



THE ABSTRACT

A Monthly Update from the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee

August 2016

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Recent STAC News

September 2016 STAC Quarterly Meeting

**September 13-14, 2016
Annapolis, MD**

STAC will hold its second quarterly meeting of FY2016 on September 13-14, 2016 in Annapolis, Maryland. A draft agenda is being developed and will be distributed in the coming weeks. As previously mentioned by STAC Chair, Lisa Wainger (UMCES), the September meeting theme will focus largely on water quality trends.

Click [here](#) for more information about the upcoming September meeting.

Upcoming STAC Quarterly Meetings

- **2016 STAC Quarterly Meeting Dates**
 - December 6-7th

Other Activity Updates

STAC FY16 Workshops

Planning for FY16 workshops began June 1st.

- 1) *An Analytical Framework for Aligning Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) Monitoring Efforts to Support Climate Change*
- 2) *CBP Modeling Beyond 2018: A Proactive Visioning Workshop*
- 3) *Legacy Sediment, Riparian Corridors, and Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs)*
- 4) *Quantifying Ecosystem Services and Co-Benefits of Nutrient and Sediment Reducing Best Management Practices (BMPs)*
- 5) *Understanding and Explaining 30+ Years of Water Clarity Trends in the Bay's Tidal Waters*

For additional information about the workshops above, contact Rachel Dixon at dixonra@si.edu or visit the [STAC workshop webpage](#).

STAC Reports

STAC distributed a workshop report entitled "Evaluating Proprietary BMPs: Is it time for a State, Regional, or National Program?" on July 26, 2016. The report is a product of a 2015 workshop focused on the need for the establishment of a Chesapeake Bay-wide evaluation program for proprietary or structural best management practices (BMPs) for stormwater treatment. The report can be found at: http://www.chesapeake.org/stac/stac_ws_pubs.php.

In addition, STAC hosted seven workshops to date in 2016. The workshop steering committees are in the process of drafting activity reports that will be distributed to the Partnership over the next few months. Information regarding these workshops including agendas, presentations, and reports can be found on the workshop's [homepage](#).

Upcoming reports:

- 1) *Conowingo Infill Influence on Chesapeake Water Quality*
- 2) *Linking Wetland Workplan Goals to Enhance Capacity, Increase Implementation*
- 3) *Assessing Uncertainty in the CBP Modeling System*
- 4) *Cracking the WIP: Designing an Optimization Engine to Guide Efficient Bay Implementation*
- 5) *The Development of Climate Projections for Use in CBP Assessments*
- 6) *Integrating and Leveraging Monitoring Networks to Support the Assessment of Outcomes in the New Bay Agreement*
- 7) *Comparison of Shallow Water Models for Use in Supporting Chesapeake Bay Management Decision-making (Part I and II)*

Update on STAC Peer Reviews

STAC is in the process of finalizing one review and planning for three others. STAC is anticipating approximately four additional reviews between now and 2017. Details of those reviews are listed below.

Chesapeake Bay Water Quality Criteria Addendum

The STAC Criteria Addendum review panel is finalizing its review of the 2015 Chesapeake Bay Water Quality Criteria Addendum. The review panel suggested a clarifying re-write of the addendum and then requested additional revisions to the updated document. Over the next few months, the review panel will work with CBP to produce a new and improved document incorporating the panel's comments.

Nutrient Inputs to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model (Scenario Builder)

In late June, STAC approved the Scenario Builder/Input Model review request from the CBP Modeling Workgroup. The review panel is working to develop their final report, and is on track to complete its review by August 31st.

James River Chlorophyll a Criteria Re-evaluation

STAC received the official review request from CBP for a review of the James River Chlorophyll *a* Criteria Re-evaluation back in May. STAC members discussed the request at its June quarterly meeting and has since formally approved the request. A review panel has been formed and held an initial call on August 1st. The review will take place over the next two months.

Boat Wake Wave Impacts on Shoreline Erosion

STAC approved the Chesapeake Bay Commission (CBC) requested STAC technical review of potential impacts of boat generated waves on shoreline stability and attendant ecosystem properties, and provide advice on available policy actions to minimize adverse effects. The review will take place over the next several months.

