



**Chesapeake Bay Program**  
**SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
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September 17, 2015

Dear STAC Effectiveness Panel Participants,

On behalf of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee, thank you for participating in the STAC quarterly meeting last week and for providing us with some valuable insights into our committee's effectiveness. During the retreat portion of the quarterly meeting, STAC members used your feedback and agreed to implement new processes based on your recommendations.

As a panel, we heard you raise a number of critical points:

- STAC has a number of tools, including workshops, issue or synthesis papers, and peer or independent reviews. We should be thinking about how best to use all these tools.
- We need to think carefully about the role of STAC as an important, independent scientific advisory group (the “voice of the scientific community”). Care is needed to avoid getting into decision making processes outside this role.
- We need to think about our areas of emphasis:
  - While STAC needs to think hard about water quality objectives, we also need to examine the range of other issues affecting the Bay and its watersheds. Water quality and the TMDL are necessary and important, but are not the only outcomes of interest to the Partnership (terrestrial habitat, fish and wildlife, social impacts, etc. are also important).
- Several of you raised points about STAC's “operations”
  - For example, STAC and STAR need to work together to expand science capacity and help support the GITs, especially as the GITs are focused on developing goals, work plans, etc. We need systematic, unified coordination.
  - This work is challenging given that a number of critical issues are emerging, including climate change, resource consumption, land use, population growth, and questions about effectiveness of management tools.
- We also heard your points about resources:
  - STAC needs to be mindful of how it engages with STAR and the GITs, what work is asked for, and what resources can be brought to address the work load.
  - The work that is needed is money and time intensive and STAC must prioritize.
  - There is a perception that STAC has more resources for meetings than other groups do; this imbalance in resources (real or perceived) creates tension between groups that need to work constructively together.

- STAC workshop funding is a resource to be used wisely.

In thinking about the questions you raised on areas to emphasize, one objective for the retreat itself was to allow members to raise critical scientific issues that are not currently being addressed. In this instance, critical is defined as key to the success of Chesapeake Bay restoration.

STAC identified five priority scientific issues where we felt we might focus future proactive efforts. Those priorities included: (1) climate change and its effect on restoration goals and actions, (2) adaptive management, including promoting innovation and addressing uncertainty, (3) assessing multiple stressors on living resources (4) human dimensions, including improving communication of benefits, and (5) emerging issues & potential for innovation in nutrient management.

In addition, STAC would like to work closely with the GITs and STAR to identify management-relevant scientific topics that STAC is best positioned to address. As recommended, STAC will develop a more effective process for interacting with the GITs that will lessen the burden on providing meeting materials. We will be seeking ways to prioritize and focus our energy to enhance our effectiveness and looking for ways to partner and coordinate with others to ensure relevance of our efforts.

Furthermore, STAC members discussed how to strategically use STAC resources, including quarterly meeting agendas to address these issues. In the coming months, the STAC Executive Board will review the retreat outputs and restructure our future quarterly meeting agendas to reflect the feedback and discussions from the retreat. For example, STAC members expressed interest in creating workgroups that will discuss priority issues at every quarterly meeting or to create quarterly meeting agendas around one theme. The goal of the workgroups would be to enhance our understanding of that issue and provide an opportunity to identify some next steps for STAC.

The summary above is only a snapshot of the discussions at the STAC retreat and longer notes are being prepared. However, we wanted to acknowledge the importance of your feedback and give you a sense of how it was used. We look forward to continuing this conversation as we adaptively management how STAC operates, and appreciate your continued future feedback.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Wainger', written in a cursive style.

Lisa Wainger, Chair, Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee