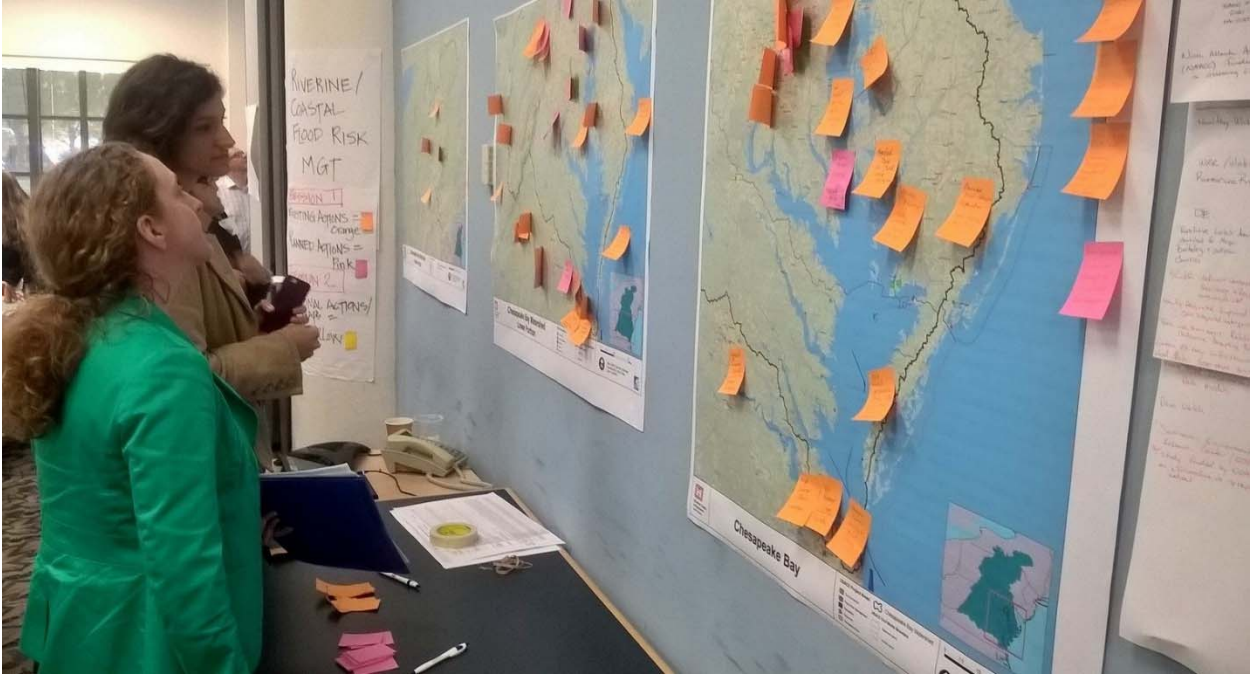


Chesapeake Bay Comprehensive Water Resources and Restoration Plan Stakeholder Workshop Summary



Workshop Overview

On November 7, 2016, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Baltimore District (NAB) and Norfolk District (NAO), National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), USACE Institute for Water Resources (IWR), and Maryland Department of the Environment hosted, moderated, and facilitated a Stakeholder Workshop to kick off the Chesapeake Bay Comprehensive Water Resources and Restoration planning process. This process will develop a coordinated, comprehensive master plan within the USACE mission areas for restoring, preserving, and protecting the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem. The objectives of the workshop were to:

1. Identify Chesapeake Bay water resources and restoration needs USACE and others could address; discuss and prioritize actions USACE and others should undertake that will contribute the most to Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts;
2. Coordinate the Chesapeake Bay Comprehensive Water Resources and Restoration Plan (CBCP) with the actions of the Chesapeake Bay Program; Consider and avoid duplication of any ongoing or planned actions of other federal, state, and local agencies and non-governmental organizations;
3. Review planned geospatial analyses and identify additional sources of information or references (datasets, reports, plans), especially geospatial datasets, to incorporate into CBCP's geospatial analyses that will be used to inform the study.

Participants from the USACE including the Baltimore and Norfolk Districts, North Atlantic Division, and Institute for Water Resources were present, as well as participants representing the District of Columbia Department of the Environment, The Nature Conservancy, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, West Virginia Department of Natural Resources, Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife, Chesapeake Bay Commission, Coastal States Organization, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Natural Resource Conservation Service. A total of 65 participants attended the workshop (See Attachment 1 for Participant list. See Attachment 2 for Stakeholder Workshop Agenda.)

