

Status and Trends Workgroup (STWG) Meeting

Wednesday, May 24, 2023

1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

Meeting Materials: [Link](#)

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

ACTION ITEMS

- **Katheryn Barnhart and Doug Bell will reach out to Doreen Vetter, Rachel Felver, Jake Solyst, and Kristin Saunders to gather their perspectives on the STWG approach for 2023.**
 - **Status - complete**
- **Katheryn and Renee Thompson met in May to discuss the new Healthy Watersheds 2.0 tool and results, with the purpose of informing Katheryn so they can provide indicator development support.**
 - **Status - complete**
- **Alex Gunnerson will cancel the June STWG meeting and work with Katheryn to schedule the meeting with STAR leadership in July to discuss coordinating science needs and indicators within the scope of SRS.**
 - **Status - complete**
- **Alex will share the plan for 2023 with the workgroup once Doug and Katheryn finalize the language of the announcement.**
 - **Status - complete**

Meeting Minutes

1:30 Outcome Attainability Discussion

Katheryn led a discussion following the Biennial presentation on Outcome Attainability. The purpose was to discuss how STWG can be involved with addressing Outcomes with data support needs and general uncertainty, so that the partnership has a clear understanding of their Status by 2025.

Status Reporting for “Uncertain” Outcomes and those in Need of Data Support

Likely to have indicators AND off course/on course status by 2025

- Healthy Watersheds
- Environmental Literacy and Planning
- Student MWEEs
- Stewardship
- Diversity
- Forage Fish
- Toxic Contaminants Research

Indicator development may not be complete before 2025

- Black Duck
- Climate Adaptation
- Fish Habitat
- Land Use Options and Evaluation
- Brook Trout

Summary

Katheryn began by emphasizing that outcomes in the category “Indicator development may not be complete before 2025” will continue to receive support for indicator development from the STWG.

Breck Sullivan said she will keep STWG apprised of the monitoring team report’s efforts to build capacity, some of which will overlap with indicator needs. Katheryn said the Toxic Contaminants Research outcome falls into this category. Breck said there are not currently resources to support the Brook Trout monitoring need, but the monitoring team is looking to find resources. Katheryn said there should be some funding available through the living resources Request For Assistance (RFA) which will support a living resource manager position. Breck said one part of the Brook Trout need is better coordination, which the living resource manager should support. Katheryn confirmed after the retirement of the current water quality data manager, funds will be available for both a living resources manager and a water quality manager.

Katheryn said she will reach out to outcome leads following the meeting to coordinate next steps depending on the timeline for each outcome’s progress.

Renee said for Healthy Watersheds, she would like to catch up Doug and Katheryn on the results of the Healthy Watersheds Assessment 2.0 (coming out on May 31st) so both Doug and Katheryn are well enough informed to help with developing an indicator. Renee said it would be good start on this work in August 2023 so they can utilize the new tool and new results to hit the ground running. Katheryn agreed with this timeline.

2:15 Review 2023 STWG Work Plan

Doug reviewed the work plan for 2023 and proposed changes that reflect ongoing discussions around Reaching 2025 and Beyond. The outcome of this discussion was meant to inform a revised schedule, focus of such schedule, and appropriate member engagement.

Summary

Doug began by reviewing the key 10 actions in the workplan and grouping them into categories. One category is operational, which refers to actions like maintain and refine the indicator process, communications and coordination for Quarterly Progress Meetings (QPMs), and standard operating procedures (SOPs). Another category is 2023 milestones, which refers to actions like the Biennial, Reaching 2025 Committee, and updating

ChesapeakeProgress. The operational and 2023 milestones categories of actions are completed by the Accountability and Budget Team (ABT), which is comprised of Katheryn, Doug, Susanna, and Doreen.

Another set of actions are dependent on the core members of STWG, which in this case refer to GIT staffers, coordinators, STAR leadership, and communications team. These actions include identifying and addressing outcome indicator needs.

One set of actions that are dependent on STAR and the ABT are related to influencing factors.

