



Criteria Assessment Protocol Workgroup (CAP) Meeting

Monday, March 24, 2025

9:00 - 10:30 AM

Join by Webinar: [Link](#)

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AGENDA

9:00 AM **Welcome, Introductions & Announcements – Peter Tango (USGS), Chair**

Upcoming Conferences, Meetings, Workshops and Webinars:

- [Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation Conference](#) – November 9-13, 2025, Richmond, Virginia.

9:10 PM **Review Water Quality Standards Attainment and Monitoring (WQSAM)**

Outcome Homework – Breck Sullivan (USGS) and Peter Tango (USGS)

The Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) has undertaken a review of 2014 Agreement outcomes as part of the Beyond 2025 partnership effort to update Agreement language and structure and CBP function. Community input over the last roughly 9 months led to the STAR Team's recommendation to the Management Board for updating the language and intent of the WQSAM outcome. STAR continues to request and gather input toward updated language for a water quality focused outcome – outcome being defined by changes we expect to see in the ecosystem as a function of management actions (e.g., attain DO, clarity, chl a WQ Stds in all 92 segments). We will briefly go over this present request for language to consider in a revision to the 2014 Agreement language.

9:30 PM **Introduction: Mission, Vision and Leadership Structure for the Future of the CAP WG – Peter Tango (USGS)**

During the recent CAP WG Coffee Hours, there were some discussions around the mission, vision, and leadership structure for the CAP WG as we move through the year. This will be a chance to bring that conversation to the full group and continue to discuss and envision what

the CAP WG should look like and focus on moving forward. While this conversation is vital, the group is advised that CBP is undergoing changes with the Beyond 2025 process during 2025 expecting to impact structure and function of our partnership. We want to give clear acknowledgment to recognize jurisdictions requests for evolving the work, support, intention and leadership of our WG, however, any final decisions likely need to address overall CBP organizational and agreement structure and function decisions due at the end of 2025 during the Executive Council meeting in December before codifying its updates and path forward.

10:00 AM Review of Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) and Scientific, Technical Assessment and Reporting (STAR) Team Structure and Function – Breck Sullivan (USGS) and Peter Tango (USGS)

Overview of the structure of the Chesapeake Bay Program, the STAR Team, and the role that the CAP Workgroup and our other groups play in the overall function. Interest has been expressed on the following topics that will be used to round out today's discussion and be used to create upcoming agendas and are not limited to:

- Go over how decisions on assessment are currently supposed to be made, including which groups are the decision makers, and discuss whether this is the best method moving forward (PT: For starters, please see information provided at the end of this agenda as a way to help answer some of our important issues like this. Thank you.)
- Discuss the current CBP webpages and perhaps work to update membership lists and keep calendars up to date or to use a different method to alert potential interested parties.
- Discuss which assessment goals are the most important and should take priority. This will help us to better align the organizational structure to support those goals and establish which group's needs take primacy.
- Discuss the Monitoring Team and how it fits into the overall structure

10:30 AM Adjourn

As there are a lot of excellent questions and topics to work through, and there will no doubt be more valuable questions to come - Peter here, aiming to help add some pre-meeting insight to a couple of questions on the final agenda item.

- *Q. Go over how decisions on assessment are currently supposed to be made, including which groups are the decision makers, and discuss whether this is the best method moving forward*
 - You probably want to go back to around 2000. Literally hundreds of scientists, managers, and policy-makers came together over the course of 3 years to develop the first compendium of the bay criteria included recommended methods of assessment (USEPA 2003). Workgroups formed in the CBP, one was

the Criteria Assessment Protocol WG to shepherd community-based questions, work together to achieve solutions for the many questions and issues, and then document agreed upon updates and methods in EPA Technical Documents. The EPA Technical Documents were given scientific support by materials being submitted to the CBP STAC for review, presentations made to STAC on method update recommendations, feedback received from STAC review, and the document was revised to address comments of the STAC review. This is the path of work that has been used since 2003 through the mid-point assessment and beyond in order to provide the scientific credibility behind nearly everything CBP does in monitoring and modeling for the whole of the partnership. The tech documents are the currency of available, agreed upon, vetted then available to be used as reference supporting water quality standards attainment assessment by the states agreed upon by EPA.

- *Q. Discuss the Monitoring Team and how it fits into the overall structure*
 - Some of *what the Monitoring Team of the CBP is and does* as a group that has 1) led analysis teams addressing methods development and testing, 2) managed the quality and breadth of water quality monitoring data collected by the partners, mutually invested in through 117e and 117d grants that are defined through the Clean Water Act, 3) managed the grants supporting monitoring and analysis programs totally over \$10M in support and over 40 years of combined effort now, 4) oversight for QA/data collection and processing to give integrity and credibility to the program, 5) have been home to the interpolator after NOAA staff developed and published it online, 6) have collated data into the interpolator for its analysis, 7) have provided partnership resources to run the analyses and summarize the results to be delivered back to the States for their own needs (assessments, reporting, 303d information, targeting and prioritizing management plans and actions, etc.), 8) developed enhanced analyses of status and trends on many data dimensions that have led to many journal publications that underpin the scientific foundations of data, methods, evaluations, interpretations and communications, 9) have developed diverse communications using the wide range of outputs from the CBP to translate, interpret and inform managers, scientists, policy-makers, advisory committees, governors, and more on progress made across the watershed and Bay with these decision-support products, 10) have developed and conducted workshops, symposia, webinars, and more to engage out partners on needs and supporting those needs with new analyses, new tools, new products, new journal articles, new technical documents that add value to the partnership contributions to the work being done to restore the Bay and its watershed inclusive of but often beyond the individual capacities of any single jurisdiction, agency or institution, 11) have been members of the teams leading coordination and synthesis of monitoring program efforts for monitoring reviews that have led to a) important structural

changes in our network, and b) addressed funding resource distribution in support of those changes, most notably the MRAT 2006-09 effort and the PSC 2021-22 efforts. In each case \$2-5M growth in monitoring support resulted from the work of the team as well as addressing community-informed gaps in our capacities, 12) the team includes nationally to internationally recognized scientists, analysts, statisticians generating new tools, new analyses, new insights, in response to a history of manager and policy-maker needs requests, across the program and 13 is supported by 2 staffers who mean the world to organizing our world and our work for effective and efficient schedules, product development, engagement and interactions within and across the partnership.