



## Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) Executive Board (EB) Call February 3, 2016

**Members:** Brian Benham, Donna Bilkovic, Kirk Havens, Robert Hirsch, Mark Luckenbach, Adel Shirmohammadi, Lisa Wainger, Gene Yagow

**Administration:** Bill Ball, Rachel Dixon, Natalie Gardner, and Renee Kelly

### STAC Members Attendance

The STAC Bylaws state that any member who misses two or more consecutive meetings (and is not represented by a designated alternate) will be contacted concerning his/her absence. There are currently two members that have missed two or more consecutive meetings. Both members are suspected to have underlying reasons for their absence, which were discussed on the call. An update has been requested from Bill Dennison (UMD) regarding the status of Russ Brinsfield (UMD), who recently retired and his status on the committee is unknown. STAC staff, Renee Kelly (CRC) will contact Dennison for a response. If no response is received, STAC staff will contact Brinsfield and then the Maryland Appointee Office and determine the next step for Brinsfield's replacement.

<p><b>ACTION:</b> <b>Kelly</b> will contact Dennison regarding Brinsfield's willingness to remain an active member of STAC. If no response is received, STAC staff will contact Brinsfield and then take the necessary steps with the Maryland Appointee Office to find a replacement.</p>
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### Updates

STAC staff, Rachel Dixon (CRC) provided an update of the FY16 STAC workshop request for proposals (RFPs), informing the EB that STAC staff already conducted an initial review of the six submitted proposals. Proposers are now responsible for re-submitting a final version by February 16<sup>th</sup>. Finalized proposals and the scoring rubric will be distributed to STAC members shortly afterwards. Members will conduct and submit initial scores to STAC staff prior to the March 2016 quarterly meeting. Dixon also mentioned that the newly revised workshop protocols effectively guided proposers in this year's process and encouraged them to find match funds. However, the EB requested Dixon revise the wording in the workshop protocols to further clarify the difference between proactive and responsive proposals, to clarify where a proposal is coming from, and who is responsible for leading the workshop. The EB then reviewed STAC's workshop budget and discussed the process for approving workshop funds, which will take place at the March quarterly meeting. Although STAC has enough funds to sponsor the six proposals, scoring is still necessary for determining whether a proposal is an appropriate activity for STAC. At the upcoming meeting, STAC will discuss initial scores and approve whether a given workshop or other STAC activity (such as a white paper) is most appropriate given available resources in FY16. This will be the first time STAC follows this procedure since the revision of the workshop proposal process.

The EB then discussed the need for a process of approving and funding additional activities, such as white papers. STAC Coordinator, Natalie Gardner (CRC) will determine the process for white paper activities and the available funds in the STAC budget. The Chesapeake Bay Commission (CBC) is in the process of proposing a STAC technical review, regarding "boat wake impacts on shoreline erosion and sediment inputs". Due to the current workload, STAC should consider the timeliness of these additional activities for FY16. The EB agreed that a full discussion should be added to the quarterly meeting agenda to discuss the availability of funds to support these activities, the procedures for approval, and different scenarios that STAC staff could support.

Finally, Gardner provided an update of the active STAC-sponsored peer reviews. The Criteria Addendum review panel has been finalized and an information session is scheduled on February 12<sup>th</sup>. With a firm schedule in place, the final report is expected to be completed by mid-April. Additionally, the Microbead/plastics review report will be distributed by mid-February. The review panel recently modified the scope of this review and is considering publishing a journal in Environmental Science & Technology. Gardner will continue to provide STAC staff support and locate funds for this publication. Gene Yagow (VT), requested a status update of the Scenario Builder review. Gardner offered to contact Matt Johnston (UMD-CBPO) to determine the status and timeline of this review.

**ACTION: Dixon** will update wording in the STAC workshop protocols with suggested revisions following feedback from the FY16 RFP.

**ACTION: Gardner** will research whether STAC funds are available for white papers/additional reviews, and develop an appropriate approval and funding procedure.

**ACTION: Gardner** will contact Johnston to obtain more information regarding the status and timeline of the Scenario Builder review.