A final set of actions that include everyone in the workgroup includes quality assurance for the Bay Barometer and the Reaching 2025 report.

Based on this review of actions, Doug suggested having the schedule for 2023 follow the categories of actions in the workplan by having quarterly themed meetings instead of monthly meetings. For example, Doug suggested the STWG convene in the summer to discuss outcome attainability and reaching 2025, meet in the fall for indicator approval if it is needed, and use a winter meeting to develop the plan for 2024.

Key questions include how the indicators team work with STAR to address needs and how to progress on the influencing factors work. Katheryn said identifying one to two influencing factors for each outcome, and then distinguishing whether those are being tracked already was the initial plan. However, the team is not ready for that step yet and given the sheer number of science needs in the database, it has been difficult to connect the science needs to actual plans. Katheryn said a good first step might be asking members of this group from the indicators, SRS, and science needs teams to consider the three types of indicators (output, performance, and influencing factor) in the context of adaptive management when reviewing this action. Peter Tango said it would be good to have this conversation at a STAR meeting. Peter added that for some of the living resource outcomes, the influencing factors vary temporally (such as juvenile vs mature fish). Katheryn replied maybe the team can step into the SRS process earlier to have more in depth conversations around science needs. One example of how to implement this might be having dedicated representatives at workgroup meetings to bring up science needs when they are beginning the SRS process. Breck agreed and said STAR wants to work with STWG to ensure effort is not duplicated. Peter mentioned that between 2011 and 2014 when the watershed agreement was being developed, STAC or some other CBP entity spent a large meeting identifying influencing factors and relationships between outcomes. Peter suggested returning to this conversation to see what was developed previously.

Katheryn suggested one key question related to this topic is the relationship between STAC and STAR, which was something discussed in preparation for the biennial meeting but was ultimately left out. This has implications for STWG and influencing factor indicators. Katheryn said this relates to the role of STWG's core members, which she likened to steering committee members as the group thinks about its purpose. Katheryn said these meetings will continue to be open to the public, but structurally the STWG seems to function more as a steering committee that drives individual meetings with outcome team leads, subject matter experts, and data providers.

Doug asked if these ideas and plans sound reasonable for STWG. Katheryn asked core members to share their opinions. Susanna said it seems reasonable from her web team perspective, although she is not engaged in all parts of the workplan. Katheryn said the main considerations for the web team would be the magnitude of work for displaying influencing factors on ChesapeakeProgress. Susanna said this is helpful and the human

population example is helpful. Katheryn said giving the web team a heads up when indicators are being developed is a good best practice.

Katheryn said no June meeting will be held given today's discussion and instead of a full workgroup meeting in July, she will organize a meeting with STAR leadership to discuss coordination between science needs, SRS, and indicators. Katheryn will share an announcement with the full STWG workgroup about the plan for 2023 once she has shared today's conversation with Doreen, Rachel, Jake, and Kristen.

Katheryn asked Alex Fries about the UMCES report card release. Alex said the embargoed report card will be ready on May 25th so higher ups can prepare for the public release on June 6th at the Washington Sailing Marina in Alexandria. Katheryn said she spoke to Katie May about the monitoring efforts being led by UMCES and was wondering if there was overlap with CBP monitoring efforts in the data being used in report cards. Katheryn said she did not hear back from Katie May, and wanted to let Alex know they are still interested in collaborating. Alex said UMCES normally checks in with the CBP communications team before report card releases to make sure the messages are not completely opposite of one another, but she would be happy to have a more in depth conversation with Katheryn about this topic. Alex said all the data in the UMCES report cards are the same as CBP data – extra data is not collected for this effort. Alex said CBP employees are welcome to attend the report card release.

2:45 Adjourn

Participants: Alex Fries, Angie Wei, Breck Sullivan, Doug Bell, Emily O'Keefe, Jamileh Soueidan, Julie Reichert-Nguyen, Katheryn Barnhart, Peter Tango, Qian Zhang, Renee Thompson, Susanna Pretzer.