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HABITAT GIT SPRING 2024 MEETING – Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 1st, 2024, 9:00 – 1:00 ET & Thursday, May 2nd, 2024, 9:00-12:00 ET

Hybrid meeting at the DC Department of Energy and Environment Office

Habitat GIT Spring Meeting Day 1: [Click here for Day 1 Meeting Materials](#)

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, UPDATES

Presenters: Bill Jenkins (EPA) & Gina Hunt (MD DNR)

- Updates on FY24 GIT Funding
 - **Brook Trout and Toxic Contaminants Workgroups**: Investigating the Potential for and Presence of 6PPD-Q in Brook Trout Habitat
 - **Fish Passage Workgroup**: Social Science Behavior Change Project
 - **Stream Health Workgroup**: Data Review and Development of Multi-Metric Stream Health Indicators - Physicochemical Metric Analysis
 - **Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Workgroup**: Chesapeake Bay Shallow Water Habitat Sentinel Site Program Development
 - **Wetlands Workgroup**: Increasing Effectiveness of Landowner Engagement to Accelerate Wetland Restoration Across the Chesapeake Bay Watershed
- Opening Remarks by Nick Bonard (*DOEE Branch chief for the Floodplains, Wetlands, and Groundwater Branch*)
 - DOEE has 6 different administrations, with the biggest one being the Natural Resources Administration
 - The Natural Resources Administration focuses on water quality standards, fish and wildlife, stream restorations, green infrastructure, and regulatory
 - Done a lot of work in the Anacostia River: reduced sewer overflows, sediment contamination clean-up, regulatory efforts to protect the stormwater coming from the city
 - There's about 300 acres of wetlands and a little bit of SAV in DC
 - Con: Difficult to balance development with habitat in a predominantly urban space
 - Pro: Know all 300 acres well and can act relatively quickly
- Introduction from Martha Shimkin (*CBP Director/EPA*)
 - Manages the Chesapeake Bay Program Office in Annapolis – oversee about 115 employees from federal agencies, grantees, contractors, etc.
 - **Vision Statement**: We envision an engaged and thriving program driven to conserve and protect the Chesapeake Watershed and Chesapeake Bay, including all the people who live within and visit this national treasure. Underpinned by science, driven by adaptive management, motivated by partnership, and supported with sufficient financial and technical resources, every day the program strives to benefit the entire ecosystem, from headwaters, through rivers, transitional zones and the Bay itself. We are dedicated, capable, creative,



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inspired, led, and supported. We actively look forward with a strategic vision to identify opportunities that will better advance a healthy and productive Chesapeake watershed and Bay. We anticipate future challenges and will strategize to tackle them.

- Goal Statement: CBPO will strive to support partnership achievement of the 2014 Chesapeake Watershed Agreement goals and outcomes by 2025, while we also strategize moving forward into the future beyond 2025. We will bolster support for the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership and continue to enhance excellent stewardship of our human and financial resources and office administration.
- Four lines of business:
 - Achieve the possible - 2014 Chesapeake Watershed Agreement goals and outcomes by 2025
 - Bolster the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership
 - Continue excellent stewardship of our human and financial resources and office administration
 - Strategize for the future
- Reaching 2025 report provided a status check on progress towards the CBP goals
 - Stresses 3 important areas: nonpoint sources, wetlands, and forest buffers
- Martha received a draft on EPA's wetlands strategy, and it will be shared once complete – invested infrastructure funding to create these plans
- GIT Funding
 - Understand the importance of GIT Funding
 - Currently going through changes
 - Starting in summer will put together a transparent plan for working with GITs and decision making on what will get funded
- Strives to foster a connection with the GITs as the CBP Director and as the MB Chair

Comments/Questions:

- **Julie Devers:** I'm curious about the draft strategy on wetlands. Is there anything else you can share?
 - **Martha Shimkin:** The wetlands strategy will look at what investing more into wetlands really means in order to make a difference. Got a draft last week and the plan is to share it once it's complete.

HGIT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Presenter: Chris Guy (USFWS)

- The Habitat GIT Management Strategy is a living document that gets updated after each HGIT meeting
- Guiding Principles
 - Infusing social science and ecosystem service evaluation into our work



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- Ensuring DEIJ is considered in WG and HGIT decisions
 - Encourages WG Chairs to meet with Melissa Sines, CBP DEIJ Contractor
- Coordination across GITs/partners to leverage resources toward common goals
- Near Term Priorities
 - Meeting the EC charge to evaluate progress towards 2025 and develop strategy for beyond 2025
 - Implement Wetlands Action Plan and Brook Trout GIT Funding project recommendations
 - Improve outcome tracking and reporting for wetlands, black duck, stream health, and brook trout workgroups
 - Support current and future WG activities around emerging science
- Long term Priorities
 - Social science and ecosystem services – structured decision making, partnership building, collective impact model community science
 - Cross GIT coordination
 - Incorporating recommendations from the STAC temperature report
 - Shallow water habitat opportunities
 - Creating habitat in more developed areas in the watershed
 - DEIJ Accessibility

WORKGROUP UPDATES

Black Duck: *Alicia Berlin (USGS) & Ben Lewis (DWR)*

- Maryland – Update from MD DNR/DU
 - Construction on a 40-acre restoration project at Wellington WMA in MD is starting in the next couple of weeks. Last fall DU worked with MD DNR to purchase four water control structures at Fairmount WMA and to spray 200 acres of phragmites there.
 - Completed the deposition phase of the Deal Island Beneficial Use of Dredge Material (BUDM) thin-layer project this winter. About 200 acres of marsh was raised about a foot using material from the Wicomico River Channel. Hopefully this will combat the effects of sea level rise on this marsh that had become degraded and was losing its ability to protect the dike and water control structures on a 2800-acre tidal impoundment.
 - About 15 acres of wetland restoration (impoundment construction) planned on former cropland at Browns Branch WMA for this fall. Our staff have been disrupting drainage tile at Browns Branch WMA in an effort to restore hydrology to 10 ephemeral basins in what was former cropland. Many of these basins filled up within days of plugging tiles and wildlife immediately began using them. Remaining cropland areas (500 ac) at Browns Branch will be planted to native grasses/shrubs so nesting cover and water quality benefits should be realized near and long term.



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- NFWF is partnering with Virginia Tech to evaluate the effectiveness of wetland restorations to provide habitat for black ducks. DU has been indirectly involved by identifying several past DU projects for them to visit a few times last winter.
- Virginia – Update from VA DWR
 - Doe Creek WMA Wetland Enhancement with Ducks Unlimited – Chesapeake WILD. DWR is working with DU to restore and enhance 147 acres of existing wetland impoundments at Doe Creek WMA for American Black Ducks and other wetland species, leveraging federal Chesapeake WILD and Virginia Migratory Waterfowl Stamp funding. Construction for this project began in November 2023 and the project is expected to be completed by 2024. Wet conditions have delayed this project in 2024.
 - Mattaponi WMA Wetland Enhancement Project with Ducks Unlimited – NAWCA DWR is working with DU to restore wetland hydrology and enhance management of approximately 85 acres of wetland habitat at Mattaponi WMA. This project is funded through a 2022 North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant and DU is currently finalizing construction plans. Expected completion date summer 2024.
 - NRCS, Ducks Unlimited, and the Working Lands for Wildlife Black Duck Initiative - ATBC Ducks Unlimited received 2022 America the Beautiful Challenge funding to provide engineering technical assistance and advance on-the-ground wetland habitat restoration in cooperation with the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) Working Lands for Wildlife Black Duck Initiative. DU staff is currently working with Eastern Shore NRCS who is actively pursuing private lands projects which were previously stalled or denied due to capacity and funding limitations. DU currently has a job opening in Chesapeake Virginia for a Working Lands Biologist to provide this capacity on the Western Shore of the Chesapeake Bay. This job was recently readvertised.

Comments/Questions:

- **Dan Rauch:** DC has about 10 – 25 wintering black ducks. See more species recruiting back after the successful wild rice project.

