

Public Access Workgroup

Fall Meeting 2024

Thursday, Oct. 24 | 10:00 am – 11:15 am

Google Meet joining info

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/asq-scgx-erg>

Or dial: (US) +1 781-514-9300 PIN: 235 909 011#

More phone numbers: <https://tel.meet/asq-scgx-erg?pin=6657419212738>

Public Access Outcome: By 2025, add 300 new public access sites, with a strong emphasis on providing opportunities for boating, swimming and fishing, where feasible.



Attendees: Lisa Gutierrez (MD), Aurelia Gracia (NPS), Lucinda Power (interested party, EPA), Britt Slattery (NPS), Kevin Du Bois (DoD), Vallie Edenbo (PA), Drew Carter (WV), Erik Zlokovitz (MD), Mark McLaughlin (PA), Kristal McKelvey (VA), Julia Wakeling (DC, DOEE), Wendy O’Sullivan (NPS), Joanne Goodwin (DC), Daniel Koval (CBP staffer)

Meeting Minutes

10:00 am Convene and Welcome (*Chair, Lisa G.*)

- **Introductions:**
- **Overview & updates from the Chair**

Since last meeting:

- Had GIT5 full meeting; Lisa gave a single slide 3 minute presentation on our progress:
 - 90% attainment for our goal
 - Public Access Site Developments in the Watershed (document from the Implementation team, with bar chart showing where we are for each jurisdictions)
 - Cumulative total including 2023 data call: 1,424 public water access sites
 - 100 sites ahead of our projected milestone

10:10 am Workgroup Documents Review & Discussion (*All*)

- **Progress Tracking / Data Report**
 - Been submitted to the EPA (Doug Bell), along with SRS docs, management strategy
 - Up to date
 - Shoutout Drew from WV (WV is most recent signatory), who went through state

records from 2023 data call, finding lots of previously uncounted sites

- **Analysis and Methods**
- **Management Strategy**

Analysis and Methods doc:

- Document that lays out for the bay program how we collect our data and how we've done it over the years
 - Had not been updated recently
- Going to submit it to bay program by end of the week (10/25)

Opening up the floor to discussion:

Kevin Du Bois: I have not taken a look at it yet, so I will look at that today and get back to you

Lisa Gutierrez: A&M is more of a narrative description of how we do the data call, and is more about what our data is and how we collect it

- One of the issues in the A&M that I encouraged people to look at is that on the CBP Webpage, there is now some mapping that illustrates existing public water access sites. Over past years (pre covid), we've had more discussion about the individual jurisdictions having better data that is more up to date and are more in depth compared to what is reflected on the bay website
- There was a suggestion several years ago from the CBP webpage that they direct people to the individual state resources
- So for example in MD, we maintain the MD online Water Access Guide (interactive web app) that is populated by data from our public access data set, We have similar resources from our fishing
- I went through and compiled a list of all the web pages (PA, MD, VA, NY, WV, DE, and DC all have similar sites)
- In A&M question 2 or 7, references that; makes suggestion that our individual links to state resources be listed
- Good conversations with CBP USGS staff (Andy Finch especially) who seem pretty receptive
- **Action item: make sure the links for each individual jurisdiction resources are correct and work well**
- (Talking to Kevin DuBois) US DoD installations within the chesapeake bay watershed

reported 199 additional parcels for public access, bringing total to 368 sites

- Word for word what is in A&M

Vallie Edenbo: I wanted to clarify that sub watersheds are included within the footprint of the entire bay watershed?

- **Lisa Gutierrez:** yes

10:30 am Access Data Discussion (All)

- **Existing Data per jurisdiction**

Lisa Gutierrez: In the full spreadsheet showing year by year, jurisdiction by jurisdiction, sent the lists to each representative. Does not require a deep dive for review, these are sites that were all submitted in previous years

- But thought it would be helpful to have handy for SCORPS (or LPPRP - Land Preservation Parks and Rec Plan)
- Throughout that SCORP exercise, it is a compliment to what we are doing with public access (with SCORPS, getting input from surveys, demographic data, inventory of resources)
 - So it could be helpful to have that list
- Does anybody have comments regarding what I sent?
 - I want to encourage people that if you see any sites that are missing in the list that come up during SCORP process, to make note of that to be added

Aurelia Gracia: Do the other federal agencies such as Forest Service, USFWS, BLM, BoR comment/review on the A&M doc?

