



Meeting Minutes Maintain Healthy Watersheds Goal Implementation Team

November 18th, 2016 10:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.
DEP Regional Office, Susquehanna Room A
909 Elmerton Ave, Harrisburg, PA 17110

Meeting Participants

Mark Bryer (TNC), *Chair*
Renee Thompson (USGS), *Coordinator*
Katherine Wares (CRC), *Staff*
Lee Epstein (CBF)
Jennifer Miller Herzog (Land Trust Alliance)
Barbara Lathrop (PA DEP)
Kristin Saunders (UMCES)
Su Ann Shup (PA DCNR)
Gina Hunt (MD DNR, CBP Fish Habitat Conservation Coordinator)
Tanya Dierolf (Capitol Region Water, Harrisburg PA)
Anne Hairston-Strang (MD DNR)
Angel Valdez (MDE)
Todd Janeski (VA DCR)
Greg Evans (VA DOF)
Sally Claggett (USFS)
Marian Norris (NPS)
Dan Murphy (USFWS)
Rachel Dixon (CRC)
Steve Epting (EPA Healthy Watersheds Program)

Action and Decision Items

- Review previous local engagement work and see if there are any potential STAC workshop suggestions – Renee and Katherine
- Locate TNC energy build out analysis and obtain any GIS data layers available – Renee and Katherine (with the help of Mark)
- Add a section on GIT funding projects with links to the HWGIT homepage – Katherine
- Obtain “Crediting Attenuation” report from Sally Claggett – Katherine
- Discuss the idea of tracking healthy watersheds through a networked system of universities with Bill Ball and Bill Denison – Renee and Katherine
- Reach out to states in February 2017 regarding assessing, tracking, and reporting healthy watersheds – Renee and Katherine
- Prepare a presentation and information to report at the Biennial SRS to share with the MB the great work being done as well as alert them to any capacity gaps, needs, or issues related to progress toward our goal – Renee and Katherine
- Brainstorm how to involve local governments and groups more at the CBP; reach out to other GITs and Mary Gattis for assistance in local engagement – Renee and Katherine
- Contact North Atlantic LCC about presenting Resource Conservation Opportunity Area (RCOA) maps and how they address climate resiliency for a future HWGIT meeting presentation – Renee and Katherine
- Explore options of working with CBC and USACE as part of Key Action 1

- Work with the GIS, web, and communications teams to determine how to share Story Maps more effectively and with a broader audience – Renee and Katherine

Minutes

Welcome and Introductions

Mark Bryer welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed participants.

Updates

Renee provided an update of work that has been done since the last meeting. The slides can be viewed [here](#). The MHWGIT welcomed new staffer, Katherine Wares. Members took a moment to remember late MHWGIT member, Wink Hastings and all the great work he accomplished.

On July 20th, Renee Thompson and Angel Valdez presented to the Integrated Monitoring Network workgroup on Healthy Watershed outcomes and monitoring needs. The presentations can be found on the Chesapeake Bay Program [website](#). The workgroup coordinator, Peter Tango provided Renee with feedback for how to potentially move forward. His assessment indicated that we know the areas deemed as “healthy” and we have individual jurisdictional definitions of health. What we need is the following: 1) a data collection and reporting commitment; 2) a definition of failure (no longer healthy) and 3) a tracking regime. This additional capacity from this STAR workgroup could help with coordination of data availability, defining failure and potentially working toward an indicator related to reporting on whether we have been able to sustain 100% of the healthy watersheds.

Questions and Comments

- Lee asked what the schedule or timeline for developing tracking tools and the next version of the healthy watershed map is. Renee responded that the timeline is flexible and not established, but we are using our two year work plans as a benchmark; there is a disconnect between our current healthy watersheds map and the next steps of determining whether we’ve sustained these watersheds. In addition some of our jurisdictions are continually monitoring and updating the watersheds meeting their state baselines for healthy. It was previously agreed that while we can add new healthy watersheds, we will not be removing them from the map, but a timeline for updates has not been established.

On November 3rd, the Communications workgroup had each GIT present communication products and needs related to GIT funding. The key theme of our communication needs focuses on how best to package and present the products related to best practices, summary reports, datasets and toolkits to our key local government and on the ground practitioners. Most of these products are specifically focused on reducing the rate of conversion farmland, forest and wetlands to development as well as incentivizing forestland conservation. The Communication workgroup can provide assistance and additional capacity related to packaging products/tools from GIT funding projects (brochures, datasets, toolboxes, etc.) and gets them out to the correct audience (land use planners, watershed groups, etc.). There is a need to coordinate with other Goal Teams namely LGAC and the Habitat GIT to make sure we are not duplicating efforts and to potentially create a shared or combined product for dissemination of the communication products.

