Chesapeake Bay Program

Watershed Technical Workgroup (WTWG)

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 5th, 2024
10:00 AM to 11:00 AM
Meeting Materials

Summary of Actions and Decisions

Action: If WTWG members have an objection to VA's proposed segmentation changes they should email Bill Keeling, VA DEQ (William.keeling@deq.virginia.gov).

Meeting Minutes

10:00 **Introductions and Announcements** – Cassie Davis, NYS DEC (10 min).

- *Please put your name and affiliation in the chat box for attendance purposes. Thank you!*
- **Decision requested:** Approval of August Meeting Minutes.

The approval of the August Meeting Minutes was postponed to the September meeting.

Discussion:

Bill Keeling: VA is considering asking the GIT to formally look at HUC-12 as the base river segmentation for Phase 7. We'd like to reach out to this group to see if there's any objection in the partnership to doing that and ask you to reach out to your colleagues within your jurisdictions to see if that would cause heartburn for anyone. If there is heartburn, it will result in a non consensus and no go, so before we go through all the effort of presenting and getting it through the GIT we'd like to know if there's any objection to the concept.

Cassie Davis: Thanks Bill, and that's as opposed to using the current Phase 6 Land River Segments?

Bill Keeling: Currently there's the Phase 6 River Segments, just the River Segments. Instead of using those, which are a holdover from Phase 5, we're suggesting using the HUC-12 as the River Segment and intersect those with the Land Segments to create the Land River Segments.

Olivia Devereux: Bill that totally makes sense to me, however I believe the Modeling Workgroup has already built the model using the NHD and what I've heard them state is that they will put the model out in CAST for Phase 7 at whatever scale people ask for. If you say HUC-12 they'll say 'sure not a problem' but they've already built it in NHD. The Modeling Workgroup reports to STAR, not the WTWG. Just throwing that out, not saying to do or not do something, but giving additional information to help with this discussion. They're going to respond and say that what you see in CAST is going to be whatever you ask for, but they've already built it in NHD.

Bill Keeling: At the catchment scale for CalCAST. What we had discussed, and Dave Montali had indicated, was that it was up to the GIT, not STAR or the Modeling Workgroup. What we're proposing is to put something forward at the GIT level that would direct the modeling team to use HUC-12.

Oliva Devereux: The other thing I've heard is that Bob Burkholder (sic) had requested for it to be in NHD for something to do with water withdrawals.
Bill Keeling: Yes, and James and I about three or four years ago brought up that that request was not made through the actual team, it was a hydrologic model request, not a watershed model request, as we had to clarify. I'm asking if there are objections within the partnership and not EPA's objections or the Modeling Team. To be honest, the schedule indicates that we would have clean GIS layers and line work two years ago and we still don't. It looks to VA that the segmentation is still open for discussion. If someone does have an objection, please email me. If there is an objection, it's a considerable effort to put all that together and try to push it through the GIT. If we'll be in a non-consensus situation, we'd like to know that before extending the effort.
Dave Montali: I'm not sure what exactly you mean by your request. Right now, we can manage at the HUC-12 level if we want. If we're modeling at finer scale to benefit better hydrology predictions at the NHD scale, those should roll up to HUC-12. We don't have the right input to argue this now, and I don't have a big objection personally unless it throws our schedule totally out the window, but I don't know enough to talk about it.
Jeremy Hanson: I missed the first couple minutes of Bill's comments, but it seems that this is the third option from VA regarding scale which Gary has already flagged for the GIT as a decision point in the coming months. My understanding is that in the first or second quarter of next year, the GIT does need to make a decision about scale and the watershed model tools. It sounds like the HUC-12 option is one that we will expand on as part of that decision if I'm following correctly.
Bill Keeling: Yeah, I'm basically saying let's do away with the Phase 6 River Segments and replace them with the HUC 12. Intersect those with the Land Segments to create new Land River Segments.
Jeremy Hanson: We'll definitely have that on the GIT calendar early next year, but I don't know exactly when off the top of my head. Thanks for flagging that option, Bill, and I hope the states get back to you.
Scott Heidel (in chat): PA supports the HUC-12 approach.
Olivia Devereux: Just a point of information for everyone, NHDs do not roll up to HUC 12, they're close most of the time but not always. I hate it when things don't roll up properly and those two scales don't which could be an issue and something for Bill to mention when he talks to the WQGIT.
Bill Keeling: The issue is that the current River Segments have even more conflicts with HUC 12 and the catchments than the HUC 12 has with the catchments. This reduces the linework needed to be done.
Olivia Devereux: It would reduce it but not eliminate if they're using NHD. I'm fully supportive since it reduces it.
Bill Keeling: You say they're using NHD but as far as I know there isn't a clean set of data that can have intersections done tin order to calculate what's needed to upscale and downscale. Until I see clean line work, I don't believe any of this is static yet.

