



**Scientific, Technical Assessment and Reporting Team
(STAR) Meeting**

Theme: ERG and Beyond 2025 Steering Committee Report update

Thursday, June 27, 2024

9:30AM – 11:30 PM

Meeting Materials: [Link](#)

This meeting was recorded for internal use only to assure the accuracy of meeting notes.

Action Items

- ✓ A future STAR meeting will discuss the Strategic Engagement Team's GIT funded project.
- ✓ A future STAR meeting will report out on the progress of the Healthy Watersheds GIT funded project Community Response to Land Use Change.
- ✓ STAR will submit a summary of high-level comments to the public feedback email for the Beyond 2025 Steering Committee to consider.
- ✓ Respond to and share the Beyond 2025 Steering Committee Report during the public feedback period from July 1st to August 30th. [The Beyond 2025 Steering Committee Report can be found here](#) and comments can be sent to comments@chesapeakebay.net.

Minutes

9:30 AM **Welcome, Introductions & Announcements – *Ken Hyer (USGS) and Kimberly Van Meter (Penn State) - STAR chair and vice chair, Breck Sullivan (USGS) STAR Coordinator, Peter Tango (USGS) CBP Monitoring Coordinator***

Announcements

Upcoming Conferences, Meetings, Workshops and Webinars

- [American Planning Association \(APA\) Virginia 2024 Conference](#) – July 21 – 24, 2024, Williamsburg, Virginia.
- [Potomac River Conference](#) – October 17, 2024, Lorton, Virginia.
- [Watershed Forum](#) – October 18-20, 2024, Shepherdstown, West Virginia.
- [American Planning Association \(APA\) Maryland 2024 Conference](#) – October 22-24, 2024, Ellicott City, Maryland.
- [12th US Symposium on Harmful Algae](#) – October 27-November 1, 2024, Portland, Maine.
- [14th National Monitoring Conference](#) – March 10-12, 2025, Green Bay, Wisconsin.
- NO JULY STAR MEETING

9:35 AM **Overview of ERG Report Findings – *Ken Hyer (USGS)***

Discussion Questions:

- Did they miss the mark on anything/are there any fatal flaws in the report?
- Were there any considerations that are particularly insightful, surprising, and/or helpful?
- Space for written comments on the [Jamboard](#).

ERG Report Findings:

- F1: The Program and its key components are viewed as being complex and the level of complexity is a concern to stakeholders.
- F2: There is a question of transparency in how the Program operates, especially in regard to using science for decision-making and in how Goal Implementation Teams (GITs) function.
- F3: There is a perception that the voices of external stakeholders are not being listened to.
- F4: The Program components, especially the GITs, operate in a situation of constrained capacity in terms of both personnel time and funding.
- F4: The program operates in a set of silos and these silos decrease the ability of the program to operate effectively as a partnership.
- F5: Combined finding – The combined impact of complexity (F1), potential lack of transparency (F2), perception of not listening to external stakeholders (F3), siloed operations (F4), and constrained capacity (F5) may add to more than the sum of the individual findings.
- F7: The SRS process is a valued part of the Program but is not meeting (or attaining) its full potential.
- F8: Social science is an emerging need for the Program.
- F9: The Program appears to be trying to do too many things.
- F10: In many cases, there is a disconnect between the actions being performed by the Program and goal/outcome attainment.
- F11: The Program's logical outcome structure contains components that are not defined properly as outcomes and lack measurable qualities.
- F12: The Program has produced a vast amount of data and scientific findings, but it can improve access to those data and findings.

ERG Report Considerations:

- C1. Ensuring that the Program's logic model is (1) based on best practices in logic model development and (2) current and known to internal stakeholders.

- C2. Reducing the number of outcomes in any changed or future Agreement to better focus the Program at achieving its outcomes.
- C3. Exploring ways to streamline and simplify the Program's organizational structure to reduce its complexity.
- C4. Placing an emphasis on eliminating a siloed approach to Program design.
- C5. Identifying need for and ways to improve Program transparency to all stakeholders.
- C6. Ensuring an accessible data and information repository.
- C7. Increasing the use of social science toward achieving Program outcomes.
- C8. Allowing for flexibility in the SRS review cycle.
- C9. Making recommendations to ensure the Management Board accesses the appropriate expertise and experience during the SRS process.
- C10. Continuing to reach out to entities and stakeholders that the Program has not traditionally reached well in the past to allow consideration and incorporation of their viewpoints.
- C11. Finding ways to ensure those working on Program activities are supported in their work.