Questions and Comments

- Mark commented that there is a gap in local engagement efforts; the roll of local government groups should be highlighted; we should look at how to involve local groups more at the CBP.
- Renee suggested that cross GIT efforts and Mary Gattis could assist in helping us reach this audience.
- Kristin commented that there are two ongoing projects that are working to reach local government officials and planners. (1) The Local Government Engagement Initiative is working

to inform local governments about the Midpoint Assessment and enhance local government engagement in the development and implementation of the Phase III WIPs (2) The Local leadership workgroup and Ecologix are working on a GIT funding project that analyzes how elected officials and planners learn issues and make decisions in order to understand their needs and how to best provide them with useful information.

The Bay Barometer is an annual publication and update on Chesapeake Bay indicators. The Communications team drafted two options for the Healthy Watersheds section; however, these options do not properly highlight current efforts or work that has been done regarding healthy watersheds. If members have better ideas or would like to highlight relevant work being done by their organization, email Katherine with a 1-2 paragraph blurb detailing your idea or project. Note: Thanks to members from VA and DC we were able to come up with a more appropriate content for the Bay Barometer.

With focus on being more strategic and effective, the Cross GIT Mapping Project takes a few important data layers from each GIT to map geographic areas that benefit multiple CBPO outcomes. Protected Lands and State identified Healthy Watersheds were the two data layers submitted by the MHWGIT. Currently, the GIS team is categorizing the data layers into two topics: conservation and restoration, and are putting 3 or 4 data layers from each topic into a map to see where the data overlaps. These maps will be used as initial conversation pieces for potential projects and areas that would benefit several GITs and enhance effectiveness. Early stages of these maps will be presenting these to GIT chairs on November 29th.

Questions and Comments

- Kristin commented that these layers will be used by the ACOE and NFWF in future work which assures that all several organizations and funding sources are working in similar places.
- Mark noted identifying places that we all find important will better connect people with these places and show the public why it is important to protect these places.
- Jenn asked how finely can this be scaled/what is the resolution limitation. It was answered that it depends on the data layers being used for analysis, however the resolution for most data layers is very fine and can focus in on project specific locations.
- Lee asked how vulnerability and protection are determined. Renee responded protection is the protected lands layer, and sea level rise, flood level risk, development pressure, and PCB impairments are layers being discussed as vulnerability indicators, but as data layers become available or are identified they can be updated or incorporated. It was also suggested that local zoning could be used as a tool for vulnerability. It was also suggested that we investigate the recent TNC energy build out analysis. Hydrologic response and change in flow would be a good area of investigation.

Renee gave brief overview of meetings that have occurred lately at CBP. At the November CAC meeting climate change was a major topic. Renee suggested the MHWGIT start to think about climate and how it relates to maintaining healthy watersheds. The Climate Resiliency workgroup has met with a few GITs and workgroups that have been interested in addressing climate related issues. Mark asked the group if climate change is something they are interested in or have started to consider.

Questions and Comments

- Steve commented that climate change is something the EPA Healthy Watersheds program has considered from an assessment standpoint. They are working with partners to developing a data layer that projects climate change indicators at the HUC12 scale. Hydrofutures.
- Dan commented that Resource Conservation Opportunity Area (RCOA) maps developed by the North Atlantic LCC take into account resiliency to climate change and that this could be a good potential presentation for the next meeting. Kristin suggested utilizing Phase III WIPs as a time and opportunity to develop climate change indicators related to healthy watersheds.

The Biennial Strategy Review System (SRS), developed by GIT 6 is a schedule of quarterly progress sessions organized to foster integrate outcome discussions. A draft was presented at the November Management Board meeting, which shows Healthy Watersheds as the first session in February 2017. The MHWGIT will need to have a presentation and information to report. This would be a great opportunity to share with the MB the great work being done as well as alert them to any capacity gaps, needs or issues related to progress toward our goal.

STAC Workshops

STAC is the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee, which offers funding and assistance for workshops. These workshops are a great resource available to the GITs that could address a variety of topics and gaps. RFPs for workshops during 2017 are due December 14th, 2016 and proposals are due January 25th, 2017. Renee asked the group if a STAC workshop is something they think could be beneficial and if anyone had any topics in mind.