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10:10 **Progress Schedule Update** – Auston Smith, EPA (5 min)

Auston provided an update on the Progress Schedule including items coming up over the next quarter and progress made by the review team so far.

10:15 **NEIEN Node Overview** – Olivia Devereux, Devereux Consulting (15 min)

Olivia shared information on an update made to the CAST NEIEN Portal and reports in response to the WQGIT's request for improved transparency in annual progress reporting. This included a live demo of the new report format.

Discussion:

Alicia Ritzenthaler (in chat): I'm looking forward to this new report format – Thanks!

Auston Smith (in chat): The alternate link to the one shown by Olivia to the 2024 Progress Schedule.

Bill Keeling: In the past, the errors were the first column instead of the last. Instead of having to scroll all the way to the right to see what's wrong. One of the primary reasons to have this is when we're trying to rectify errors in the process of uploading the data to NEIEN, I believe I asked in the past to have the errors listed first, not last. One of the nice things about the old format was that you had an error summary which you could look at to get a picture of just the errors, where this spreadsheet has a summary of everything.

Olivia Devereux: I will put in a ticket to the development team, if everyone else is in agreement to move all of that to the far left, those three columns, and that error summary should be in there. I think we just missed that one, it tells you the total number of errors. Thanks Bill for those two comments.

Dylan Burgevin: I've been working in test node right now and am noticing that the report I am getting looks different than that formal submission. Is there any way of getting more details in test node submissions, like the error reports I'm getting out, similar to what you were showing there, or is that impossible?

Olivia Devereux: I don't know, I will check. Maybe someone else on the call knows, but because we're not running it through CAST I don't think we're getting all those errors in the test node, it's just checking to see if the XML validates.

Cassie Davis: That's my understanding; it's just looking for initial XML errors. Sometimes I use a free XML checker on the website to make sure its feeding correctly. For the actual NEIEN and CAST errors I have to go through CAST. Its almost like there's two checks it has to go through and one is just to make sure your XML is functioning properly.

Olivia Devereux: So when I talked about the two emails you get if you put your email in the header, one is 'does it validate if its in the right format' and the other is where it actually gets run through CAST to get the errors. You need to see both, but the latter is what you're asking about.

Cassie Davis: I just want to say that every year the point source app gets easier to use, and its so much nicer than having that huge spreadsheet I used to have to submit. The fact that it can just read in DMR data is amazing.

Olivia Devereux: Yeah, and if you don't have changes and can just update that's awesome too.

10:30 **Data Dashboard Nutrients Applied and Crop Need Module –** Ruth Cassilly, UMD and Kaylyn Gootman, EPA (15 min)

Kaylyn and Ruth presented on the inclusion of a module in the Data Dashboard that displays detailed nutrients applied, crop need and application ratio data from CAST at the county level. The intent was to obtain feedback from workgroup members on draft module content and display.

Discussion:

Chris Brosch (in chat): Regarding Terminology, these tweaks are a big improvement for communicating the assumptions and modeled nutrient distribution. I am a bit concerned that the "expected application" is a non-BMP rate. I would consider alternatives to expected, like "default," "historic" or "baseline," or "estimated." Recommended is a good choice (BMP or LGU may be more on-the-nose). What was the process for coming up with this? Did the AMT get involved? To be more clear, *expected* seems dubious because an EPA tool expecting a high pollution loading rate is a poor message.

Bill Keeling: I do not see anyone using this for WIP planing in VA.

Ruth Cassilly: Regarding Chris' comments. I think basically some of the new definitions are improvements, but we'll take a second look at expected applications. That's the one we struggled the most over, so we really appreciate your input on that. In terms of the process of coming up with this terminology, the CAST team and AMT staff including Tom Butler, Gary Shenk, Jess Rigelman, and Joseph Delesantro all had discussions on this, which is where the terms came from, not the larger AMT group. We'll consider bringing this to them. We'll share the link to the current dashboard but this module isn't up yet.

