Breakout Session Question Overview

SSWG members: Ellen, Leah

1. What is a **pressing question or challenge** facing the Chesapeake Bay Program that social scientists are uniquely qualified to tackle in collaboration with natural and physical sciences?

2. What **barriers exist to collaboration** between social and natural scientists, and how can we overcome them?

3. How can we **better communicate the value** of social science insights to natural science practitioners and policymakers?

What is a **pressing question or challenge** facing the Chesapeake Bay Program that social scientists are uniquely qualified to tackle in collaboration with natural and physical sciences?

- Non-point source pollution and agriculture (implementing BMPs)
  - Communication and Behavior
- Structure, Governance, and Processes of CBP
  - lists that teams have created as a menu of options
- Beyond 2025 - desire to move the partnership goals and outcomes to be more human focused
  - Shift in mental framework from TMDL as goal or healthy ecosystems and human populations
- Urban sector - TMDL as stick but when you need to move the needle elsewhere and you can only use a carrot - we need more ways of understanding what people value if it's not under a regulatory framework
  - Urban planning and Voluntary planning
- Exploration of how to best communicate and what are the purposes of communication
  - Two way dialogue to share ideas and build consensus v. pushing out ideas to make people do things
  - How to engage people, talk to people (but not tell them what to do), different perspectives
  - Talking to people in terms that are important to them, reframing of ideas (i.e. not reduction in Nitrogen but how reducing Nitrogen pollution will help them)
  - Understanding concerns and perspectives
- What tools do community need and how can they be tailor to their goals and value
- Who is included, who is excluded, whose voices are heard and valued and why

What **barriers exist to collaboration** between social and natural scientists, and how can we overcome them?

- Few social scientists see how things operate among different groups in the partnership (there are power dynamics that exist among people at the table - e.g., leaders in each jurisdiction)
  - Social scientists voices are typically not heard in these discussions
  - Some voices are elevated more than others in problematic ways - voices representing social science issues can be excluded/overlooked
- We need a systematic approach and tools for developing collaborative solutions by integrating these voices and perspectives
- Political motivations, policymaker perspectives, etc. are part of this structure - is STAC getting the information we need? Can STAC representatives be present in other meetings? A lot of the partnership still doesn't know what STAC can do for them. They don't know what to ask sometimes. Idea: better integrating advisory committees within the partnership
- Think about reframing our goal. It's not just the TMDL. It's more like a healthy Bay, healthy watershed, and happy, healthy people
- Social sciences are devalued - seen as not rigorous. Particularly qualitative work.
- Our work is often slow moving – esp. Community-based work that take relationship building investments. The timeframes may not match.

How can we better communicate the value of social science insights to natural science practitioners and policymakers?

- Communicating fast and slow processes so that there is improved understanding of the natural and human systems and how to study them and on what timeframes.
- More lightning talks or direct connections to outputs of social science work
- The value of qualitative approaches need to be emphasized so they can be appreciated - and the importance of the findings can be highlighted. What happens if we don't have these insights?
- Social science and natural science pools can be divisive sometimes – it loses the nuance about our methods
- Practicing better ways to communicate and collaborate
- How do we see connections between the work when we are speaking different languages - how can social scientists work together - moving towards creating and building out more diverse teams
- Understanding how we model and how decisions about what we model directly impact what we can learn - modeling is a tool, but whose perspectives and voices are represented in the model determine what we learn from it. We need to take a step back to examine our modeling choices and assumptions and whose voices aren't at the table
- Translating science into actionable nuggets - moving science into the policy world and policy world being hesitant to drawing conclusions from science. Scientists are hesitant to go beyond the science and recommend a policy action. Likewise, policy makers are hesitant to make a change in response to a scientific finding, especially one that relies on many assumptions.
- Link methods with the identified challenges and barriers.
- Think about who we are communicating to and why. There are people at the table making the decisions - perhaps this audience should be the priority for communicating how to overcome barriers.