ERG conducted a program assessment and drafted a report to inform the decision-making of the Beyond 2025 Steering Committee. ERG was given three evaluation questions to review the current organizational structure of the program (including the program's decision making, Outcomes, and functioning as a partnership); connection to external stakeholders; and contribution of the partnership in terms of goal attainment. ERG also reviewed key documents, held group discussions, and performed Outcome structure assessment. All of this informed their twelve key findings and 11 considerations (see above). ERG reviewed Outcomes using the SMART Rubric (Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Reasonable, Time-Limited).

Discussion:

Consideration 1: Ensuring that the Program's logic model is (1) based on best practices in logic model development and (2) current and known to internal stakeholders.

Greg Allen (EPA) commented that this consideration was written originally like there was no logic model; this is insensitive to the fact that the CBP is operating under a logic-based strategy review system. He said it would be an okay conclusion to highlight areas where there could be improvement, but it should be underscored that there is an existing logic model. Greg said he was hopeful that the final report highlights where there can be improvements to the current logic model.

Olivia Devereux (Devereux Consulting) said she hoped there were also revised comments in the report that said there wasn't coordination amongst GITs; the GIT Chairs meetings serves this purpose.

Ken Hyer (USGS) said this discussion on the ERG Report is trying to accomplish two things: share access to the ERG report (a completed document) and Beyond 2025 Steering Committee Report (a draft report); and provide a space for feedback from STAR members. Although the ERG report will not be modified, feedback can still be provided on how it will inform the next part of Beyond 2025. The Beyond 2025 Steering Committee report will be released for a 60-day public feedback period starting July 1st, and the report will be modified based on feedback.

Chris Guy (USFWS) asked if there is a formal process for soliciting comments? Is there a role for formal comments for example comments submitted from a GIT? He said he's bringing this up because during the Principals' Staff Committee (PSC) meeting on Tuesday, they commented that they were taking all comments into account but will be drafting their own recommendations. He thinks it would be wise to underscore to the PSC about remembering where these started and the need to reprioritize around Outcomes. Ken Hyer responded that STAR has not put a plan together to put a set of STAR comments forward; USGS has not been thinking along those lines either. Greg Barranco (EPA) said PSC has not said they will be ignoring the Beyond 2025 Steering Committee's recommendations. It's still unclear how they will be moving forward (e.g., their own recommendations or accepting these recommendations). Ken Hyer said he likes the idea of PSC making their own recommendations, with the Beyond 2025 recommendations being unmodified by the PSC.

Greg Barranco commented on SMART Outcomes versus Directional Outcomes with a logic model and that the ERG report has been modified to acknowledge the logic model that exists. Ken Hyer said that the recommendations don't go as far as telling partnership how to carry out recommendations.

Consideration 2: Reducing the number of outcomes in any changed or future Agreement to better focus the Program at achieving its outcomes.

Julie Reichert-Nguyen (NOAA) commented that not working with long-term outcomes is difficult when it comes to climate change, which is a long-term problem.

Greg Allen (EPA) commented in the chat: should not presume more or fewer outcomes but rather right-sizing the number of Outcomes needed to achieve the vision.

Kristin Saunders (UMCES) commented in the chat: building on Greg's comment, it might be that we build some of those longer-term considerations into the management strategies (which are intended to be longer term approaches) AND perhaps elevating things like climate as a goal that shorter term actions nest under to keep us moving toward resiliency, etc.

Katie Brownson (USFS) commented in the chat: There are LOTS of comments on this report that ERG flagged for further discussion at the Steering Committee - would be good to get some clarity about if/when those discussions will be happening.

Peter Tango (USGS) commented in the chat: Totally agree Greg and Kristin - not presuming that the future of the agreement has less or more or the same number of outcomes. That is our adaptive management process to noodle through and make updates in accordance with our collective needs, work, vision, collaborations. Yes, to your follow-up thinking Kristin too on Climate Change/CRWG. Katie, maybe the discussions fit into the 60-day period we are waiting for public comments? Seems like a window of opportunity for us.

