



Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) Executive Board (EB) Call October 25, 2016

Members: Brian Benham, Donna Bilkovic, Kirk Havens, Mark Luckenbach, Andrew Miller, Marc Ribaldo, Adel Shirmohammadi, Lisa Wainger

Administration: Bill Ball, Rachel Dixon, Elaine Hinrichs, and Renee Kelly

Updates

An updated version of the STAC Midpoint Review Timeline/Status document was distributed to the EB prior to the call. STAC staff, Renee Kelly (CRC) began by asking if there were any questions about the status of the timeline. STAC Coordinator, Rachel Dixon (CRC) explained that the accelerated timeline is not a concern from staff's point of view and reviews are on track to be completed within their given timeframes. Per STAC's request at the September 2016 quarterly meeting, Dixon will regularly distribute updated review tables to the committee. STAC Chair, Lisa Wainger (UMCES) suggested that Dixon confirm that reviews are on track when distributing the timeline document to STAC.

ACTION: **Dixon** will distribute the STAC Midpoint Review Timeline/Status document to STAC.

STAC Member Vacancies: Rotation Updates

Kelly requested an update on the status of the Maryland Gubernatorial Appointee replacing Russ Brinsfield (UMD Wye Research Center). The request has been sent to the Maryland Governor's office, but no updates have been received. Wainger agreed to check with Donald Boesch (UMCES) on the status of this request. The EB also discussed the process by which Gubernatorial/Mayoral Appointees are appointed to STAC and when it is appropriate for STAC to submit recommendations for appointees.

ACTION: **Wainger** will request an update on the status of the Maryland Appointee replacement.
UPDATE: Response received from Bill Dennison (UMCES) on 10/26/16. STAC Staff now wait for an official letter of appointment before welcoming the appointee to the committee.

Discuss FY17 Workshops

Dixon reviewed amendments to the request for proposals (RFP) document, RFP process, workshop protocols, and proposal scoring rubric for workshops in fiscal year (FY) 2017. Amendments were minor, with the exception of two larger changes proposed by STAC members during the FY 2016 proposal cycle: 1) in the workshop process timeline, STAC members requested the option to comment on initial proposals before their final submission, and 2) recommended FY17 workshop themes (climate change, adaptive management, multiple stressors on living resources, human dimensions, and nutrient management) were added to the RFP. The EB agreed to discuss the FY17 RFP themes with STAC during the December quarterly meeting. Additionally, the EB agreed that a STAC comment period would be useful and asked STAC Staff to extend the length of time STAC has to review the proposal in the workshop process timeline. Upon request, Dixon provided an update of the feedback received from the Coordinators/Staffers meeting regarding the STAC RFP process presentation. Coordinators and staffers communicated a general desire to be more involved in the RFP process and a recommendation that letters of support should be required for all workshops. Wainger requested that STAC Staff highlight important requirements (i.e., the requirement of a letter of support for responsive workshops) in the RFP.

DECISION: **STAC** will discuss and select the recommended workshop themes for the FY17 RFP at the December quarterly meeting.

ACTION: **STAC Staff** will revise the FY17 workshop process timeline to provide more time for STAC review of proposals and highlight important requirements in the RFP, and will review these changes with STAC at the December quarterly meeting.

Midpoint Assessment Review Reports: Discussion of Report Distribution Process

Dixon and Wainger, along with STAC Executive Secretary, Bill Ball (CRC), updated the EB on recent discussions regarding the need for a more standardized format for STAC review reports. Wainger suggested that: 1) executive summaries of reports need to be easier to skim; 2) the reasoning behind recommendations needs to be clearly explained; and 3) reports should avoid making policy recommendations, unless otherwise noted. Based on conversations with Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) Management Board (MB) members, Wainger also suggested that STAC strongly advise report authors to write a “teaser” or a headline for the email to the CBP so that people are more likely to open and read the actual report. The EB supported the following two recommendations: 1) creating flexible guidance for STAC reports and executive summaries; and 2) strongly advising report authors to write a teaser for the distribution email. Dixon and Ball have started a template of an appropriate executive summary, including an example and guidance, and agreed to have an example ready for the December quarterly meeting. EB members discussed the feasibility of STAC review reports identifying which recommendations are most important, and determined that report guidelines should say, “If you have certain strong recommendations, identify them.” Ultimately, each report is unique (not ‘one size fits all’), but these additional guidelines will be helpful to report authors.

