

CHESAPEAKE BAY AND WATER RESOURCES POLICY COMMITTEE WEBINAR SUMMARY-DRAFT

March 18, 2022

LINK TO ALL MEETING PRESENTATIONS AND MATERIALS:

<https://www.mwcog.org/events/2022/3/18/chesapeake-bay-and-water-resources-policy-committee/>

DECISIONS & ACTIONS:

- The CBPC approved the FY 2023 Regional Water Quality Management Work Program and Budget.
- COG staff will share the schedule of WRTC 2022 workshops when it is ready.
- CBPC members are interested in messaging about Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week (June 4-12), and the 50th Anniversary of the Clean Water Act (the timing is still to be determined, but most likely October).
- COG staff will update members on lobby check-in and meeting protocols for upcoming meetings held at COG.

1. CHAIR'S WELCOME

Chair Jackson welcomed new members.

2. CBPC MEETING SUMMARY APPROVAL

Members approved the draft summary of January 2022 CBPC Meeting.

3. FY '23 WORK PROGRAM AND BUDGET APPROVAL

Steve Bieber, Water Resources Program Director, provided highlights of the proposed FY 2023 Regional Water Quality Management (RWQM) Work Program and Budget and requested CBPC approval.

- The Regional Water Fund and the Regional Environmental Fund went up 4.72% in proportion to COG member dues, as approved by the COG Board.
- Steve Bieber highlighted work that the dues fund, including Water Resources Program Management, drinking water security, protection and response, Ag and Forestry, as well as the Community Engagement Campaign (water utility outreach campaign).
- He highlighted WRTC priorities for some workshops this year, which include flood resiliency, long-range wastewater capacity, and realistic water quality standards for urban streams.

Member discussion:

- Chair Jackson said the flooding topic is timely, both rainy day and sunny day flooding.
- Chair Jackson asked COG staff to share the WRTC workshops schedule once it is decided.
- Members approved the FY '23 RWQM Work Program and Budget.

4. WINTER SALTS REGIONAL UPDATES

Nicole Christ, Maryland Department of Environment (MDE):

- MDE is developing a salt applicator training and certification program for a wide audience. A portion will be online and a portion will be hands-on. They are developing a written test to get certification and are aiming to pilot the training program by late summer or early fall.
- Other salts outreach materials are on the MDE website.

- The newest Maryland stormwater MS4 permits are requiring salt management plans. The State Highway Administration (SHA) has had a salt management plan for a while.
- MDE's website: [Winter Salts in MD](#)

Norm Goulet, Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC)

- NVRC has taken over the northern VA salt management strategy (SaMS) effort from DEQ. The strategy and summary document are on the NVRC website.
- The SaMS action plan process stemmed from a chloride TMDL for Accotink Creek. However, because of DEQ's softer approach, it does not qualify for TMDL implementation funding.
- NVRC is working with DEQ to develop a summer training for commercial applicators.
- Norm Goulet expects there will be some salt requirements in the Virginia MS4 stormwater permits.
- NVRC website: <https://www.novaregion.org/1399/Northern-Virginia-Salt-Management-Strate>

Matt Gallagher, Water Quality Division, District Department of Energy and the Environment

- He provided a brief update about a District of Columbia's piloting of a comparison of rock salt, brine, and calcium magnesium acetate, as a MS4 permit requirement.
 - Calcium magnesium acetate (CMA) is presumably more environmentally friendly than rock salt based on limited data. DOEE applied the products according to forecasts.
 - They wanted to apply when they would not be plowing and removing it. They were aiming for piloting for four snow events, and monitoring the roads and downstream water quality, but this year they were able to run the pilot once, based on forecasts.
 - Anecdotally, the products worked equally well for the one event, but DOEE will continue to pilot in subsequent year(s).

