



# THE ABSTRACT

*A Monthly Update from the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee*

October 2013

## *Recent STAC News*

### **Management Board (MB) Conference Call – Annapolis, MD** **September 12, 2013**

The last Management Board meeting was dominated by discussion of the new Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement goals and outcomes. Before discussion of the Agreement began, the MB announced the completion of the STAR/UMCES *Lessons from Chesapeake Bay Restoration* report and subsequent distribution after further coordination with the CBP Communications Office; Nick DiPasquale (CBPO) announced that Jeff Horan (USFWS) will step down as GIT 2 (Protect and Restore Vital Habitats) Chair. Mike Slattery (USFWS) will assume the Chair position; the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the CBP will no longer consist of one formal event, but rather a week of restoration activities in mid to late October during which MB members will volunteer to take on a range of environmental activities. Following those announcements, the MB discussed the potential inclusion of management strategies that are not currently included in the new Agreement. Strategies include: Conowingo reservoir and dam, fracking, climate change, environmental literacy, and more. Members requested that a third category (“commitments”) be added to the Agreement to account for jurisdictional obligations that do not fall into goal or outcome categories. Issues raised at the MB meeting will be passed to the Issues Resolution Committee (IRC), where changes are made based on MB suggestions and concerns, thereafter submitted to the PSC for approval at the September 24<sup>th</sup> PSC Meeting.

### **STAC Quarterly Meeting – Annapolis, MD** **September 17-18, 2013**

The September 2013 STAC quarterly meeting marked the last quarterly meeting for Chris Pyke as STAC Chair. Kirk Havens (VIMS) will assume the role of Chair. In other membership news, Randy Chambers (College of William & Mary) cycled off STAC, and Bob Howarth (Cornell) resigned as the New York Gubernatorial STAC appointee. Elections were held to fill the vacancy left by Chambers, reappointment of Marjy Friedrichs (VIMS), and approval of Lisa Wainger (UMCES) as new Vice-Chair. Candidates included: Shirley Fiske (UMD), Alix D. Dowling Fink (Longwood University), Maria Tzortiou (Earth System Science Interdisciplinary Center – UMD), J.K. Bohlke (USGS), Mary Snieckus (Natural Resource Policy Analysis and Consulting), Jack Watson (PSU), Robert Wolcott (EPA – Retired), and Lara Fowler (PSU).

Friedrichs was re-appointed, Wainger was elected Vice Chair, and Dr. Alix D. Dowling Fink will join STAC as the newest At-large member. Quarterly meeting agenda items included discussion of the new Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement and STAC's messages to the Executive Council; updates on BMP Verification review from both the STAC BMP Verification Subcommittee (led by Brian Benham) and CBP Director Nick DiPasquale; updated technology developments and research needs in point source nutrient removal; discussion of CBP goals and outcomes included in the new Agreement; sustaining the Bay Watershed Water Quality Monitoring networks through 2025; an update on SAV research in the Bay; updates from the CBP Phosphorous Review; and recaps of the Environmental Literacy workshop, Coastal Habitat workshop, and Oyster Review findings and recommendations. The next STAC quarterly meeting is scheduled for December 3-4, 2013 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Annapolis, MD. September 2013 quarterly meeting presentations can be found on the STAC meetings website: [http://www.chesapeake.org/stac/meeting.php?activity\\_id=218](http://www.chesapeake.org/stac/meeting.php?activity_id=218).

### **Principals' Staff Committee (PSC) Meeting – Washington, D.C.** **September 24, 2013**

The PSC convened on September 24<sup>th</sup> to discuss and vote on the latest version of the new Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement. Representatives from the 9 signatories reviewed changes and additions to the Agreement goals and outcomes. In total, 14 recommendations are up for approval by the PSC including goals and outcomes pertaining to the Conowingo Dam, fracking, climate change, land use, toxic contaminants, local leadership goal, outcomes vs. measuring progress/status, data management/verification, management strategies/partner participation, operational commitments, communications/outreach, socio-economic indicators, independent evaluation, and monitoring/modeling.

New or revised goal and outcome text was presented and officially approved by a super-majority (7 out of 9) of the signatories for the following: the Blue Crab Management Outcome, Revised Oyster Outcome, Forage Fish Outcome, Fish Habitat Outcome, Wetlands Outcome, SAV Outcome, Tree Canopy Outcome, Land Conservation Goal, Land Use Options Evaluation Outcome, Public Access Site Development Outcome, and Environmental Literacy Goal. There was a major omission of goals and outcomes pertaining to Toxic Contaminants as both the Toxic Contaminants Research Outcome and Toxic Contaminants Reduction Outcome were not approved for inclusion by a super-majority.

