



## COG WATER RESOURCES PROGRAM UPDATES CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM (CBP) (AS OF 11/2/17)

Summary of key CBP activities that COG staff are monitoring or actively involved in that have critical impacts or potential implications for COG's members & the RWQM Work Program.

Bay TMDL – Overall Program & Midpoint Assessment (MPA) Activities	COG Contact
<p>The Bay Program Partnership's schedule for the Midpoint Assessment (MPA) is outlined in a <b>COG graphic that outlines the overall <a href="#">MPA schedule</a></b> noting key milestones and decision points where COG member input on technical and policy matters will need to be provided over the next few years.</p> <p>Key MPA decisions include whether to approve the new Phase 6 suite of modeling tools; whether to use 2025 growth projections in the Phase III Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs); how to allocate the 'new' Conowingo Dam/Susquehanna Watershed loads (who should be responsible, and the timeframe for addressing the additional loads); how to factor climate change into the Phase III WIPs; and the development of the Phase III Planning Targets, which will lead to the development of the Phase III WIPs. The Water Quality Goal Implementation Team (WQGIT) will discuss these issues and make recommendations to the CBP's Management Board and Principals' Staff Committee.</p> <p><b>UPDATE</b>– Because of the need to finalize modeling efforts and allow some time to review the model outputs; the majority of the decisions have been delayed by approximately six weeks – and won't be decided upon until the December 2017 timeframe.</p> <p>COG staff will continue to brief and solicit input from the WRTC and CBPC members over the coming months to note any technical issues, and seek guidance on policy positions that should be communicated to the CBP.</p> <p><b>Key Deadlines</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>Final</u> decisions regarding allocation of Conowingo Dam/Susquehanna Watershed, Growth, and Climate Impact loads – <b>Mid-December 2017</b></li><li>• <u>Draft</u> Phase III WIP Planning Targets issued – <b>December 22, 2017</b></li><li>• <u>Final</u> Phase III WIP Planning Targets (<b>with special cases</b>) issued – late April 2018</li><li>• <u>Draft</u> Phase III WIPs issued – <b>April 2019</b></li><li>• <u>Final</u> Phase III WIPs issued – <b>June 2019</b></li></ul> <p>Note: This schedule <b>still</b> allows a one (1) year interval from the issuance of the Final Planning Targets to issuance of the Final WIPs.</p>	<p>Tanya Spano (202) 962-3776 <a href="mailto:tspano@mwcog.org">tspano@mwcog.org</a></p>

Watershed and Water Quality Models– Activities and Issues

COG Contact

**2017 Dead Zone Estimates Provide Mixed Results**

In mid-October, the Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences released an assessment of the size of the 2017 “dead zone” in the entire Chesapeake Bay that was 10 percent higher than a similar assessment for 2016. Earlier, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources reported that its monitoring of dissolved oxygen levels in Maryland waters of the Bay indicated that the volume of hypoxic waters in August was below the long-term average,

The variation in these assessments are due to different methods of estimating hypoxic and anoxic volumes and the different scopes of the two agencies. Bay scientists note that levels of low oxygen in the Bay fluctuate with different weather and climate factors, but that the long-term trend continues to show improvement, i.e. decreasing hypoxic volume, in response to management actions.

For more details, see:

[https://www.chesapeakebay.net/news/blog/chesapeake\\_bay\\_dead\\_zone\\_in\\_creases\\_by\\_10\\_percent](https://www.chesapeakebay.net/news/blog/chesapeake_bay_dead_zone_in_creases_by_10_percent)

**Using CAST to Develop Implementation Plans that Meet Loading Targets in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed**

The Chesapeake Assessment Scenario Tool (CAST) allows users to generate data from the Bay Program’s new Phase 6 version of the watershed model. On November 9<sup>th</sup> the Bay Program staff held a webcast to demonstrate the tool and highlight how it is being used by representatives of counties, states, watershed groups, and others for a variety of uses, not just those directly related to the Chesapeake Bay TMDL.

Note that the Bay Program has not yet produced its final version of the Phase 6 watershed model. COG staff will update its Navigation Guide to various model analysis tools when final model output is available

Link to CAST tool information:

<http://cast.chesapeakebay.net/>

**Phase 6 Watershed Model Analysis**

The Bay Program has not yet finalized either Version 6 of its watershed model or the new version of its water quality and sediment transport model.

COG staff continues to track draft results from these models, which will be used to revise the amount of nutrient and sediment reduction each state must achieve under the Midpoint Assessment process for the Bay TMDL. Data from the final versions of the models, now expected to be available in November and December, is not expected to be significantly different than the draft final information currently available.

COG and Northern Virginia Regional Commission staff still plan to conduct a workshop on Phase 6 watershed model results once the final results are

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available, probably sometime early in 2018. In the meantime, members who are interested in specific modeling issues or who would like assistance in navigating the tools that exist for depicting model inputs and outputs can contact COG staff for help.

**Use of Growth Scenarios in WIP Planning**

The Bay Program has not yet made a decision on whether to use estimated loads in 2025 as the basis for the Phase III Watershed Implementation plans to be produced under the Midpoint Assessment of the Bay TMDL. Doing so would entail the use of the program’s model for forecasting land use change due to growth and development. The Bay Program’s Land Use Workgroup will review preliminary results from one particular model forecast – designed to reflect current zoning conditions – at its next meeting on Nov. 8. For local governments in the Washington region, one of the key parameters for gauging the impact of growth on estimated loads of nutrient and sediment will be the percent of growth through infill and redevelopment.

**Ecologix Report: Strategic Outreach Education Program for Local Elected Officials**

In January 2017 a small number of CBPC members participated in an Ecologix Group, LLC-facilitated conference call, contributing to their research about local government Chesapeake Bay information and communication needs. In sum, Ecologix recommended where possible to tie the Chesapeake Bay issues to local issues (i.e., local jobs, infrastructure, public health, and land use planning) wherever possible, and educational units should be tied to the Chesapeake Bay Agreement goals. Educational content should be a combination of in-person and online; should leverage existing resources and share best practices; and should measure success. Here is the full [Ecologix final report](#) on their findings and recommendations about how to develop strategic outreach for local elected officials. Ecologix (Bob Summers, Bob Hoyt, and Diane Cameron) produced the report under Chesapeake Bay Trust contract, and thanked COG in their acknowledgments.

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