Member discussion:

- A member asked about the salt management process for Maryland municipalities and whether the roads are managed by SHA.
 - Nichole Christ recommended working through your municipality government and possibly the county. It depends on the type of road as to who maintains it.
 - Steve Bieber mentioned that brining is a best management practice that SHA has been implementing—it is both a cost savings and is better for the roads.
- A member had heard about brining controversial and asked more about that.
 - Nicole Christ responded that brining is a pre-treatment, so it has to be applied ahead of the storm, to prevent ice from forming, and it reduces the concentration of salt since the salt is mixed with water. Rock salt is not effective until it is driven over. Norm Goulet said there was controversy this year in Virginia about the I-95 corridor and how the roads were not brined. There was public backlash because the roads were not pre-treated. That is because forecast was for rain, and the brine would have washed away.
- A member asked whether there are any other products on the horizon besides rock salt or brine; another environmentally friendly alternative?
 - Nicole Christ said there are other products out there, but most have chloride, and some are only effective under colder conditions.
 - Norm Goulet mentioned beet juice has been tried in the region, but because it is organic it has an oxygen demand associated with it which is also an environmental drawback.
- Karl Berger mentioned the Occoquan Laboratory study of UOSA's wastewater effluent, namely the chronic salt content (sodium ions) in household products such as cleaning products, water softener salt, etc. He asked whether MDE is looking at this source.

- Nicole responded that MDE's primary focus is on winter salts applications, since research has shown there are sometimes perverse incentives in contracts to use more salt.
- A member asked Norm Goulet whether messaging to contractors about salt reduction as a cost savings could be more effective than environmental messaging?
 - Norm responded that it is a cost savings for contractors as well as local governments. Salt also corrodes steel so there is an indirect cost savings to the infrastructure. In addition, if drinking water sodium rates continue to rise then there will be a tremendous cost to remove the sodium.
- A member mentioned there is a salt certification bill in the Maryland General Assembly and there is a need to rewrite some contracts to not incentivize using more salt.
- A member asked Matt whether other municipalities are piloting the calcium magnesium acetate. Matt said not that he is aware of.
- A member asked Matt Gallagher how much more expensive CMA was than rock salt.
 - Matt replied about ten times more expensive but could try to use a mixture with 80% rock salt and 20% CMA mixture or target it to specific watersheds with chloride exceedances. The cost is a factor.
- Nicole Christ asked that Matt share the results of their pilot study when it is completed, and he said he would.

5. STAFF UPDATES

Heidi Bonnaffon, COG staff

- A. Recap of recent CBPC advocacy positions
- B. Paper Competition submissions
COG has received an expression of interest from two Virginia Tech students about green infrastructure. The plan is for them to present their papers at the May meeting.
- C. Stream restoration FAQs document
The stream restoration Question and Answer document summarizing the high points of the longer Guidance document, at the request of the CBPC. It will be available on the COG webpage here: <https://www.mwcog.org/documents/2022/01/06/recommended-stream-restoration-best-practices/>
- D. Community Engagement Campaign (CEC) videos promotion
Heidi Bonnaffon played the four 30-second CEC videos, noting that they will be ready for promotion in April, once closed captioned. Heidi will be sending an update when they are ready.
- E. General Updates
Heidi Bonnaffon highlighted other written updates including salts articles, PFAS articles, and FARM committee updates.

Member discussion:

- Members discussed the desire to plan outreach for this year's 50th Anniversary of the Clean Water Act. Possible timing might be October, since it was signed into law in October. Steve Bieber mentioned it could be a COG podcast topic.

6. COVID-19 WASTEWATER SURVEILLANCE

Karen Pallansch, Alexandria Renew Enterprises (Alexandria Renew), provided background, and introduced Allison Deines who spearheaded the Covid-19 wastewater-based epidemiology research at Alexandria Renew. Alexandria Renew is one of 200 wastewater recovery facilities participating in a National Science Foundation and CDC wastewater surveillance collaborative

study.