Upcoming Reviews

STAC is working closely with CBP representatives to plan for four upcoming independent scientific peer reviews in the coming months. These STAC reviews will help inform the Partnership's 2017 Midpoint Assessment.

- 1) *Application of WRTDS to watershed WQ trend analysis and explanations and General Additive Models (GAMs) to estuarine WQ trend analysis and explanations*
- 2) *Phase 6 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model*
- 3) *Chesapeake Bay Water Quality/Sediment Transport Model (WQSTM)*
- 4) *Approach being taken to factor climate change considerations into the 2017 Chesapeake Bay TMDL Midpoint Assessment*

For additional information regarding the reviews above, contact STAC Coordinator, Rachel Dixon at dixonra@si.edu or visit the [STAC review webpage](#).

Key Events

There are a number of relevant conference calls and meetings to which STAC members should pay special attention. All upcoming CBP related events can be found on the [CBP meeting calendar](#). Each listing provides logistical information and meeting materials, when available.

STAR Updates

At the Integrated Monitoring Networks (IMN) Workgroup meeting, STAC member Tom Ihde (ERT) reviewed a proposed effort to leverage the Riverkeeper's network to help perform SAV monitoring and pilot new work to support data collection needs under the Forage Fish outcome of the Bay Agreement. Click [here](#) to view the presentation.

The Citizen-Based and Non-Traditional monitoring project group (aka the Chesapeake Monitoring Consortium) has received 80 responses from their Chesapeake Monitoring census sent to non-traditional monitoring groups in April 2016.

The Climate Resiliency Workgroup (CRWG) held a meeting on July 18th. The meeting reviewed collective efforts that are part of the Climate Resiliency workplan and the development a climate change research agenda to improve understanding of climate impacts and fill critical data or research gaps. STAC member Susan Julius (EPA) gave a presentation on stormwater management in response to climate change impacts, using lessons from the Chesapeake Bay and Great Lakes Regions. The CRWG also discussed the status of FY16 GIT funding proposals.

The Status and Trends Workgroup is expected to use the Indicators Framework to evaluate how existing indicators support the Bay Agreement by identifying gaps, assisting in developing new indicators, and ensuring there are updated indicators for all of the Partnership products. The Status and Trends Workgroup finalized the Indicator Process, used for updating and adapting existing indicators, and establishing new ones.

The Modeling Workgroup held a webinar on the Phase 6 Beta 2 version of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model (WSM). The purpose of the webinar was to provide an overview of the entire watershed modeling system including the nutrient application/scenario builder components and watershed delivery. Participants will also be oriented to the available Phase 6 modeling documentation to assist in the Partnership's review of these tools. Work is continuing on the development and refinements to the Phase 6 Beta 3 version of the WSM, in preparation for its delivery at the August 9-10th Modeling Workgroup quarterly meeting.

If you have any questions regarding STAR activities, please contact STAR Coordinator, Peter Tango at ptango@chesapeakebay.net or visit [STAR's webpage](#).

Other Advisory Committee Updates

Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC)

As directed by the Principals' Staff Committee (PSC) at the May 26th meeting, LGAC convened internal and external partners for a strategic discussion about enhancing communication with local officials. Participants included representatives from EPA Region 3, CBP, Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania, as well as funder, non-government organizations, and private sector subject matter experts. The primary focus was on communicating key information related to the Mid-Point Assessment and Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP). The group agreed to pursue development of a road map and schedule to help guide individual and collective initiatives. LGAC agreed to continue leading the collective effort and will convene a second meeting in advance of the August 10, 2016 PSC meeting.

LGAC's next quarterly meeting will be held on September 29-30, 2016 in Shepherdstown, WV. Topics to be addressed include water quality trading and local area planning targets. For more information about LGAC, contact LGAC's Program Assistant Jennifer Starr, at jstarr@allianceforthebay.org or LGAC Coordinator Mary Gattis, at mgattis@allianceforthebay.org.

