



Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.

Diversity Workgroup Meeting

Monday May 22nd, 2023

10:00 am - 12:00 pm Virtual meeting via [Microsoft Teams](#)

Or by phone +1 256-715-9946

Meeting ID: 213 146 000 956 Passcode: Kut9cB

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| Attendees | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| In person: | | | |
| Alisha Camacho | Amanda Knobloch | Edgar Freeman | Edward Gonzalez |
| Wendy O'Sullivan | William Urvina | Carmera Thomas-Wilhite | Melissa Fagan |
| Britt Slattery | Cindy Osorto | Kayli Ottomanelli | Jimmy Looper |
| Tanisha Cliett | Beth Ginter | Brittany Omoleye-Hall | Trena Ferrell |
| Joined remotely: | | | |
| August Goldfischer | Bailey Bosley | Breck Sullivan | Cliff Opdyke |
| Gerald Griffin | Jessica Blackburn | Kayle Krieg | Laura Cattell Noll |
| Maggie Bennett | Michelle Ramirez | Ruby Stemmler | Alexandra Cenatus |
| Caitlin Eversmier | Will Parson | Kim Pezza | Julie Lawson |
| Frank Rodgers | Rico Newman | | |

Summary

This document contains the meeting minutes for the Diversity Workgroup Meeting on May 22nd, 2023. The meeting covered several topics, including NASA's workforce efforts, building a diverse workforce, and Chesapeake Bay conservation/restoration. The participants engaged in discussions on various issues related to these topics, such as how to increase accessibility, how to recruit and retain a diverse workforce, and how to measure success in people-focused goals.

1. Welcome and introductions - Members and interested parties had the opportunity to

introduce themselves.

2. Building a diverse workforce - This discussion included how to create and expand employment opportunities for underrepresented individuals and communities by strengthening connections to existing resources and creating new career-building avenues. Members shared workforce and career opportunities, and the group discussed workforce needs, best practices – such as increasing accessibility by allowing remote/hybrid work, breaking down barriers to recruitment by streamlining application processes, restructuring funding sources, providing paid/benefitted internships, and establishing transparent hiring processes – and how to disseminate information. NASA's workforce efforts and inclusive workplace practices were discussed in detail, and members shared their own experiences with efforts to diversify the workforce within their agencies and organizations.

3. Chesapeake Bay 2025 and Beyond – Discussion - This topic addressed how Bay conservation/restoration efforts could be more effective at centering people in the future. The group discussed what the CBP leadership should consider as priorities as they move into the next phase of the work to steward and conserve the Chesapeake. They talked about the importance of workforce analysis to understand what is lacking from the current workforce and the need for organizations to have a plan to help K-12 schools. The participants also discussed how smaller organizations struggle to hire people due to their inability to compete with larger organizations in terms of benefits and salary.

4. Workgroup business - This topic was skipped due to time constraints. Members would have discussed the workgroup budget update, ideas for training, the Diversity Workgroup Coordinator position, and the new C-StREAM Internship position hired for this summer. Information available on these items will be provided in the next monthly update that is emailed to Workgroup members.

5. Rapid coordination and closing - The group shared lightning updates from their own current work and encouraged colleagues to connect outside of the meeting.

Key Takeaways

- The group discussed how smaller community and grassroots organizations could be better supported and funded.
- The importance of integrating people-oriented goals into science-based goals.
- NASA is hosting Earth Science Week and welcomes help with or collaboration on the events from Workgroup members, a suggestion was made to consider using this as an opportunity to model what integrating the people-side into science can look like.
- The need to understand what is lacking from the current workforce and what type of workforce is needed for green infrastructure and other restoration/conservation work across the watershed.
- The importance of incorporating output rather than outcome in Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement: The current Diversity outcome states: "Identify stakeholder

groups not currently represented in the leadership, decision-making or implementation of current conservation and restoration activities and create meaningful opportunities and programs to recruit and engage these groups in the Partnership's efforts." An example of a focus on output would be "Increase the percentage of stakeholder groups not represented in conservation and restoration activities to XX% from the current percentage including X amount of underrepresented stakeholders hired in conservation/restoration employment opportunities."