A new Local Leadership Goal was discussed also, but was not approved, much to the dismay of LGAC Coordinator Mary Gattis who spoke up in defense of the role local governments will play in the effectiveness of the new Agreement. EPA Region III Administrator Shawn Garvin agreed that the inclusion of local leadership was important, but the group decided it would be better included elsewhere in the Agreement, and not as an explicit goal with a set of outcomes. The Agreement language will be revised to reflect the importance of local leadership, but it will not be included as a goal. The proposed goal and outcome changes, stakeholder comments, and additional PSC meeting materials from September 24<sup>th</sup> can be found here:

<http://www.chesapeakebay.net/S=0/calendar/event/20954/>.

## *Upcoming Events*

### October 2013 Management Board Call

**Date:** October 10, 2013

**Call-In Information** – Conference Line: 1-866-299-3188; Conference Code: 410-267-5731

### October 2013 Modeling Quarterly Review

**Date:** October 16-17, 2013

**Location:** USGS Baltimore Office (Room A) – Baltimore, MD

### November 2013 Management Board Meeting

**Date:** November 21, 2013

**Location:** Joe Macknis Memorial Conference Room (Fish Shack) – Annapolis, MD

### Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) December 2013 Quarterly Meeting

**Date:** December 3-4, 2013

**Location:** Hilton Garden Inn – Annapolis, MD

\*Please see the Chesapeake Bay Program Calendar for more specific event times:

<http://www.chesapeakebay.net/calendar>.

## *STAR Updates*

STAR continues to discuss the process of adjusting the FY2013 monitoring program to accommodate a million dollar shortfall in federal funding. STAR previously considered four different funding allocation options and selected Option 2. STAR Coordinator, Peter Tango, said that Option 2 will result in the tidal monitoring network losing \$55,000 with the nontidal monitoring network slated to lose about \$700,000. Additional funding from EPA (\$300,000), USGS (\$100,000), and state partners reduced nontidal network losses for 2013. “The losses in the end for this year are slightly more balanced between tidal and nontidal as a result,” Tango said. “We are coordinating the final outlook based on all the amazing gap closing efforts underway, but the result of all the additional effort appears to be that 4 stations (instead of about 18) will be reduced from the nontidal network.” Under this option, a monitoring funding gap of \$189,000 must still be addressed by the CBP.

Now that a funding option has been selected, STAR will move forward with Phase 1 of the Monitoring Review and Phase II and III BASIN (Building and Sustaining Integrated Networks) Review. If you have any questions regarding this process, or other STAR activities, please contact STAR Coordinator Peter Tango at [ptango@chesapeakebay.net](mailto:ptango@chesapeakebay.net).

## ***GIT Updates***

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

### **Sustainable Fisheries Goal Implementation Team (GIT 1)**

The Chesapeake Bay Stock Assessment Committee (CBSAC) met in late August to prioritize blue crab research and data needs. The committee identified fishery independent surveys (especially summer surveys) focused on the spring through fall distribution and sex-specific abundance of blue crabs as their top priority. The Invasive Catfish Task Force is moving forward with their draft final report of management recommendations aimed at mitigating the spread of these invasive species while minimizing their impacts on the ecosystem. At their last meeting on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, GIT 1 heard a presentation from the American Shad Indicator Action Team regarding a proposed revision to the shad indicator.

### **Habitats Goal Implementation Team (GIT 2)**

Jeff Horan (USFWS) will step down as GIT 2 Chair and has accepted a new position as Forest Ecologist with Refuges in the USFWS Northeast Region. Mike Slattery (USFWS) will become the new GIT 2 Chair. In other news, the Stream Health Workgroup is planning to hold a meeting to coincide with the October 30<sup>th</sup> Mid-Atlantic Stream Restoration Conference in Baltimore, MD.

### **Water Quality Goal Implementation Team (GIT 3)**

The Water Quality GIT held their last meeting on September 9<sup>th</sup>. At that meeting the GIT agreed that CBP jurisdictions will submit their 2015 milestones by January 15, 2014. All of the jurisdictions have the opportunity to revise the milestones based on 2013 progress runs, and May 15, 2015 will be considered the date-certain for submitting final milestones. The GIT 3 Agriculture Workgroup is also working to finalize Watershed Model Phase 5.3.2 recommendations for a number of best management practices before the 2013 progress runs, including the conservation tillage BMP, nutrient management BMP, and cover crops BMP. GIT 3 will review these recommendations and vote to approve/disapprove on its October 15<sup>th</sup> call. In the meantime, the GIT 3 Poultry Litter Subcommittee is working to develop new baseline data on poultry production within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, and will present that new data in late Fall 2013.

