



Stewardship Workgroup Meeting MINUTES

Tuesday, May 13, 2025

2:30 pm - 4:00 pm

Virtual meeting via [Zoom](#)

Meeting ID: 824 3690 6695

Passcode: 630141

Or by phone: +1 301 715 8592 US

Summary of Action Items & Decisions:

Beyond 2025:

- **DECISION:** The following draft outcome language has been submitted by Leila Duman to Amy Handen for Management Board and Principals' Staff Committee review on May 14, 2025:
 - Increase public participation in stewardship actions that contribute positively to the lands, waters, living resources and communities throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed.
- **DECISION:** The following draft target language has been submitted by Leila Duman to Amy Handen for Management Board and Principals' Staff Committee review on May 14, 2025:
 - Through 2040, better equip practitioners with the social science data, technical assistance and support needed to develop, improve and carry out individual and community-level stewardship programs, including those that will help advance Agreement goals.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Help spread awareness that there will be a public comment/feedback period for the proposed Watershed Agreement revisions beginning July 1, 2025 and lasting for 60 days. Updates about the Beyond 2025 process can be viewed [here](#).

Action Teams:

- **ACTION ITEM:** Reach out to Meredith, lemkem@chesapeake.org, if you would like to get involved in any of the Stewardship Action Teams. New meetings will be planned for each team within the next month.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Please add resources that would be useful and relevant to stewardship and behavior change practitioners, stewardship organization leadership, and workgroup members to the [Resource Hub Materials Brainstorming Document](#). Questions? Reach out to Meredith.

Network Science Project:

- **ACTION ITEM:** Register for a training session if you are interested: <https://forms.gle/9oXQA6P4nDzLwWQD7>
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Complete this short Menti: <https://www.menti.com/alw87zrwsowq>
 - Reach out to Christy Gabbard (christy@localconceptsllc.com) or Sonia Keiner (sonia@localconceptsllc.com) if you have any questions.
-

MINUTES

Attendance: Meredith Lemke, Britt Slattery, Steve Raabe, Christy Gabbard, Rachel Felter, Jess Blackburn, Marissa O'Neill, Amy Handen, Phil Miller, Jenny McGarvey, Julie Lawson, Angela Jones, Shannon Sprague, Emily Heller, Renee Bourassa, Anna Killius, Nick Staten, Adrienne Kotula, Marel King, Virginia Witmer

2:30 Welcome/ Introductions

2:40 Beyond 2025 - Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement Outcome Development

2:40 Stewardship Outcome – Workgroup members provided feedback on the draft language for the updated Stewardship Outcome and potential associated targets.

Workgroup Discussion about the May 13 Draft Outcome Language: *"Increase public participation in regular actions that contribute positively to the health of the Bay, its watershed and communities."*

<i>2014 Watershed Agreement Outcome Language</i>	<i>Draft Outcome Language Presented to MB May 8, 2025</i>	<i>Draft Outcome Language Revised May 9 - May 13 (for Workgroup feedback)</i>
Increase the number and diversity of trained and mobilized volunteers who have the knowledge and skills needed to enhance the health of their local watersheds.	Equip partners and the regional network of practitioners with the social science data, technical assistance and support needed to develop and carry out programs that train and mobilize individuals and communities to improve the health of our land, water, living resources and people.	Increase public participation in regular actions that contribute positively to the health of the Bay, its watershed and communities.

Please note: The draft outcome language presented to the Stewardship Workgroup on May 13th was reworked from the May 8th version to reflect the Management Board's desire for a simpler, shorter outcome statement that is easily understandable by the public.

Workgroup Wordsmithing Discussion:

Shannon - The phrasing of "regular" actions is not easily understood.

- Alternative words: *Continued, repetitive, repeated, frequent, habitual, everyday, normalized, common, consistent, routine, daily, continual*
- Marissa - Yeah regular to me sounds like the actions themselves are just normal things people are doing and not necessarily that it's actions people are doing on a frequent basis.
- Amy - maybe remove the adjective and just say "actions" or "actions and activities"
- Britt - We want to recognize that we're attempting to expand to other actions, as well as indicate a normalization/ increased frequency

Christy – I prompted ChatGPT. My prompt: Can you please help to change this language so that it is more approachable to the public. This is draft outcome language for the Chesapeake Bay Agreement. "Increase public participation in regular actions that contribute positively contribute to the health of the Bay, its watershed and communities."

- ChatGPT said: Certainly! Here's a more approachable, clear, and public-friendly version of that outcome language: "Encourage more people to take regular actions that help protect and improve the health of the Chesapeake Bay, its rivers, and the communities that depend on them."
- A few other variations depending on tone:
 - Simplest and most conversational: "Get more people involved in everyday actions that make the Chesapeake Bay and its communities healthier."
 - Inspirational tone: "Inspire more people to take regular steps—big and small—that support a cleaner, healthier Bay and stronger communities."

- Community-focused version: "Grow public involvement in meaningful, everyday actions that improve the health of the Bay, the watershed, and the places we live."

