



REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

NOVEMBER 29, 2005
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY,
WASHINGTON, DC

Executive Summary

Comprised of 21 members (six from each state and three from the District of Columbia), the Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC) is coordinated by the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay. We are pleased to report that we now have only two vacancies on the Committee, both in the District of Columbia, which we anticipate will be filled within the next few months.

Over the past year, LGAC traveled to different corners of the Bay watershed to learn about and discuss issues dealing with stormwater management, low impact development, sewage treatment plant upgrades, urban forestry, public education, and the financing of these activities.

As a result of these discussions, LGAC offers the following recommendations to the Bay Program:

- 1) Funding for Local Government Activities:** In many aspects, local governments are where “the rubber meets the road” in the implementation of the Bay’s Tributary Strategies. With over 1,650 local governments in the Bay’s watershed, capabilities vary tremendously in understanding the call to action in the Tributary Strategies and implementing effective programs and practices.

We encourage the Bay Program to accelerate funding for programs that support local, concrete action. We support continued funding of the Small Watershed Grants Program. Priority should be given to those projects that leverage these dollars with both public and private resources at the local level. We also ask that LGAC continue to be used as a review partner during the grant application process.

We also encourage the Bay Program to help local agencies sort through the complexity of existing financing mechanisms and provide guidance on how actions under the Tributary Strategies can be supported through creative financing strategies.
- 2) Chesapeake Bay Finance Authority:** As local officials with years of experience in the financing of local infrastructure projects, LGAC members again urge the Executive Council and Bay Program to consult with LGAC as these initiatives unfold. Please tap our expertise as decisions are made to prioritize needs and create an operating Finance Authority.
- 3) Chesapeake Bay Program Goals & Tributary Strategy Messages:** We believe there is confusion among local officials between the original 40 percent nutrient reduction goal and the assigned load reductions for nitrogen and phosphorus for each major tributary that were developed to support water quality conditions for living resources. We urge the

dissemination of goal statements targeted at local government that clearly explain the evolution of Bay Program goals.

Furthermore, we encourage the Bay Program to work with LGAC in clearly articulating the expectations for local government actions as embodied in the various Tributary Strategies. LGAC members and staff can assist in disseminating uniform messages about the Tributary Strategies as these blueprints for action are refined.

- 4) **Local Stormwater Management Programs:** Stormwater issues will only intensify as the Bay watershed becomes more urbanized. While there are local, state and federal programs in place to better manage stormwater, there are roles the Bay Program can play to ensure their success. We urge the Bay Program to support the transferability of tools and approaches that local partnerships have used successfully. Many local governments see the MS4 requirements (and possibly the tributary strategies) as yet another unfunded mandate. To the extent that the Bay Program can share models of successful partnerships and support quality training, we believe it would be a wise investment of Bay Program funds.
- 5) **Low Impact Development:** There is a lot to learn about low impact development and many different audiences to reach at the local government level -- engineers, elected officials, planning commissions, etc. These audiences need to be comfortable with what low impact development promises, and that's where the Bay Program can help. Through its interstate network and powerful website, the Bay Program can facilitate the delivery of lessons learned across state lines and provide technical assistance to smaller communities where resources are limited. The communication and outreach needs related to low impact development are immense and yet we believe there are ways to effectively package this information to reach local governments struggling with decisions to implement new technologies.

Over the past year, LGAC strived to improve its role in facilitating effective two-way communication between the Bay Program and local governments in the watershed. We launched the Peer Match Program, improved the Bay LOGIN website, reinstated the LGAC newsletter, continued the Bay Partner Community Award Program, and participated in several local government conferences throughout the watershed.

We look forward to building on these initiatives in 2006 and playing an active role in being the voice for local governments in the Chesapeake Bay Program.

