2015 Work Plan for the Chesapeake Bay Program Data Integrity Workgroup

Mission Statement: To provide professional direction and guidance on field and laboratory methods and QA/QC, resulting in accurate and comparable water quality and habitat monitoring data throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Purpose: Workgroup members are technical advisors to the monitoring and modeling workgroups of the Scientific, Technical Analysis and Reporting Team concerning field and analytical methodology and quality assurance issues related to collection, processing and assessment of water quality and habitat data. The Workgroup provides a forum for the exchange of technical information focused on the standardization and use of comparable methods for sampling, analyzing and reporting data for the Chesapeake Bay tidal and nontidal water quality monitoring programs. Laboratory members participate in the Coordinated Split Sample, Blind Audit and Reference Sample Programs, the results of which are used to evaluate the quality of the monitoring data and to identify areas for quality improvement.

Objectives:

- Ensure that state, federal and academic agencies adhere to established methods and quality assurance practices for Chesapeake Bay Water Quality Monitoring Programs; document deviations and significant changes that may affect the quality and application of the data.

- Participate in Coordinated Split Sample Program, blind audit and reference sample programs to demonstrate data accuracy; investigate potential analytical problems; determine corrective actions to resolve water quality data discrepancies; improve efficiency of data collection and reporting procedures; perform and review method comparability studies; and

- Explore new monitoring and laboratory technologies for water quality and habitat analyses; standardize field and laboratory techniques among agencies; prepare reports on the quality of nutrient, chlorophyll and sediment data.

2015 Priorities:

- Complete the document "Methods and Quality Assurance for Chesapeake Bay Water Quality Monitoring Programs" and publish on CBP website.

- Establish a peer-based field audit process for tidal and nontidal water quality sampling.

- Provide guidance to the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay in the development of the Chesapeake Bay watershed citizen science monitoring program.

- Expand non-traditional monitoring group (citizen/county government) participation in the Data Integrity Workgroup in order to enhance watershed monitoring coverage for assessing effectiveness of nutrient and sediment reduction strategies.

- Conduct quarterly reviews of results on inter-laboratory performance testing (CBP Coordinated Split Samples, Blind Audit samples and/or USGS Reference Samples).

- Evaluate impacts to laboratories, field programs and data quality from the CBP's Building and Sustaining Integrated Networks (BASIN) process.