- Expand the scope of CBP's goals to include people-oriented goals.
- **Hiring Best Practices**
 - INCREASE ACCESSIBILITY of jobs, training, etc. - for example, allow more workplace flexibility such as remote/hybrid to remove transportation burden.
 - BREAK DOWN BARRIERS & BUILD PATHWAYS TO RECRUITMENT – for example, lower required qualifications for positions or broaden acceptable qualifications to include experience beyond formal education.
 - RESTRUCTURE FUNDING SOURCES
 - PAID/BENEFITTED INTERNSHIPS
 - TRANSPARENT HIRING PROCESS

10:00-10:20 Welcome/Introductions

- This is where members and interested parties get the opportunity to introduce themselves.
- Tom Neumann - Deputy Director of the Earth Sciences Division at NASA Goddard
 - Alisha: How do we make NASA'S work more accessible to the public?
 - Goddard partners with NOAA to build platforms for public use
 - NASA's mandate is more focused on research and science but there should be more of an effort to disseminate information to other audiences.
 - Cindy: How is the applied division focusing on climate change?
 - For climate change, it is a very diverse topic.
 - Wendy: Does NASA have policies in place to diversify their workforce, do they follow the trends of the make-up of their workforce?
 - There has been more of an effort to diversify the workforce. One way they have worked towards this is by setting vision and goal teams. Goal team 2 is working on looking at the make-up of the current workforce and seeing how they can diversify and tap into various perspectives. There are also agreements between NASA and HBCUs/MSIs/Tribal Colleges. Goddard has ERGs which are focused on targeted groups that are used as advisory committees.
 - Alisha: A follow-up question. There was a situation where they required a certain percentage of specific workers but they were not able to find "qualified" candidates.

- Goddard has internships and pathways. Goddard is unique because they have a program called SPEID (Stem Pipeline for Equity Inclusion and Diversity) that targets specific students that might have been overlooked in other programs.

10:20-11:05 Building a Diverse Workforce

In this section, we will focus on Management Approach 2 of the Diversity Outcome 2-year plan: Create and expand employment opportunities for underrepresented individuals and communities by strengthening connections to existing resources and creating new avenues for career building.

- Members share workforce & career opportunities
 - NASA's workforce efforts – Trena Ferrell, NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, Earth Science Division Education and Public Outreach Lead
 - Trena Ferrell: Newest pillar that was added 2 years ago is inclusion. Their primary term is DEIA. ERGs (Employee Resource Groups). ERGs are meant to represent the diversity of the workforce (hispanic, lgbtqia+, etc.). NASA Goddard has a center for diversity and inclusion. They have been trying to recruit and go to targeted locations (going to conferences). NASA Goddard cannot do direct hiring. Trena has a listserv with HBCUs, Tribal colleges, etc. NASA has a program at the agency level (BRIDGES). They are trying to target underrepresented groups.
 - Cindy Osorto: How are you looking at inclusion?
 - They are making sure contractors are following the same guidelines that NASA follows in terms of inclusivity. They are also trying to be more sensitive. There are monthly talks about data, imposter syndrome, etc. On the civil servant side, they walked through how certain things on applications can kick them out, etc.
 - Britt: Is there anything else about your internships you haven't mentioned?
 - There are programs that are year-round, they have experience-learning opportunities. Students can apply to 15 positions. If a senior has been accepted to a university/college, they can apply to 30 in total (15 positions for high school, 15 positions for university). Other things they do to increase their diversity is they reach out to specific audiences.
 - Brittany Hall: Are there any other hiring pathways at NASA?
 - NASA does not have direct hiring authority.
 - Brittany Hall: Does NASA accept any other hiring authorities from other organizations?
 - They would have to look into it.
 - Michelle R.: What is the largest barrier to getting a job there, is it the main application system? What positions or departments are the most difficult to recruit diverse staff for ?