ACTION: **Dixon and Ball** will complete an example executive summary and report guidance document based on the EB suggestions.

Quarterly Meeting Agenda: December 6-7, 2016 STAC Quarterly Meeting

Wainger began the conversation by providing an overview of the current agenda, which featured presentations on toxic contaminants and nutrients in the Chesapeake Bay and other ecosystems, but did not have a focused theme. Wainger reviewed day two of the agenda first, mentioning that Gary Shenk (USGS) suggested STAC invite Walter Boynton (UMCES) to give a presentation on big picture insights on the Bay. Wainger requested that STAC Staff change the title of Boesch’s presentation to “Strategic science research perspectives for the Chesapeake Bay.” Ball noted that Boesch may not be prepared to talk to STAC about strategic science at this time. Wainger suggested asking Boesch directly whether or not the timing would be right for this discussion in December.

The EB then discussed day one of the agenda. Since Wainger will not be at the December meeting, she requested that STAC Vice-Chair, Brian Benham (VT) start the meeting with an overview of the December theme. Peter Kleinman (USDA-ARS) would then follow by highlighting the important takeaways from the September 2016 quarterly meeting and give a progress update on the development of a “Phosphorus in the Bay Watershed” factsheet. Kirk Havens (VIMS) reminded the EB that he suggested the topic of living resources at the last EB meeting, then recommended that STAC bring Bryan Watts (William & Mary) to the December meeting to discuss the extirpation of the black rail in the Chesapeake Bay. Wainger suggested that Jeremy Testa’s (UMCES) presentation on chlorophyll-*a* and dissolved oxygen trends within the Bay be moved up in the agenda as a follow-up to Kleinman’s updates. The EB agreed to schedule Watts to speak after Testa and before lunch on day one.

The EB also discussed toxic contaminants as a theme for the rest of day one. Wainger mentioned that the topic of toxic contaminants is somewhat ignored within the Chesapeake Bay, and that STAC does not have any toxic specialists. EB members noted that STAC could have a discussion about the role of toxics in the Bay at the December meeting, particularly on the fate of atrazine used to kill cover crops in the Bay watershed, which is not the current focus of the CBP Toxic Contaminants Workgroup. Wainger also mentioned that states are not tracking herbicide use and trends, and STAC could ask more about that. EB members agreed that STAC needs to be informed on legacy toxic contaminants and contaminants of emerging concern, and that STAC should be drawing attention to issues that are created when we try to solve other issues in the Chesapeake Bay.

For day two, Wainger suggested that Lee Norfleet (USDA-NRCS) could be asked to present the recent United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Western Lake Erie Basin Report if Boesch is not able to present. Wainger also suggested the discussion on FY17 Workshop themes and review of workshop protocols, RFP, and process documents be moved to day two, with additional time devoted to a discussion about creating a common tone for executive summaries of STAC Reports. The EB then discussed bringing speakers from the Gulf of Mexico or the Everglades. Shirmohammadi suggested STAC bring in Holly Greening (Tampa Bay Estuary Program) to speak about Tampa Bay issues, and agreed to contact Greening. Wainger said that would work well, as STAC would have a group of presentations on three systems: Lake Erie, Tampa Bay, and the Chesapeake Bay. If a presenter from outside the region is requested to present, Kelly will look into whether travel can be reimbursed for such an occasion.

ACTION: Wainger and STAC staff will revise the December quarterly meeting agenda based on the EB suggestions. Please send any additional comments to Wainger (wainger@umces.edu) and Kelly at (kellyr@si.edu).

ACTION: Wainger will contact Boesch regarding his availability and willingness to present at the December quarterly meeting.

ACTION: Kelly will look into travel money for any speakers from outside the Chesapeake Bay region.

ACTION: Shirmohammadi will contact Greening if the December quarterly meeting agenda requests input from an outside estuary specialist.