Chesapeake Bay Program's (CBP)
Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC)
STAC Topical Meeting | Virtual
February 20th, 2026
Integrating Social Science in Restoration Programs
Meeting Webpage | RSVP

Friday, February 20th

9:00 am   **Meeting Introduction** – *STAC Chair Bill Dennison (UMCES)*
Welcome; introductions (STAC leadership, facilitator, SSWG (STAC Social Science Standing Workgroup)); quick agenda overview and why STAC is convening this discussion.

9:05 am   **Setting the Stage** – *SSWG Co-Leads Christine Kirchhoff (PSU) and Ellen Kohl (UMBC)*
A short framing conversation on what "integrating social science" can mean in restoration and management contexts (alongside natural and physical science) to support more actionable, durable decisions. We'll outline what we hope participants listen for throughout the panels (real-world examples, decision context, and tradeoffs) and how STAC will use today's discussion in follow-up synthesis and recommendations.

9:20 am   **Expert Panel 1: Sister Programs** – *Facilitated by Lara Fowler (Penn State)*
Speakers from peer regional programs will share practical examples of how social science has been incorporated into restoration planning, priority-setting, stakeholder engagement, and decision support. Panelists will highlight what changed, what it took to make it work (structures, roles, funding), and lessons learned.

Guiding prompts: What did integration look like in practice? What improved (or didn't)? What challenges and tradeoffs emerged?

Panelists:
- Puget Sound – David Trimbach (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife)
- Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta – Xoco Shinbrot (Delta Stewardship Council)
- Western Lake Erie Basin – Michelle Selzer (Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development)

Expert Panel 2: Aspirational Co-Production – *Facilitated by Lara Fowler (Penn State)*
Speakers will share concrete co-production examples—how partners worked together to shape questions, methods, interpretation, and use of results—showing what social science contributed beyond "communications" or "behavior change." The emphasis is on what was done, why it mattered, and what was difficult.

Guiding prompts: What did you do, what did social science add, and what was hardest?

Panelists:
- NERRS Science Collaborative – Julia Wondolleck (University of Michigan)
- Shrimp Futures – Carissa Gervasi (University of Miami)
- Maryland Oyster Futures – Taylor Goelz (Aspen Institute)

10:10 am   **Break**

10:20 am   **Panel Q&A** – *Facilitated by Lara Fowler (Penn State)*
Open Q&A focused on transferable lessons and what could be relevant to STAC and
Chesapeake Bay Program decision-making processes.

10:50 am   **Breakout Groups**
Small-group discussion to reflect on key takeaways and identify practical implications.
Groups will focus on:
- What approaches seem most transferable to the Chesapeake Bay context?
- Where are the biggest gaps or uncertainties?
- What should STAC explore next, and what could be tried in the near term?

11:20 am   **Breakout Group Report-out & Synthesis**
Groups share key points; facilitator identifies cross-cutting themes.

11:35 am   **Facilitated Plenary Discussion** – *Facilitated by Lara Fowler (Penn State)*
Full-group discussion to refine takeaways and identify priority next steps.

11:55 am   **Wrap-Up and Next Steps**
Overview of immediate next steps, including a short post-meeting synthesis and potential
follow-on products.

12:00 pm   **Topical Meeting Adjourns**