Introduction of the Chesapeake Bay Comprehensive Water Resources and Restoration Plan

Ms. Amy Guise, Chief of Planning, provided welcoming comments on behalf of the USACE NAB, and Mr. Jake Reilly, Director of Chesapeake Bay Programs, provided welcoming comments on behalf of NFWF, the non-federal sponsor for the CBCP. Ms. Guise described the CBCP as a roadmap for the implementation of projects in the future, including the identification of USACE actions and projects to be implemented in each state within the Chesapeake Bay watershed as well as the District of Columbia. Mr. Reilly emphasized the importance of identifying not only USACE actions, but also leveraging the related efforts of other agencies and organizations in the watershed. In addition, Ms. Rena Weichenberg, Planning Program Manager of the USACE North Atlantic Division, welcomed stakeholders to consider opportunities through which the sequencing and timelines of USACE and nonfederal actions could be aligned in order to achieve the maximum benefit for Chesapeake Bay through the CBCP.

NAB and NAO provided an overview of this two-year study, with the clarification that the CBCP is a watershed assessment which will result in a single, integrated restoration plan to be shared with the public and provided to Congress in the form of a report. It will not include specific recommendations for construction, but instead will include information outlining projects that are planned or could be noted as opportunities for implementation. Possible avenues for the USACE role in these opportunities include Section 510 (design/build authority), Technical Services (Floodplain Management Services/Planning Assistance to States and adaptation planning), Support for Other (SFO) which includes Federal agencies and DoD, the Continuing Authorities Program, General Investigations Feasibility Studies, and research recommendations. Geospatial analyses of the watershed, restoration progress, policies and programs, and a funding strategy for projects to be completed by 2025 will also be included in the CBCP Report.

Mr. Dave Robbins, Project Manager of USACE NAB, outlined specific components of the study including 1) Geospatial Analyses, 2) Prioritization and Sequencing Actions, 3) Products, 4) Milestone Schedule, and 5) Next Steps and Path Forward. For more details of these components, see Attachment 3 to view the slide presentation from the workshop. Mr. Jason O'Neal, GIS Lead of USACE NAB reviewed the geospatial analyses and data collection process, and circulated a list of all datasets collected to-date for the study that will be utilized for the geospatial analysis (see Attachment 4). NAO requested that participants review the handout and let the team know of missing or additional data sources that are pertinent to the study (see Attachment 5). It was emphasized during the introductory comments that the CBCP aims to build upon the existing networks, efforts, and programs that are already in place in the region, such as the Chesapeake Bay Program. The presenters also pointed out that while the CBCP is inclusive of water quality needs and opportunities, the focus of this study is more broadly focused on ecological restoration. The importance of input from stakeholders was reiterated in terms of the need to avoid duplication of efforts, to make maximum use of existing information, and to identify as complete a picture as possible of the problems, needs and opportunities related to ecological restoration and/or conservation, flood risk management, water supply, navigation, and military installations in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Breakout Sessions

The Workshop included three breakout sessions through which participants could share information and ideas. Session 1 was focused on the identification of existing or planned actions in the watershed, as well as existing sources of information and geospatial data relevant to restoration actions. Session 2 focused on identification of additional actions the USACE should take, gaps related to restoration actions, and which organization would be most appropriate to lead. Maps of the study area were used by each breakout group to document and develop actions; information provided by meeting participants was added to over the course of the day as groups moved through each breakout session. Results of the mapping exercises from Sessions 1 and 2 are included in Attachment 6. Session 3 focused on initial prioritization discussions and highlighted gaps and opportunities of most interest to participants, including possible actions by USACE and other agencies or organizations. A list of priority activities was developed for each topic area, and all stakeholders were then given the opportunity to 'vote' for their top ten priority areas across all topic areas.

Throughout sessions 1 through 3, participants had the opportunity to provide input on the following topics 1) climate change; 2) ecosystem restoration (including water quality Best Management Plans (BMPs), land conservation, water supply - ecological and consumptive use, restoration actions (Watershed Implementation Plans, Chesapeake Bay Program Management Strategies, Biennial Workplans); 3) riverine and coastal flood risk management; 4) regional sediment management and shoreline erosion/stabilization actions (including navigation and beneficial use of dredged material); 5) public access to, and educational/stewardship opportunities for, USACE projects; and 6) policy needs and implementation barriers.

The results of breakout session 3, which focused on prioritization are included in Attachment 7. The gaps and opportunities identified by stakeholders for each topical area are listed below in descending order based on number of votes received.