Consideration 3: Exploring ways to streamline and simplify the Program's organizational structure to reduce its complexity.

Ken said this could maybe mean a smaller number of outcome teams.

Consideration 4: Placing an emphasis on eliminating a siloed approach to Program design.

Consideration 5: Identifying need for and ways to improve Program transparency to all stakeholders.

Ken said this was originally wrapped up in the science-based decision-making point. There is a lot of new information and reports driving decision making. Some stakeholders raised concerns about program transparency. A decision log was suggested to track decision making and document big program changes and how decisions are arrived at. A couple of participants said that decisions and decision processes were tracked in meeting minutes.

Consideration 6: Ensuring an accessible data and information repository.

Breck Sullivan (USGS) commented at what level are people saying that they can't find specific/certain information? This opens it up to everything we are doing as a partnership. Ken Hyer said what came to his mind was the work the GIS Team did in understanding end-user use of tools which informed the development of Chesapeake Data. Doug Bell (EPA) said when ERG is assessing comments, being specific is hard, since the issue is more widespread; comments from those they interviewed were "things are hard to find" which is one of the reasons they can't be more specific.

Comments related to both C5 and C6:

Jeremy Hanson (CRC) commented if it is an issue of action/decision items in the meeting minutes that are hard to find, then it is more a matter of practices (e.g., decision summary put at the beginning of every minutes – this is already present in many minutes). Doug Bell said organization is key to not repeating processes needlessly. Chris Guy said everyone has their own file system.

Jamileh Soueidan (CRC) commented in the chat: As far as minutes go (though this could be a more widespread comment), but each GIT/WG has their own needs and level of decision making/ actions/ and regulatory needs. We have talked about this as staffers in the past when discussing standardizing minutes practices.

Consideration 7: Increasing the use of social science toward achieving Program outcomes.

Ken pointed out they did not say how, just highlighted the direction to go in.

Consideration 8: Allowing for flexibility in the SRS review cycle.

Ken added that generally people voiced support of SRS but noted it can be inflexible, long and tedious, and GITS spend most of their time preparing and executing the process which leaves little time for implementing it.

Consideration 9: Making recommendations to ensure the Management Board accesses the appropriate expertise and experience during the SRS process.

Ken said while GITs shared that the SRS process had value, they didn't feel like the appropriate people were present at the Quarterly Progress Management Board meetings.

Consideration 10: Continuing to reach out to entities and stakeholders that the Program has not traditionally reached well in the past to allow consideration and incorporation of their viewpoints.

Ken said this would include Indigenous communities and tribes, and ensuring the program is working with all stakeholders and incorporating all viewpoints.

Consideration 11: Finding ways to ensure those working on Program activities are supported in their work.

Ken said a lot of people are volunteering their time and leadership in addition to their job duties and we need to support them to ensure that CBP work is included in their job descriptions.

Ken said it was good to have an outside group (ERG) identify these issues, even if these were already known issues or points. ERG focuses on issues found, but not on what the partnership is doing correctly/well. Doug Bell said most of the way that ERG asked questions was in a neutral way, so feedback that they got is what they reported out; the overwhelming message is what they captured.

Peter Tango said if they only heard something once or twice, it may not have been as emphasized. They really focused on repeated themes, so the recommendations are representative of the strongest messages that they heard. They did not ask for those themes that were not as repeated.

Katie Brownson commented in the chat: I found it interesting that even though we had an evaluation question specifically about the unique contribution of the Partnership, they decided not to answer that question (and instead focused on outcome structure).

Doug Bell commented in the chat: Couldn't be done in time, Katie. I hate to say it, but eyes bigger than the stomach with the Steering Committee requests. That was a rapid implementation.

Jeremy Hanson commented in the chat: This added passage from Section 1.1 felt like the closest thing to a summary of the "value-added" question: "In our work, many areas of Program success were highlighted by group participants. Some examples of successes highlighted in our group discussions included collaborative efforts that involved joint problem-solving, resource sharing, and mutual learning, outcome attainment that was highlighted in the Reaching 2025 report, workgroups that perform tasks at the local level, educational modules that have built scientific literacy, and listening sessions that have been focused on learning what has worked and what has not worked. Finally, some group participants mentioned the fact that the Program is known internationally is a sign of its success at addressing a complex set of problems facing the Bay."

