan Medina, Chesapeake Treatment Center

Howard Weinberg, UMCES

Alison Armocida, MD DNR

Kristen Saacke Blunke, Headwaters, LLC

**Action and Decision Items:**

**Decision**: The November meeting minutes were reviewed and approved.

**Action:** Nominations for Co-Chair are being accepted until May 5th, 2016. Please email nominations for yourself or others to Runion ([runion.kyle@epa.gov](mailto:runion.kyle@epa.gov)).

**Action:** Starr will contact Elizabeth Maclin (TU) regarding her potential addition to the workgroup.

**Action**: Runion will update the SHWG’s online membership and update the group when this occurs.

**Action**: McClain will contact Scott Lowe and see where he is with incorporating the pooled monitoring approach into other states.

**Action**: Runion will poll the group to solicit interested members for Action 8.

**Action**: Seiger will share the permitting strawman with the SHWG and provide this as a starting point for an Action 7 group.

**Action:** Nationwide permits will be shared with the group when they become available. The group will decide how to comment at that time.

**Action**: Law will follow up with the USWG to kickstart Action 9.

**Action**: Saacke Blunk will connect with Agricultural Workgroup to tailor urban work to fit better with agricultural work.

**Action**: Revisit Action 10 at the end of 2016/start of 2017.

**Action**: McClain will take the lead on Action 11. Runion will poll the group soliciting other members for the group.

**Minutes:**

**Decision**: The November meeting minutes were reviewed and approved.

**Chairmanship Discussion**

* With current Chair Rich Starr’s upcoming move from USFWS to EPR, we have asked the Stream Health workgroup: Are you comfortable with Rich staying on as Chair as he moves from USFWS to EPR? Starr has noted that he will be diligent in recusing himself in any conflict of interest.
  + Results were 12 - yes, 5 – no. Comments stated that adding co-chair from a natural resource agency with Starr would be a more comfortable situation.
  + We will move forward by seeking nominations for Co-Chair of the Stream Health Workgroup beginning today, and closing May 5th. Ideally, a non-private employee would be willing to serve. There are no bylaws regarding workgroup leadership employment or approval, but Starr will step down if any members are uncomfortable with leadership from the private sector. The workgroup will be polled on this leadership package, and if not unanimously approved, we will seek nominations for a new Chair by the end of May.
    - **Action:** Nominations for Co-Chair are being accepted until May 5th, 2016. Please email nominations for yourself or others to Runion ([runion.kyle@epa.gov](mailto:runion.kyle@epa.gov)).
      * Neely Law self-nominated herself for Co-Chair.

**ChesapeakeProgress**, Catherine Krikstan

* The Chesapeake Bay Program is tracking progress towards the Stream Health Outcome on the [ChesapeakeProgress website](http://www.chesapeakeprogress.com/abundant-life/vital-habitats/stream-health).
* An issue has risen with the Stream Health map: data points, shown as colored dots on the map, are often overlapping by sharing or having very close latitudes and longitudes. Even with a similar location, the values of these data points differ.
  + The question becomes: which data point do we show, if overlapping? Currently, the “top” data point is random.
    - Different station IDs prevent a quick fix of showing the most recent data.
  + Law: The SHWG TAG is currently reassessing the Stream Health baseline and updating the Chessie BIBI to translate to stream miles. This adjustment in how we display data may render this issue moot by this fall.
  + Starr: This could help show trends if we could determine which closeby stations are in fact the same sampled station. Showing data from multiple collection dates at the same station would be helpful; the dot color could be the most recent year with an attribute table containing older data.
    - Stranko: Maryland has sites that were sampled every year since 2000, so we (MD) certainly have this data and potential for that idea. [Maryland’s Stream Health website](http://dnr2.maryland.gov/streams/Pages/streamhealth/default.aspx) may be a good resource to visit regarding issues on this map.
    - Clearwater: Repackaging this data in other ways, such as improving/declining trends would also be helpful. Linking nearby sections in poor condition may help restoration efforts.
  + Greiner: This may be a project to ask for assistance from STAR if data analysis is required.
    - Starr: We should coordinate with Claire Buchanan, ICPRB, regarding the potential adjustment in data display and then work with STAR if that would still be useful.