***Workgroup Decision:** Remove "regular" replace with "stewardship"

Increase public participation in ~~regular~~ **stewardship** actions that contribute positively to the health of the Bay, its watershed and communities.

Debate on the order of the last clause:

- health of rivers, communities, and the Chesapeake Bay.
- Communities, local lands and waters, and the Chesapeake Bay.
- Land, water, people, and living resources
- Local lands, waters, communities, and the Bay.

Jenny – "health of local communities" too broad – could be everything like vaccinations

Version ideas:

- Increase public participation in **stewardship** actions that positively contribute to the health of our local communities, waters and lands, including the Bay.
- Increase public participation in **stewardship** actions that positively contribute to healthy communities, lands, and waters of the Chesapeake Bay.
- Increase public participation in **stewardship** actions that positively contribute to healthy communities, lands, waters, and living resources of the Chesapeake Bay.

Rachel's versions:

- Increase public participation in actions that positively contribute to healthy lands, clean water and engaged communities?
- Increase public participation in actions that positively contribute to healthy lands, clean water, protect living resources and engage people?

Anna - I think the last clause should include all four categories being discussed as broad areas of work: Land, Water, People, Living Resources

***Workgroup Decision:** Include all four categories being discussed as broad areas of work: Land, Water, People, Living Resources

Jess – I'm not sure we need to say "the Bay". I want to make sure those of us far from the Bay feel included.

DECISION: After additional post-meeting collaboration, the following draft outcome language was developed. This language was submitted by Leila Duman to Amy Handen for Management Board and Principals' Staff Committee review on May 14, 2025:

- **Increase public participation in stewardship actions that contribute positively to the lands, waters, living resources and communities throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed.**

Workgroup Discussion about the May 13 Draft Target Language: “Through 2040, better equip partners and regional practitioners with the social science data, technical assistance and support needed to develop, improve and carry out programs that advance certain Watershed Agreement outcomes through individual and community-level stewardship.”

<i>Draft <u>Target</u> Language Presented to MB May 8, 2025</i>	<i>Draft <u>Target</u> Language Revised May 9 - May 13 (for Workgroup feedback)</i>
<p>1. Measure how well we are supporting partners</p> <p><i>Continually increase partners’ ability to develop and carry out programs that enable people and communities to participate in stewardship.</i></p>	<p>Combined draft target:</p> <p><i>Through 2040, better equip partners and regional practitioners with the social science data, technical assistance and support needed to develop, improve and carry out programs that advance certain Watershed Agreement outcomes through individual and community-level stewardship.</i></p>
<p>2. Measure on the ground stewardship work.</p> <p><i>Through 2040, support achievement of the targets identified [SMART targets to be set**] that ultimately increase both individual and community level stewardship actions that advance certain Watershed Agreement outcomes, e.g., Healthy Forests and Trees, Workforce, Water Quality, etc.</i></p> <p>EXAMPLE: “By 2040, XXXX number of acres of urban or suburban forest will be stewarded by individuals or communities.” Assist the WG by connecting stewardship partners to help with implementation, and assist in the process to track the metric.</p>	

Please note: The draft target language presented to the Stewardship Workgroup on May 13th was reworked from the May 8th version to reflect the Management Board’s request for the outcome language to be simplified. Many aspects of the outcome language presented on May 8th were reworked into the target instead.

Workgroup Wordsmithing Discussion:

Jess - take out the word "needed" just say “to develop”

Jess - I think if we take out the word "certain" outcomes it still works. The “certain” part can be in the management strategy

Shannon - “Certain” is odd phrasing

- Suggestion: “Improve and carry out individual and community-level stewardship” – (assumes its advancing other Agreement outcomes)
- Britt - we’re trying to funnel energy and support behind outcomes that could benefit from stewardship rather than encouraging any and all stewardship types. Gives it some focus
- Julie - “Watershed Agreement Outcomes” was also originally in Workforce to make it sticky and harder to cut. Maybe we don’t need that language anymore now that it seems like we have more consensus?
- Anna - Watershed Agreement Outcomes also in here from moving from 2 targets to 1 target
 - 1st target was working with partners
 - 2nd target was working across Outcomes
- Anna - if you remove reference to the other outcomes, just want to make sure it doesn’t get lost (by keeping in the management strategies)

* **Workgroup Decision:** Remove the word “certain”

* **Unresolved:** We ran out of time to resolve whether or not to remove the reference to the other Agreement outcomes.

- Meredith – I personally think that the reference to the other Outcomes should stay in the target language. It helps preserve the intent of both of the May 8 targets that were merged.

Version ideas:

- Shannon: *Through 2040, better equip practitioners with the social science data, technical assistance and support needed to develop, improve, and carry out individual and community-level stewardship programs.*
- Julie: *Through 2040, better equip practitioners with the social science data, technical assistance and support to develop, improve, and carry out individual and community-level programs.*

DECISION: After additional post-meeting collaboration, the following draft target language was developed. This language was submitted by Leila Duman to Amy Handen for Management Board and Principals' Staff Committee review on May 14, 2025:

- **Through 2040, better equip practitioners with the social science data, technical assistance and support needed to develop, improve and carry out individual and community-level stewardship programs, including those that will help advance Agreement goals.**

3:10 Workforce Outcome – Julie Lawson, DOEE

Julie presented about the new Workforce Outcome, recently approved to be included in the next version of the Agreement. View the version of the Outcome and Targets presented to the Management Board on May 8th [here](#).