- Alex Renew serves just over 300,000 customers in the City of Alexandria and Fairfax County and was the first independent wastewater recovery facility in Virginia.
- The River Renew project to address a portion of the system that has combined sewer overflow (CSO) will include underground tunnels; the tunnel work is slated to start in July.
- Wastewater-based epidemiology (WBE) is the process of sampling wastewater to inform public health decisions—sampling can be done at the head of the plant for the entire population served, or within a collection system to identify hotspots more narrowly (e.g., where there are Covid spikes).
- It is necessarily a partnership of the water sector, analytical labs, and the public health sector. It is time consuming and generates a lot of data that needs analyzing.
- WBE has been around for a long time but is just getting attention for the pandemic. It is sometimes used for other applications, such as drug surveillance.
- Wastewater can provide earlier detection than other forms of testing—sometimes those few extra days can give an advantage of heading off a further outbreak.
- It can be a cost-effective tool and a leading indicator.
- Alexandria Renew partnered with Howard University to refine the methodology and for analysis, and with Virginia Department of Health (VDH) for state funding. The wastewater data was in alignment with Covid case counts and was an early indicator of the Delta variant surge and the Omicron surge.
- For this to be ongoing, it would need ongoing partnerships and to address questions such as:
 - How to protect private health information
 - Capacity, training, and resources for wastewater agencies and local health departments.
 - How should findings be communicated publicly.
- There are links in the presentation for additional background information on WBE.

Member discussion:

- A member asked whether it could be used for surveillance of chronic diseases such as diabetes, to focus health care dollars and clinics.
 - Allison Deines responded that that is a great question. This methodology has been focused on pathogens, but perhaps the science could be expanded.
- Hampton Roads has utilized bacteria source tracking funding to pay for their analysis, but it is costly so there is a need for a conversation with VDH about funding.

7. CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM UPDATES

Karl Berger, COG Principal Planner, provided highlights from the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP), noting two main items:

- A. The recent CAST model data has found that—in part due to some miscalculations or assumptions about the agricultural sector—the Bay Model will need to account for an additional ~6.2 Million pounds of nitrogen. Uncertainty makes achieving the WIP nutrient reduction goals more difficult, particularly for the agricultural sector. A question remaining is the timing of adding those required load reductions for states and local governments, since their WIPs are focused on 2025.
- B. If a financial strategy for addressing the loadings coming over the Conowingo Dam cannot be agreed upon, EPA will likely default to the most effective basins shouldering the additional best management practices (BMPs) for the Conowingo WIP's nitrogen loads. These would be in Pennsylvania primarily, and some in New York and Maryland, but it would not add to the Virginia or DC total load reduction targets. Unlikely, but possible: EPA could reassign Pennsylvania's portion of the Conowingo load reductions to all of the Bay states. Should that happen, the CBPC may wish to act.

8. MEETING ADJOURNMENT

Chair Jackson announced the next meeting will be on May 20, and will be hybrid, with the option to meet in-person at COG.

ATTENDANCE

Members and Alternates:

Amy Jackson, Chair, Alexandria
Cindy Dyballa, City of Takoma Park
J. Davis, City of Greenbelt
Jon Stehle, City of Fairfax
Keith Levchenko, Montgomery County
Kenny Boddye, Prince William County
Libby Garvey, Arlington County
Maria Mackie, Vice Chair, College Park
MC Keegan-Ayer, Frederick County
Penny Gross, Fairfax County
Robert Love, City of Laurel
Allison Deines, Alexandria Renew Enterprises
Aimee Dailey, Charles County
Andrea Crooms, Prince George's County DEP
Beth Forbes, Gaithersburg
Heather Gewandter, City of Rockville
Jonathan Champion, DOEE
Karen Pallansch, Alexandria Renew
Matt Reis, DC Water
Michelle Russell, Prince George's County DEP

Maureen Holman, DC Water
Nasser Kamazani, Montgomery County DEP
Nicole Hernandez-Rodriguez, Montgomery County
Shannon Moore, Frederick County DEP
Steve Shofar, Montgomery County DEP
Tiffany Wright, City of Bowie

Guests:

Matt Gallagher, DOEE
Nicole Christ, MDE
Norm Goulet, NVRC

COG Staff:

Chuck Bean
Heidi Bonnaffon
Lisa Ragain
Lisa Reynolds
Karl Berger
Steve Bieber
Tom Gates
Wyetha Lipford