Chesapeake Bay Program
Program Update
April, 2014

CBPO Calendar

Wednesdays 1:00-3:00 Issues Resolution Committee Calls
Wednesdays 3:00-4:00 Executive Council Planning Meetings

Apr 13-14	Principles Staff Committee Retreat
Apr 15	Shad Abundance indicator data release
Apr TBD	2014 EO Action Plan/2013 Progress Report final
May 15	Management Board meeting (Annapolis)
May 15-16	CAC Quarterly Meeting (TBD)
Jun 3-4	Choose Clean Water conf (Staunton, Va.)
Jun 5-6	LGAC meeting (TBD

Program Updates

2013 Chesapeake Bay Program Report to Congress

On March 27, EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy signed the transmittal letters to Vice President Biden and Speaker Boehner, presenting the 2013 Chesapeake Bay Program Report to Congress. The report was developed in accordance with the requirements of Section 117(h) of the Clean Water Act and is required every 5 years. It includes: the status and trends of the Bay ecosystem; the effectiveness of CBP in implementing management strategies; and recommendations for improved management through development of a new Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement. The report will be distributed to the CBP Principals' Staff Committee and CBP Management Board, and is expected to be posted to the CBP partnership website (www.chesapeakebay.net) with an accompanying blog post on April 9.
Contact: Tom Wenz, (410) 295-1360, wenz.tom@epa.gov

Proposed Rule Clarifies Clean Water Act Protections for Seasonal Streams

After almost a decade of confusion about just what waters the Clean Water Act protects, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have clarified that most seasonal and rain-dependent streams are guarded under the law. While these streams might only flow during certain times of year or following a rainstorm, they are connected to downstream waters that offer habitat to wildlife and drinking water to communities.

The federal agencies' proposed rule also protects wetlands near rivers and streams. But it does not expand the scope of the Clean Water Act, and it preserves existing exemptions for building irrigation ponds, maintaining drainage ditches and other agricultural activities. In other words, protection for ponds, lakes and other "stand-alone" waters will be determined on a case-specific basis, and those agricultural activities that do not send pollutants into protected waters will still not require a permit.
For more information: http://www2.epa.gov/uswaters

EO 13508 FY13 Progress Report and FY14 Action Plan agency review

On March 31, the draft FY13 Progress Report and FY14 Action Plan public comment period ended with 7 public comments. Comments are being reviewed by the Federal Office Directors and edits to the reports considered. The reports were previously presented to the CBP and reviewed by OMB/CEQ. The final reports are scheduled to be published in April.

The FY13 Progress Report highlights efforts toward reaching the federal milestones set out in the FY13 Action Plan in support of the Executive Order for Bay restoration. The FY14 Action Plan outlines next steps to be taken by Federal agencies in support of the Executive Order for Bay restoration, including outlining the federal two-year Milestones for 2014-2015.

Contact: James Edward, (410) 267-5700, edward.james@epa.gov

Advisory Committee Updates

Citizens Advisory Committee

The Citizens Advisory Committee is working on a letter to the President to express concern for the planned termination of the NOAA B-Wet funding in FY 2015. They want to express the importance and success of the program in helping to meet environmental education goals. Since 2002 when Congress established the BWET Program, the program has proved to be a tremendous success enabling State and local education and natural resource agencies and their non-profit partners to provide K-12 environmental and outdoor experiential education opportunities to 423,000 students and training for more than 15,000 teachers. An average of $2.5 million annually for the program has leveraged more than $18 million in matching support. The next CAC meeting will be in Richmond, VA on May 15-16."

Contact: Jessica Blackburn, jblackburn@allianceforthebay.org

Local Government Advisory Committee

At their March 2014 meeting, LGAC members elected Sheila Noll (Supervisor, York County, VA) to serve as Chair in 2014. Sheila replaces Rick Gray (Mayor, City of Lancaster, PA) who served the maximum two terms as Chair. The following were elected as Vice Chairs by their respective jurisdiction delegates: Rosemary Wilson (Virginia Beach, VA); Sheila Finlayson (Annapolis, MD); John Thomas (Hampden Township, PA); and Diane Davis (District of Columbia).

LGAC's next meeting will be held in south-central Pennsylvania on June 5-6, 2014.

Contact: Mary Gattis, mgattis@allienceforthebay.org

Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee

STAC will hold its first quarterly meeting of FY 2014 on June 17-18, 2014 at an undetermined location in Annapolis, Maryland. If you plan on attending this meeting, please send your RSVP to Matt Ellis at ellism@si.edu.