Fish Passage: *Ray Li (USFWS) & Jim Thompson (MD DNR)*

- Fish Passage Outcome: Continually increase access to habitat to support sustainable migratory fish populations in the Chesapeake Bay watershed's freshwater rivers and streams. By 2025, restore historical fish migration routes by opening an additional 132 miles every two years to fish passage. Restoration success will be indicated by the consistent presence of alewife, blueback herring, American shad, hickory shad, American eel and brook trout, to be monitored in accordance with available agency resources and collaboratively developed methods.
- Strategy Review System
 - QPM back in December 2023



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- The workgroup restored fish passage to 60 miles of habitat across the watershed – short of the 132 miles in the outcome
- 3 big challenges as a workgroup
 - Covid 19 – grinding fish passage work to a halt
 - Landowner willingness – most of the remaining sites that are high priority don't have willing landowners
 - Funding and staff capacity – projects are getting more complicated and expensive to implement
- Looking Forward
 - Outcome outlook is on course
 - Additional funding through BIL
 - Reports of 2 major dam removals opened 45 miles of habitat in the James River watershed and 250 miles in the Susquehanna River watershed
- Submitted a FY24 GIT Funding proposal to develop communication materials and targeted outreach to landowners for priority dam removals and road stream crossings in MD and VA and to get projects shovel ready for sites with willing landowners
- Fish passage credit mitigation calculator – with the USACE in Section 44 CWA program
 - Aligned with the fish passage prioritization tool and will increase transparency and predictability of mitigation credits for dam removal and fish passage projects
- Looking to strengthen coordination with DOT partners
 - Through the BIL there's \$1 billion dedicated to aquatic organism passage projects at road stream crossings
 - Hoping to collaborate with DOT so fish passage is being considered and provided for with their other infrastructure projects
- Next Fish Passage Workgroup meeting is May 23rd

Comments/Questions:

- **Dave O'Brien:** Where can I find a copy of the draft mitigation credit calculator? What workgroup is working on it?
 - **Ray Li:** It's really the Interagency Review Team: NOAA, MD DNR, Baltimore District USACE, MDE. This goes out through USACE for public feedback. The calculator is just for the MD IRT but there is interest in sharing it beyond MD.
- **Jim Thompson:** The calculator will allow firms to have a funding mechanism.
- **Olivia Devereux:** Would love to add the calculator as a resource on the ecosystem health browsers on CAST.

Brook Trout: *Katie Ombalski (Woods & Waters LLC) & Dan Goetz (MD DNR)*

- Outcome: 8% increase in occupied Brook Trout habitat by 2025
- 2022 GIT Funded Project: Facilitating Brook Trout Outcome Attainability through Coordination with CBP Jurisdictions and Partners
 - Trout Unlimited (Shawn Rummel) & Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture (Lori Maloney)



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- Collect and compile existing data from stakeholders and analyze monitoring and implementation data necessary to adequately track progress. Final Report Due July 31st
- Strategy Review System
 - Presented new strategy to the MB for engaging local jurisdictions and partners to increase brook trout conservation in stronghold areas
 - MB recommended doing the strategy with pilot counties in MD and VA
 - Interested counties in PA: Potter, Clearfield, and Cameron
 - Interested counties in MD: Garrett and Baltimore
 - Waiting to pursue the project until get threat assessment for the proposed counties from the FY22 GIT Project
- Priority Practices for Outcome Attainment
 - Increase Habitat Occupancy
 - Restore streams polluted by Acid Mine Drainage
 - Improve Aquatic Organism Passage
 - Culvert replacements and dam removals
 - Protect and Increase Resiliency of Existing Populations
 - Conserve stronghold and persistent BT patches
 - Conservation easements and land acquisitions local zoning ordinances
 - Increase forested cover in stronghold and persistent BT patches
 - Riparian buffer implementation
 - Legacy mine land reforestation
- Work Plan
 - Condensed strategies from 20+ down to 9
 - New Focus - Local partnerships/scaling up conservation
 - Groundwater and climate change
 - 6PPD-Q – new frontier for salmonid toxicology
- Management Strategy
 - Needs a full update/revision
 - Waiting on states to submit brook trout catchment data to EBTJV
- 2024 GIT Proposal
 - Investigating the potential for and presence of 6PPD-Q in Brook Trout habitat
 - Brook Trout are highly susceptible to the chemical

Wetlands: *Pam Mason (VIMS), Tess Danielson (DOEE), & Nancy Schumm (City of Gaithersburg)*

- Last April WWG was restructured to include a nontidal team and a tidal team
- Nancy Schumm (Nontidal) and Tess Danielson (Tidal) became Vice Chairs for the WWG
- Each team met once every other month to discuss priorities
 - 2 meetings where both teams came together
- From those meetings there were 5 wetlands challenges that stood out
 - Tracking: There needs to be a system in place to track wetlands lost and long-term monitoring of restoration projects



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- Funding: There is a lack of financial drivers to increase wetland restoration at the scale necessary to meet goals
- Lack of Consistency: There is a need for a list of practices that count towards restoration and enhancement with guidance on how to calculate acres restored
- Capacity: There is a need for long term capacity/more expertise in wetland design, permitting, and implementation
- Outreach: Outreach and education geared towards landowners
- Wetlands Workgroup Accomplishments
 - [Wetlands indicator update on Chesapeake Progress](#)
 - [WWG Statement on Sackett v EPA](#)
 - [Progress on Wetlands Workshop Action Plan](#)
 - GIT Funded Projects
 - Chesapeake Bay Trust Capacity Building Project
- WWG Next Steps
 - Begin merge with Black Duck Action Team
 - Continue to discuss the wetlands outcome
 - Keep science needs up to date
 - SRS in December

Comments/Questions:

- **Kevin Du Bois:** There are some potential legislative fixes that might be suggested from the GIT funded wetlands mowing project. Pam will present them to the Chesapeake Bay Commission at their September meeting.
- **Greg Allen:** Related to capacity, is there an academic curriculum for a minor or a certificate related to wetlands?
 - **Nancy Schumm:** Society of Wetland Scientist would be the best resource. Having a [Professional Wetlands Scientist certification](#) is a good foundation.
 - **Sarah Koser:** There is also a Certification for Wetland Professionals in Training (WPIT) through Society of Wetlands Scientists - for younger folks.
- **Woody Francis:** Does the mowing address the landward areas behind living shoreline projects that are wetlands which property owners like to mow.
 - **Pam Mason:** In some ways yes.
- **Gina Hunt:** Also wondering if the mowing project will have any recommendations that applies to MD.
 - **Pam Mason:** MD and VA are in the study.
- **Kevin Du Bois:** Virginia just downgraded the requirements for certification of wetland delineators I'm not sure if they recognize SWS credentials.
- **Woody Francis:** Need to promote to property owners the value of not mowing in consideration of their living shoreline project purpose.
 - **Kevin Du Bois:** Agreed, I've seen homeowners install required living shorelines and then mow them because they didn't want them in the first place. Interestingly, surveys of some regulatory stakeholders in our GIT study



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commented that they don't regulate mowing of existing wetlands but would discourage mowing of living shorelines.

- **Woody Francis:** Feds don't regulate mowing, but MDE does, and they are aware of the issue.
- **Pam Mason:** Also wanted to share [the Evaluating an Improved Systems Approach to Wetland Crediting: Consideration of Wetland Ecosystem Services Report](#)
 - **Jonathan Phinney:** The USFWS 6th decadal S&T of the nation's wetlands was released covering the years 2009-2019. [Status and Trends of Wetlands in the Conterminous United States 2009 to 2019: Report to Congress \(fws.gov\)](#)

Stream Health: *Sara Weglein (MD DNR) & Alison Santoro (MD DNR)*

- Outcome: Continually improve stream health and function through the watershed. Improve health and function of ten percent of stream miles above the 2008 baseline for the watershed.
- STAC Workshop
 - State of the science and practice of stream restoration in the Chesapeake: Lessons learned to inform better implementation, assessment, and outcomes
 - Held March 2023
 - Steering Committee is finalizing workshop report
- Literature Review: Building Climate Resilience in Stream Restoration Practices
 - Seeks to answer: How common stream restoration techniques perform when faced with climate change and the long-term resiliency of streams
 - 2022 GIT Funded Project with Stroud Water Research Center
 - Project should be complete late fall 2024
- Strategy Review System Cycle
 - Began spring 2024
 - Management Board meeting is June 2024
 - Final materials due September 2024
- Data Review and Development of Multi-Metric Stream Health Indicators – Physicochemical Metric Analysis
 - Phase 3B of the project continues to address how stream health is changing and how to better characterize the response through non-biological metrics
 - Submitted for FY24 GIT Funding

Comments/Questions:

- **Denice Wardrop:** The CRC Roundtable that focused on the stream restoration workshop report had over 360 registrants, a new record. Clearly a lot of interest in the topic.

Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV): *Brooke Landry (MD DNR) & Becky Golden (NOAA)*

- SAV numbers were up in 2022 by 13%, which is 42% of the SAV goal
- CBP Strategy Review System
 - SRS process ran October 2023 – March 2024



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- The updated Management Strategy and Workplan will be available soon
- The SAV WG made a request to Management Board **“We ask that the MB endorse the necessity of establishing a Shallow Water Habitat Sentinel Site Program and guide the CBP to take the necessary steps to do so”**
 - Step 1: Conduct a STAC Workshop to determine where to place the Sentinel Sites and what parameters to include. It will also identify which CBP Workgroups and Goal Teams would be included in the effort
 - Step 2: Request GIT or other funding to develop protocols for each parameter to be measured, a QAPP for the program, data portal options, and to identify potential and sustainable funding sources for the program
 - Step 3: Secure long-term funding for the Shallow Water Habitat Sentinel Site Program
 - Step 4: Implement the Shallow Water Habitat Sentinel Site Program as a CBP and partner effort
- Submitted the Shallow Water Habitats Sentinel Site Program for a STAC Workshop, but didn’t get selected
- 2022 GIT Funded Projects
 - Protecting Chesapeake Bay SAV Given Changing Hydrologic Conditions: Priority SAV Area Identification and Solutions Development
 - This project will identify high-priority SAV areas within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and determine which BMPs could be most effective in protecting those areas from loss during high-flow events/years
 - Contracted to Tetra Tech
 - Advancing Social Marketing Through Two Pilot Programs
 - This project will develop pilot programs for existing community-based social marketing (CBSM) campaigns that have been developed over the past few years, SAV being one.
 - Contracted to OpinionWorks
 - Lead: Communications Workgroup
- SAV Watchers
 - There are 4 SAV Watcher Trainer Certifications events planned for 2024 at Marshy Point Nature Center, Havre de Grace Maritime Museum, Accokeek Foundation at Port Tobacco
 - Try to expand this effort to VA in 2024
 - The data from this effort are sent to VIMS to support the ground truthing process
 - Switched to ArcGIS Survey 123 for SAV Watchers



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- SAV Sentinel Site Program
 - Sites to be installed and monitored in 2024 – Severn River, Susquehanna Flats, Smith Island, Marshy Creek, Dundee Creek, St. Mary's sites, VIMS, CBNERR sites
- NOAA Funding Opportunity
 - **Proposal 1:** Infrastructure and Capacity Building for Transformation Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Restoration in the Mid-Atlantic United States
 - Build SAV processing centers & SAV nurseries, create educational materials, and develop SAV restoration training program to increase capacity. Restore America's Estuaries will be the lead agency and there are 17 partners in total from North Carolina to New Jersey.
 - **Proposal 2:** Helping Eelgrass Adapt to Temperature
 - This project will conduct common garden experiments with eelgrass from North Carolina to Maine. Facilitating the migration of more heat tolerant eelgrass plants northward.
 - Funding announcement likely in June
- Science Needs
 - Created a Google Form with the current SAV WG science needs asking workgroup members to rank them high, medium, or low priority.
 - The science needs were ranked based on the results. They can be found [here](#) on slide 19.
- East Coast SAV Collaborative: <https://www.eastcoastsavcollaborative.com/>

Comments/Questions:

- **Denise Clearwater:** Are you still missing early season grasses?
 - **Matt Robinson:** EPA CBPO is funding Old Dominion University with BIL money to experiment using satellite data and machine learning to map grasses in the bay. Part of that project will include monitoring an early season species, Zannichellia (Horned Pondweed).
 - **Brooke Landry:** We're working our way there Denise and hopefully have all the pieces in place in the next few years to start including early season grasses in our annual reporting.
- **Kevin Du Bois:** What does it mean to be a Sentinel Site?
 - **Gina Hunt:** SAV WG webpage: <https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/programs/monitoring/sav-monitoring-program>
 - **Becky Golden:** We're using it to mean a representative site where the long-term data is/will be collected.
 - **Jim Thompson:** They are often sites with no or limited anthropogenic disturbance to monitor trends and variations.
- **Sadie Drescher:** Do we know why the rain caused SAV losses (in the most recent 3 yrs)?



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- **Brooke Landry:** We had a few years of intense and frequent rain that drove nutrients and sediments into the Bay in a fairly unrelenting fashion. It wiped out thousands and thousands of acres of widgeon grass, which although it has a broad salinity tolerance, doesn't do well with rapid changes in salinity.
- **Sarah Koser:** Does anyone know about other "sentinel site" programs or other resources that are either in existence or being planned in the watershed now?
 - **Jim Thompson:** The Maryland Biological Stream Survey has sentinel site surveys. They define them as high-quality reference streams.
<https://dnr.maryland.gov/streams/Publications/2010SentinelSiteReport.pdf>
 - **Brooke Landry:** DoD has a sentinel site program and there's a Chesapeake Bay Sentinel Site Program for wetlands that Taryn Sudol runs. Outside of the Bay, there are Sentinel Site programs all over the place for SAV.
- **Olivia Devereux:** Does this need to be updated?
<https://cast.chesapeakebay.net/Home/TMDLTracking#SAVReportsSection>
 - **Brooke Landry:** Yes! It's a whole thing since we didn't use the 92 segments exactly. Let's discuss...John Wolf expressed interest in keeping these updated as well.
 - **Olivia Devereux:** Okay. Helen and I can get this up as soon as you provide the data. We can put it up differently if that helps.
- **Faren Wolter:** Are Sentinel Sites part of the same programming as Sentinel Landscapes?
 - **Brooke Landry:** No, but that's definitely something to consider.

HABITAT TRACKER PRESENTATION

Presenters: Olivia Devereux & Helen Golimowski (Devereux Consulting)

- Collect data to evaluate functional benefits of wetlands and for indicator species
- Develop a tracking tool to assess progress towards the Wetlands and Black Duck Outcomes
 - Brook Trout Outcome in development
- Includes tidal and nontidal areas of the CB watershed
- Projects that include impacts on new and existing watershed wetlands and habitat for indicator species in natural, urban, and agricultural areas
- Data provided by direct communication from DU, TNC, federal agencies, & jurisdictions
- Not estimating load reduction for BMP but looking at expected outcomes for all the projects
- Data analysis to assess functional benefits
 - People access and environmental educations
 - Proximity of communities of various identities
 - Rate of wetland loss
 - Wetland areas at risk of development
 - Type of land adjacent (farmland, pasture, % impervious)
 - Tidal v Nontidal
 - Used data so far to inform indicators but would like to do more



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- Habitat Tracker Link: <https://habitat-tracker.net/>
 - Where you can upload the template
 - Project Tab: Project ID, Type, and Location are required – everything else is optional but helpful to complete as many as fields as possible
 - Land Use Tab: Track pre and post land use changes – can add multiple lines for land use change
- Wetlands and Black Duck Acres Report
 - Presence of black duck in a project is recorded in the “Presence of Black Duck” column
 - Wetland type and acreage is reported
 - Captures all acreage of projects that impact wetlands not just new acres of wetlands
- Funders Report – shows historic funding sources and where they come from in the past
- Conclusions:
 - The Habitat Tracker is a data collection system for evaluating progress towards the Vital Habitat Goals & Outcomes
 - Persistent effort is required to elicit data
 - Tracking and analyses can help incentivize goals and show the impact of habitat preservation and restoration
 - Flexibility of data collection and tracking allows for multiple data analyses to be conducted to assess an array of wetland and living resources functions

Comments/Questions:

- **Kevin Du Bois:** Do you have a master list of NGOs that might report wetland projects? Perhaps a living document is something we can all review and update as necessary.
- **Kevin Mclean:** Have you had discussions to determine who will be reporting on behalf of each jurisdiction? And do we have a sense of if/when this will become required reporting?
 - **Chris Guy:** Discussions with the Wetlands workgroup members and some MB members have made the decision to ask for the data on the water quality cycle in the late fall, so as not to overburden the jurisdictions. Right now, Helen is the keeper of the data and has the identified state contacts she will be reaching out to during this cycle for the data. Helen puts it into the database for the states.
 - **Kevin Mclean:** Main concern as a jurisdiction is duplicate reporting and additional staff time, while we're also being asked at the same time to do duplicate reporting for IJA...
 - **Chris Guy:** We do have a process of weeding out duplicates. Less confident that we are getting 100% of the projects. Working on data October – December to coincide with WQ data collection.
 - **Kevin Du Bois:** Chris, maybe there was a misunderstanding. DoD submits all wetlands restoration for BMP credit. Happy to discuss offline.



