

COG Chesapeake Bay & Water Resources Policy Committee (CBPC) Water Outreach Plan

(5/20/16)

PLAN SUMMARY / CONTENTS

Background – Provides context, as well as to note the evolution of the CBPC’s current outreach efforts.

Overall Outreach Elements – Lists general message points and coordination that would broadly be reflected in all water-related outreach efforts or events (as appropriate).

Water Outreach Plans – 2016: Current Events & Specific Activities

– List of current events that CBPC will specifically focus on (currently 3), and outline of specific work efforts for each event. [This will be an ongoing, evolving work effort](#), so the intention is that this plan will be regularly updated to reflect new activities/resources and when new events and focus areas are added to the CBPC’s planned outreach work.

1. May 16 – 23: National Infrastructure Week
2. June 4 – 12: Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week
3. June 30: Virginia’s Drinking Water and Wastewater Professionals Day

BACKGROUND

Annual Work Program Elements

- **Overall Goal** – *Continue to protect water quality and public health in a sustainable and affordable manner for the region*
- **A Key Initiative - Communicate Water Resource Successes & Challenges** - Continue to communicate on behalf of the COG region, for example:
 - Impacts and benefits of pollution control efforts in Potomac and local waters
 - Present current and future challenges faced by wastewater/stormwater managers
 - Current water infrastructure needs and opportunities for addressing some needs
 - Potential weather/climate vulnerabilities and the implications for regional water infrastructure

CBPC Activities - Water Quality Forum (11/20/15)

- Communication planning and public education ranked highly as Forum action items.
- COG staff will work with EPA and state staff to identify and pursue development of specific actions over the coming year to address various water issues.

COG Board Resolution – Water Appreciation (R22-2016) (adopted 4/13/16)

- Annual – Drinking Water and Wastewater Professionals Appreciation Day
- Annual – Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week

OVERALL OUTREACH ELEMENTS

General Message Points (as appropriate)

- Emphasize ‘Value of Water’
- Highlight local successes
- Link local efforts to improvements to local waters as well as Potomac and Anacostia Rivers, and the Bay
- Note inherent links (interconnectedness) between all water subsectors (i.e., wastewater, stormwater, drinking water) and need for holistic solutions
- Highlight COG member leadership in innovative processes/practices/programs
- Emphasize that water sector has directly economic benefits and supports whole economy
- Emphasize the strong jobs benefits of water sector (i.e., local, sustainable, wide range of skills and career development)
- Acknowledge challenges and need for adequate/sustained funding
- Acknowledge that these efforts are ongoing, long-term commitments and financial investments

General Coordination

- Coordinate with CBPC and other COG member governments and water utilities’ public information and outreach staff to:
 - Share outreach plans
 - Identify activities to promote
 - Provide input on key messages for the region
 - Help to integrate efforts (i.e., same message, many voices)
 - Other?
- Link local efforts with other applicable groups (as appropriate):
 - Federal (EPA/CBPO) offices

- State offices (MD and VA)
- Chesapeake Bay Commission (CBC)
- Chesapeake Bay Program’s Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC)
- National water organizations (e.g., WEF, NACWA)
- Others?
- Coordinate with COG’s Office of Communications:
 - Integrate with overall COG/Board messaging
 - Utilize COG’s social media, Region Forward blog, and website
 - Develop a media toolkit
 - Submit articles to select news sources (e.g., Chesapeake Bay Journal)
 - Other activities?

WATER OUTREACH PLANS – 2016
Current Events & Specific Activities
(as of 5/18/16)

1. May 16 – 23: National Infrastructure Week

- 2016 Priority/Focus:**
- This event is same week as CBPC meeting, so this year’s level of effort will be minimal.
 - Efforts will be made to opportunistically share and highlight COG member activities.
 - Expectation for next year is to be able to plan earlier and to have a more active effort.

- Events:**
- May 16th - Loudoun Water Potomac Water Supply Program Tour
 - May 18th - Advocacy Day on the Hill
 - May 19th - Alex Renew’s plant tour (<http://uswateralliance.org/resources/blog/throwing-cloak-invisibility>)
 - Others?