STAC recently held a workshop in March 2014. The workshop is described in detail below:

1) *Enhancing Approaches to Explain Management Effects on Water Quality Trends* - This workshop took place on March 25-26, 2014 at the Westin Hotel in Annapolis, Maryland. The workshop investigated connections between trends in human activities (including management actions in the watershed), watershed loads, and estuarine water quality and living resources. The purpose of the workshop is to identify improved technical approaches for explaining the effect of management actions, and the degree to which they are influencing water-quality changes in the watershed and estuary. The breakout sessions promoted discussion and generated recommendations on three primary topics: Enhancing trend detection methods; Identifying information that is needed to better explain trends; and Suggesting quantitative approaches for an integrated approach to explain trends in the tidal waters and watershed. A final workshop report is scheduled for June, 2014.

STAC staff and the workshop steering committees are in the process of planning two additional workshops. The workshops include:

1) *The Peculiarities of Perviousness* - This workshop will take place on April 22-23, 2014 at the Sheraton Hotel in Annapolis, Maryland. This workshop plans to define, measure, and model the nutrient dynamics from the land cover known as pervious land. The objective of this workshop is to characterize the key source areas and pervious cover types that generate nutrients and sediments, and/or reduce runoff in the urban landscape and determine whether it is feasible to utilize them in Phase 6 of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model (CBWM).

2) *Designing Sustainable Stream Restoration Projects within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed* - The workshop will take place on May 6-7, 2014 at the Sheraton Hotel in Annapolis, Maryland. The objective of this workshop is to create agreement among practitioners, regulators and scientists on a common language and methods for designing sustainable stream restoration projects that improve the functional elements of stream health to address water quality, climatological impacts, physical and biological components within the stream and adjacent riparian zone.

For additional information about the two workshops above, contact Natalie Gardner at gardnern@si.edu.

STAC is in the process of finalizing two workshop reports. Below is a list of reports that STAC will distribute over the next few weeks.

1) Multiple Models for Management in the Chesapeake Bay (M3.2)
2) In my Backyard: An Innovative Look at the Advances of Onsite Decentralized Wastewater Treatment Systems

Finally, STAC distributed a workshop report entitled "Designing Sustainable Coastal Habitats" on March 31, 2014. The report is a product of the April 16-17, 2013 STAC Designing Sustainable Coastal Habitats workshop. As always, the report can be found at:
http://www.chesapeake.org/pubs/317_Horan2014.pdf

Goal Implementation Team Updates

GIT 1 – Fisheries

The Sustainable Fisheries GIT focuses on advancing ecosystem-based fisheries management by using science to make informed fishery management decisions that cross state boundaries.

- The Fisheries GIT Executive Committee is reviewing proposed changes to the Agreement fisheries outcome language based on public and partner comments.
- The Invasive Catfish Task Force submitted their Final Report to STAC for review.
- The Chesapeake Bay Stock Assessment Committee (CBSAC) is gearing up for analysis of the Winter Dredge Survey results and development of the 2014 Blue Crab Advisory Report over the next few months.
- CBSAC staff are finalizing a draft charter to better define the roles and responsibilities of CBSAC and its members.
- STAC has approved and funded the Fisheries GIT's proposed workshop titled "Assessing the Chesapeake Bay Forage Base: Existing Data and Research Priorities". Tom Ihde (STAC member) and Ed Houde (Chesapeake Biological Lab) are co-chairing this workshop, which is tentatively planned for fall 2014.
- The next biannual meeting of the Full Fisheries GIT is scheduled for June 4-5th, 2014 at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science in Gloucester Point, VA.
- The Fisheries GIT Executive Committee will have their next monthly conference call on Monday, April 21st.

GIT 2 – Habitat

The Habitat GIT is restoring a network of land and water habitats to afford a range of public benefits and to support priority species.

STAC released a report summarizing the "Designing Sustainable Coastal Habitats" workshop co-sponsored by the Habitat GIT in April 2013 in Easton, Maryland. The workshop explored approaches for designing coastal landscapes in the Chesapeake Bay watershed through strategic restoration and protection of habitats most likely to be sustainable in the face of multiple stressors affecting coastal ecosystems. Scientists, habitat restoration partners, and policy makers focused discussion around three themes: (1) Ecosystem Components of Coastal Habitats; (2) Capacity of Coastal Habitats to Support Fauna and Flora; and (3) Designing Sustainable Coastal Habitats in the Face of Human Development, Climate Change, and Sea Level Rise. The report outlines five specific recommendations agreed to by the workshop participants:

- Institute a more balanced approach to Chesapeake Bay restoration by integrating water quality, habitat, and ecosystem-based species goals.
- Expand the spatial and temporal scales used to set Bay restoration/conservation targets.
- Align differing and complex objectives for management of living resources using an adaptive management framework, such as Structured Decision Making and Strategic Habitat Conservation.
- Initiate a pilot study of landscape-scale restoration approaches.