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- **Jill Whitcomb:** Who from the states reporting programs were included in the discussion of development of the Habitat Tracker?
 - **Olivia Devereux:** Members of the HGIT, Wetlands Workgroup, Black Duck Workgroup, and the team working on brook trout.
- **Kevin Du Bois:** Does the "Funders" fields include the concept of partners that provide in-kind donations of resources?
- **Jill Whitcomb:** How is existing reporting through NEIEN used to supplement/support the data in the Habitat Tracker?
 - **Olivia Devereux:** The NEIEN data includes only two components that could be used and does not meet the needs of tracking on the land but is great for looking at impacts in the hydrological model. Those two items are the component information on 2 BMPs: wetland BMPs creation and rehabilitate. The Water Quality people are not tracking wetland enhancement BMP, so it is not in NEIEN anymore.
- **Jill Whitcomb:** I think it's important to understand if it's a NEIEN issue or if it's an EPA CBP BMP efficiency issue. Wetland reestablishment and enhancement was included in the BMP Expert Panel Report. Not sure why it's not included in NEIEN. It also comes down to permitting requirements and what is tracked from the regulatory end.
 - **Denise Clearwater:** Wetland rehabilitation is in NEIEN. This is different from wetland enhancement from a BMP standpoint. Rehabilitation and enhancement are lumped together in the tracker.
 - **Pam Mason:** I was on the expert panel that Jill mentioned. Enhancement was not included, and BMP load reduction is not accounted in NEIEN. Sometimes local governments aren't considering climate resilience projects for crediting.
- **Jill Whitcomb:** So, if NEIEN has wetland rehabilitation, and rehabilitation and enhancement are put together in the tracker, then there is overlap.
 - **Olivia Devereux:** Not really. We are capturing different data, not just the acres of BMPs.
- **Pam Mason:** "Rehabilitation" is considered by Maryland and Virginia to mean "restoration". Making a former wetland a wetland again. Enhancement is change in a function not net change in areal extent.
 - **Denise Clearwater:** No, MD considers rehabilitation to be a form of functional gain.
- **Kevin Mclean:** VA spent years and millions of dollars to build a BMP system that feeds directly into NEIEN. Already have a small team, and don't have the bandwidth to do more reporting for multiple tracking systems. Who is the VA person working with the Habitat Tracker?
 - **Chris Guy:** That would be Ben Sagara.
- **Helen Golimowski:** I met with each state individually and walked through the template and gave the option to use the template or send the data in another format and I will add it.



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- **Katheryn Barnhart:** Could a data manager manually go through NEIN data and enter it into the Tracker? Then just solicit projects not reported to NEIEN? Or would that still require the same amount of effort for the jurisdictions to sort through their data?
- **Jill Whitcomb:** Regulatory program does not track that. Should consider what is missing from NEIEN and use that as the basis.
- **Kevin Du Bois:** I'm wondering if the Chesapeake Bay Commission could help with the issue of lack of funding and capacity. Maybe it can be presented to CBC so they can address these needs.

KINGMAN AND HERITAGE ISLANDS FIELD TRIP PRESENTATION

Presenter: Tess Danielson (DOEE) & Ariel Trahan (DOEE)

- Kingman & Heritage Islands were formed by dredge spoils in 1903
- Seawall construction circa 1938 channelized the Anacostia
- Northern part also dredged around this time to form Kingman Lake
- The island's purpose has changed over the years: recreational "lake", gardening plots, dumping ground, plans to build an airport, natural area for environmental education
- Transferred to DC from NPS in 1996
- Mayoral Designation as State Conservation Area in 2018
- Programming and partnerships
 - Outreach
 - Management
 - Environmental education
 - Recreation
 - Workforce development
 - Service
 - Citizen science
- Achievements
 - State conservation area and critical wildlife area
 - Restoration – meadow, freshwater mussels, wild rice
 - Toxic waste removal
 - Water quality – DC river tunnel
- Kingman Lake Wetlands Project Goals
 - Restore habitat for black duck, striped bass, American shad, river herring, and freshwater mussel species
 - Promote natural floodplain and fringe wetland reconnection
 - Increase native SAV and freshwater mussel beds
 - Provide nature-based solutions to minimize shoreline erosion
 - Provide resilience to climate change impacts
- Alignment with District and NPS plans, goals, and priorities
 - Sustainable DC Plan
 - DC Wildlife Action Plan
 - DC Climate Resilient Plan



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- Anacostia River Corridor Restoration Plan

Comments/Questions:

- **Kevin Du Bois:** What's the salinity there?
 - **Chris Guy:** Tidal fresh.
- **Kevin Du Bois:** Joint Base Anacostia Bolling has been raising freshwater mussels for deployment on natural sites. Is there potential for collaboration here?
https://www.denix.osd.mil/chesapeake/denix-files/sites/30/2023/07/DIGITAL_FY22-Annual-Progress-Report_v3.pdf
- **Kevin Du Bois:** Is it a "lake" or a tributary of the Anacostia River? Have you thought about a name change?
 - **Tess Danielson:** Not formally a lake. It has an inlet at the north end of the island and outlet at the south end. Anacostia mainstem is on the east of Kingman.

LINK TO FIELD TRIP PHOTOS

- A selection of the photos taken during the field trip are publicly available on the Flickr archive, in our "Washington, D.C." album:
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/chesbayprogram/albums/72157664366267592/>
- If anyone wants to publish (presentation, report, website, etc.) they should go through the normal requests process and send a note to requests@chesapeakebay.net with the relevant Flickr/Google links.
- The attribution must list the Chesapeake Bay Program, though you are welcome to include the photographer's name (Will Parson) in addition.
- More information about our terms of use can be found at www.chesapeakebay.net/site/terms-of-use.
- You can browse the full archive at www.flickr.com/chesbayprogram.

PARTICIPANTS (90):

In-person (13): Katlyn Fuentes (CRC), Dede Lawal (CRC), Chris Guy (USFWS), Gina Hunt (MD DNR), Amanda Lawrence (NOAA Sea Grant), Rese Cloyd (DOEE), Emily Young (ICPRG/CBP), Sadie Drescher (CBT), Marisa Baldine (CBP), Lorenzo Cinalli (USFS/CBP), Tess Danielson (DOEE), Jen Dietzen (DOEE), Nick Bonard (DOEE)

Online (77): Bill Jenkins (EPA), Alicia Berlin (USGS), Brooke Landry (MD DNR), Becky Golden (NOAA), Alison Santoro (MD DNR), Pam Mason (VIMS), Nancy Schumm (City of Gaithersburg), Jim Thompson (MD DNR), Ray Li (USFWS), Katie Ombalski (Woods & Waters), Dan Goetz (MD DNR), Greg Allen (EPA), Katheryn Barnhart (EPA), Doug Bell (EPA), Alex Gunnerson (CRC), Ian Blackburn (DEC), Keith Bollt (EPA), Lindsey Boyle (USGS), Sarah Brzezinski (EPA), Joel Carr (USGS CRWG), Chris Patrick (VIMS), Kayla Clauson (DNREC), Sandra Davis (USFWS), Denise Clearwater (MDE), Julie Devers (NRCS), Sean Emmons (USGS), Helen Golimowski (Devereux Consulting), Emily Heller (EPA), Nathaniel Hitt (USGS), Jonathan Niles (TNC), Jonathan Phinney



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(USFWS), **Kelly Maloney** (USGS), **Kevin Mclean** (DEQ), **Megan Diehl** (CBT), **Marina Metes** (USGS), **Clinton Morgeson** (DWR), **Olivia Devereux** (Devereux Consulting), **Daniel Rauch** (DOEE), **Brock Reggi** (DEQ), **Rick Jepsen** (ICPRB), **Robert Isdell** (VIMS), **Matt Robinson** (EPA), **Alison Rogerson** (DNREC), **Scott Lopez** (CBT), **Martha Shimkin** (EPA), **Erin Sonnenburg** (CRC), **Steve Strano** (NRCS), **Brittany Sturgis** (DNREC), **Ariel Trahan** (DOEE), **Gabriella Vailati** (DNREC), **Holly Walker** (DNREC), **Denice Wardrop** (CRC), **Alan Weaver** (DWR), **Jill Whitcomb** (DEP), **Kristen Wolf** (DEP), **Faren Wolter** (USFWS), **Taylor Woods** (USGS), **Gregory Zuknick** (BioHabitats), **Kevin Du Bois** (DoD), **Lydia Brinkley** (Upper Susquehanna Coalition), **Katie Stahl** (USFWS), **Liz Feinberg**, **Jonathan Watson** (NOAA), **Zhaoying Wei** (UMCES), **Dave O'Brien** (NOAA), **Leah Franzluebbbers** (USFWS), **Matt Lawrence** (MD DNR), **Sarah Koser** (CBT), **Kristin Saacke Blunk** (Headwaters LLC), **Woody Francis** (USACE), **Jeremy Waddell** (Upper Susquehanna Coalition), **Ari Engelberg**, **Jonathan Leiman** (MDE), **Kaitlin Scowen** (MD DNR), **Melissa Yearick** (Upper Susquehanna Coalition), **Tammy O'Connell** (MD DNR), **Rachel Felver** (CBP)