Questions and Comments

- Greg commented that the proposed idea: developing vulnerability information (utilize sea level rise assessments, incorporate energy development trends, incorporate resiliency study, incorporate resource conservation opportunity areas) aligned interest of the CAC so it could be a good topic for a workshop.
- Gina commented that outreach and conveying the local economic benefits of healthy watersheds to local governments could be a helpful topic.
- Anne suggested addressing green infrastructure. With potential new investments in roads and other infrastructure, there is an opportunity to leverage mitigation dollars associated with large infrastructure projects. Being prepared to work with State and Federal DOT to guide and influence restoration and protection projects would be a proactive approach. In addition, many of these projects take place in urban areas so they have the potential to impact a large number of people.
- Kristin commented that having a workshop with another GIT or that addresses needs across the GITs could be useful for the next round of GIT funding.
- It was also suggested to go back through the local engagement work done previously and determine if there were any needs identified that may be appropriate for a STAC workshop.
- The group settled on ecosystem service values and local engagement with a potential link to climate change and green infrastructure as a possible topic for a workshop.

Discussion: Summary of Past/Current GIT Funding

Renee reviewed current and past [GIT funding projects](#). Renee reviewed the 2014, '15 and '16 GIT funding projects and also provided a summary that grouped the projects with management strategy themes, in order to highlight what actions and topics have not yet been addressed.

Questions and Comments

- Mark suggested having a link to each GIT funding project on the HWGIT webpage.
- Mark asked when UMD Center for Smart Growth could present their findings on the Land Use Evaluation project to the GIT. Renee responded that they should be ready to report in early spring.
- A potential phase II land use project was also discussed where we would want to expand on not only identifying the best tools, practices and policies related to reducing the rate of conversion to development but also which ones have been most effective. For example how have TDR programs worked? Have they reduced conversion? What is the proof of this? Evidence based approach would be utilized to see which programs and policies have been most effective over a 10 year time period for example. A statistical analysis including a regression model correlating strong and weak variables could be one approach as well.
- Greg commented that local officials have been asked for Phase III of the forestland retention project, where localities could implement and tests land use policies to see which are effective.

Su Ann commented that a lot of local officials want to see implementation of the project in their locality and are concerned about long-term involvement of this project. It was stressed however, that this would need to be a local leader to be the lead for a phase III project. There is a need to take this project to a “boots on the ground approach”. Reaching out to existing clubs and relying on local leaders to pull together and engage local stakeholders is a necessary component.

- EPA Healthy Watersheds program has engaged in some of this kind of outreach work. They noted that groups like the Land Trust Alliance, the Chesapeake Land and Water alliance and other small watershed groups would be good allies in making the case for forestland retention.
- It was discussed that multiple years/phases of a project could be very beneficial in order to accomplish the goal of the project.
- Grassroots and outreach are important to keep projects going and ensure long term implementation; meeting with local organizations like the rotary club or garden club that involve citizens could be additional phases or components of projects.
- STAC, STAR, and GIT funding are all resources that can help fill gaps; determining which resource will best address each issue is important.
- Determining whether healthy watersheds are being sustained is a challenge for state and local governments; this gap is an important issue. Kristin suggested citizen monitoring as a potential solution and having a co-proposal with STAR or the Citizen Stewardship Team. In Maryland, schoolshed programs are used for monitoring efforts. Lee suggested creating a networked system of universities where science students could go into the field and monitor the watersheds assigned to their college. This idea will be discussed with Bill Ball and Bill Denison. A system of participating universities and colleges with a good coverage of key watersheds would help supplement current efforts.
- Summary of ideas for potential future GIT funding projects: determining most effective tools for reducing land use conversion, phase III of the forest restoration project, and a university network of healthy watershed monitoring.

Presentation: DeHart Watershed Conservation

Tanya Dierolf, Water Sustainability Manager at Capital Region Water (CRW) gave a review of the DeHart Watershed Conservation project. CRW is a municipal authority that provides the city of Harrisburg and surrounding townships with drinking water. Clark Creek is a high quality water that feeds into DeHart Reservoir, the primary water source. CRW was approached by to purchase 384 acres using Army Compatible Use Buffer funds through Fort Indiantown Gap, a military training installation adjacent to the property that is interested in limited light pollution. CRW decided to retain ownership of the property instead of selling to Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC), but has allowed hunting and hiking through PGC on the property. After conducting a cost-benefit analysis of several management approaches (do nothing, deed restriction, sale, and conservation easement), they decided to put the DeHart Watershed Property into conservation easement due to maximized environmental and economic returns. CRW partnered with The Nature Conservancy's Working Woodlands Program and the Ward Burton Wildlife Foundation to put 3,900 acres into easement and are hoping to have the entire 8,200 acres in easement within the next few years. CRW is managing the property as if its entirety is in easement; they have put 150ft-300ft riparian buffers around all water resources, have drafted a forest stewardship plan, and are developing a carbon market plan.