Breck Sullivan summarized some themes. CBP's work did originate from a logic plan. There are questions around consideration of long-term goals. CBP should not presume more or fewer Outcomes but "right" sizing Outcomes. Considering access to data is important and this could look like a one stop shop for tools and data, and/or standardization of practices.

Peter Tango commented in the chat: STAR - via Scott Phillips, frequently used a slide that has appeared on our STAR webpage for about 10 years, that is a basic logic model for how we interact with ourselves and the resources we are managing. Perhaps we need for everyone a

Bay Program 101 presentation/training that - like FISSA, like Security, we all need once a year to be refreshed about so we are all aware of such structure underpinning our program work.

10:05 AM Overview of Synthesis from Steering Committee, and Overview of Timeline – Breck Sullivan (USGS)

Discussion questions:

- Do you agree with the recommendations?
- Were there any that are particularly insightful, surprising, and/or helpful?
- Is there anything actionable you want to see added to the narrative, or examples of actions you think could be done or are already being done based on the recommendations?
- Science, Restoration & Conservation, and Partnership Recommendations can be found listed on the [Jam board](#).

Overview

This report will be released soon followed by a 60-day feedback period. There will not be a point-by-point response to feedback, but an overall response to feedback by repeated themes.

Breck went over the contents of the report. Part one is detailed recommendations to inform a critical path forward; part two is high level recommendations; a synthesis portion of the document; and how we see our work going forward beyond 2025; and part three is source material and one-pagers from small group recommendations.

Breck started by sharing the two overarching recommendations/bottom line up front:

Executive Council Recommendation #1: The Beyond 2025 Steering Committee recommends that the Chesapeake Executive Council affirm its continued commitment to meeting the goals of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement and direct the Principals' Staff Committee to propose specific amendments necessary to improve the Watershed Agreement.

Julie Reichert-Nguyen said this doesn't lead to the possibility of new Outcomes and she wanted to know if there is room for new Outcomes. Peter Tango responded that the Executive Council (EC) Charge doesn't explicitly say anything about changing the Watershed Agreement. It focused on meeting existing goals in the current Agreement. Chris said up to 2025 was presented to the EC last year. Peter says there is a piece missing between 2022 and 2024. It seems like the charge has 2 steps - create recommendations based on science and continue to make progress during 2023 for the current goals.

Chris Guy asked if that means GITs should be reporting progress for 2023 and then also giving the further recommendations for adjusting Outcomes? Ken Hyer said they should recognize the reaching 2025 report and then build from that.

Kristin Saunders commented in the chat: I concur with Peter's observation. It might be useful to lift up the Reaching 2025 pieces that were supposed to carry us now while focusing on the future. The steering committee indicated they would use that report and build on it in their work, but there is not an official reference to it in the synthesis document. I have heard a few chairs raise this as a point lately.

Greg Barranco commented in the chat: Agree. We should be referencing it, and it should still be informing our path forward. (Feels like we finished it and put it on a shelf).

Ken Hyer said there are a few voices that are interpreting the EC Charge in narrow way. The Beyond 2025 Steering Committee interpreted the charge broadly. It may be PSC says that they did not expect them to go quite this far.

Executive Council Recommendation #2: The Beyond 2025 Steering Committee recommends strengthening the Chesapeake Bay Program by identifying ways to simplify and streamline the partnership's structure and processes, including potential changes to the Chesapeake Bay Program's Governance and Management Framework to ensure that partner commitments can be met.

Jeremy Hanson commented he was skeptical on how to actually simplify and streamline things because efforts to do so typically backfire. Ken Hyer said this could be bringing in outside expertise to how to structure partnership; internally reworking process could overcomplicate it. Peter Tango said managed complexity is important, actually: simplifying and streamlining doesn't leave room for managing complexity effectively. Jeremy Hanson said he is concerned in differences in expectations on what this would look like.