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Habitat GIT Spring Meeting Day 2: [Click here for Day 2 Meeting Materials](#)

WELCOME AND SUMMARY OF DAY 1

Presenter: Bill Jenkins (EPA) & Gina Hunt (MD DNR)

- Provided a summary of field trip and habitat tracker discussion

UPDATES ON BEYOND 2025

Presenter: Gina Hunt (MD DNR)

- All materials for Beyond 2025 can be found on the [Beyond 2025 Steering Committee webpage](#)
- The Beyond 2025 Steering Committee (SC) advises the development of recommendations to meet the Executive Council (EC) charge on charting a course beyond 2025
- Phase 1: Process - *not about the language of the agreement*
 - Responsible Parties: SC, ERG (contractor), Beyond 2025 Small Groups
 - Source Material: Evaluation report, Recommendations (25 one-pagers)
 - Final Product: Report to the EC in December
- Timeline
 - April 19th: ERG draft delivered to the SC
 - Late June: SC draft out for public feedback
 - 60 days for public feedback
 - September: Draft revised after feedback
 - October – December: Approval Process (Management Board in October, Principal Staff Committee late October, & Executive Council in December)
- Translating the Scope of Work
 - Small Group Recommendations
 - Measure consensus and synthesize
 - ERG Evaluation Report
 - Steering Committee Draft
 - Public Feedback
 - Revisions/Approval Process
- Measuring Consensus – Pulse Check Survey
 - GITs, jurisdictions, etc. gave their comfort level with the 25 recommendations
 - Support = 74%, Reservation = 22%, Concern = 4%
- Recommendations synthesized into the 3 buckets under the EC charge
 - Science: Monitoring, Modeling/Tools, Contaminants, Accountability/Data, Adaptive Management, Ecosystem Services
 - Restoration and Conservation: Living Resources, Climate Resilience
 - Partnership: Local Communities, DEIJ, Engagement, Social Science, Networks, Capacity Building, Outcome Accountability, Governance
- ERG Draft Interim Report
 - The SC has until May 10th to comment on the draft report
 - There were 12 Findings



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- The Program and its key components are viewed as being complex and the level of complexity is a concern to stakeholders.
- There is a question of transparency in how the Program operates, especially in regard to using science for decision-making and in how Goal Implementation Teams (GITs) function.
- There is a perception that the voices of external stakeholders are not being listened to.
- The Program components, especially the GITs, operate in a situation of constrained capacity in terms of both personnel time and funding.
- Combined finding – The combined impact of complexity (F1), potential lack of transparency (F2), perception of not listening to external stakeholders (F3), siloed operations (F4), and constrained capacity (F5) may add to more than the sum of the individual findings.
- The SRS process is a valued part of the Program but is not meeting (or attaining) its full potential
- Social science is an emerging need for the Program.
- The Program appears to be trying to do too many things.
- In many cases, there is a disconnect between the actions being performed by the Program and goal/outcome attainment.
- The Program's logical outcome structure contains components that are not defined properly as outcomes and lack measurable qualities.
- The Program has produced a vast amount of data and scientific findings, and it can improve access to those data and findings.
- Proposed Outline SC Draft
 - Critical Path Forward: Recommendation, charge, mission, vision
 - Synthesized/Analyzed Summary: High level considerations (science, restoration & conservation, partnership), work process, and public engagement summary
 - Source Material: Small group one-pagers, ERG report, partnership report
- Next Steps
 - May 30th – Review draft and discuss ERG findings
 - June 27th – Final ERG report due and review/accept draft of EC document for release to the public
 - May – October – Public feedback process
- Phase 2: After the EC meeting in December update the agreement as necessary

Comments/Questions:

- **Faren Wolter:** How do we align things without adding more networks because we are already at capacity?
- **Bill Jenkins:** Adding conservation into the mission is huge. The considerations that came out of the ERG report need to be kept at the front of our minds as we go beyond 2025. We need more people to break silos and reduce fragmentation in the partnership.



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- **Katie Brownson:** Having a fewer number of bigger silos can also reduce the amount of silo-busting needed.
- **Greg Allen:** The question is how we have optimized the vertical and horizontal structure. We need the right specialization in the vertical with vigilant constant effort on horizontal collaboration.

SOCIAL SCIENCE OF PARTNERSHIP NETWORKS – CHANGING OUR MINDSET: THINKING LIKE A NETWORK

Presenter: Faren Wolter (USFWS)

- Build partnership and network science literacy to support near and long term HGIT goals
- Participation is a spectrum
 - Neither positive nor negative assessment of the categories
 - Not static, organizations move throughout the spectrum
 - Low Trust/High Control → High Trust/Low Control
 - Competition, Coexistence, Inform/Consult (1-way communication), Cooperate (2-way communication), Coordinate (2-way communication), Collaborate (multi-way communication), Empower/Integrate
- Systems Thinking and Network Science
 - Social networks are a theoretical construct in network science
 - How we think about systems, and we study the relationships of people and organizations in those systems
- Ecosystem Networks and Social Networks
 - Place based coordination and efforts to scale up what we want to achieve on a landscape scale – getting away from state based and closer to physio-geographic systems
- Systems Thinking - Systems Approach
 - Facilitates work across scales sectors and disciplines
 - Ignoring the complexities of systems can lead to misidentifying issues, narrowing the scope, and creating solutions that can undermine the goal
 - The biggest challenge with systems is that it is slow and steady work and not transactional but transformational/translational
- Starling Exercise
 - Link to the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9pRC-IPuhuU>
- Faren Wolter led a Social Science of Partnership and Mentimeter discussion. *Menti results are provided on page 22 of this summary.*
- Mindsets: Organization vs Network
 - Organizational
 - Narrow mission
 - Tightly controlled and planned
 - Top down
 - Proprietary
 - Silos – individual expertise, focused on a particular goal/objective/output



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- Network
 - Shared vision
 - Focus on learning, connection, and trust
 - Bottom up
 - Open and share resources
 - Interdisciplinary

Comments/Questions:

- **Bill Jenkins:** When trust goes higher, fear about uncertainty/the future also goes higher. I thought the description for empower/integrate includes forming a new entity. Would that entity be a new partnership or network?
 - **Faren Wolter:** It depends on the context, but it's usually larger scale situations where that is the case.
- **Faren Wolter:** Adding more networks is not helpful because it pulls us too thin. We need to start thinking about working collectively in a common way. Even though we desire the collaborative space, it may not be the best depending on what the GITs are trying to do. Not everything has to be a complex system of coordination and collaboration.
- **Gina Hunt:** If you just have a network where is the accountability?
 - **Faren Wolter:** We can't make anybody do anything, but I'd say we're all accountable. Working in a system isn't straightforward, so we have to show flexibility.
- **Jeremy Hanson:** I'm trying to mentally synthesize our normal "logic model" or governance-focused (Bay Program) mindset with the social network concept on Faren's diagram slide. I get the sense that when it comes to focusing on the social network and relationship side, there is less concern or focus about the measurement and the reporting/performance-tracking, but both would be concerned with qualitative results and collective learning?
 - **Gina Hunt:** I am not sure it can't be quantitative. We need performance tracking. But it seems that the key is that the metrics are agreed upon. Development of metrics have to consider how that is measured or tracked.
- **Bill Jenkins:** One of the terms used a lot is "unintended consequences". If you don't take a systems approach it may increase the probability of unintended consequences because you're not fully understanding the relationship of that action.
 - **Faren Wolter:** Thinking like a system also helps us find solutions.
- **Sarah Brzezinski:** The SRS involves identifying factors that impact our ability to achieve the outcome which we can and cannot control, as well as gaps in existing efforts. Management approaches are developed in relation to those factors and gaps, then we assess the actions we've taken under those management approaches biennially. The intention is not to shame workgroups when they haven't completed actions, but rather to stimulate conversation and planning to thoughtfully learn from our actions. If we haven't taken an action, is that action still needed? Is it truly within our control? Have actions that we have taken had the intended effect? Why or why not? I think the logic



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model makes sense, but we should continue conversations to reconcile when we expect to see impacts from the actions we take, etc. I love this conversation and would be happy to continue it to help find ways to improve the SRS.