Questions and Comments:

- Tanya asked the group if this 8,200 acre property could be counted as protected land and included in reaching CBP goals. Renee will reach out to obtain a shapefile for incorporation into the protected lands database. We also would want to connect them with the contact who compiles the National Conservation Easement Database.
- Mark asked about challenges CRW faced with messaging and conveying their efforts and source water information to the public. Tanya responded that some people are not happy that the reservoir is not open to the public and that many think the Susquehanna is their source of

water. CRW held hearings and did surveys during their work, and they have a source river program and provide tours of the DeHart property. They are also trying to create awareness and show the connection between septic tanks and water quality to the public.

- Jenn asked if the public had a negative perception of CRW's collaborative work with TNC, Ward Burton Wildlife Foundation, and Fort Indiantown Gap.

Presentation: Story Maps

Katherine gave a presentation on story maps that she has made based on past HWGIT meeting presentations. The group thought that story maps could be a great resource for presenting information. Katherine will continue to work on these in her free time and will work with John Wolf, the GIS team lead as well as the web/communications team to determine how to share this information for a broader audience. There are other story maps being developed for some other topics at the CBP, so we may want to collaborate with others to create a story map landing webpage.

Shared Goal Team Action Items

During the May 2016 meeting, six key action items were identified as near term (2016) workplan priorities. Renee and Mark provided an update on the status of each action item.

Key Action 1: "Engage with federal agencies other than EPA (such as FERC and DOT) to leverage opportunities within those agencies so that they can set the stage for state and local governments to further healthy watershed protection"

Lee and Greg met with the EPA at the CBPO to discuss the involvement of other federal agencies but did not receive much interest. The comment was made the green infrastructure would become a topic of interest for federal agencies with the incoming administration and focus on infrastructure development. By working in this realm there is an opportunity to direct acres for reforestation for offset and mitigation to areas that have a greater benefit, thereby avoiding small project mitigation. There is also an example in Region 8 where USFWS and FERC are working together in Ohio. The comment was also made about trying to work with USACE and that the Comprehensive Plan opens the door for more opportunity. The Chesapeake Bay Commission is always looking for opportunities to influence policy so working with them could be an option.

Key action 2: "Assess protected status of healthy watersheds"

The group brainstormed ideas on assessing, tracking, and reporting healthy watersheds which has been a challenge. It was noted that definitions for "protected" lands and "healthy" watersheds differ so there are going to be different ways of assessing. It was suggested to pair protection assessment with vulnerable areas to determine areas of focus. The question of schedule and timeline was posed. It was suggested to talk with states and aim for February 2017, during the SRS quarterly progress session. A potential framework for beginning to address this issue includes creating a baseline to assess how well we are protecting and sustaining the healthy watersheds. That baseline should include: status, current protection and vulnerability.

Key Action 3: "Continue meeting 2-4 times a year and at meetings continue hosting Case Study presentations related to healthy watershed protection/tracking"

The group felt this action had been worked on. The comment was made that the GIT should work to ensure that meetings are being held in the most useful and productive manner and work more with GIT 6.

Key Action 4: "Continue to work with the Chesapeake Bay Program and partners to quantify and incorporate conservation practices into the Chesapeake watershed modeling efforts and to explore how land use protections might be used to quantify future pollutant load reduction incentives for land conservation"

Partners are working on how to incorporate conservation practices into modeling efforts and quantify future land use and how protection can serve as an offset for future growth and thereby serve as an

incentive for TMDL crediting. People are thinking about this in regards to future growth offsets and incentives and metrics on growth trends/patterns. Kristin commented there is a spirit to find a solution to this and an open-mindedness of going to a 2025 future land use baseline. Sally commented that the Forestry workgroup is working on crediting conservation and created a paper "Crediting Attenuation" which she can share with the group.

Key Action 5: "Work collectively to improve outreach strategies, and better get the word out across multiple Management Strategies to determine the best approaches and methods for reaching key stakeholders"

It is being accomplished through working with the Communication workgroup, GIT funding projects, and the Cross-GIT Mapping project.

Key Action 6:

"Provide messages and resources to CBP Communications Staff"

Greg commented that in addition to providing messages and resources to localities, we need to better understand their needs and take them into account, and that we need to think of ways to connect with others and find commonalities like economics, and make sure that our colleagues do the same.

Meeting Adjourned