- Specific Messaging Points:**
- Highlight how investments in water infrastructure provide support for local infrastructure, local jobs, and local economies
 - Link efforts to COG Board priorities (infrastructure, jobs, economic competitiveness, etc.)
 - Other?

- Specific Coordination:**
- Regional Water Utilities.

- References/Resources:**
- <http://infrastructureweek.org/calendar/>
 - Others?

2. June 4 – 12: Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week

2016 Priority/Focus:

- Bay Journal Op-ed from CBPC Chair as mechanism to engage EPA/CBPO as well as to reach a broader environmental audience (submitted).
- Identify CBPC members as spokespersons for a Media Tool Kit.
- There will be a concerted effort to actively highlight COG member activities, and to engage other key groups like CBC and EPA/CBPO.

Events:

- CBP table of Bay-wide events: <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/takeaction/events>
- Local events directly linked to Bay efforts (TBD)

Specific Messaging Points:

- Highlight COG region's wastewater successes as part of Bay-wide successes:
 - Implementation of wastewater treatment plant upgrades ahead of 2025 schedule
 - In many cases, reducing nitrogen levels/loads now in advance of the 2025 schedule
 - Testing and implementation of state of the art nitrogen reduction technologies
 - Operating at limit of technology levels for phosphorus for several decades
 - Documented improvements water quality in the upper portion of the Potomac River in response to all of these wastewater treatment efforts
 - Utility efforts to address water-energy nexus and build resiliency. [examples: Microgrids, Blue Plains' biosolids]
- Highlight COG regions' stormwater successes:
 - Some of the most aggressive MS4 permits in the country are in the metropolitan Washington region.
 - Designing and implementing new and innovative practices to achieve nutrient and sediment reductions. Regional best practices sharing via COG workshops and forums. [examples of practices Opti RTC, DC's green roofs, DC Water's green infrastructure project to lessen stormwater flow and CSO events] [examples of workshops: Green streets and stream restoration success stories, TMDL action plans]
 - Instituting creative and new funding mechanisms to support challenging implementation schedules and plans. [examples: Water Quality Trading, stormwater utility fees, bonds, P3]
 - Partnerships: (e.g., VAMSA/MAMSA; Coordination and conversations with MACo and MDE.)

References/Resources:

- <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/takeaction/events>
- <http://www.mde.state.md.us/programs/Marylander/outreach/Pages/10ThingsYouCanDo.aspx>
- <http://businesses.allianceforthebay.org/>
- <https://allianceforthebay.org/2016/04/chesapeake-business-forum-may-24/>
- <http://www.jefpat.org/patuxentriverrwadein.html>
- <http://bayweek.mpt.org/programs/>
- Others?

3. June 30: Virginia's Drinking Water and Wastewater Professionals Day

2016 Priority/Focus:

- There will be a concerted effort to actively highlight COG member activities, and to engage other key groups like local water professional organizations.
- Focus will be on Virginia; but also include the District of Columbia and Maryland events too (to hopefully build support for expanding this concept beyond Virginia next year)
- Efforts will be made to identify at least one compelling VA based event as a platform to generate broader interest and attention to metro Washington actions and messages.

Events:

- Local events directly linked to supporting Drinking Water and Wastewater Professionals Day on June 30th
- Others?

Specific Messaging Points:

- Express appreciation for the dedicated work of these professionals (including the 24/7/365 aspects of many jobs)
- Recognize the importance of their work in protecting public health as well as the environment
- Highlight the wide range of jobs and career opportunities that are available, and the diversity of the workforce
 - Promote job training programs/opportunities whenever possible
- Recognize that these jobs are part of/support our local communities
- Others?

Specific Coordination:

- Local governments and water utilities that provide either drinking water and/or wastewater treatment services
- Work with local chapters of national water organizations (e.g., VWEA, CWEA, FWQA, AWWA VA Section, AWWA MD Section)

References/Resources:

- MD EARN Program Operator specific site <http://www.cleanwatercareersmd.org/>
- General EARN program link <http://www.dllr.maryland.gov/earn/earnresources.shtml>
- COG Board Resolution <http://www.mwcog.org/uploads/committee-documents/bFxeVI5b20160413152332.pdf>
- Virginia General Assembly [Resolution](#)
- Prince William County Service Authority [press release](#)
- Others?