SUMMARY OF MANAGEMENT STRATEGY SURVEY

Presenter: Gina Hunt (MD DNR)

- Survey provided on Day 1 (5/1) and folks were asked to submit survey responses by 5pm
- Total of 8 responders
 - 3 Maryland
 - 3 NGOs: 2 consultants, 1 academic
 - 1 Federal (NOAA)
- Survey Questions
 - How has the HGIT helped your workgroups since the last meeting?
 - What more can the HGIT do to support your workgroups?
 - Has the Management Strategy informed your workgroup activities?
 - Has the Management Strategy and/or workgroup activities helped you with your job responsibilities?
 - What priorities should be added or removed from the Management Strategy
- *The Management Strategy Survey results are provided on page 26 of this summary.*

PARTICIPANTS (63):

In-person (6): Katlyn Fuentes (CRC), Dede Lawal (CRC), Chris Guy (USFWS), Gina Hunt (MD DNR), Tess Danielson (DOEE), Rese Cloyd (DOEE)

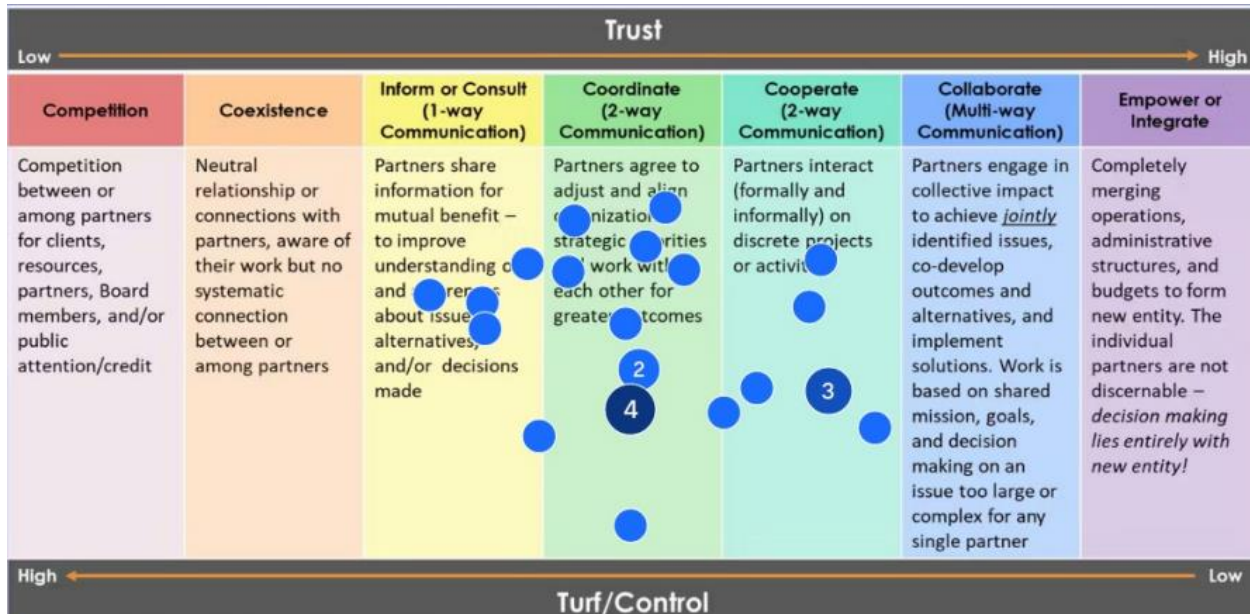
Online (57): Robert Isdell (VIMS), Sarah Brzezinski (EPA), Megan Diehl (CBT), Bill Jenkins (EPA), Gabriella Vailati (DNREC), Rikke Jepsen (ICPRB), Kevin Mclean (DEQ), Clinton Morgeson (DWR), Faren Wolter (USFWS), Sarah Koser (CBT), Brittany Sturgis (DNREC), Ray Li (USFWS), Scott Lopez (CBT), Lindsey Boyle (USGS), Rachel Felver (CBP), Emily Young (ICPRB/CBP), Sadie Drescher (CBT), Matt Robinson (EPA), Alex Vidal (USFWS), Katie Brownson (USFS), Greg Allen (EPA), Megan Fitzgerald (EPA), Steve Strano (NRCS), Suzanne Trevena (EPA), Jacob Holtz, Taylor Woods (USGS), Tori Sullens (NFWF), Brooke Landry (MD DNR), Jeremy Waddell (Upper Susquehanna Coalition), Erin Reilly (VIMS), Brock Reggi (DEQ), Pam Mason (VIMS), Jonathan Phinney (USFWS), Marisa Baldine (ACB/CBP), Alicia Berlin (USGS), Doug Bell (EPA), Jeremy Hanson (CBP), August Goldfischer (CRC), Holly Walker (DNREC), Lucinda Power (EPA), Amy Handen (EPA), Alex Gunnerson (CRC), Alison Rogerson (DNREC), Laura Cattell Noll (ACB), Dan Goetz (MD DNR), Melissa Yearick (Upper Susquehanna Coalition), Jim Thimpson (MD DNR), Kristen Saacke Blunk (Headwaters LLC), Sara Weglein (MD DNR), Katie Ombalski (Woods & Waters), Ben Sagara (DWR), Tammy O'Connell (MD DNR), Liz Feinberg, Jonathan Niles (TNC), Becky Golden (NOAA), Carl Friedrichs (VIMS), Amanda Pachomski (USFWS)



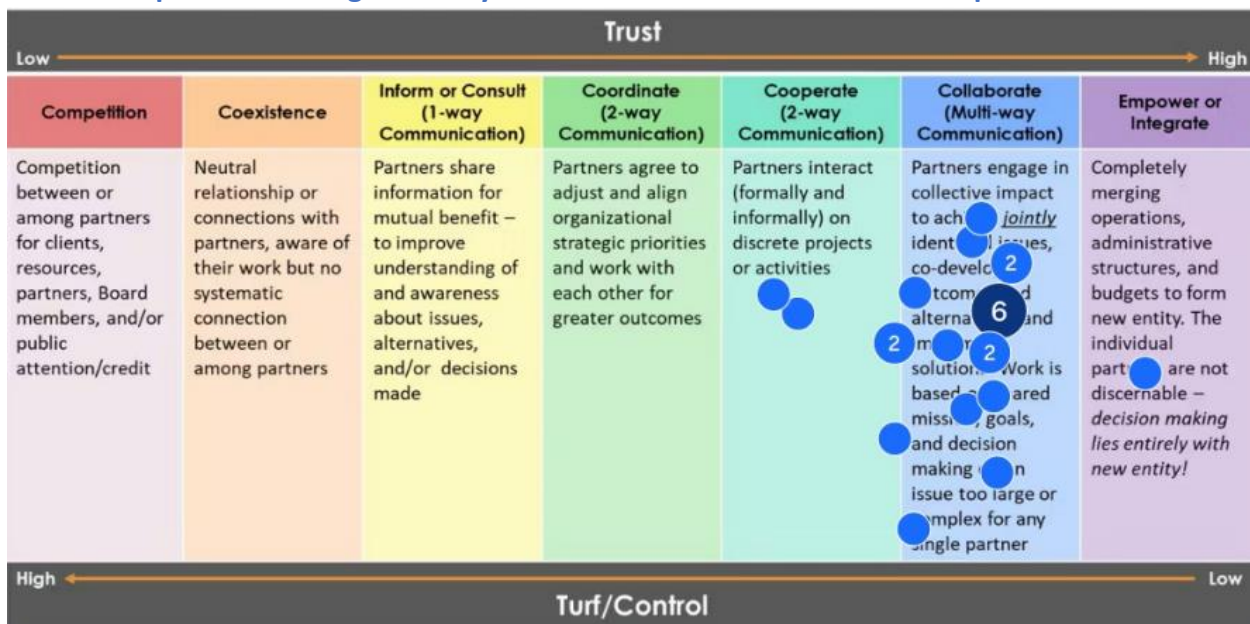
MENTIMETER RESPONSES

During the Habitat Goal Implementation Team Spring 2024 Meeting, Faren Wolter led a discussion on the Social Science of Partnership Networks. Below are the responses from the Mentimeter questions presented during the conversation.