Local Government Advisory Committee Membership

Russell Pettyjohn, Chair Mayor of Litz Borough	Marilyn Praisner, Vice Chair Montgomery County Council	Gerald W. Hyland, Vice Chair Fairfax County Supervisor
Kenneth J. Wingo, Jr. Potter County Commissioner	Ellen Moyer Mayor of Annapolis	Paul Fisher, Executive Director Richmond Regional Planning Commission
Charles Smithgall Mayor, City of Lancaster	Phyllis Kilby Cecil County Commissioner	Penelope Gross Fairfax County Supervisor
A. Carville Foster Springfield Twp. Supervisor	Effie M. Elzey Dorchester County Council	William H. Whitley Gloucester Co. Administrator
Ann Simonetti Marysville Borough Council	Kelly Porter Seat Pleasant City Council	Sally Thomas Albemarle County Supervisor
Carol Simpson Manheim Twp Commissioner	Robert C. Willey Mayor of Easton	Kandy A. Hilliard Stafford County Supervisor
Sheila Besse, Dept. of Health Bureau of Environmental Quality Washington, DC		

The 2005 LGAC Annual Report includes the following:

- LGAC Meetings and Recommendations to the Bay Program
- Summary of recent LGAC activities

LGAC Meetings and Recommendations to the Bay Program

LGAC members traveled throughout the Bay watershed to discuss important issues at the following locations:

- March 2005 – Washington, DC
- June 2005 – State College, PA
- September 2005 – Fredericksburg, VA
- December 2005 – Annapolis, MD

During these meetings, LGAC members gained insight and provided feedback to Bay Program representatives on urban forestry initiatives, urban stormwater management, changing Chesapeake Bay restoration indicators, the Chesapeake Club Mass Media Campaign, and Tributary Strategies. LGAC also helped the Bay Program conduct a focus group as part of a study to evaluate and redesign the Bay Program's website and electronic communication strategy.

Below is a summary of actions taken and recommendations made as a result of these meetings.

Funding for Local Government Activities Assistance to Small Watershed Grants Program

In many aspects, local governments are where “the rubber meets the road” in the implementation of the Bay's Tributary Strategies. Responsibilities for waste water management, stormwater management, land conservation and development, stream buffer management, and wetlands conservation fall at the feet of local governments. With over 1,650 local governments in the Bay's watershed, capabilities vary tremendously in first understanding the call to action in the Tributary Strategies and subsequently adopting effective programs and practices.

We encourage the Bay Program to accelerate funding for programs that support local, concrete action. Last winter, three LGAC members (Marilyn Praisner, MD; Russell Pettyjohn, PA; and Penny Gross, VA) provided assistance to the review of Small Watershed Grant applications at the request of the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation. Each reviewed up to 50 applicants for each state. Because local governments are often the recipients or partners in small watershed grant projects, we encourage the Bay Program to continue using LGAC as a review partner and to continue providing funds to local governments that leverage these funds with local resources.

We also encourage the Bay Program to help local agencies sort through the complexity of existing financing mechanisms and provide guidance on how actions under the Tributary Strategies can be supported through creative financing strategies.

Misunderstanding of the 2000 Bay Agreement Goals & Tributary Strategies

LGAC urges the Bay Program to provide clarity to local governments on the goals of the Chesapeake 2000 Agreement, especially as it relates to water quality and nutrient reduction. We believe there is confusion among local officials between the original 40 percent reduction goal and the assigned load reductions for nitrogen and phosphorus for each major tributary that were developed to support water quality conditions for living resources. LGAC can help communicate clearer messages that target local governments in understanding the evolving goals.

Furthermore, we encourage the Bay Program to work with LGAC in articulating the expectations for local government actions as embodied in the various Tributary Strategies. Through the communication vehicles that LGAC administers (Bay LOGIN, newsletter, attendance at local government conventions, etc.), our members and staff can assist in disseminating uniform messages about the Tributary Strategies as they are refined.