### **Maintain Healthy Watersheds Goal Implementation Team (GIT 4)**

The Chesapeake Watershed Forum was held in Shepherdstown, West Virginia from September 27-28 and featured two 90-minute sessions from GIT 4 on the importance of healthy watershed

protection. At their last GIT meeting on September 11<sup>th</sup>, GIT 4 discussed the possibility of an EPA HQ-funded pilot healthy watershed protection project in the Chesapeake basin; a case study about how Trout Unlimited is pursuing brook trout habitat conservation with the Coldwater Land Conservancy Fund; a College of William and Mary study of local government watershed protection tools that are in effect in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia; an adaptive management review of GIT 4 strategies past and future; pending improvements to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model that will facilitate better focus on local watersheds; and forecasts of urban land use change and corresponding estimates of forest and farmland conversion.

### **Foster Stewardship Goal Implementation Team (GIT 5)**

The GIT 5 Education Workgroup, Public Access Planning Action Team, and Land Conservation Priorities Action Team developed new and revised outcome and goal language that was submitted to the PSC for approval. Two new outcomes were added under the Land Conservation Goal: the Land Use Methods and Metrics Development Outcome and the Land Use Options Evaluation Outcome, both approved at the September 24<sup>th</sup> PSC meeting. Revised language for the Public Access Site Development outcome was unanimously approved, and revised language for the Environmental Literacy Goal was also approved.

### **Partnering and Leadership Goal Implementation Team (GIT 6)**

GIT 6 has been focused on assisting the Bay Partnership with the development of the New Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement. GIT 6 Chair, Carin Bisland, presented the latest version of the Agreement at the PSC meeting on September 24<sup>th</sup>. This version of the Agreement will be made available to the public for comment between September 23<sup>rd</sup> and October 23<sup>rd</sup>. GIT 6 will track all comments during this time period and discuss/incorporate new suggestions, along with the help of the CBP Editorial Board and Issues Resolution Committee.

## ***STAC Spotlight***

### **Chris Pyke Steps Down After Two Years as STAC Chair**

Chris Pyke (USGBC) recently concluded his final quarterly meeting as the committee's Chair, and he said he knows how new Chair, Kirk Havens (VIMS), and Vice-Chair, Lisa Wainger (UMCES), are likely feeling. "I'm sure they're simultaneously concerned about what they just signed up for and also trying to figure out how to best serve as Chair and Vice-Chair," Pyke said. "My advice would be not to worry about what you can't change right now, and focus on what you can change in the near term. There's almost a zen aspect to it, and I think [Kirk and Lisa] are well suited to make those decisions and find balance."

Pyke said one of the most challenging tasks the Chairs will encounter is navigating the increasingly regulatory landscape of the Chesapeake Bay Program, and determining where STAC can make the most positive impact. “I had the fortune, or misfortune, of working as STAC Chair as the TMDL and regulatory perspective took over the Bay Program. Since then, we’ve been trying to navigate how a volunteer science community operates within a regulatory program. It’s not so obvious how we should behave in that role,” Pyke said.

One of the keys to advancing the role of science within the Partnership is to bolster the communication and understanding between state level representatives and the scientific community, Pyke explained. Another is the application of that science in a practical and financially responsible way that will benefit both the environment and Bay Program. Havens and Wainger should adapt easily to that setting. As a gubernatorial appointee, Havens is well situated to be very responsive to the state partners, and Pyke said Havens’ strength in driving state engagement will trickle down to the local government level as well. Pyke also expressed hope that STAC might team up and work in conjunction with the Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC) and Citizen’s Advisory Committee (CAC) in the future to better formulate strong, consistent recommendations to the CBP. And on the economic side, Wainger will bring a lot of experience as an environmental economist and social scientist.

Looking back on the past two years as STAC Chair, Pyke joked that he’d probably take on the role again as soon as he has some time to forget how it went this first time around. “It was and still is a very challenging time to think about what volunteer science advisors are doing. I don’t know if I moved the ball as far as I wanted to...it could be that the ball is made of concrete and chained to the floor, or maybe I didn’t do enough, but there’s only so much you can do as one person over two years,” Pyke said.

“But, there’s some wisdom in having the STAC Chair terms being only two years. We allow new people to try out new ideas and then move on and let the next person take a crack at it.”

As Havens and Wainger take control, Pyke is confident that STAC is in safe hands, and now that his term is over, Pyke said he looks forward to resuming his role as a regular STAC member and working on narrower issues that are of importance to STAC. Specifically, he’d like to reach out to more local schools and construction programs in the Bay area to discuss how the CBP can help foster built environments that are good for Bay health. Other than that, he’s finishing some work related to the IPCC’s Climate Assessment this fall, and keeping his eyes open for new opportunities.

On behalf of STAC, we would like to give a big thank you to Chris for his enthusiastic dedication to the advancement of STAC over the past two years, and wish Kirk Havens and Lisa Wainger the best of luck as they assume their respective roles as Chair and Vice-Chair.