GIT Updates

***The following updates are provided by the CBP. Some GITs do not have recent updates to provide at this time.**

Sustainable Fisheries Goal Implementation Team (GIT 1)

The Sustainable Fisheries GIT Executive Committee hosted a conference call on July 18th. The meeting featured discussion on a variety of topics, including: letters sent to the Sustainable Fisheries GIT on two blue crab topics and responses to the decision not to pursue a jurisdictional-based allocation system, a shad and river herring position statement, takeaways from the June full Sustainable Fisheries GIT meeting, priorities for the Sustainable Fisheries GIT for the year, media attention on cownose ray tournaments, new regulations for catfish inspections, and membership updates.

In addition, the Fish Habitat and Forage Action Teams conducted meetings to kick off implementation of the 2016-17 workplans. These meetings provided team members with progress reports on ongoing projects, a review of near-term actions, suggestions for approaches to prioritize needs, and a schedule for regular check-ins. Both teams will meet quarterly to continue their progress towards achieving workplan actions.

More information on the Fisheries GIT can be provided by Bruce Vogt (NOAA) at bruce.vogt@noaa.gov or on the [Sustainable Fisheries GIT webpage](#).

Habitat Goal Implementation Team (GIT 2)

The Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) Workgroup, under the Habitat GIT, is working on the SAV Technical Synthesis III (TS3) which will compile the latest research regarding SAV in the Chesapeake Bay and highlight new information. The TS3's anticipated completion date is December 31st, 2016. Topics to be covered are likely to include SAV restoration, abundance patterns, genetics, land-use, fisheries, and climate change effects, ecosystem services, and management implications. In addition, the SAV and Wetland Workgroups are working with the Climate Resiliency Workgroup to implement the FY15 GIT-funded project to develop a Climate Resiliency Assessment and Decision-Making Matrix. The project will involve structured decision-making workshops with both Workgroups in November 2016 and Spring 2017. Finally, the SAV Workgroup hosted a Riverkeeping Monitoring Workshop on July 25th. The field-based workshop trained local riverkeepers in SAV sampling and identification at the Havre de Grace Maritime Museum in the Susquehanna Flats.

For more information regarding the Habitat GIT, please contact Kyle Runion (CRC) at Runion.Kyle@epa.gov or visit the [Habitat GIT webpage](#).

Water Quality Goal Implementation Team (GIT 3)

The Water Quality GIT (WQGIT) held conference calls on July 11th and July 25th. These meetings addressed comments on feedback received on the Draft Preliminary Phase III WIP expectations and received an update on the development of the Phase 6 Land Use data. The WQGIT agreed upon the prioritization of the submitted GIT Project Funding proposals. The highest priority was given to a proposal assessing multifunctional forest buffers, with next highest a tie between a proposal to assess potential toxic reduction benefits achieved through nutrient upgrades to wastewater treatment plants and a proposal to develop an assessment protocol for crediting manufactured treatment devices. In addition, the

WQGIT has approved the recommendation to introduce formal rerunning of model and progress history (to accommodate new data and methods) with the Phase 6 modeling tools, and not with Phase 5. Therefore, new data and methods will be introduced in 2019 and the model history will be rerun back to 2009.

Finally, the WQGIT received an overview of the Chesapeake Atlantis Model (CAM), a decision support tool that simulates ecosystem dynamics under future, modified system conditions for climate, habitat, water chemistry and water quality. The tool is designed to test human impacts on the environment, and to provide information for decision makers on trade-offs of policy choices, in the context of multiple, simulations system stressors. STAC member Tom Ihde (ERT), is scheduled to provide a similar presentation at STAC's September quarterly meeting.

For more information regarding the WQGIT, please contact Lucinda Power (EPA) at power.lucinda@epa.gov or visit the [WQGIT webpage](#).

Maintain Healthy Watersheds Goal Implementation Team (GIT 4)

At the most recent Healthy Watersheds GIT meeting in May, members discussed key action items in the Healthy Watersheds workplan that the GIT could work toward and produce tangible results in 2016. Members gave recommendations on how the GIT could specifically work on these action items and comments are being used to outline and begin tracking and assessment of current State-identified healthy watersheds.