- Sciences are lacking in diversity. They are trying to talk to diverse audiences and go to different locations.
 - The largest barrier to getting a job here is the application process.
 - Alisha: How many times a year does the pathways program open up?
 - Twice a year
- Workgroup members' opportunities/ efforts
 - Melissa Fagan: CRC has the staffer program and C-StREAM that aim to diversify the workforce at the CBP. Would be interested in developing the continuous support for the students/internships.
 - Carmera (CBF): In the last two years, they just moved to paid internships. Student leadership program with internship opportunities. Two ERGs: for women and BIPOC. Just moved to a 36-hour work week. They are working with a contractor to workout a DEI plan.
 - Alisha: How does the CBF enforce this 36 hour work week in a healthy way?
 - They worked with focus groups to understand what the needs are by department. An example is no monday meetings before noon and no meetings during lunch hours internally.
 - Alexandra Cenatus: (Maryland Humanities) Hiring practices that focus on Racial equity. They made the search transparent. They listed the information on the website (ex. we will screen the application). They are also moving away from traditional questions and moving more towards scenario-based questions. In terms of aligning with racial equity, they ask the candidates what racial equity is to them. This has changed the hiring process and the candidates that end up applying. They also have started to send the questions beforehand so they do not stress and they can be more comfortable.
 - Wendy O'Sullivan: When you send the questions beforehand, how has it been when sending the question "what is equity"?
 - They ask the question of equity in a variety of ways to really see if the candidate understands and where they stand.
 - Maggie Bennett: Chesapeake Conservation Climate Corp. 4C program is a great professional development program. They provide the opportunity to do a year-long project. The program helps connect early career professionals with non-profits or federal agencies.
- Discussion
 - Workforce needs
 - Best practices – What can we learn from each other?
 - INCREASE ACCESSIBILITY - remote/hybrid work allows people to do the work without the added barrier of travel/relocation

- **BREAKDOWN BARRIERS & BUILD PATHWAYS TO RECRUITMENT** - train diverse audiences to more effectively use application systems; or better yet, streamline the application process for more accessibility. Lower required qualifications where possible, or broaden to include experience beyond education.
- **RESTRUCTURING FUNDING SOURCES** - Expand scope to include capacity for smaller community/grassroots organizations to more readily recruit talent for their organization (compete on a pay/benefit basis compared to larger & gov orgs). **ADDITIONALLY**, make grant processes more accessible & equitable. Limit or remove match requirements & provide training to work within “the system” or restructure “the system” to remove unnecessary bureaucratic barriers that prevent those who most need assistance from applying for it.
- **PAID/BENEFITTED INTERNSHIPS** - Housing/transportation allowances & ensure pay for interns. Additionally, establish a pipeline to transition those interns into career positions. Including granting hiring authorities where available.
- **TRANSPARENT HIRING PROCESS** - Ask what equity means to the candidate. Send interview questions beforehand to reduce stress & expand upon them in the interview process.

- How can the Workgroup best disseminate this knowledge?

11:05-11:35 Chesapeake Bay 2025 and Beyond – Discussion

How can Bay conservation/restoration efforts be more effective at centering people in the future? As we move into the next phase of Bay partnership work beyond 2025, what do we want those planning for this to consider? The groundwork for this discussion began at the Workgroup meeting in March, and today we want to dig a bit deeper.

- **Background information and update on the planning effort**
 - We are a workgroup that has multiple levels of reporting and decision-making. At the level of the executive council is where the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement was signed and put into action. The agreement has set many of the goals to have a deadline of 2025. The EC has directed all levels of the CBP to look at what can be done between now and 2025. Where in the goal and outcomes are there opportunities for clarity, shifts, improvements, etc.
- **Breakout Rooms (turned questions for the group)**
 - What do we want to make sure the CBP leadership considers as priorities as we roll into this next phase of the work to steward and conserve the Chesapeake?
 - **Eddie** - Are there enough people-oriented goals defined by CBP? Should there be more & should those measure success?
 - **Wendy**: The reality is that the CBP does not consider the people's side of things core. They mainly focus on the water quality of the bay. Do we need to reform how we present questions/information regarding other outcomes with a focus on people?

