

COG Chesapeake Bay & Water Resources Policy Committee (CBPC) Water Resources Outreach Plan 2018

(as of 3/15/18)

PLAN SUMMARY / CONTENTS

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

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

Water Outreach Plans –Current Events & Specific Activities – List of current events that CBPC will specifically focus on, 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.

2018 Events/Dates

1. March 22 [World Water Day](#)
2. March 22: [Clean Rivers Anacostia Tunnel Grand Opening](#)
3. April 17-18: Nat’l Water Week Water Policy Fly-In
4. April 28: [DEA Drug Take Back Day](#)
5. May 6-12 [Drinking Water Week](#)
6. May 14 – 21: [National Infrastructure Week](#)
7. June 2-10: Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week (2nd week in June)
8. June 30: Virginia’s Drinking Water and Wastewater Professionals Day
9. All year: [Year of the Anacostia](#)
10. October 10: Imagine a Day Without Water
11. November: National Critical Infrastructure Security and Resiliency Month

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 Policy Principles](#) (R49-2016)
 - www.mwcog.org/chesbay

CBPC Activities – Annual Water Quality Forum

- 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.
- **Scheduled for September 21, 2018**

COG Board Resolutions

1. Water Appreciation (R22-2016) (adopted 4/13/16)

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

2. Support for Continued Chesapeake Bay Program Funding (R35-2017) (adopted 6/14/17)

- <https://www.mwcog.org/documents/2017/06/14/certified-resolution-r35-2017--chesapeake-bay-program/>
- <https://www.mwcog.org/newsroom/2017/06/14/area-officials-act-in-support-of-full-federal-funding-for-the-chesapeake-bay/>

COG's Role in Regional Bay Restoration Efforts

- COG's membership spans a major portion of the Potomac River watershed – covering the District, suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia
- COG region represents approximately 30% of the Bay watershed's population
- COG convenes local governments and regional water utilities to address common issues, share best practices, develop regional approaches, and unify messages.
- COG serves as a forum for dialogues with the states and EPA on critical Bay efforts as well as broader water issues.
- COG's member governments and water utilities are responsible for implementing the processes, programs and other management practices that the states and EPA include in their nutrient reduction plans.
- COG fosters partnerships with local universities, consultants, associations of cities and counties, and national water associations to share knowledge and encourage innovation.

- COG has had a long history of active involvement in the Chesapeake Bay Program's activities, from the first Bay Agreement through the current Bay TMDL and Management Strategies, and the current Mid-Point Assessment effort.

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
 - Local governments have a critical role in restoring the Bay
 - Restoration of local waters are essential to restoring Bay health
- 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
- Critical role volunteers have played.
- 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
 - Noting that there is not a "one size fits all" approach to financing local programs.

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)
 - Others?
- 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)
 - www.mwcog.org/chesbay for links to COG videos, social media, etc.

WATER RESOURCES OUTREACH PLAN

2018 Events & Activities

(revised 3/7/18)

1. Year of the Anacostia—2018

Priority/Focus:

“A yearlong invitation to honor history, celebrate progress, and enjoy the Anacostia River and its surroundings while envisioning an inspiring future.”

Events listed on website: <https://www.yearoftheanacostia.com/>

Specific Messaging Points:

2018 is a big year for the Anacostia River corridor in Washington, DC and Maryland:

- Celebrating 100 years of the Anacostia Waterfront Park—Dedicated by Congress on August 31, 1918.
- Marks the completion of DC Water’s Anacostia River Tunnel, which will substantially improve water quality in the river.
- DC Department of Energy and Environment and the National Park Service will make the final decision on the most effective way to clean up the riverbed.
- Social media hashtags:
#yearoftheanacostia
#MakeWaves

2. Drinking Water Week-May 6-12

Priority/Focus:

- Efforts will be made to opportunistically share and highlight COG member activities.

Events: The region’s utilities may hold public information events and tours.

Specific Messaging Points:

- Highlight the CEC’s [TapIt program](#)
- Highlight local infrastructure, local jobs, and local economies

Specific Coordination:

- Regional Water Utilities.

References/Resources:

- <https://www.awwa.org/resources-tools/public-affairs/public-affairs-events/drinking-water-week/dww-materials.aspx>
- www.freetapwater.org

3. National Infrastructure Week— May 14-21

Priority/Focus:

- Efforts will be made to opportunistically share and highlight COG member activities.

Events: The region’s utilities hold public information events and tours.

<p>Specific Messaging Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.) • Discuss how services and accomplishments that result from rate increases. • Acknowledge that rate increases are necessary to sustain this critical infrastructure - given many decades of deferred investment
<p>Specific Coordination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Water Utilities.
<p>References/Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://infrastructureweek.org/calendar/

<p>4. Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week— June 2-10</p>
<p>Priority/Focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be a concerted effort to actively highlight COG member activities, and to engage other key groups like CBC and EPA/CBPO. • Member Resolutions supporting the Awareness Week
<p>Events:</p> <p>More details to come.</p>
<p>Specific Messaging Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight COG region’s wastewater successes as part of Bay-wide successes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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 these wastewater treatment efforts ○ Utility efforts to address water-energy nexus and build resiliency. [examples: Microgrids, Blue Plains’ biosolids] ○ Metropolitan Washington region’s significant public investment in our wastewater infrastructure has clearly been successful. • Highlight COG regions’ stormwater successes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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] ○ 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.) • Acknowledge how all of this is linked to need for robust Water Infrastructure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Discuss how services and accomplishments have been supported by rate increases.

- o Acknowledge that rate increases are necessary to sustain this critical infrastructure - given many decades of deferred investment.

References/Resources: From last year (2017)

- <http://www.vcnva.org/chesapeake-bay-awareness-week/>
- <https://www.mwcog.org/newsroom/2017/06/05/get-back-to-the-bay-during-chesapeake-bay-awareness-week/>
- [City of Falls Church Resolution](#) recognizing Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week.

5. Virginia’s Drinking Water and Wastewater Professionals Day—June 30

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:

http://www.tpomag.com/editorial/2017/11/giving_water_professionals_the_recognition_they_deserve

Specific Messaging Points:

- Express appreciation for the dedicated work of these professionals (including the 24/7/365 aspects of many jobs)
- Water utility staff are also ‘First Responders’ for many emergencies.
- 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
- Highlight water jobs as a work force of the future, with a strong career pathway.
- Promote job training programs/opportunities whenever possible
- Recognize that these jobs are part of/support our local communities

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](#)

6. November: National Critical Infrastructure Security and Resiliency Month

Priority/Focus:

- Focus on various ongoing COG work efforts, e.g., Water Redundancy Study, metropolitan Washington's reservoir system, and results of COG Cooperative Forecast 9.0 (i.e., for assessing design capacity for wastewater and drinking water plants). [Protect Your Pipes](#) campaign.
- Others to be developed

Information: <https://www.ncisrm.org/branding-resource>

Events:

- COG's *newsfeed* featured a message on disposing of [Fats, Oils, Grease](#) in the trash, in time for the holidays, highlighting the [Protect Your Pipes](#) campaign.
- The region's utilities will hold public information events and promote infrastructure on social media.

Specific Messaging Points:

- Water is a fundamental and critical infrastructure sector.
- Highlight the good work that COG is doing to address/advance water security and resiliency matters.

7. Other Themes (to be developed)

- Water Quality & Metropolitan Washington's Economy & Jobs
- Support for Sustained Chesapeake Bay Program Funding