In addition, there were two GIT-funded projects awarded last year that are currently in the works. The Healthy Watersheds Forest Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Project (Phase II) was awarded \$50,000 and is being conducted by the Virginia Department of Forestry. This project focuses on evidence gathered in Phase I to negotiate with local officials and establish land use policies and decisions that retain forestland in healthy watersheds. It includes the creation of a toolbox incentive that can be used to stimulate forestland retention throughout the watershed. A project entitled "The Evaluation of Land Use policy options, incentives and planning tools to reduce the rate of conversion of agriculture lands, forests, and wetlands" was awarded \$66,077 and is being conducted by the National Center for Smart Growth at the University of Maryland, College Park. They are tasked with conducting a comprehensive review/study to implement one of the Management Strategy tasks in the Land Use Options Evaluation Management Strategy. Three GIT-funded project proposals were received for FY16 and are currently undergoing review. Regina Campbell from West Virginia submitted a proposal for "Back Creek Watershed Demo – Getting Water Off the Road", a pilot project studying road sediment erosion and reduction mitigation. The Land Use Workgroup submitted a request for a stream mapping project titled, "Methodology for developing high-resolution stream and waterbody datasets for the Chesapeake Bay watershed". Finally, Natureserve submitted a proposal to build the LandScope Conservation Registry.

On July 20th, the Healthy Watersheds GIT met with the Integrated Networks and Monitoring Team (INMT). Renee Thompson (USGS) and Angel Valdez (MDE) provided status reports on what the GIT has been working on and explained how the INMT could help with their monitoring needs. The INMT will work with the Healthy Watersheds GIT in the future and assist with them with tracking and monitoring of State-identified healthy watershed.

For more information regarding the Healthy Watersheds GIT, please contact Renee Thompson at rthompson@chsapeakebay.net or visit the [HW GIT webpage](#).

Fostering Stewardship Goal Implementation Team (GIT 5)

The Diversity Workgroup is working on a GIT-funded Public Health project to conduct a watershed wide screening of existing fish advisory methods and develop more effective targeted messaging for minorities.

The Public Access Workgroup recently published its 2015 site count. The team is working with partners to find new potential sites, with a focus on reaching diverse communities, as well as enhancing access to the Potomac. The Public Access Workgroup continues to provide technical assistance in developing new public access sites, and work on a visual interactive mapping project of public access sites.

The Environmental Literacy Workgroup is working on a number of projects including ‘School Grounds for Learning’, an online component to help educators create plans and training modules to develop environmentally focused projects on school grounds. The Workgroup is partnering with the Chesapeake Bay Trust (CBT) to develop stronger school grounds projects through grants programs. In addition, the Education Workgroup leadership is meeting with states to develop ways to incorporate outdoor learning into Next Generation Science Standards.

The Citizen Stewardship Workgroup is continuing to develop a comprehensive measurement tool and Stewardship Indicator framework that will measure individual and collective citizen stewardship efforts in all communities across the watershed. The Workgroup is also developing a case study database to share successful examples of programs to change behaviors to maximize funding and promote effectiveness.

For more information regarding the Fostering Stewardship GIT, please contact Amy Handen (NPS) at ahanden@chesapeakebay.net or visit the [Fostering Stewardship GIT webpage](#).

Enhancing Partnering, Leadership, and Management Goal Implementation Team (GIT 6)

The Enhancing Partnering, Leadership, and Management GIT has received topics for possible revisions to the Governance Document from all interested GIT’s, Workgroups, and Advisory Committees. The GIT is in the process of developing specific language to bring back recommended solutions to the Management Board (MB). The GIT is also drafting a process timeline for current and future Governance Document revisions, taking into consideration the biennial revision schedule determined at the June 16, 2016 MB meeting.

The Budget and Finance Workgroup has drafted an updated workplan. Both the purpose and scope were revised to directly reflect the Workgroup’s focal points, specifically funding, finance strategies, and budget. The revision was carried out to strengthen the Workgroup’s commitment to coordination, innovation, and accurate reporting related to an overall program finance system.

The Enhancing Partnering, Leadership, and Management GIT drafted a charge for PSC consideration for the Independent Evaluator called for under the Chesapeake Bay Accountability and Recovery Act. The draft charge and recommended committee member expertise will be discussed on the August 10th PSC conference call.