- Jimmy: One of the big conversations at the Biennial meeting was about how we can compare and define success. A lot of people-focused goals are hard to define in terms of success. One of the major things discussed was messaging and trust. CBP has presented information in a way that is not accessible. There is definitely a future in terms of incorporating people into more science-based goals.
- Rico - Hold state governments responsible if not liable for pollutants entering the Bay waters.
- Beth Gunter: What is the workforce that we need to implement and maintain the green infrastructure? A workforce analysis is needed to understand what is lacking from the current workforce.
 - Eddie: They developed a green infrastructure credential. There is training out there that can be used to answer the workforce needs in green infrastructure.
 - Beth: What do we need? The training programs indicate the interest in the green infrastructure but they still need more answers.
 - Britt: Workforce Action Team has recently been stood up & is focused on this question & will be spearheading a GIT Funded workforce analysis coming up.
- Cindy Osorto: There is the idea that across the country there are a lot of climate focused goals. We need a workforce in order to accomplish the multiple climate goals. There needs to be a connection between what is in demand and what is being advertised/what students are being informed about. Thinking about best practices for young adults is important.
 - Wuill: Consider how early career professionals access information, & how inaccessible proprietary government software platforms are for unfamiliar users.
- Brittany Hall: Laura Cattell Noll (in-chat) Why aren't people an indicator species? As we shift to more people-focused policy. We should consider the fact that scientists are not the best communicators. There are entities in our network that specialize in community engagement and communication. It is ultimately BIPOC that are harmed by certain policies.
- Eddie: Should the outcomes include something at the end to relate back to people as an indicator species? Output rather than outcome? For the benefit of... Recreation, Culture, History. These speak to things that people care about that we have not been talking about
- What are the actions that could be taken for the most meaningful change to occur?

- Wendy: We are looking for the DWG to be a little powerhouse. We are the change that the CBP needs. There still is so much work that needs to be done. We are trying to run up and down an escalator. We need to continually work and if we don't get to a place where the outputs are not grounded in the larger lens of people, we will not be able to continue the important work.
- Frank Rodgers, Cacapon Institute : Thank you for the conversation. Every organization should have a plan to help K-12 schools. In every community, 15-20% of the population is below 18 years old. Before we can move people into meaningful jobs they need to graduate high school. In communities of generational poverty, dropout rates are highest. We all need to be mentors to move disadvantaged families into higher education.
 - If we are not talking to schools, we are missing 20% of the population.
- Ruby: For the smaller organizations, it is difficult to hire people. When compared to larger organizations, smaller ones are not able to compete in terms of benefits, salary, etc. This is something that should be a part of that conversation.
 - Wendy: something that we will capture & incorporate into the official discussion because these community & grassroots organizations are critically important. Potentially, an easier pipeline for these organizations to access government funding.

- Group synthesis

11:35-11:50 Workgroup Business (Skipped)

- Workgroup budget update, brainstorming training ideas
- Diversity Workgroup Coordinator position update
- Workgroup C-StREAM Internship

11:50-12:00 Rapid Coordination & Closing

- Rapid Coordination / Announcements & updates from Workgroup members
 - Workgroup members share lightning updates and encourage colleagues to connect outside of the meeting: "What I'm working on is... What I need [help with] is..."
- Trena: Can we collaborate for Earth Science Week? (In general, Nasa and CBP DWG, Etc.)
 - Wendy: Maybe let's reform it as Earth Science People Week
 - Britt: Is there any way we can model what it looks like to integrate the people-side into Earth Science Week?
 - Eddie: Can there be an event committee?
- Wendy: There was a report that came out two weeks ago that's been covered in the Bay Journal. Main gist: there was a look into the work of

the bay. Two takeaways: push back on “restoration” because the Bay cannot be restored to how it was before, we must rethink how it will look in the future. Second takeaway: focusing on making the shallow waters healthy (areas with biggest impacts) to induce a more of a trickle down effect.

- Closing comments