

Email to: Water Resources Technical Committee and Regional Water Quality Monitoring Subcommittee Members
From: Christine Howard
Date: August 12, 2013
Subject: 2013 Funding Shortfall for the CBP Partnership's Tidal and Non-Tidal Monitoring Networks

Dear WRTC and RWQMSc Members,

We would like to make you aware of a funding shortfall in the Chesapeake Bay Program's tidal and non-tidal monitoring networks that could affect some non-tidal stations in the COG region. We bring this to your attention to bring awareness to this funding issue and to start a dialogue regarding long term monitoring in the COG region, particularly non-tidal monitoring. The non-tidal monitoring network will play a critical role in the upcoming midpoint assessment for the Chesapeake Bay TMDL both in providing data used to calibrate a revised watershed model and in directly assessing nutrient and sediment pollutant load reductions.

Background information on the 2013 Funding Shortfall for the CBP Partnership's Tidal and Non-Tidal Monitoring Networks

The states, the District, EPA, other federal agency partners, universities, river basin commissions, and others have a long history of joint funding for the tidal and non-tidal monitoring networks. However, the lack of long-term federal agency funding commitments combined with recent state and EPA reductions has led to a shortfall of \$944,000 affecting FY 14. The Bay Program's Scientific, Technical Assessment and Reporting (STAR) team, in conjunction with the tidal and non-tidal monitoring workgroups, developed options to address the funding shortfall (see attached paper) and presented these to the CBP Management Board on August 8. Given the likelihood that both EPA and the U.S. Geological Survey will find some additional FY 14 funds, the Management Board unanimously approved 'reduction option 2' (see second attachment). Under this option, operations at as many as 14 of the 18 stations identified for the elimination of funding (see map on attachment 3) may still be cut beginning with the start of a new water year Oct. 1. The original 18 includes four stations in our region.

The proposed action is seen as a temporary solution, given the likelihood of further budget shortfalls in FY 15. The Bay Program plans to evaluate its tidal and non-tidal monitoring programs more comprehensively over the next year before making more long-term decisions.

Proposed Station Cuts to the Chesapeake Bay Non-Tidal Monitoring Network

The four non-tidal stations that may be affected in the COG region include 1 in Virginia, 2 in DC, and 1 in Maryland. COG staff has been in contact with staff at the USGS to gain some additional details about each station. In general, the funding cutbacks will affect only USGS activities designed to align sampling protocols across the entire network. They will not affect the operation of flow gauges and other work USGS may conduct at the sites.

- Rock Creek –DC. The funding that may be eliminated for this station is used by USGS to bring the already extensive monitoring program at this site into conformance with the sampling protocols for the CBP non-tidal monitoring network. Neither the flow gauge at the station nor the ongoing water quality sampling work in conjunction with Montgomery County would be affected if this funding is eliminated.

- Broad Run –DC . This station, which would have sampled a tributary of Rock Creek whose confluence is below the existing Rock Creek gauge, is still being developed by USGS and has never been in operation.
- Patuxent River – MD. This station has a 30-year data. Elimination of funding would not affect the flow gauge at this station nor any monitoring work directly conducted by WSSC.
- South Fork Quantico Creek – VA. USGS recently added this station, through which a small, mostly forested watershed drains, to its non-tidal network as a reference watershed for the Piedmont region.

Next Steps/ Your Feedback and Recommendations

COG plans on working with staff at the USGS to conduct a workshop this fall that will examine the non-tidal monitoring network in more detail, particularly the urban component, and how the data can be used for TMDL accounting. Our target audience will include members involved in water quality, stormwater and wastewater planning in the COG region. In the meantime, we will continue to provide updates on the 2013 funding shortfall. Feel free to contact me or Karl Berger, kberger@mwkog.org, 202.962.3350, if you should have any questions or comments.

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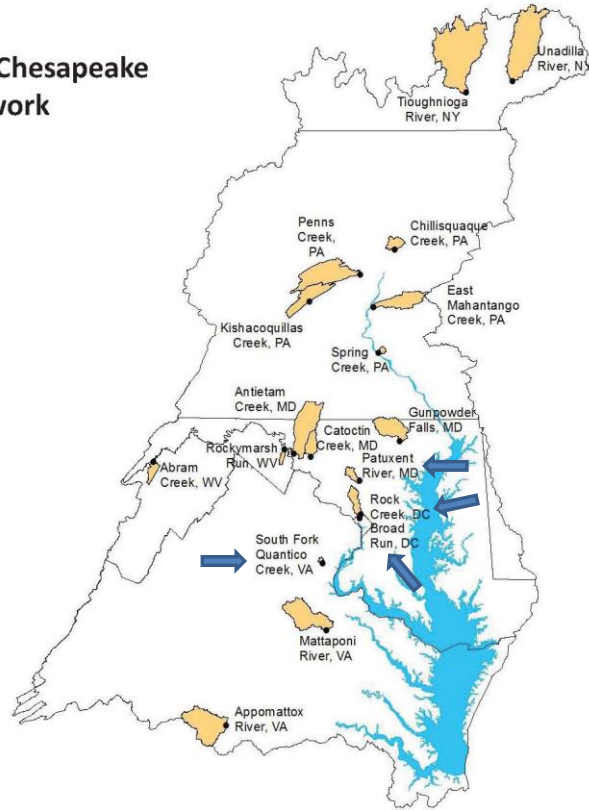
Attachments

1. Map of Proposed Station Cuts (enclosed)
2. Star Options paper for addressing the shortfall (posted here)
3. Option 2 (enclosed)

Proposed Station Cuts to the Chesapeake Bay Nontidal Monitoring Network

Cuts By Jurisdiction

- Maryland-4
- Pennsylvania – 5
- Virginia 3
- District of Columbia- 2
- New York -2
- West Virginia- 2



Reduction Option 2		
	<u>Tidal</u>	<u>Nontidal</u>
Amount (Tot=\$755,000) (Gap=\$189,000)	\$55,000	\$700,000
Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virginia (\$27.5K) Maryland (\$27.5K) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate January cruise • Eliminate nutrients from 2 summer cruises • Eliminate planned benthic analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 station reduction* • MD-3, PA-4, VA-2, DC-2, NY-2, WV-1 • 44% reduction in support for expanded monitoring. • Target Source Sectors affected <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban • Agriculture <p><small>* (The list of stations cut TBD by NTW)</small></p>
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2017 mid-point evaluation will not include a reevaluation of benthic IBI-derived reference curves for dissolved oxygen assessment • Loss of critical data linking winter production with summer oxygen conditions • Reduced ability to the strengthen the Bay water-quality model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss long-term trend information at 5 locations with greater than 10 years of history. • Loss of trend and load assessment capabilities in key settings needed for TMDL and Mid-point assessment • Inability to strengthen WSM for targeted source sectors