The Enhancing, Partnering, Leadership, and Management GIT has received project proposals from all GITs and the Climate Resiliency Workgroup. The proposals have been sent to the Chesapeake Bay Trust (CBT) and distributed by CBT to a panel of external reviewers. Final selection of projects to be funded will take place in August/September 2016. The Enhancing Partnering, Leadership, and Management GIT submitted two proposals top priority projects. The first considers the creation of a “Bay 101” video to

enhance engagement of local governments and their constituents, and the second seeks to coordinate the possible implementation of the Watershed Education Program being designed under the 2016 GIT Funding.

Finally, the Enhancing Partnering, Leadership, and Management GIT's *ChesapeakeDecisions* Project Team would like to recommend co-leading a process to develop an adaptive management-based decision framework for use by the MB, GITs and associated Workgroups. This is part of a larger effort to establish decision-making processes that will inform the development of a tool to assist in future decision-making. The GIT plans to develop draft workflow options to make the biennial cycle in the Watershed Agreement a reality. This would include putting forward initial recommendations and soliciting feedback from GIT Chairs before the GIT presents a final recommendation to the MB possibly at the August 2016 MB meeting.

For more information regarding the Partnering and Leadership GIT, please contact Greg Allen at allen.greg@epa.gov or visit the [Enhancing Partnering, Leadership, and Management GIT webpage](#).

Focused on Science

The Role of Living Shorelines as Estuarine Habitat Conservation Strategies

STAC Member Donna Bilkovic (VIMS) co-authors article in Journal of Coastal Management

This article presents emerging research that suggests that living shorelines may be a viable approach to conserving coastal habitats (marshes, beaches, shallows, seagrasses) along eroding shorelines. Living shorelines typically involve the use of coastal habitats, such as wetlands, that have a natural capacity to stabilize the shore, restore or conserve habitat, and maintain coastal processes. The article also suggests that living shorelines may represent a singular opportunity for habitat conservation in urban and developing estuaries because of their value to society as a shoreline protection approach and resilience to sea level rise (SLR). Click [here](#) to read the full article.

Declining nitrate-N yields in the Upper Potomac River Basin: What is really driving progress under the Chesapeake Bay restoration?

University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES) study, by Keith N. Eshleman and Robert D. Sabo, published in the journal Atmospheric Environment

An UMCES study suggests that improvements in air quality over the Potomac watershed, including the Washington, D.C. metro area, may be responsible for recent progress on water quality in the Chesapeake Bay. Scientists from UMCES have linked improving water quality in streams and rivers of the Upper Potomac River Basin to reductions in nitrogen pollution onto land and streams due to enforcement of the Clean Air Act (CAA). Researchers examined water quality trends in streams and major tributaries of the Upper Potomac River Basin from 1986 to the present. Their analysis revealed nearly “universal improvement” in water quality. In particular, researchers found that atmospheric nitrogen deposition began to decline in 1996 – the same year that emission limits on coal-fired boilers were first put into effect. Click [here](#) to read the study.

World's largest engineering providers, conservation grant-makers team up to restore nation's largest estuary

US Army Corps of Engineers

During the May 26th PSC meeting at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Headquarters, Col. Ed Chamberlayne, Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Baltimore District, signed the symbolic Watershed Assessment Cost-Sharing Agreement with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to begin work on the Chesapeake Bay Comprehensive Resources and Restoration Plan. The comprehensive plan will outline ecological needs, problems, and opportunities in the watershed, while relying heavily on existing information such as the Bay Agreement workplans, as well as new digital land-cover data provided by NFWF. The Corps will contribute 75 percent of the approximate \$2.8 million cost share for the comprehensive plan, and NFWF will contribute the other 25 percent entirely from in-kind services (non-monetary contributions). The end product will be a report submitted to Congress that documents analyses completed and also makes recommendations for actions that the Corps or other federal, state, and local jurisdictions can undertake.

Click [here](#) to read the USACE article. Click [here](#) for more information on the Chesapeake Bay Comprehensive Water Resources Restoration Plan.