- **Lisa Gutierrez:** In MD, we give grants to NPS to fund projects, so we are involved in that. Other states, do you want to chime in on how you handle the federal inventory?
- **Drew Carter:** In WV, we advertise all of the national Forest Access sites on our state GIS public access website
- **Kristal McKelvey:** Gonna ask Allison to figure that out, I think we do the same, but will make a point to check
 - **Lisa Gutierrez:** in past, with John Davey they did
- **Vallie Edenbo:** We have them mapped in some updates we've been worked on, but I don't know if we have them reported to the state list or not,

- **Lisa Gutierrez:** suggest NPS review the data that federal sites have in the inventory on CBP, and can let us know if there are things missing
 - **Aurelia Gracia:** we will need to let all of the federal agencies know, we want to be counting all the federal sites

- **Preparing for 2024 data call**
- **Adjustments to the data call sheet/fields**

Preparing for 2024 Data Call:

Lisa Gutierrez: had lots of comments that the tracking spreadsheet that we use for the data call has grown exponentially over the past few years. There was a suggestion that for 2024 data call, since we are near deadline and goal, that we simplify for the final year spreadsheet

- Will keep main fields like Type, Location, Name of Facility, Jurisdiction

Opening up for discussion:

Britt Slattery: What are the extraneous fields you are thinking about removing?

- **Lisa Gutierrez:**
 - the month that the site opened,
 - whether or not the site is on the route of the Captain John Smith route (this does not affect all jurisdictions; those that are affected by it can keep track of it, but doesn't necessarily have to be on the sheet)
 - This makes it easier and quicker
 - Meeting with Andy Finch to put together a revised data call spreadsheet; will still be excel format

Britt Slattery: I support making it easier; thinking that if there are things that other people could use or not use within the spreadsheet; it is the tail end for the outcome, so there is no reason that we shouldn't think about 'keep working even if we reached 300'; so if there is anything that you see in there that feels extraneous, but could have some use for something we think about as we move beyond 2025 – either save the idea for a recommendation or consider whether it could be useful, etc etc)

- If looking for funding, if the site has some connection to something else like a trail that might help make it more eligible for funding, etc.
- **Lisa Gutierrez:** more about the kind of fields that people felt was not necessary, like
- the month

Vallie Edenbo: We may have been overthinking the question, but the month it opens can be

ambiguous; we close the grant on the day that it is finished, but whether that is the date it is opened or not isn't always the case

Drew Carter: month and year was not something i could have easily found, so I have no idea of when they were open

Lisa Gutierrez: This is a good starting point, and we will send out a new datasheet soon. If you think of fields that would make sense that aren't already on there, let us know!

- **Britt Slattery:** Or if there's info not collected now that could be valuable in the future.
- **Vallie Edenbo:** we will get back to you about that

Lisa Gutierrez : in the A&M, question about challenges

- Made sure to say that all of us work for states as our job and that is our top priority; and staffing and institutional knowledge related to voting access, etc;
- So we wear a lot of hats and this is a voluntary effort but it is not meant to stress folks out.
- We are trying to be partners and achieve something collectively
- Water access is opportunistic; there is acquisition, planning, implementation; takes time and money;
- We are so grateful for everyone's participation!

From chat:

- **Britt Slattery 10:42 AM**
 - With land conservation, they are now realizing that the year established should have been included in data on sites conserved over the years and it was not collected or even recorded. And now they need that info for thorough analysis.
- **Aurelia Gracia 10:45 AM**
 - Yes, the Protected Lands WG is going through an effort to dig back into records to determine the date of establishment.

Aurelia Gracia: we rely on GIS team and they are going back into data sets with states and trying to determine the date of establishment for records

- Other thing: confused about comment with DC
 - We will circle with federal agencies to clarify that their info is recorded

- **Aurelia Gracia** from chat 10:37am: Confused about the comment regarding DC, I believe we agreed to share the A&M and data collection with the other federal agencies to ensure new sites are counted.