1. Place a pin on the image where you think the Habitat GIT *currently* operates.



2. Place a pin on the image where you *would like* the Habitat GIT to operate.



3. What is an image or sound that stood out to you in the video?



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- The eyes of bird one
- **WINGS FLAPPING: 5 responses**
- **MOVING COLLECTIVELY/UNITY: 6 responses**
- The sum of the group was greater than the individual action
- **QUICK/ADAPTIVE RESPONSE: 2 responses**
- **THE NUMBER 7: 2 responses**
- Didn't need a leader or overall control
- Personal space around each bird
- **CALM MUSIC: 4 responses**
- **CHAOTIC/TENSE: 6 responses**

4. What did the image or sound make you feel or think?

- **INSPIRED/MOTIVATED: 4 responses**
- **HOPEFUL: 5 responses**
- **TEAMWORK: 8 responses**
- That nature knows best
- Why can't people be more like birds
- Adaptive response
- Need a Leaders Academy for CBP team leaders to build shared values, relationships, culture, etc.
- Felt chaotic, but it worked
- Treat each other with dignity and respect
- Be perceptive of others' needs

5. What *connections or possibilities* did you see in this video to how Habitat GIT groups or partners could work together or respond to change?

- **CONSIDERING DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES: 5 responses**
 - Learn from and work with those who see things from a different perspective.
 - Considering other's needs, wants.
 - Practice empathy when listening to partner priorities and perspectives.
 - Collective insights are powerful.
 - Mutually adjusting our own course or path without defensiveness or a big fuss, because the flight is about the flock and not the individual bird.
- We need opportunities to fly together. More time in the same spaces.
- **DON'T OVERCROWD: 2 responses**
 - Only need 3 rules. Keep an eye on others. Move when they move. Give everybody space.
 - Communicate frequently but don't crowd - take turns leading/following in collaborative work.



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○ IDENTIFYING THE 7: 5 responses

- The power/strength of connecting to 7 compels us to consider beyond the 2-3 we typically partner/work closely with.
- Who is the 7th within the sphere that we may not be keeping an eye on?
- The 7 can change.
- Only worry about the 7 closest people. All else is white noise.
- Responsibility of the 7 to keep an eye on where they are in context with others.
- We only have 6 GITS ... seems overwhelming. But it should be possible for GITS to connect if just keeping track of a few things with each other.
- If a few birds go their own way, and break the rules what happens?
- Accepting that we don't know what we don't know.

6. What potential *challenges or barriers* did you see in this video to how Habitat GIT groups or partners could work together or respond to change?

○ LEADERSHIP: 2 responses

- Who is in charge?
- Who is in charge can change. The 7 can change.

○ TIMING: 2 responses

- It might take time for things at one edge of the flock to affect how we do things at another part.
- Flexibly responding to changes in capacity and priorities in a timely manner.
- How to react when your bird gets crowded. Sure it's about the flock, but no one wants to be the one bird that gets eaten so the flock can survive.
- LOOKING BEYOND IMMEDIATE SPACE: 2 responses
 - Responsibility of each of the partners (or the 7) to keep an eye on where they are in context with the others.
 - The flock didn't really go anywhere it shifted back and forth over the same area.
- The birds all share the same "vision" or overall direction.
- Challenge to be in so many places (even more meetings?).

7. What inspired you about this video? Anything you can apply to how Habitat GIT groups or partners interact with each other and how they operate?

- Does the flock need a "hierarchy" to function well?
- The birds have a focused goal - avoid predators. Perhaps the partnership has too many goals that we don't work well together because we're spread too thin.
- Engaged more/ broader flocks.
- The whole flock continues to move no matter what the 7 within our sight are doing.... so, we might as well do SOMETHING - as the system continues to flow.
- Group think and shared goals.



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- Better (more frequent) communication across HGIT.
- We could have a shorezone group with tidal wetlands, public access, SAV, & black duck.
- A way to pass on workgroup highlights.



HABITAT GIT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY: SURVEY SUMMARY

During the Habitat Goal Implementation Team Spring 2024 Meeting, Chris Guy led a discussion on the HGIT Management Strategy. The HGIT solicited feedback on the Management Strategy and ways in which we can modify and/or improve HGIT priorities in order to better support our six Outcomes (Black Duck, Brook Trout, Fish Passage, Stream Health, Submerged Aquatic Vegetation, and Wetlands). The current Management Strategy can be found on [the HGIT webpage](#).

The following survey questions were provided to the HGIT membership via a Google Poll on May 1st. The responses were presented during Day 2 (May 2nd) of the meeting. The survey deadline was later extended to May 9th, and the following summary contains all responses received.

**Survey responses have been edited for clarity and personal identifiers have been removed to preserve anonymity.*

RESPONDER INFORMATION: 13 people responded to the survey

- 4 from Maryland
- 1 from DC
- 4 NGOs: 2 consultants, 1 non-profit, 1 academic (from a University in MD)
- 2 Federal (NOAA, EPA)
- 2 anonymous responders (affiliation unknown)

1. How has the Habitat GIT helped your workgroup(s) since the last meeting (November 2023)?

- **I HAVE NOT RECEIVED HELP/THE HGIT IS NOT HELPFUL: 3 responses**
- **LEADERSHIP/COORDINATION: 4 responses**
 - Provided leadership and coordination for Habitat Tracker
 - Promoting sharing across the workgroups, convening discussions/learning sessions on concepts or issues that cut across the groups (e.g., social science, DEIJ)
 - Support for the Brook Trout WG joining the Toxic Contaminants Workgroup on a shared GIT Funding project idea
 - Has helped facilitate SRS process, workplan and management strategy updates. Provided guidance on proposals for GIT funding and tying in workplan priorities to address outcome objectives. Provided guidance on Management Board updates and navigating the CBP organizational structure.
- **HGIT STEERING COMMITTEE: 2 responses**



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- Staffers are awesome! Assisted with SRS and Management Strategy updates.
 - Chairs and staffers helped work through the SRS process and ensure that the workgroup met all the CBP needs, which resulted in a completed and updated workplan and near final/updated management strategy, and request to the Management Board. Chairs and staffer also helped to advance our GIT-funded project, which is now near completion, and will incorporate data into the Habitat Tracker.
 - **FOLLOW-UP WORK:** Identified other relevant work for follow up
 - **FOCUS & EDUCATION:** Help keeps us focused on what we need to do. Learn about what others are doing.
 - **SUPPORT FOR WETLANDS: 2 responses**
 - It is all about the dedicated people - the Habitat GIT is so integral to moving the Wetlands Outcome forward, which we are really depending on for support in the Tidal Wetlands Strategic Plan. Many of the folks in the Habitat GIT are on the Tidal Strategic Plan Steering (Planning) Committee and we are so grateful for their knowledge and input. We are also really happy to see that some of the Workgroups are now combining/collaborating more towards common goals (Brook Trout WG and Wetlands WG) - this is so positive and exciting! Great job!
 - Driver for Wetland Workgroup goals, including the Habitat Tracker
-

2. What more can the Habitat GIT do to support your workgroup(s)?

- **NOT SURE: 4 responses**
- **FUNDING:** Besides being a steady and dependable source of funds - don't think there is much more that you guys can do.
- **DATA/HABITAT TRACKER:** Help support the data submitters to habitat tracker. Also communicate the types of analysis that workgroup would like so we can use the data in habitat tracker.
- **WORKGROUP PRIORITIES:** Continue to advocate for workgroup priorities, science and funding needs and assist in securing funding/financing for priority workgroup projects and activities.
- **COORDINATION: 2 responses**
 - Facilitate coordination between workgroups to implement overlapping outcome objectives.
- **CAPACITY & FACILITATION:** Tell us how we can do more faster - help us as co-chairs and the larger workgroup identify opportunities to increase our capacity to advance the workplan. Help facilitate meaningful collaboration with other workgroups that are relevant to our workplan.