### **Upcoming STAC/EB Member Rotations**

Prior to the EB meeting, Bob Hirsch (USGS) was informed that his two-year term as an EB member would end after the February EB call. STAC's EB nominating committee selected Marc Ribaud (USDA-ERS), a previous EB nominee, to fill Hirsch's vacancy. Ribaud accepted his nomination, pending full membership approval. EB members did not object to this nomination, so a formal vote will occur at the March quarterly meeting.

In addition, STAC has not found a replacement to fill the vacant federal appointee position previously held by Kurt Gottschalk (USFS). Several requests for a recommendation were sent to Sally Claggett (USFS) and STAC staff have received no response to date. EB members discussed nominating individuals from federal agencies offering expertise most relevant to STAC's current needs. A member from the United States Forest Service with a focus on climate change and a member from National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) were both suggested nominees. Kirk Havens (VIMS) suggested that the EB nominate Martin Lowenfish (USDA-NRCS). After discussion, the EB agreed that a member from NRCS would be an ideal match for upcoming STAC expertise needs. Havens agreed to contact and discuss Lowenfish's willingness and availability to join STAC. Pending a decision from Lowenfish, Gardner and Wainger will take the necessary steps for nominating a federal appointee.

**ACTION: Havens** will contact Lowenfish to determine his willingness and availability to join STAC. If Lowenfish accepts, Gardner and Wainger will take the next steps in the federal appointment process.

### **Feedback on the monthly STAC newsletter (The Abstract)**

During the December 2015 STAC quarterly meeting, improvements were suggested for the STAC newsletter "The Abstract" in order to increase its effectiveness. All suggestions were incorporated into the January newsletter. Feedback from the EB was all positive. Kelly will continue drafting the newsletter with the same format and brevity.

### **Quarterly Meeting Agenda: March 15-16, 2016 STAC Quarterly Meeting**

Wainger began the conversation by reviewing three items that were requested at the December quarterly meeting, but were not incorporated on the March quarterly meeting draft agenda. The items requested were: 1) STAC should encouraged continued responsiveness from USDA, USGS, and EPA regarding the progress on enhancing collaborative efforts; 2) STAC should write a letter to the Management Board (MB) and Principal's Staff Committee (PSC) to put more effort into finding ways to support the GITs research science needs; and 3) STAC's response to the Scientific, Technical Assessment & Reporting (STAR) priority science needs one page document. The EB agreed that adding an NRCS appointee to STAC would help facilitate inter-agency collaboration and adding a discussion related to this topic to the March agenda is not appropriate at this time. Wainger previously suggested inviting the new Cross-Program Coordinator, Kristin Saunders (UMCES), to coordinate and discuss the priority science needs of the GITs, which would help address two of the requests above. The EB further discussed the timeliness of inviting Saunders to the March meeting and the different topics that Saunders could discuss, including synergizing workshop proposals to answer multiple questions across the GITs, and guiding a process to identify science needs of GITs.

Wainger continued the discussion by proposing a single-day March quarterly meeting, due to the shortage of official STAC business. Before deciding, Wainger reviewed the remainder of the draft agenda with the EB, mentioning the decision to focus on a theme of "humans influencing habitats". Wainger arranged for speakers to present results of the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center (SERC) study on the effects of shoreline hardening. EB members were in favor of the centralized theme for the March meeting. Members suggested pre-reading materials and adding Pam Mason (VIMS) to discuss the social aspects of shoreline hardening. EB members also requested an agenda item that would allow recent STAC workshop/review leads the opportunity to briefly update STAC members on specific outcomes of their activity.

After reviewing the necessary time allotment, the EB decided to keep the quarterly meeting as two days. A few time change suggestions were made, including expanding the amount of time allotted for the white paper discussion and moving the FY16 RFP discussion to day one. Wainger continued the discussion with STAC staff after the call ended to incorporate the EB suggestions to the draft agenda.

<b>ACTION: Wainger and STAC staff</b> will work together to revise the March quarterly meeting agenda, in accordance with the suggestions made during the EB call.
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