



Maryland Water Monitoring Council
Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources
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Matt Stover,
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Andy Becker, KCI Technologies
Megan Brosh, Baltimore Co. DEPS
Lindsay DeMarzo, Howard Co. OCS
John Denniston, Maryland Dept. of Transportation
Jason Dubow, Maryland Dept. of Planning
Matt Harper, M-NCPPC
Bob Hilderbrand, UMCES
Ken Mack, Montgomery Co. DEP

Byron Madigan, Carroll Co. BRM
Rupert Rossetti, Octoraro Watershed Association
Nancy Roth, Tetra Tech, Inc.
Brian Smith, Maryland DNR
Ken Staver, Univ. of MD WREC
Chris Victoria, Anne Arundel DPW
Michael Williams, Univ. of MD College Park

BOARD MEETING REPORT

MARYLAND WATER MONITORING COUNCIL

JANUARY 23, 2024 – VIRTUAL

In Attendance

Brian Smith, Matt Stover, John Denniston, Najma Khokhar, Bob Hilderbrand, Michael Williams, Byron Madigan, Megan Brosh, Andy Becker, Mat Pajerowski, Chris Victoria, Nancy Roth, Ken (S)taver, Ken (M)ack, Matt (H)arper, & Katherine Hanna

Matt (S) called the meeting to order at 1005 AM.

Last Meeting Minutes

Matt called for review of the minutes, which were approved by a virtual “hands up” vote. He & *Katherine* asked for future minutes to be limited to 2 or 3 pages.

Matt skipped the nominating committee report since *Ken M* was not present.

Future Board Meetings

Scheduled Board Meetings (*Katherine*)

- April 23 (intended to be hybrid)
- July 30 (field trip – Duckett Dam?)
- October 22 (intended to be hybrid)

Matt said that prior to the pandemic, the Board had one field trip a year with a “water feature.” He asked for possible speakers for the hybrid meetings, who may present virtually. *Katherine* if not enough people indicate they were coming in-person, we would have a virtual meeting only. *Mat* encouraged people to attend in-person meetings and recommend speakers. *Matt* reminded people to send (*Ken M*) contact information for each board member’s alternate. Send that alternate if you are unable to attend a board meeting.

Committee Updates

Monitoring and Assessment

Byron met with the committee January 10 to discuss the eDNA workshop and February Monitoring Roundtable. *Chris* about 300 registrants at the eDNA workshop. Due to speaker illness, if the workshop had not been hybrid, it would have been canceled. People seemed interested and engaged. He advised that the workshop would have run smoother and been recorded if he prepared to use Zoom. He also thought that QA/QC issues around eDNA are starting to be addressed. *Mat* offered the free USGS conference room (Capacity 40-100) to the Board for meetings. He also recommended workshops get experts together to discuss critical topics. *Andy* discussed the Monitoring Round Table on February 26. He asked organizations to participate and submit monitoring points for the statewide online DNR map. *Matt* recommended participating to reduce monitoring redundancy (consider landowners); and who got what data. *Andy* asked that people save monitoring results for the annual conference. *Byron* also reported the committee discussed monitoring requirements and how jurisdictions handle them; and pooled random sampling monitoring efforts—further discussion at a future meeting.

Information Management

Najma reported her committee, with the EPA, will host an online webinar on January 30, “Quality assurance in EPA Best Practices.” A second on February 27 will be entitled, “The Three Rs of QAPPs: Writing, Reviewing, and Realization of Implementation.” Both run from 10AM to noon. So far, 70+ registrants for Best Practices and 45 registrants for QAPP. She asked for ideas on topics for future webinars. *Brian* offered to pass announcements on to Mark Trice to post to the MWMC Facebook page. *Matt* discussed other possible topics for this webinar series. *Katherine* reported that MWMC's email list was 18,000+. *Ken M* asked for a webinar on transition from paper to digital. *Chris* noted Anne Arundel County transitioned to tablet-based data with some lingering concerns. He offered a possible experienced participant. He also suggested another webinar on the topic of regional bioinformatics.