**Biennial Workplan Comments and Key Action Leads**

* The biennial workplan was posted for public input from January 22nd to March 8th. We received three comments on the Stream Health workplan – all from Trout Unlimited. They were added as a participating entity, and a few key actions were added to include TU initiatives. USGS also commented during the last round of Management Board comments, requesting to be listed as a participating entity. See workplan distributed, with all changes highlighted.
  + Stranko: Would it be appropriate to offer Trout Unlimited a membership spot on the workgroup?
    - Clearwater: Would be helpful to have a representative that oversees multiple states.
      * McClain: Elizabeth Maclin is the vice president of all of TU’s east coast conservation work. She would be a good candidate.
        + **Action:** Starr will contact Maclin regarding her potential addition to the workgroup.
        + **Action**: Runion will update the SHWG’s online membership and update the group when this occurs.
* Action Item 5: Moving along strongly. CBT will be announcing awards for the pooled monitoring RFP in May. Through the Stream Restoration Monitoring subcommittee under MWMC, a workshop has been set up for June 8th to share data and report on the latest findings of the results of stream restoration. There has been interest in spreading this pooled monitoring approach to other states.
  + Stranko: Funding came from the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund, (MD DNR) CBT, and EPA. Hopefully this group will continue with similar events to benefit the stream restoration field.
  + **Action** McClain will contact Scott Lowe and see where he is with incorporating the pooled monitoring approach into other states.
* Action Item 6, 7, & 8: Action 6 dealt with developing a Stream Restoration Permit Committee, which would then work towards Actions 7 and 8.
  + Mantay is interested in leading Action 8.
    - **Action**: Runion will poll the group to solicit interested members for Action 8.
      * Starr, McClain, and Seiger are interested in joining.
  + Seiger: We are working with MS4 folks and MACO to develop a streamlined permitting process scenario. A strawman should be available at the end of the month.
    - **Action**: Seiger will share the permitting strawman with the SHWG and provide this as a starting point for an Action 7 group.
  + We will move forward and establish groups for Actions 7 and 8, continually checking to see if the Action 6 group is necessary.
  + **Action:** Nationwide permits will be shared with the group when they become available. The group will decide how to comment at that time.
* Actions 9: The USWG Chair and Coordinator agreed to work with the SHWG for this action, but this has not progressed any further at this time. The stream restoration protocol coming from a BMP expert panel focused on nutrient and sediment load reduction. The Habitat GIT wanted to address other functions of restoration. This action then came out of a STAC report.
  + **Action**: Law will follow up with the USWG to kickstart Action 9.
    - The timeline gives a few years in the case we wanted to convene an expert panel or some other option.
    - Clearwater: There is a need to determine if you are actually getting net benefits in terms of water quality improvement as well as habitat when working in an aquatic resource. It would be helpful to have guidelines on this.
      * Greiner: The Water Quality GIT was approved in for a STAC workshop on assessing the co-benefits of water quality BMPs, one of which is stream restoration. Nice opportunity for interaction with the Water Quality GIT.
  + Saacke Blunk: This would be a good fit to also apply to agricultural sectors rather than just urban.
    - Law: Stream restoration BMPs were developed by an expert panel for urban projects. Once they were approved, they were simply adopted for the agricultural sector as well.
      * **Action**: Saacke Blunk will connect with Agricultural Workgroup to tailor urban work to fit better with agricultural work.
        + Rich Mason may be a good connection.
* Action 10: Stressors other than nutrient and sediments need to be addressed in order to fully recover the stream. This action aims to have regulatory folks that work on TMDLs linking with MS4 folks to looks at stressor ID to see how restoration measures can better address those other stressors.
  + **Action**: Revisit Action 10 at the end of 2016/start of 2017.
* Action 11: A group will be formed to identify and provide training needs for the workgroup.
  + **Action**: McClain will take the lead on Action 11. Runion will poll the group soliciting other members for the group.
    - Starr and Hartman are also interested.
    - Law: Mike Lovegreen, USC, has developed extensive training for municipal staff to look at risk assessment with stream repair following a storm event. This training program would be a good fit here.
    - Hartman: Training need in bringing together partners that conduct stream restoration to review the verification strategy and stream restoration BMP protocol.
* Clearwater: The Wetlands Workgroup is interested in getting credit for wetland related enhancement or creations that are currently labeled as stream restoration BMPs such as floodplain reconnection credits. This issue will require coordination with the Wetland Workgroup and modelers as we will have to avoid double counting. The two workgroups will work together when this conversation within the Wetland Workgroup intensifies.

**Member Updates**

* Williams: DE DNREC has two stream restoration projects in the Chesapeake Bay watershed underway. A project along the Bridgeville branch of 1600 linear feet was completed in December. A 4300 linear feet project along the Nanticoke started in February and will continue for another four months.
  + Starr: USFWS is working with DNREC on the Nanticoke project. We were able to have 4 landowners agree to a natural system that would not require digging out river to provide drainage. A court order is required to change how the river/ditch is managed, which the partners on this project accomplished.
* Hartman: High profile project on the Tuscarora Creek (tributary of the Opequon Creek) funded by NFWF starting soon.

**Next Steps**

Thanks to everyone who stepped up to lead actions. We will start to form subcommittees and keep the workgroup informed of their progress. The next meeting is unplanned but should occur in a few months.