

Monitoring Meeting

Wednesday, April 16th, 2025

9:00AM – 10:00AM

Join Meeting Here: [Link](#)

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Action Items

- ✓ Those from the Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) outcome and the Water Quality Standards Attainment and Monitoring (WQSAM) outcome will find time to get together before April 25th to discuss the two outcomes.
- ✓ The WQSAM team will rewrite the outcome language to match with the Management Board (MB) requests and survey feedback, after meeting with the WIP team. This will be sent to the group next week and partners can express any major red flags or quick fixes. Due to the tight timeline, there won't be time for big fixes.

Minutes

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

Announcements

- The team is expected to put together briefing materials on the Monitoring Program. An update is the Modeling Team and Monitoring Team are going to team up on this briefing. This will be submitted on April 30th.
- Peter will be out next week (April 21-25).
- Peter encourages people to take vacation if they are able.
- Gary Shenk will be taking early retirement. His last day will be April 18th.
- CERF abstracts are due on April 28th. USGS personnel should be able to go to the CERF conference. Breck and Qian are both hosting sessions related to monitoring.

9:10 AM **Update on Management Board (MB) Guidance for Outcomes & Outputs – Breck Sullivan (USGS)**

- *At the April 10th Management Board (MB) meeting, the MB discussed the consensus on how Outcomes and Outputs would be displayed in the next Watershed Agreement. Breck will update the group on their decision and what that means for the Water Quality Standards Attainment and Monitoring (WQSAM) Outcome.*

Summary: Breck started by giving a big thank you to everyone who filled out the WQSAM Outcome survey.

Next, Breck updated the group on the conversations and decisions from the last two Management Board meetings. The Management Board supported the updating of WQSAM. The Management Board asked the group to focus the outcome on addressing water quality attainment and include tidal and nontidal. They also emphasized that monitoring is a priority within the partnership. They were open to considering other parameters but didn't want that to be a focus. Lastly, the Scientific, Technical Assessment and Reporting (STAR) team had suggested combining WIP and WQSAM Outcomes and the MB was not in support of that.

At the last MB meeting, they decided to go with the "Option B" (discussed in the last Monitoring Meeting) with some edits. For the agreement, they are looking for a high-level outcome language sentence or two, with bulleted outputs or targets that would be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound). Targets that are not fully flushed out can be listed as "under construction" for now, so the MB will know that they are not finalized. These targets will describe what is going to happen, but more specific language and actions will be in the logic models/work plans.

9:25 AM [Summary of WQSAM Outcome Language Survey Results](#) – Breck Sullivan (USGS)

- *Key takeaways and results from STAR's survey on the WQSAM Outcome language.*
- *Group discussion of any changes to the outcome language based on the findings of the survey.*

Summary: Breck is going to share the current draft outcome language and the survey thoughts and results. She emphasized that our final outcome language submitted to the MB on April 25th is still subject to editing by the MB and Principals' Staff Committee (PSC).

Firstly, Breck went over the feedback for the outputs. Within the positive feedback, some people think it looks good, it is not missing anything from a laboratory perspective, it includes key areas for analysis and incorporates nontraditional data. For the revisions to consider, people asked for SMART-er language, better organization, and clearer language. Some people wanted other parameters to be focused on and Breck noted that the toxics

workgroup is working on the Toxics outcome. Peter also mentioned that some things that are not listed in our outcome are being discussed within other outcomes, mostly fish habitat. Also, the Management Board had asked WQSAM not to focus on broadening the outcome.

Next, for the feedback on the draft outcome language, over 50% (52%) of people were leaning yes on the draft outcome language. People liked the language “established water quality standards,” how the language included Bay and watershed health, the emphasis on attainment, and clear language. For the revisions, people thought that reaching “full” attainment is an unachievable goal, wanting to say “Chesapeake Bay Watershed” rather than the Bay, it is redundant with the WIP outcome, including expansion to other parameters in the outcome language, and that the goal language should be incorporated into the outcome.