Kristin Saunders in the chat said: To Jeremy's point, we potentially added an Agricultural Advisory Committee AND a monitoring action team at the PSC meeting right after talking about simplifying and streamlining. It is confusing to many.

Peter Tango commented in the chat: And Kristin - the Management Board supported creation of the Plastic Pollution Action Team that has had at least 4 years of support but no specific outcome in spite of substantive science and monitoring planning. The issues of criteria

assessment led to 2 new groups under STAR changing workloads on staffers but desired by the community. Adaptation seems to therefore be give and take considerations, but rarely have we consolidated groups (Wetlands + Black Duck is one of the rare examples for me).

Doug Bell said he agreed with Jeremy's point and one of the ways this could be addressed is through ecological principles such as nutrient limitations. Organizations focus on their limitations, but selecting a stable/closed system (e.g., time management) could help. One way to start trying to think about how to simplify is to think about a standard unit that crosses work entities and groups.

Science Recommendations: Optimize Monitoring, Modeling and Analysis.

- The SC recommends developing a long-term strategy to maintain the integrity of core monitoring networks and pursue opportunities for enhancements in monitoring.
- The SC recommends that any updated outcomes have a clear target for reporting and an existing monitoring plan or coincident development of a fundable monitoring and analysis plan to support assessment.
- The SC recommends better utilizing our monitoring and assessment capacity, with increased emphasis towards characterizing watershed health at the local level as well as for the entire basin.

Peter Tango said from his perspective, this focuses on process without recognizing new data/tools/information. Breck Sullivan said she struggled with it too. Peter Tango said in the Reaching 2025 report there is reference to existing science reports; in these recommendations, they are so broad without context. Breck said referencing of materials was in the recommendations themselves and in the last edit the Steering Committee was asked to condense.

Science Recommendations: Integrate existing and new science findings in decision making, resource allocation, and communication strategies.

- The SC recommends adaptation to the latest scientific findings as well as improved communication on how these findings are integrated into decision making, resource allocation, and management strategies.
- The SC recommends improved access to information and cooperation among organizations to share data.

Peter Tango said the language is so general, he does not see direct connections to robust details that have been carried through out partnership; what is specific science that CBP is

already integrating? Ken Hyer said he's thinking that the 25 small group recommendations could be getting at these specifics; these are more synthesized and general language.

Katie Brownson commented in the chat: Maybe a more specific recommendation (framed with an eye towards Phase 2) would be to "identify the latest scientific advances that could be used to better inform decision-making"... and then give a few specific examples.

Breck Sullivan said that the reaching 2025 report has these specifics, so maybe emphasize referencing the report. The Beyond 2025 report recommends improved access to information and cooperation among organizations to share data and this is informed by ERG consideration.

Science Recommendations: Prioritize research that addresses knowledge gaps in existing and emerging challenges.

- The SC recommends enhancing the partnership's understanding of anticipated changes, and how conservation practices respond to those changes, by prioritizing climate science and research on land use change.
- The SC recommends a greater focus on conducting social science research and applying its findings to ensure restoration and conservation efforts align with the well-being of people.

Peter Claggett (USGS) said he hears the social science need loud and clear. Social science experts are needed to provide/train processes on engaging with stakeholders and communicating. Ken Hyer said STAR met with SET to talk about this and how to use social science for better 2-way integration with communities. Peter Claggett said Healthy Watersheds GIT-funded project, Community Response to Land Use Change, is also working towards a similar end-goal. This could be something to report out on at a future meeting.

Kristin Saunders commented in the chat: Peter is giving words to what I have been struggling with as well - the highest level summaries have inadvertently lost specificity and meaning, and so it feels like things are missing (soil health, climate, toxics...). And do we know if these syntheses ideas will be going into phase II or just the two top level recommendations? I don't have a sense of what gets carried forward especially given how general these descriptions are in the synthesis.

Ken Hyer said that recommendations are synthesized as the "go up the pyramid". Kristin Saunders said that's helpful, however what she is trying to get her head around, when talking about phase 2, which recommendations will be focused on? (E.g., only the upper portion of the pyramid? But the bottom part of the pyramid will inform the top part of the pyramid.) Ken Hyer

said the Steering Committee members envision that the phase 2 group will use all the content (entire pyramid), however when it goes to the PSC there is uncertainty on what goes forward.