- Form a Habitat Modeling workgroup to facilitate data synthesis, coordination, and regional model development.

Next steps from the workshop include hosting a STAC workshop in spring 2014 titled "Designing Sustainable Stream Restoration Projects within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed", reflecting expanded spatial/temporal scales for habitat restoration/conservation actions identified in Management Strategies to be developed under the new Chesapeake Watershed Agreement, and identifying potential pilot landscapes.

The Habitat GIT met on February 26th at North Point State Park. The meeting provided habitat practitioners a forum to strategize about how best to build a network of land and water habitats capable of supporting the fish, wildlife, recreational and cultural resources most important to communities at local, landscape, and regional scales. The agenda was developed to focus on areas in which cross-GIT collaboration was currently occurring and how the teams could work together in the future.

Noteworthy items:

- Meeting participants included the chairs from the Fisheries GIT, Healthy Watersheds GIT, and Stewardship GIT. The GIT chairs have committed to meet regularly in pursuit of items of common interest, including a collaborative push to account in CAST for the value of ecosystem services provided by habitats.
- A wetland initiative project is underway to accelerate wetland restoration across four states in the watershed and is being lead by TNC
- A tool is being developed to prioritize and target brook trout habitat restoration in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed
- A STAC workshop, "Designing Sustainable Stream Restoration Projects within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed," is chaired by Bill Stack (Center for Watershed Protection) and Rich Starr (US Fish and Wildlife Service) and will be held May 2014. The objective of the workshop is to create agreement among practitioners, regulators and scientists on a common language and assessment methods for designing sustainable stream restoration projects that improve the functional elements of stream health to address water quality, climatological impacts, physical and biological components within the stream and adjacent riparian zone.
- Discussion at the Habitat GIT meeting identified an interest in formulating suggestions to improve the ways diverse viewpoints are heard and addressed through the BMP Expert Panel Process. A small group of CBP partners convened to discuss possible adjustments to the process to ensure that all voices among the Partnership feel that they are being heard in all such CBP endeavors. Recommendations were drafted that include ways to advance the general awareness of the process and involve other GITs to identify BMPs for expert panel review process. Next Steps: Implement some of the recommendations through a conference call to discuss Habitat GIT input on recommendations formed by the Algal Flow-ways BMP panel.

GIT 3 – Water Quality

The Water Quality GIT works to evaluate, focus and accelerates the implementation of practices, policies and programs that will restore water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal tributaries to conditions that support living resources and protect human health.

- On April 14th the WQGIT will approve the selection of a new Vice-Chair based on WQGIT nominations, which were requested by March 24th.

- The WQGIT will be confirming the nomination of two Agriculture Workgroup Co-Chairs, Kristen Saacke Blunk and John Rhoderick.
- The Land Use Workgroup has released a recommendation for Phase 6.0 land use classifications with comments requested from the GITs and sector workgroups by April 30th. Based on this feedback, the LUWG will be providing a final recommendation to the WQGIT in summer 2014 as part of the overall midpoint assessment process.
- The WQGIT is in the process of finalizing governance guidelines for the goal team and its workgroups. This work is informed by the PSC discussion and decisions on governance earlier in the spring.
- Upcoming BMP panel reports for WQGIT review include: Erosion and Sediment Control, Septics and Riparian Buffers.
- The BMP Verification Review Panel met on April 1st to review the six sector and habitat workgroups' latest verification guidance. The Panel agreed that the Streams, Wetland, Forestry, Urban Stormwater, and Wastewater Treatment Workgroups' revised draft guidance, once amended to address the Panel's specific questions and comments, should move forward for review by the larger Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership. The Panel agreed on the need to review the revised draft Agriculture Workgroup guidance once the workgroup has reviewed a revised draft addressing the Panel's recommendations and forthcoming table. The Panel held a joint meeting with the BMP Verification Committee on April 2nd to review the full draft BMP verification framework.

GIT 4 – Healthy Watersheds

The goal of the Maintain Healthy Watersheds Goal Implementation Team (GIT 4) is to maintain local watershed health across a range of landscape contexts. With this goal, GIT 4 intends to bring attention to the challenge of protecting streams and watersheds that are healthy today. This initiative complements the "dirty waters" approach which focuses on restoring impaired waters.