Farewell STAC Coordinator, Natalie Gardner



After five years, Natalie Gardner has left CRC and STAC. Gardner joined CRC in 2011 after completing her Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Towson University. Oddly enough, Gardner was pursuing a business degree so she could open her own wedding planning business, something she wanted to do since she was a child. It wasn't until an environmental science class at Anne Arundel Community College when she decided to take another path. According to Gardner, "That class changed my entire perspective on life. It was a science class focused mainly on the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. I had no idea that I, myself, was a contributing factor to the issues within the Bay.

It was eye opening and quickly became a passionate subject for me. The funniest thing about that class is that I remember being so annoyed that I had to take a required science class. Why the heck does a wedding planner need to take a science class?" All of those feelings are such a distant memory to her now.

Gardner heard about CRC through her internship at the EPA Headquarters in Washington, DC. While participating in a law clerk program, Gardner looked for every opportunity to learn more about issues within the Chesapeake Bay. As a born and raised Annapolis native, and server at a locally sourced seafood restaurant for 15 years, Gardner became passionate about the multiple issues facing her local rivers and streams. After receiving an EPA network email, Natalie decided to congratulate the newly appointed EPA Administrator to the Chesapeake Bay Program. "That email, as silly as it seems, was the best thing I ever did" said Gardner. After several back and forth emails, Gardner set up an informational interview to get advice on a career with the Bay, and was introduced to Melissa Fagan, CRC Career

Development Program Coordinator. After learning more about CRC and the program from Fagan, Gardner immediately applied for the open position - "At that very moment, I knew CRC was the perfect fit for me."

Gardner started as STAC staff and eventually moved into the Coordinator role after former STAC Coordinator, Matthew Johnston, took a position moved with University of Maryland at the Bay Program. Gardner said, "I was so nervous, and I almost declined the offer. I like to stay behind the scenes; I don't like to be in the front of the house (a restaurant term)." After consideration, she saw an opportunity for career growth and decided to take on the challenge. "The committee was different pre-Mid-Point Assessment, but not in a good way or a bad way; just different" Gardner stated, "But that's what I love about STAC! It was, and will continue to be, a fast pasted, and forever evolving group of dynamic individuals."

After settling into the Coordinator position, Gardner decided to head back to school and start working towards her Masters Degree in Environmental Planning and Geography at Towson University. Gardner said, "Looking back now, it didn't seem so hard to work full-time and attend grad school at night. But now that I think about it, it was pretty challenging." Her passion for the program content and dedication to her career kept her pushing forward towards her goal. After three and a half years, Gardner received her Masters. "I have to say, the only reason I was able to finish was because of the support of CRC and the STAC members. Having the support of the organization you work for is everything! CRC was flexible, supportive, accommodating, and helpful. The STAC members gave me the confidence to pursue it and they were my biggest cheerleaders."

When asked what Gardner liked most about the position, she said she loved that every day was different and always challenging. She also appreciated the position for its opportunity to work directly with some of the "smartest, most respected scientists in the Bay region." The members are what she will miss the most. "I learned so much from those crazy scientists. No amount of education will ever replace what I learned from them. I feel so blessed for that." Most of all, she said she will miss the friendships she has built with the members, and all the Bay Program staff over the years.



Gardner has begun a position with Earth Resource Technologies (ERT) as a Fisheries Program Support Specialist for NOAA's Office of Habitat Conservation. She is enthusiastic and excited about the opportunity to get a national perspective on the policies and programs working to protect and restore essential habitats, among the many other things she will be exposed to. Day two of her new position took her back to the Bay Program for a full day of meetings at NCBO and a ton of familiar faces. "That day Peyton (Robertson) said I was his new boss! I laughed. But then when I had to email Peyton for a task he had to deliver to me in two days, I laughed harder." "I'm excited that I still get to work with some of these amazing people but in a different context and perspective. I also spent two days in the same meeting with a former STAC member. It's been making the transition a little easier."

Gardner's talents, passion, and enthusiasm will be greatly missed at CRC and STAC, but we expect her to accomplish great things. She was, and will always be, one of the most

dedicated STAC Coordinators. With her departure, CRC is happy to announce that STAC staff, Rachel Dixon (CRC) has accepted the position of STAC Coordinator.

Good luck, Natalie! We will miss you.