Chris Guy and Greg Allen asked what phase 2 will look like as no clear vision has been shared. Ken Hyer said there is still opportunity to learn from recommendations and apply them even without a defined phase 2 (at this point). Chris Guy said the Habitat GIT is already doing this. He said it's also key to emphasize what people care about such living resource and shallow waters and this still needs to be addressed.

Restoration and Conservation Recommendations: Support System-Scale Conservation and Restoration Planning and Implementation for Habitats and Communities.

- Elevate Conservation as a key guiding pillar alongside Science, Restoration and Partnership
- Planning for the restoration and conservation of nearshore habitats, inclusive of tributary rivers and streams— some of the most important places for people and the most productive habitats for living resources.

Katie Brownson said in the chat: The narrative accompanying this recommendation calls for the Program (theoretically during Phase 2) to evaluate how conservation can be better integrated throughout the partnership - but elevating it as a pillar would ensure that it is a core guiding post for all the work we do.

Jeremy Hanson said in the chat: the EC charge was the first written document to use the tag line "pillars". Until ~2013 our tag line was "a watershed partnership". The pillars aren't codified in the Watershed Agreement, it's just CBP's tagline.

Ken Hyer said there's lot of focus on restoration, however the conservation piece needs to be addressed too. Chris Guy said conservation needs to be talked about in addition to restoration; net habitat gained or lost. Kristin Saunders said that adding a conservation ethic in how CBP's work is framed helps combine the preventive with the restorative. This includes things like protected lands, but also land use planning. Mark Dubin (UMD) said this has been a struggle over the years without a resolution yet, so to represent this value is important. With conversion of agricultural land, is it okay to conserve something that has a contributing factor to nutrient and sediments?

Kristin Saunders responded in the chat: Mark, we definitely have land conservation goals related to protecting ag land for prime soils and culture/historical value and food.

Katie Brownson said this was a great point and the Steering Committee tried to craft an intentionally broad recommendation due to these things. Katie said in the chat: Conservation, defined here as protection from development and other land use transitions, is much cheaper than restoration and can help ensure the durability of investments in water quality and habitat restoration. Chris Guy said in the chat: most green space include sports fields, many of these are astroturf, which counts as conservation, but has an ecological function of a parking lot.

Restoration and Conservation Recommendations: Review and, where necessary, revise existing goals, outcomes and management strategies to more effectively guide the partnership's restoration and conservation efforts beyond 2025.

- Reviewing and adapting the partnership's portfolio of outcomes as needed to be more compatible with anticipated future landscape conditions, accounting for climate, population growth and projected land use change.
- Streamlining goals and outcomes, as well as overall partnership structure, to improve the integration, efficacy and efficiency of restoration and conservation efforts.

Olivia Devereux said in the chat: This discussion gets at the "Save the Bay FOR the People, not FROM the people."

Julie Reichert-Nguyen commented there is a question of whether to support new goals and Outcomes to reflect emerging issues. Katie Brownson said from what she has heard is that there is very little appetite to make specific recommendations around new Outcomes; this language is about as close to new Outcomes as they will get (and new Outcomes could be interpreted within the realm of possibility). Chris Guy emphasized the interpretation part.

Peter Claggett said in the chat: We'll have better luck wordsmithing existing outcomes to broaden/alter their scope than to develop brand new ones.

Peter Tango commented in the chat: Katie - yes, I think that type of tuning not unlike what Reaching 2025 report did considering the EC Charge asks to continue the demonstration of science and data are further being referenced for use, guidance - blending message with a taste of specifics I believe moves the needle. I kind of want to think about how much, as a receiver of the info (putting myself in the PSC member chair if I was one) and what will I use effectively from the text for my messaging to the Governors. I sense some detail would be helpful but searching my brain for supporting a particular balance. Peter Claggett - agree that may be the way to consider how to embrace emerging issues with the context of well established directions. That is part of what I feel happened between Chesapeake 2000 and the 2014

agreement - there is a lot of commonalities of themes, issues, but they were packaged more concisely in my view.

Restoration and Conservations Recommendations: Improve the Program's holistic approach to planning, prioritization, progress-tracking and accountability.