1.) Climate Change:

- a. Integrate green infrastructure strategies to generate multi-benefit projects (i.e. water quality, ecosystem resiliency, community erosion buffering, flood mitigation [i.e., Ellicott City], and wetland areas)
- b. Need for wetland migration mapping (projections for 2025, 2050, 2100)
- c. Develop a strategy to prioritize protection and enhancement of Tangier Sound (“Heart of the Bay”)

2.) Ecosystem Restoration:

- a. A need for large, multi-benefit restoration projects for future implementation (with a focus on funding and policy issues)
- b. Increase the flexibility for permits and regulations
- c. Increase fish passage connectivity
- d. Need to better quantify/further develop ecosystem services

3.) Riverine and Coastal Flood Risk Management:

- a. Prioritize floodplain restoration and conservation based on ecosystem services, as defined by existing studies
- b. Provide technical assistance to communities for the identification of co-benefits of flood risk management and MS-4 (storm water regulations)
- c. Target nature-based restoration around flood vulnerable communities
- d. Quantify flood risk benefits and ecosystem services for wetland restoration

4.) Regional Sediment Management:

- a. Conduct uniform geospatial analysis across the watershed of sediment-starved habitats, shoreline erosion, coastal risk, stream stability, littoral drift, coastal wetlands
- b. Activate a sediment work group to coordinate sediment management, integrate dredging and beneficial use, and address comprehensive analysis of sediment locations, use, transport and budgets across watershed and sub-basin scales.
- c. Conduct hotspot analysis of legacy sediment across the watershed, for locations such as Conowingo Dam

- d. Develop better information, control, and technical assistance related to agricultural pollutants and toxins

5.) Public Access and Educational/Stewardship Opportunities for USACE:

- a. Provide capacity to community colleges, trade schools (i.e. look to add a certification for restoration efforts)
- b. Identify local champions for efforts (e.g. city council, church leaders)
- c. Assess access vulnerability under future conditions
- d. Expand on external programs to promote issues – all partners work together (e.g. Monarch Initiative)

6.) Policy Needs and Implementation Barriers:

- a. Streamline regulatory permitting process for restoration projects
- b. Analyze and review existing jurisdictions' tidal wetland policies; compare with science and actual actions on the ground
- c. Project selection criteria – allow for the prioritization of multi-beneficial uses, partner contributions, and long-term benefits
- d. Include Best Management Practices and Low Impact Development into other projects (i.e. USACE wetland and stream restoration projects)

Concluding Discussion

During the concluding discussion, Dr. Seth Cohen (USACE, IWR) facilitated a short group discussion of the gaps and opportunities identified by participants in each of the topic areas. Mr. Dave Robbins (USACE, NAB) reviewed the accomplishments of the day, which included the gathering of information and input from stakeholders through the three breakout sessions. It was noted that the full breadth of input received during these sessions will be referenced during subsequent stages of the CBCP development. Stakeholders requested further input from USACE regarding the agency's approach to the prioritization of activities as the CBCP is further developed, and it was noted that additional stakeholders representing a wider range of geographic regions within the watershed should be further engaged in upcoming workshops or webinars as well. The group confirmed use of the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Agreement as a shared vision statement for the CBCP, with the recommended addition of the term 'resilience' to the vision statement (See Attachment 8 for the CBCP framework which includes the draft vision). Mr. Robbins emphasized that there will be many future opportunities for stakeholder input, including upcoming webinars focused on planning horizons and future without project conditions; problems, needs, and opportunities, draft results and recommendations, as well as geospatial analysis that will be carried out through upcoming CBCP efforts. To view results of workshop evaluations completed by participants, see Attachment 9. To view a related summary of USACE Technical Service Program, see Attachment 10.

This stakeholder workshop was the first of multiple opportunities for stakeholder input and review as the CBCP is developed over the next two years. Moving forward, stakeholders can check the project website periodically for interim study products and updates:

<http://www.nab.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Chesapeake-Bay-Comprehensive-Plan/>.

Attachments

Attachment 1: Participant List

Attachment 2: Stakeholder Workshop Agenda

Attachment 3: Stakeholder Workshop Slide Presentation

Attachment 4: Data Inventory Handout (provided by NAB during workshop)

Attachment 5: Data Sources (identified during workshop)

Attachment 6: Mapping Exercises (results of breakout sessions 1 and 2)

Attachment 7: Priority Actions (results of breakout session 3)

Attachment 8: CBCP Framework document (workshop read-ahead)

Attachment 9: Workshop Evaluation Results

Attachment 10: Summary of USACE Technical Service Programs