Britt Slattery: echoing thanks for all the work jurisdictions are doing

- Adding that participation in CBP is an opportunity for you all to have an influence for all things happen
- If there are things you are concerned about that make it harder to work in some situations like acquisition, implementation, etc...
 - CBP participation is an opportunity to find ways to suggest and work together to solutions that can make your work easier
 - Not meant to be extractive of your work on the ground; it is also an opportunity to lean in and work on things together to make your jobs easier

Lisa Gutierrez: in response to that, one of the things that comes up regularly is that a lot of what happens in jurisdictions is reliant on funding and agency budgets; sadly the CBP doesn't have a lot of influence related to that

- And particularly for what us on PAWG do (implementation, planning) that funding is a big factor. Funding is a factor on how many staff we have, how many projects get done. We go back to MB and they say we can't help with funding or advocacy about needing funding

Britt Slattery: many workgroups share what their state is doing that could benefit another state, or share ideas and jointly think about SCORPS reports etc

- Wanted to plant the seed that even though our goal is winding down, there is still work to be done in the future and participating in CBP can facilitate that
- **Lisa Gutierrez:** agreed

11:00 am New Business & Wrap-up (All)

- **Updates from Members**
- **Suggested timeframe for next meeting**

Open the floor for updates from jurisdictions:

Wendy O'Sullivan: We will look to get the other federal agencies more involved and reviewing documents. For those that don't know me, I'm the chair of GIT5 (Fostering Chesapeake Stewardship Goal Implementation Team) under CBP

- Something to put on folks' radar: this year, we will be reaching back out to PAWG to be engaged in thinking through Phase 2 of Beyond 2025
- As we start the process as an overall partnership between the federal agencies and states/DC about the pieces of the watershed agreement that need to be updated/renewed, we will be working closely with the full membership of the PAWG

Erik Zlokovitz: Communicating with the Reimagine Middle Branch folks in Baltimore (branch of Patapsco River) who are doing shoreline improvements

- First thing I checked was that our fishing area will still be available and it is
- Also the city of Annapolis is looking to do improvements around College Creek (shoreline restoration, walkways, trails)
- So possibility for some fishing access there, perhaps a small pier near St John's College
- All in the early stage; but they expressed interest in adding a fishing pier where no license is required

Kristal McKelvey from chat: 10:54 AM

- Be on the lookout for Virginia's new SCORP - Virginia Outdoor Plan 2024. A new innovative online 'document' using ESRI Hubsite.
- Rolling out in December

Lisa Gutierrez: Regarding the Key Bridge destruction, thanks to feds and host of state agencies, we are on track to plan what a new Key Bridge will look like

- Looking at how improved the water access could be along with it
- Had lots of discussions of including pedestrian access when doing the Woodrow Wilson Bridge which was successful
 - So hopefully something similar to that project

Kevin Du Bois from chat, 10:55 AM

- @Wendy; with three new Sentinel Landscapes in the Watershed (two in VA and one in PA), I'm excited about the possibility for more collaborative off-base land conservation contributing to any new "Beyond 25" goals.

Wrapping up / Last Thoughts and Questions:

Vallie Edenbo: Clarifying questions:

- What is the role of these regulatory representatives?
 - **Lisa Gutierrez:** the PAWG started as an action team back in the 80s; we evolved to become a workgroup;
 - Framework: states of original signatories (PA, MD, VA, federal gov); all the states signed on to commit to host of goals that fell under the bay program
 - **Wendy O'Sullivan:** it is not regulatory; there are components that are, but this is a voluntary effort
 - **Lisa Gutierrez:** The Bay program commitment is not required by law, but the governors of states signs contracts, which binds reps in voluntary way
 - **Wendy O'Sullivan:** it is meant to be a collaborative partnership
 - **Vallie Edenbo:** I'm still learning, so thank you.
 - Tried communicating that this is collaborative to my professional circles, but sometimes it is not perceived that way. There's only a few of us working on the nuts and bolts of this. I have worked in local scale for so long that it is hard to explain to someone that it is not a top down approach
 - **Aurelia Gracia from chat:**
 - <https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/what-guides-us/watershed-agreement>
 -

11:15 am Adjourn