The Maintain Healthy Watersheds Goal Implementation Team has been moving forward with the formation and early meetings of two new workgroups including the Local Engagement Workgroup as well as the Tracking workgroup. Each of these groups were formed with the intention of furthering the primary goals of GIT4 including providing a forum for mutual learning, developing information resources, including health and protection status tracking capabilities, and other communications in support of healthy watershed identification and protection, as well as enhancing the science that supports better characterization of healthy watershed functional values. The local engagement workgroup met for the first time last week and had a great turnout of experts on working with organizations and local governments and envisions the role of workgroup as aggregators, conveners, and supporters building capacity for local actors.
The GIT4 leadership has been able to successfully review and respond to all assigned comments provided in response to the draft Chesapeake Bay Agreement related to healthy watersheds.

The complete GIT4 will be scheduling a full membership meeting in late spring.
Contact: Renee Thompson, rthompso@chesapeakebay.net

GIT 5 – Foster Stewardship

The Fostering Stewardship GIT promotes individual stewardship, supports environmental education for all ages, and assists citizens, communities and local governments in undertaking initiatives to achieve restoration and conservation in the Chesapeake region. It aims to build public support of restoration efforts and increase citizen engagement and active stewardship.

No new updates at this time.

GIT 6 – Partnering and Leadership

The goal of the Enhance Partnering, Leadership, and Management GIT is to continually improve the governance and management of the CBP Partnership.

No new updates at this time.

Scientific, Technical Assessment and Reporting

BASIN

The Scientific, Technical Assessment, and Reporting Team (STAR) is currently moving forward with the Building and Sustaining Integrated Networks (BASIN) process. After completing Phase I of BASIN, the monitoring review to find gap-filling options to meet the funding shortfall faced in FY13, STAR is undertaking Phase II of BASIN. As part of Phase II, STAR has hosted eight panelists spanning the Great Lakes, Puget Sound (WA), Upper Mississippi River Basin, Mid-Atlantic Observing System (MARACOOS), Wisconsin Citizen-Based Monitoring programs in lakes and streams , two case studies from Australia (Moreton Bay and the Great Barrier Reef), and Ireland's Coastal and Transitional Waters Monitoring Program. The panelists served as long-term monitoring program case studies for STAR to consider options and alternative approaches to monitoring, funding, and communicating the science of monitoring programs. Concurrently, workgroups under STAR are investigating alternative approaches to support long-term water quality monitoring of the Chesapeake Bay and Basin and subsequent funding implications of those options. The information gathered from Phase II thus far (i.e. the STAR workgroup discussions and case studies) complemented by historical recommendations for monitoring the Chesapeake Bay (i.e. MRAT 2009) and upcoming customer expectations discussions, will culminate in a BASIN Water Quality Report which will outline alternative water quality monitoring strategies with cost scenarios . Phase III is expected to engage the larger Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership's priorities with the assistance of the CBP Scientific Technical Advisory Committee (STAC). Phase III will include a review of the monitoring needs to support tracking and reporting on the new Chesapeake Bay Agreement Outcomes beyond water quality. *More information on BASIN can be found on the STAR webpage under Projects & Resources on the Chesapeake Bay Program Website.*

Explaining Trends

A STAC responsive workshop was held on March 25-26, 2014 to discuss efforts to measure the effects of management actions on water quality trends in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and estuary. The goals of the workshop were to identify promising approaches for: (1) enhancing trend detection methods; (2) identifying information needed to better explain trends; (3) better quantifying the factors (anthropogenic and natural) driving observed changes in water quality. Regional and national experts presented on current and emerging strategies for linking observed patterns to causal factors.

The workshop steering committee is in the process of consolidating workshop notes and contributions, documenting findings, and developing recommendations. A report describing the workshop's outcomes and recommendations will be produced within 90 days, and the report's recommendations and major findings will be shared with the Management Board and Chesapeake Bay Program community.

Water Quality Criteria Assessment Protocols

Criteria Assessment Protocol WG under STAR - A full draft of the new *Ambient Water Quality Criteria for Dissolved Oxygen, Water Clarity and Chlorophyll a for the Chesapeake Bay and Its Tidal Tributaries* – technical addendum is near completion. The document will be available for work group reviews in April 2014. The addendum has 7 core chapters and summarizes a combination of work and decisions since 2012 regarding updates on the water quality criteria assessment framework and water quality standards assessment protocols that have been completed and carried through the WQGIT. Draft text is also in place on select, residual issues that are moving through the workgroups and GITs for approval.

Recent Meetings and Events

April 1-2 Modeling Quarterly Review (Annapolis)
Mar 18-19 STAC Quarterly Meeting (Annapolis)
Mar 17 Agreement Public comment period ends
Mar 13-14 LGAC meeting (Richmond)