Kaylyn Gootman: Link to the dashboard.

10:45 **Biosolids Data Call** – Emily Majcher, USGS (5 min)

Emily Majcher explained USGS efforts related to biosolids mapping in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and requested an update on county level data from Jurisdictions.

Discussion:

Bill Keeling (in chat): The idea that catchment scale modeling will improve things has to be viewed in light that the current scale has large uncertainty associated with it and taking that to even finer scale only increases that uncertainty it does not improve anything necessarily.

Emily Majcher (in chat): Feel free to use the Point Source App's biosolids template or email me directly.

Auston Smith: Would it be helpful if you had the datasets for biosolids sent directly to you? You're not planning to wait to see them in 2024 Progress, right?

Emily Majcher: Yes, any updates would be wonderful. Some of the states that have been

updating, we have data from 2023, so 2023 data would be great. Feel free to send them directly to me as well.

10:50 **Forest Harvesting Practices BMP Update** – Lorenzo Cinalli, USFS (5 min)

Lorenzo introduced a project from the Forestry Workgroup (FWG) looking at changing the efficiency rate and the credit duration of the Forest Harvesting Practices BMP.

Next Meeting: Thursday, October 3rd, 2024, from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM.

Participants

Alicia Ritzenthaler, DC DOEE
Ashley Hullinger, PA DEP
Auston Smith, EPA
Bailey Robertory, UMCES
Bill Keeling, VA DEQ
Caitlin Bolton, MWCOG
Carol Cain
Caroline Kleis, CRC
Cassie Davis, NYS DEC
Chris Brosch, DDA
Chris Thompson, LCCD
Christina Lyerly, MDE
Clint Gill, DDA
Dave Montali, Tetra Tech WV
Dylan Burgevin, MDE
Elizabeth Hoffman, MDA
Ellen Egen, Aqualaw
Emily Dekar, USC
Emily Majcher, USGS
Eric Hughes, EPA
Eugenia Hart, Tetra Tech
George Doumit, DE DNREC
Helen Golimowski, Devereux Consulting
Holly Walker, DE DNREC
Jackie Pickford, USGS
Jeff Sweeney, EPA
Jeremy Hanson, CRC
Joseph Schell, DE DNREC
Joshua Glace, Larson Design Group
Katie Brownson, USFS
Kaylyn Gootman, EPA
Lorenzo Cinalli, USFS
Lori Brown, DE DNREC
Mark Dubin, UMD
Matthew Kofroth, LCCD
Megan Thynge, EPA
Normand Goulet, NVRC
Olivia Devereux, Devereux Consulting
Pearl Ashitey, Jacobs
Ruth Cassilly, UMD
Samuel Canfield, WV DEP
Scott Heidel, PA DEP
Sushanth Gupta, CRC
Tyler Trostle, PA DEP

Acronym List

AMT: Agricultural Modeling Team
BMP: Best Management Practice
CAST: Chesapeake Assessment Scenario Tool
CBP: Chesapeake Bay Program
CRC: Chesapeake Research Consortium
DDA: Delaware Department of Agriculture
DEC: [NY State] Department of Environmental Conservation
DNREC: [DE] Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control
DOEE: [DC] Department of Energy and the Environment
DEP: [PA or WV] Department of Environmental Protection
DEQ: [VA] Department of Environmental Quality
EPA: [US] Environmental Protection Agency
GIT: Goal Implementation Team
HUC: Hydrologic Unit Code
LCCD: Lancaster County Conservation District
MDA: Maryland Department of Agriculture
MDE: Maryland Department of the Environment
MWCOG: Metropolitan Washington Council of

Governments
NEIEN: National Environmental Information Exchange Network
NHD: National Hydrography Dataset
NVRC: Northern Virginia Regional Commission
QAPP: Quality Assurance Project Plan
STAR: Scientific Technical Analysis and Reporting
UMCES: University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science
UMD: University of Maryland
USC: Upper Susquehanna Coalition
USFS: United States Forest Service
USGS: United States Geological Survey
WIP: Watershed Implementation Plan
WTWG: Watershed Technical Workgroup
XML: Extensible Markup Language