Breck split the feedback into five groups with different priorities. Those groups were; 1) wanted more focus on monitoring capacity, 2) thinks the outcome is too similar to WIP, 3) wants to focus on tidal and nontidal, 4) likes the goal language and wants to incorporate that into the outcome language, 5) thinks the outcome needs to be broader. Breck notes to group 2 that STAR brought combining the outcomes to the MB and they have asked not to do that. If needed, we could bring that up again, but it would be best to submit something that aligns with what they requested. For group 4, as the MB refines the goals, they may rewrite the goal language, so we may be able to pull from some of the existing goal language without being redundant. For groups 1 & 3, we may be able to add some of these suggestions in the outcome language when we do our final restructuring.

Discussion

Peter Tango: If the MB creates a new goal language, we could pull from the current goal language and in doing so, we can make our outcome broader. Ex. “reduce pollutants.” We can become more specific within our outputs. Jeremy, have you updated your outcome language with the new structure? It seems very model based until you get to the last sentence, which seems like we should be combining.

- Jeremy Hanson: Not yet. We have had some leadership out of the office and our feedback form is still open. We are getting similar input. We will be updating our outcome language soon to match with MB requested format. We have a target for the near-term using Phase 6 existing targets and the longer-term target would be Phase 7 – under construction. We should try to get time on the calendar to discuss the two outcomes before April 25th.

Breck: With the language that we move forward with, we will include a narrative with the feedback we are getting to show the story of how we wrote our outcome language. We want to make sure they know that we are getting continued requests for broadening and combining with WIP.

Claire Buchanan: I believe we should keep WQSAM and WIP separate. WQSAM reflects what you want the Bay ecosystem to look like when you achieve your goals while WIP is looking at how you want the Bay Watershed to look when you achieve your goals. They are strongly connected, but they're looking at different aspects. WQSAM focuses on measuring ecosystem response while WIP focuses on land use and land cover.

- Breck Sullivan: We are talking about what topics will be covered by the Bay Program, but we still need to discuss how we will be doing that work. I agree that the nutrient and sediment reduction outcome (potential new name for WIP outcome) reflects the change we want to see in pollutants coming into the Bay. The workgroups under STAR are still going to be doing the analysis of nutrient and sediment reduction. We need to have the conversation with our partnership to express that this doesn't mean that the WQ GIT is doing that work. We need to talk about what we want to do and how and who will do that.
- Peter Tango: The 2014 agreement didn't have any of our outputs accounting for Bay response. In our review for Beyond 2025 Phase 1, they mentioned our agreement didn't have quantifiable and ecosystem driven endpoints. We are trying to accommodate the monitoring and assessment, while including a report expectation to match the language to what we are already doing with Chesapeake Progress.

Breck Sullivan: From the MB guidance and feedback from the survey, we will be reconstructing our outcome language. We will send that to the groups. Because of the timeline, it will be just major red flags and full stop kind of feedback. We can also look into whether you think targets should be put under construction or quick fixes. We will send that to you all next week, after we meet with the Water Quality GIT. Final language will be submitted on April 25th.

Peter Tango: We have many indicators of change. We are often constrained by the expectation of reporting water quality standards and their attainment, but we don't have all of the measurements. We have information coming through other sources, like our hypoxic volume analysis. The generality of the current goal language would allow us more breath in the metrics we use.

Breck Sullivan: If you have anything else you'd like to share, you can email me (bsullivan@chesapeakebay.net). The major things I heard were making the output more

SMART, having clearer language, taking out “reach full attainment,” consolidating with WIP or keeping them separate, and keeping a tidal and nontidal focus. The revised outcome language will come to you next week.

Jeremy Hanson: Breck, can you send these slides to me or the group? Where is the outcome language description visual?

- Breck Sullivan: Yes, they are available on the webpage. That can be credited to Gina Hunt.

10:00 AM Adjourn

Other Notes:

Upcoming Management Board (MB) Meetings and Important Dates

April 25th – Revised Outcome Language due to the Management Board

May 7th & 8th – MB Retreat: “Finalize recommended Outcome revisions; discuss any changes necessary for Goals and Management Strategies based on Outcome status; discuss any changes necessary for structure and governance work.”

May 23rd – PSC Meeting: “Review MB’s recommended Outcome revisions; discuss possible changes to Goals and Management Strategies; discuss any changes necessary for MB structure and governance work.”