Blue Ribbon Panel: Finance Authority Task Force

We understand that recommendations are being made to further examine approaches for the regional financing effort, building on the work of the Chesapeake Bay Financing Authority Committee. LGAC is honored to have a member from this Finance Authority Committee, Penny Gross, Fairfax County Supervisor, as one of its own members, who have benefited from Supervisor Gross's first-hand knowledge of the Finance Authority Committee's investigations.

We also understand that, in the meantime, a voluntary Watershed Assistance Network has been created to support today's financing needs without any changes in legislation, and that a series of top spending priorities, based largely on cost-effectiveness, has been developed.

As local officials with years of experience in the financing of local infrastructure projects, LGAC members again urge the Executive Council and Bay Program to consult with LGAC as these initiatives unfold. Please tap our expertise as decisions are made to prioritize needs and create an operating Financing Authority.

Chesapeake Club

LGAC members were highly impressed with the quality of the Chesapeake Club mass media campaign and encourage financial support for the expansion of this program to other parts of the Bay watershed. LGAC would welcome the opportunity to provide input on message development that will target areas upstream, particularly those regions far removed from the Bay itself.

Stormwater Management & Low Impact Development

As the watershed continues to develop, the impact of stormwater runoff will have ever growing consequences for the stability of local stream channels, groundwater supplies, and downstream watershed health. In 2005, LGAC spent considerable time listening to local concerns and needs with regard to the demands on local government to meet these challenges. Below is a series of recommendations.

As the Chesapeake Bay Program considers ways to reduce the impact of urban stormwater as called for in the various tributary strategies, the Local Government Advisory Committee

urges the Bay Program to support the transferability of tools and approaches that local partnerships have used successfully.

During the June 2005 LGAC meeting, we heard from a panel of local partners who impressed the Committee with their ability to work together to meet new challenges in stormwater regulation and education. The Centre County Council of Governments, the Clearwater Conservancy (a local watershed organization), and Penn State University have collaborated in a unique way to meet these challenges. Following that meeting, the LGAC offered suggestions for consideration by the Bay Program in its development of the *Urban Stormwater Strategy* under the Executive Council's Directive 04-2.

Specifically, LGAC members were impressed with 1) the use of a watershed/land trust organization for stormwater education & outreach that collectively reaches a wider audience, 2) the collaboration of 14 separate municipalities to address stormwater issues through a local watershed commission (made up of elected officials), and 3) the cooperation between a land grant university and its surrounding local governments related to establishing sound scientific research on the local applicability of stormwater techniques. **We urge the development of a model for local stormwater partnerships.**

Secondly, we understand that the urban stormwater summit resulted in a recommendation for additional education and capacity building for local programs. We therefore encourage the Bay Program to support gaps in stormwater education and training. Many local governments see the MS4 requirements (and possibly the tributary strategies) as yet another unfunded mandate. **To the extent that the Bay Program can help fill these gaps and support quality training and program support, we believe it would be a wise investment of Bay Program funds.**

At our September LGAC meeting, a focus group suggested many constructive ideas to improve the knowledge base of innovative stormwater and low impact development practices:

Website and Electronic Communication:

- 1) Clearinghouse on techniques and lessons learned in low impact development (important to include what failed and why)
- 2) forum – chat room or forum on stormwater issues
- 3) target local governments with few or no technical staff – communicate resources available to help them develop effective stormwater programs

Messages:

- 1) Generate stronger connection between specific stormwater controls and sub-watershed health – important to stress watershed perspective and cumulative impact of site by site stormwater measures
- 2) Need for more homeowner education for stormwater techniques on private lots

New partnerships:

- 1) involve American Planning Association and state chapters in assessing ordinances and best management practices
- 2) facilitate regional meetings of planning directors, engineers and planning commissioners

We urge the Bay Program to consider incorporating these recommendations through its Stormwater Workgroup activities.