Draft Workforce Outcome and Targets with edits May 9-13:

- Outcome: Increase the ability of all **job seekers in the** watershed to understand, participate in, and succeed in environmental career pathways.
- Target #1: Understanding: By 2035, inform and grow implementation of strategies that help students, educators, and job seekers to become aware of and understand environmental careers and the pathways to them.
- Target #2: Participating: By 2035, increase the number of post-secondary institutions and training providers offering industry-recognized credentials that support *Agreement* outcomes.
- Target #3: Succeeding: By 2035, inform and support greater hiring and retention of workers trained in fields necessary to support *Agreement* outcomes.

Discussion:

- Rachel - grammatical side-by---don't think you need the 'in' after participate
- Shannon - Note: I think that we are supposed to be shooting for 2040? Which doesn't change anything really.
- Julie: WASHCOG said they'd be willing to set up a committee or workgroup for Workforce. We will be working closely with Education, Stewardship, and Local Leadership. We also want to talk to all the outcome areas and jurisdictions about what are their known workforce/employment gaps
- Jenny - I'm excited to see how neatly some of the Alliance's ongoing workforce development efforts compliment and reflect these new targets.

3:20 Implementing Stewardship Work in 2025

Ongoing Efforts, Action Teams – Meredith Lemke, CRC/CBP, Stewardship Workgroup Staffer

Meredith provided updates about the work the Action Teams have begun so far. The Action Teams have been formed to work on items from our [2024-2025 Work Plan](#). Check out their progress at the links below and get involved.

- **ACTION ITEM:** Reach out to Meredith, lemkem@chesapeake.org, if you would like to get involved in any of these teams. New meetings will be planned for each team within the next month.

1. **Chesapeake Steward Map Ambassadors group** – Assist with outreach and promotion of the map. Help brainstorm new map uses and map design improvements. View the map [here](#).
 - Learn more about the [roles and responsibilities of a Map Ambassador](#). Reach out to Meredith to get involved.
2. **Resource Hub Action Team** – Help design, gather resources for, and eventually share an online stewardship resource hub for practitioners.
 - Explore the [running notes](#).
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Please add resources that would be useful and relevant to stewardship and behavior change practitioners, stewardship organization leadership, and workgroup members to the [Resource Hub Materials Brainstorming Document](#). If you have any questions, reach out to Meredith
3. **Community-Scale Stewardship Action Team** – Develop a plan/methodology to identify what community-scale stewardship actions already exist across the watershed. Help establish a baseline for future measurement.
 - Explore the [running notes](#).

New Project on Network Science – Christy Gabbard and Sonia Keiner, Local Concepts, LLC
 The Chesapeake Bay Program's Strategic Engagement Team has initiated this project, funded by EPA CBP, to help bring network best practices into the work across the partnership. View the [SLIDES](#).

- This project aims to build the collaborative infrastructure necessary to advance shared goals and enhance the existing capacity of the CBP partnership to accelerate achievement of Agreement goals and outcomes.
- The project will involve: assessment and strategic design, partner-wide training, technical assistance for network design, network evaluation, and recommendations/ a report.
- Join a training session and spread the word! Note the sessions below are still in development and slight topic changes may occur.
 - **Tues, Jun 24, 2-4pm ET – Session 1: Know the Network** - Build your network mindset and explore our network
 - **Tues, Sep 9, 2-4pm ET– Session 2: Engage the Network** - Explore the importance of trust and how to activate our network
 - **Wed, Nov 19, 2-4pm ET– Session 3: Communication & Convening** - Leverage our communication pathways to increase connections and knowledge sharing
 - **Tues, Jan 13, 2-4pm ET– Session 4: Leadership, Decision Making & Next Steps** - Leadership in networks are different & we all have something to offer. Learn leadership practices and decision making techniques.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Register for a training session if you are interested and help spread the word: <https://forms.gle/9oXQA6P4nDzLwWQD7>
- **ACTION ITEM:** Complete this short Menti to help inform this project's process: <https://www.menti.com/alw87zrwsowq>

3:50 Other Workgroup Business / Announcements

The NPS Chesapeake Gateways office has made some strategic decisions to recenter their work more closely on their core mission guided by their congressional mandate. NPS staff time and capacity will be more focused on the Park partnership network and Chesapeake Gateways sites. This work aligns well with the mission and vision of CBP, but NPS will just no longer be taking on the coordination and facilitation leadership for GIT5 and the workgroups under GIT5 (i.e., Stewardship, Education, Protected Lands, Public Access).

- Anna & Leila are champions for getting the Outcome language finalized.
- Meredith and Daniel are continuing in their staffer roles. Coordinators & chairs currently uncertain - awaiting EPA guidance.

4:00 Adjourn