

STAC Discussion Item

Tuesday, June 7, 2016

Challenges and questions

Challenge:

The Chesapeake Bay Goal Implementation Teams (GITs) and their related work groups have significant goals and outcomes, yet limited time and resources in which to meet them.

Questions:

There are a lot players working on goals like restoring, enhancing and protecting vital habitats and meeting outcomes like the wetlands outcome:

- What is the role of the GITs and work groups in meeting the goals and outcomes?
- How can various efforts be brought together to enhance the capacity to collectively address these critical goals and outcomes?
- How can STAC help support the hard work by the GITs and work groups?

Opportunity presented by STAC workshop

Work with one work group to identify:

- Key obstacles
- Potential opportunities for addressing these obstacles
- Prioritizing and linking work group actions to achieve desired outcomes
- Identify ways to enhance capacity, address implementation considerations
- Identify next steps, path forward

Objectives:

1. Identify ways to enhance capacity of the Wetland Workgroup via 2-year work plan, and
2. Demonstrate a pilot process on how other work groups might similarly enhance their capacity to meet and implement their overall goals.

Enhancing Capacity Workshop: *Linking the Wetland Workplan Goals to Enhance Capacity, Increase Implementation*

Date: January 14, 2016, SERC

Wetland Work Group Members: Amy Jacobs, Erin McLaughlin, Melissa Yearick, Mark Biddle, Mindy Ehrich, Carol Petrow, Denice Clearwater, Jana Davis, Rich Mason

STAC/STAR Members: Lara Fowler, Denice Wardrop, Carl Hershner, Kirk Havens, Scott Phillips

Process:

- Reviewed Wetland Work Group outcomes, goals, draft work plan
- Reviewed *Accelerating Wetland Restoration in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Report* (Oct. 2015)
- Brainstormed additional obstacles/challenges
- Discussed additional opportunities for addressing these challenges
- Discussed potential challenges for all work groups

Outcome: A memo describing overall comments and recommendations, as well as specific comments related to the Management Approaches, was sent to Wetland Workgroup on 3/8/16.

Overall recommendations included:

1. Enlist the Management Board to advise on expectations for the Work Group
2. Define Work Group Management Actions vis a vis work being accomplished by others
3. Work to include wetland function when meeting Wetlands outcome, not just acreage

Wetland Work Group

Vital Habitat Goal

Restore, enhance, and protect a network of land and water habitats to support fish & wildlife, and to afford other public benefits, including water quality, recreational uses and scenic value across the watershed.

Wetlands Outcome

Continually increase the capacity of wetlands to provide water quality and habitat benefits throughout the watershed. Create or re-establish 85,000 acres of tidal and non-tidal wetlands and enhance the function of an additional 150,000 acres of degraded wetlands by 2025. These activities may occur in any land use (including urban) but primarily occur in agricultural or natural landscapes.

Related Outcomes: Black duck, stream health, brook trout

“Accelerating Wetland Restoration in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed: Obstacles & Solutions”

- The Nature Conservancy & Ducks Unlimited, Oct. 2015

Identifying Solutions to Obstacles

Obstacle	Solutions
1. Limited Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Secure sustained funding for all phases of restorationB. Focus funding to priority areasC. Advocate for increased program funding
2. Outreach is Limited/ Not Coordinated	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Designate a local leader for outreach and coordinationB. Host annual cross-training for wetland practitionersC. Develop better marketing strategies
3. Programmatic or Institutional Obstacles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Increase flexibility of WREB. Increase flexibility of CREPC. Develop program with local conservation groups to offer private restoration optionsD. Invest in market research to evaluate the need to change incentive values
4. Permitting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Reduce regulatory burden for environmentally beneficial projectsB. Separate the review process for restoration and development projectsC. Develop list of information to support permit applications
5. Limited Approaches to Restoring Wetlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Implement demonstration projects to model a variety of practices and approachesB. Disseminate alternative restoration designs and information to practitioners, agencies, and funders

Overall challenges identified during the workshop

- Each work group has a big goal
- Insufficient resources to get there
 - Not enough time/effort to meet the needs
 - Impact on staffing priorities
- Funding allocation
 - Existing \$ enough (allocation, reallocation, new funding)?
- Coordination b/n work groups
 - Goal teams meet a few times a year, including work groups
 - Collectively, all work groups haven't gotten together
 - Some coordination b/n GIT chairs (quarterly meetings)
 - Coordinators/staffers together couple times a month
 - Kristin Sanders- goal team coordination should help
- Feeling alone in the struggle, burnout factor

Overall questions identified during the workshop

- What is the actual role of the work groups?
 - Who's job is it to get something done?
 - Not necessarily to solve, but to articulate/demonstrate issue?
 - May help to define 1) what it will take; 2) what we can do, and 3) what is needed
 - Workgroups have multiple stakeholders- who are they, what are the work groups supposed to be doing for them?
- How do we better leverage the other work groups & CBP?
 - E.g., Communications? Other work groups?
 - Can the CBP role/structure be better defined?
- How can the vast network of players be leveraged while avoiding overlap/duplication and filling the gaps? How do we build complementary functions/focus?
- Generally
 - If money is available, how do we work to get it to the right place in the right way?
 - How do we ensure accountability without drowning people in paperwork?
- How do we address/inform goals (100,000 acres “worth” of wetland function?)

Potential opportunities identified during the workshop

- Inventory obstacles & opportunities (like TNC/Ducks Unlimited Report)
- Inventory capacity, interest of work group & beyond (who is doing what, where, what are they doing?)
 - Systematic list of who is in a particular space
 - What is the capacity?
 - If folks are tapped out- what % of time might be available?
 - How do we better utilize the network in this space (gov't, NGO, academic, private, other)
 - Systematic list of potential funding sources (Bay “brief” for funding sources)
 - Clarify what support is available to work groups
 - E.g., to write a grant, do other functions such as manage paperwork
 - Potential expertise: Technical, communications, outreach, funding/ grant writing, etc.
- Conduct survey and/or hold focus group discussions to identify obstacles, opportunities → informed by decision science approach?

Potential guidance for other work groups?

- Link of goals/outcomes to management actions, expectations for what work group can do
 - Helpful to promulgate critical discussions with each GIT
 - Help clarify role of work group
- Identify work group stakeholders- who are they, how do they fit in?
- Realization that adaptive management will take place (may not meet goal- how do we adapt, make tough step in the cycle)?
 - Prioritize, work on fewer things
 - Pare down strategies, simplify (strategies, work plans)
 - Once management strategies approved, then figure out how to implement
 - Expect over 2-4 years: e.g., accomplish assessment of sub-watersheds (expected performance/outcome)
 - Identify actions to take, what outcomes might be expected: track this over time, or absence of response (argument for continuing, augmenting, stopping)
- How do we meet work group needs?
 - Are we using all the state/federal/academic assets that we have?
 - If there are still needs, how can we meet them?
 - Facilitate discussion around different networks
 - How do we actually expand capacity to get stuff done?

Other opportunities to focus efforts?

1. Do goals need to be broken down into actionable steps to enhance GITs effectiveness?
2. If so, what is a process for doing that?
3. Are there lessons to be transferred from other cases (recipes for success?)
4. Can STAC help GITs to find the science issues that are critical to success?

Next steps from Enhancing Capacity Workshop

- Feedback on Wetland Work Group work plan
- Workshop report
- Broader survey of work groups
 - How can we help support their important work and enhance the overall capacity for meeting goals/outcomes?
- Help support Kristin on GIT coordination
- Examine roles for different entities:
 - GITs, work groups
 - STAC
 - STAR
 - Management Board