Recent LGAC Activities

Bay Partner Community Award Program Provides Recognition and Foundation for Tapping Local Expertise

Local governments appreciate the opportunity to be recognized for their local efforts in water and land management. During 2005, LGAC took strategic advantage of the Bay Partner Community Award Program, which has recognized 72 local governments (cities, townships, boroughs and counties) since the program's inception in 1997.

First, we used the information provided by applicants to populate the Bay LOGIN website's *Local Innovations* page, which was designed to purposely mirror the benchmarks evaluated under the Bay Partner Award program.

Second, we use Partner Award communities as mentors in our new Peer Match program (see below).

Third, we offered for the first time a \$1,000 mini-grant to the first ten applicants as encouragement to apply for status as a Bay Partner Community. Though modest in amount, these grants are being used to help plant a riparian buffer park in Chester County, PA; purchase watershed boundary signs in Clarke County, VA; and create an urban park that's completely free of chemical pesticides in the City of Lancaster, PA. Smaller communities, in particular, appreciate these grants to support on-the-ground projects and educational initiatives.

Peer Match Program

In 2005, LGAC launched a new Peer Match Program designed to stimulate change by connecting Gold and Silver level Bay Partner Communities with local governments that are striving to improve their land and water management activities. One-day visits to mentoring communities involve facilitated discussion of specific needs, barriers, and recommended actions and a tour of local sites that demonstrate innovative programs or policies. Last spring, two Gold communities -- Annapolis, MD and Harris Township, PA -- hosted Peer Match visits involving Plymouth and Lancaster townships, PA and Aberdeen, MD. Additional visits are planned for this winter. The program is a simple, cost-effective approach to providing technical and program assistance to local governments. In addition, it takes advantage of the local expertise that we learn about through the Bay Partner Community Award program.

Bay LOGIN

We are excited to report that our electronic communication vehicle -- Bay LOGIN -- has new and improved content and search capabilities. Through the website www.baylogin.org, subscribers can now:

- 1) apply to be a Bay Partner Community;
- 2) search a database for examples of local government innovations in water quality, living resources and habitat, sound land use, and community engagement;
- 3) answer a quick survey question on issues related to local government's involvement in the Bay's recovery;
- 4) apply to participate in the Peer Match Program;
- 5) subscribe to receive regular Bay LOGIN newsflashes; and

- 6) link to the Bay Program website for information on the *Chesapeake 2000* Agreement and other issues

LGAC continues to invest time in improving this site and is anxious to promote the site among local governments in the coming year.

Print Media: Chesapeake Channels Newsletter & Targeted Articles

LGAC recognizes the need to reach local government audiences outside of electronic communication media. In 2005, we re-instituted the LGAC newsletter *Chesapeake Channels*, a quick-and-easy, two-page newsletter that is mailed quarterly to over 2,200 local governments in the watershed.

We also prepared articles targeting local government publications in an effort to educate local officials about the jurisdictions' tributary strategies and how local governments can take specific action to help implement the strategies.

Outreach at Local Government Conferences

LGAC believes it's imperative to carry the Bay Program messages to the places where local government officials gather to learn and discuss issues. In 2005, LGAC staff manned the new LGAC table-top exhibit and print materials at the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors (PSATS) convention in April, Maryland Municipal League conference in June, and the Maryland Association of Counties in August. A workshop presentation was also made at the PSATS convention. Efforts will be made to be part of the Virginia Municipal League conference next fall.

Activities in the Coming Year

The coming year will require many local governments to undertake fundamental changes in the management of sewage and stormwater. LGAC will strive to foster effective communication between the Bay Program and local governments on matters related to financial opportunities, technological advancements, and education and outreach for these key areas.

Through Bay LOGIN, Bay Partner Awards Program and Peer Match Program, we will continue to get the word out about effective technologies and programs and facilitate the sharing of local expertise. In 2006, staff will work to aggressively promote these tools and services to a wider audience of local government officials.

We recently reevaluated LGAC activities as they relate to the 2002 *Local Government Participation Action Plan* and will be working with the Bay Program to revisit action items that warrant additional attention.