- Developing and adopting approaches to better incentivize practices that maximize benefits to living resources and people.
- Enhancing the local benefits of Chesapeake restoration and conservation by improving alignment with regional, state and local plans and priorities.
- Improving progress-tracking and accountability to further support efforts to adaptively manage, to better target and prioritize resources and to provide technical assistance and communication of outcomes.

Jeremy Hanson said social science is needed and incentives are just one piece of the puzzle; incentivize can be over-used.

Mark Dubin said for the second bullet, one of the challenges he's seen with local TMDLs vs a Bay TMDL don't align very well. Partially because they are different environmental systems (a freshwater stream vs the tidal Bay). Things like nitrogen may not be an issue for one vs the other. Mark said it's not a level playing field across these environmental systems.

Partnership Recommendations: Adopt a systems approach to streamline governance and structure.

- Contract an independent party to help review and revise the Chesapeake Bay Program's governance and structure.
- Revisit the Partnership's adaptive management principles to better enable efficient and effective decision-making.

Amy Handen said this kind of reads as having outside expertise "do it for us" but if an outside entity is utilized for this they should "do it **with** us".

Partnership Recommendations: Enhance Capacity Building and Administrative/Technical Assistance through Local Networks.

- Enhancing the Program's structure so it can better serve as a partnership of networks that connect local implementors with data, tools, resources and technical assistance that build capacity at the local level.

Breck said this reads closely to a Healthy Watersheds small group recommendation.

Partnership Recommendations: Strengthen the Program's capacity to ensure watershed restoration is relevant to all communities.

- The Program and partnership should commit to inclusive and meaningful engagement of people and communities that have been historically underrepresented, under resourced, and underserved.
- Institutionalize and actualize the Program's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice Implementation Plan.

Partnership Recommendations: Enhance Communications and Transparency to Foster Long-term Success.

- Prioritizing and improving communications and transparency with the partnership's outreach and engagement activities to spur stewardship, drive restoration and conservation momentum and ensure long-term Program efficacy.

Katie Brownson commented in the chat: The full Steering Committee still needs to reach consensus on the final/revised report after the public feedback period, right? Doug Bell confirmed that is correct.

Peter Tango commented in the chat: processing the feedback for revision and presentation is not insignificant in my mind. That's like submitting a manuscript to a journal, there can be a lot of work when you receive comments to get the work across the finish line. As a science writer, two weeks to revise and get consensus on representing 50+ voices is an important and time consuming, deep thinking effort pending the questions and comments breadth and depth. Katie responded I think we will need to be working on revisions throughout the public feedback period. Doug Bell said this will be covered in the front quarter of today's meeting. Co-Chairs are hoping we have volunteers to take part on a response summary team, similar to how Breck and Katie served on the synthesis drafting team.

11:30 AM Adjourn

Next meeting: August 22nd, 2024

Meeting participants:

August Goldfischer (CRC), John Wolf (USGS), Jamileh Soueidan (CRC), Scott Heidel (PA DEP), John Lancaster (PA DEP), Caroline Kelis (CRC), Olivia Devereux (Devereux Consulting), Greg Allen (EPA), Natalie Hall (USGS), Amy Handen (EPA), Erin Sonnenburg (CRC), Geroge Doumit (DNREC), Ann Foo (UMCES), Alexandra Fries (UMCES), Emily Young (ICPRB), Douglas Austin (EPA), Mark Dubin (UMD), Bailey Robertory (CRC), Ashley Hullinger (PA DEP), Matthew Kierce (IWLA), Rebecca Murphy (UMCES), Mark Nardi (USGS), Katherine Brownson (USFS), Jeff Sweeney (EPA),

Sophie Waterman (USGS), Kristin Saunders (UMCES), Carl Friedrichs (VIMS), Jennifer Olszewski (USGS), Meredith Lemke (CRC), Alex Gunnerson (USGS), Jeremy Hanson (CRC), Breck Sullivan (USGS), Ken Hyer (USGS), Peter Tango (USGS), Chris Guy (USFWS), Melissa Fagan (CRC), Douglas Bell (EPA), Gregory Barranco (EPA), Peter Claggett (USGS)