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- **NEED FOR INTEGRATIVE FOCUS:** I have been a member of the Habitat GIT for more than a decade and have never been a member of any of its workgroups. The workgroups, by design, are stovepiped to focus on specific populations, while my professional work is all about the ecology of the system, which sadly, has been neglected. While the species of focus were originally chosen to be representative of the larger ecosystems, that broadening step has not been taken, and there is little opportunity for integrative science to be engaged. So, as I see it, the HGIT has two options that would improve the lack of engagement of members like myself – either 1) improve the focus of the workgroups to go beyond the species-only approaches, or 2) foster the development of a new workgroup that has an integrative focus.
 - **INFORMATION DISSEMINATION** : Help the partnership understand how toxic contaminants stress key habitats, benthics, forage quality, SAV, etc from pesticides, PCBs, other organics.
-

3. Has the Habitat GIT Management Strategy informed your workgroup activities? *If yes, how? If not, why?*

- **YES: 5 responses**
 - The Strategy is needed to prioritize output and outcomes.
 - Helped with the update of our workplan. Very helpful in encouraging us to think about how we make DEIJ part of our SOP.
 - The Management Strategy is the impetus for current work on the Tidal Wetlands Strategic Plan and so integral to trying to meet wetland goals. We know that implementing the Wetlands Action Plan is a priority of the Habitat GIT in the Management Plan (2024), but it is a bit unclear where we are in this priority. Also suggesting more discussions or centering how to continue to integrate DEIJ in all the work-considerations into workgroup and HGIT decisions (in the 2024 Management Strategy) by maybe providing tools for how to do this and highlighting what is working well would be really helpful!
 - STAC workshop for warmwater stressors in aquatic ecosystems. Outcome priorities from STAC workshop were incorporated into the Brook Trout Work Plan.
 - Recognizing need to focus on tidal and non-tidal wetlands within their own subgroups
- **NO: 1 response**
 - No, not really. It seems like the other way around (workgroup priorities are informing the HGIT strategy).
- **NOT SURE: 7 responses**



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- The GIT (not the Management Strategy) has informed me/us of other activities and opportunities that are going on in the Bay.
-

4. Has the Habitat GIT Management Strategy and/or workgroup activities helped you with your job responsibilities at your agency/affiliation?

- **YES: 6 responses**
 - Yes, it's great to have a guiding document keeping everyone moving in the same direction.
 - Yes, cross-GIT Coordination is so useful and through completing EPA GIT projects will continue to inform the Wetlands Work Group!
 - In general, yes (having colleagues/examples from across the watershed and being able to show how agency priorities align with/support HGIT and CBP)
 - Yes, it has introduced me to several colleagues outside my division who are also working on CBP workgroups and provided context in communicating workgroup/outcome issues to leadership.
 - **NO: 4 responses**
 - **SOMETIMES: 2 responses**
 - Sometimes with pointers of where to find information.
 - **OTHER COMMENTS:** All SAV is a priority habitat for NOAA Fisheries while the SAV workgroup believes the monitoring of "sentinel sites" will provide status/trends data used to help protect this resource. Respectfully disagree. I see it as an accounting exercise that will work against conservation with data intentionally misused to justify the loss of SAV elsewhere (outside sentinel sites).
-

5. What priorities should be added to the Habitat GIT Management Strategy?

- **NOT SURE: 2 responses**
- **NO CHANGE:** I think the current priorities have things covered.
- **CLEAR DEFINITIONS:** Be clearer about the difference from what the CBPO is vs. the Partnership. I was thought the purpose of the office was to support the Partnership.
- **CROSS-COORDINATION:** Coordination between other GITs and workgroups should be increased. Be more active in identifying and trying to resolve management approaches which are in conflict between workgroups. Urge consideration of additional system crediting for habitat improvement to improve biological outcomes beyond nutrient and sediment reductions
- **DEIJ & ACCESSIBILITY:** Incorporate Accessibility in the DEIJ guiding principles - its mentioned later in the document but not upfront.
- **EMPHASIZE HABITAT PRIORITIZATION: 2 responses**



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- Nothing to add but want to add emphasis to priority on creating and maintaining habitat in developed portions of watershed - particularly building and supporting relationships among agency staff who work in these areas and strengthening connections and considerations of DEIJ and EJ in this work.
 - Creating Habitat in more developed portions of our watershed should remain as a priority. I'd like to hear more about the Baltimore Rivers to Harbor Urban Refuge model, that could be very applicable to DC.
 - **LIVING RESOURCES:** It is essential in my view, that living resource questions be contextualized to consider ecological consequences of change. So, habitat effects on living resources should be a priority (e.g., how different living shoreline approaches affect multiple goals simultaneously, restoration impacts on not only ecological components but also socioeconomics, etc.), as well as understanding how living resource changes affect habitat (e.g., invasive blue catfish effects on SAV, et. al)."
 - **OPERATIONS:** Operational issues based on industry checklists
 - **SOCIAL SCIENCE:** Move Social Science into near-term priorities; if you want support for the millions of dollars being spent on CBP and Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts then we need an informed and educated general public that supports that sustained level of funding into the future. How do these projects/programs benefit their quality of life? We better figure out (quickly!) how to better promote these efforts or no one will care whether or not goals are met. Set specific dates to implement or achieve recommendations and goals. 'Near-term' and 'long-term' are quite subjective and don't allow for accountability in achieving or not-achieving elements of the management plan. Let's focus on the Wetlands and Climate action plans. Too many irons in the fire here.
 - **TOXIC CONTAMINANTS:** Emphasize understanding toxic contaminant stressors.
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6. What priorities should be removed from the Habitat GIT Management Strategy?

- **DEIJ: 2 responses**
 - I understand it's not going anywhere, but the Justice and Equity stuff don't really fit into what shapes our priorities in my workgroup.
 - DEIJ is listed under 'long-term', so how/what/when do you intend to use this?
- **NOT SURE: 3 responses**
- **NONE: 5 responses**
- **WARM WATER STRESSORS:** Warm water stressors - let streams GIT handle this through riparian buffers.
- **TOOL SUPPORT:** I suggest we reduce the focus on supporting specific, existing tools (many are mentioned by name in the strategy) and focus more on developing new tools (integrative modeling products) that actually address some of the questions the



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HGIT has not been addressing, in part, because of the limiting focus of the existing workgroups. The low-hanging fruit have been harvested long ago, let's try some new things.

- **URBAN HABITATS:** I caution the priority for increasing habitat in urban areas. I think the concept is good, but how much effort do we want to put into improving habitat in severely degraded areas, when we're losing good to pristine habitat at such a fast pace? There are 1000+ acre solar farms going along mountain sides and pristine ag/farm land in the name of "Green Energy". I think shifting the focus of "Green Energy" to Urban watersheds and protecting the existing habitat we have is better worth our time. We should be able to put solar panels on all the warehouses and roof tops, parking lots that we already have not fertile ground. It's just a shame.

7. General feedback on the Spring 2024 meeting? Any other comments/questions?

- **MEETING STRUCTURE:**
 - So far so good. I like how these meetings don't take all day. Two half-day meetings are better than one long day meeting.
- **WORKGROUP UPDATES:**
 - Allow more time for workgroup updates and Q&A!
 - Updates are always helpful
- **MANAGEMENT STRATEGY:**
 - The management strategy reads as simply a framework but lacks substantive actions and specific project implementation on a definitive timeline. Too much focus on developing new tools to report the same data/information while hoping for a better outcome to achieve goals. We need a new perspective; develop new restoration techniques, implement new projects. Use the existing science now to make better informed conservation and restoration decisions/projects. Why does the strategy include extensive description of the Wetlands Workshop held in 2022? Let's focus on developing and improving the way we work moving forward to obtain future goals.
 - I recommend changing the name of the "HGIT Management Strategy". Any chance of calling it the "GIT Workplan" since Management Strategy is a term defined in the SRS process?
- **HYBRID MEETINGS & OPEN DISCUSSIONS:** Hybrid is hard (still!), but it is great to see so many participants and a fairly active chat. I'd love to see more opportunities for unstructured conversation between folks on different workgroups during the meeting.
- **NOT SURE:** I'll think about it!



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- **SHARED RESOURCES FOR CROSS-COORDINATION:** I recommend creating a more passive way for cross workgroup/GIT coordination since we all can't be everywhere at once. There should be a slack or chat channel or shared living document that can host updates from WG chairs. A place to share for recent publications, GIT project updates, or effective meeting tools (like the science needs poll that Brooke Landry presented on).
- **HABITAT TRACKER:** I know the wetlands data does not have the jurisdictional breakdown public-facing for good reason. But would jurisdictions be more inclined to submit data with more detail if they received outputs specific to their state to help with internal tracking?