Ken S quoted an article of the CBP stating many miles of the watershed have improved WQ. *Nancy* clarified it was a compilation of state and local data generating a BIBI index evaluation. *Andy* shared a link to the article. *Chris* suggested a webinar on the metrics of stream health. *Najma* agreed. *Nancy* will find a speaker on the topic and recruit for the October meeting. *Matt* suggested they could do it as a webinar for the Information Management series. *Megan* will remind her coworker (Kevin) about doing a talk on midges for the April meeting.

Groundwater

Mat said the committee has not met since the last board meeting. In their next meeting they're planning to address water supply issues and the combined MGS & USGS monitoring well network monitor across the state. *Matt* said the Water Supply Program may get more involved in MWMC and restart its Groundwater Symposium. They have particular interest in groundwater issues. *Mat* stated that we have a member of Water Supply on the Groundwater Committee.

Student

Lindsay was absent. *Katherine* read her note. At the last conference, there were three poster and four lightning-round presenters. Lightning-rounds were well-presented and well-received by students in the audience. They continue to have difficulty reaching out and getting students to participate. Any suggestions are welcome. *Matt* stated that he continues to reach out to former professors of his. *Chris* suggested developing better social media outreach targeted at a younger

audience. *Mat* suggested that we reach out to mothers of the students. *Ken S* asked if we are promoting awareness of what we do? *Matt* suggested we should reach out to universities we don't have historical ties to, including HBCUs.

Ken S & Nancy agreed that our outreach depends on having faculty contacts within a university. *Nancy* explained that the research for the student poster/talk must be completed in the spring for our fall conference. So, word should go out in the spring. *Ken S* explained we host an inexpensive starter conference. *Brian & Byron* concurred that the earlier date this year was good for the students. *Mat* recommended we announce to academics our other activities during the year. *Nancy* asked members to send her contacts to combine into a list.

Citizen Science and Community Stewardship

Matt noted *Jeff* stepped down; the vacancy needs to be filled. *Rupert* was absent, feeling ill.

Annual Conference Planning

Katherine reported that planning started with the first meeting on December 6. They discussed resolutions for the shorter third session. *Chris* asked what people didn't like about the shorter session. *Katherine* explained that last year's third session seemed rushed. *Matt* noted that many people need to go somewhere else after the conference. *Katherine* shared the current budget spreadsheet (+\$25K). She shared the attendance record by category (registered 447; checked in 400). Most registered during our early bird period. We had a good number of nonprofits but only 19 students. Reaching out to academia this year might boost that number. We had 12 table vendors and 3 we offered free.

We had 3 Weber and 2 Above-and-Beyond nominees. The two Above-and-Beyond were also Weber nominees. We are come up short on nominees—get the word out. *Mat* noted that we did not have the Awards Committee reporting. *Katherine* reported that Clark is staying involved. *Mat* recommended that we canvass for nominees earlier and nudge the committee. *Matt* pointed out the need for more volunteers on the Awards Committee and explained their light duties.

Katherine reported 51 responses to our survey this year, nearly double last year's. She broke down the attendees and responses by category. We had good responses regarding our speakers, with the greatest number regarding restoration sessions, then session by session analysis. The room layout and scheduling of the conference will be the same as last year. She asked if anything needs to be discussed or improved. *No responses*.

Brian asked if we could announce the date to colleagues. *Katherine* hesitated but was open to suggestions. *Matt & Katherine* noted the RFP was being processed. *Brian* asked if virtual was an option this year for presenters. *Katherine* said to discourage it, unless onsite is not possible for the speaker. *Matt* said the Maryland Stream Restoration Association volunteered to host registration again this year. He told them we plan to go back to doing it ourselves unless we have a similar problem. If we had the same problem this year, we would have an earlier “drop-dead” date. He also asked for comments on the conference. *Andy* noted a couple of comments about the simulcast. He asked if the speaker could be on camera. *Katherine* will check into that as an option.

Chris asked why we haven't sent out a general solicitation for talks in the last couple of years. *Katherine* will discuss that at the next Planning Committee meeting. *Chris* elaborated that canvassing for speakers might require the session topics be shaped by offered presentations.

Nominating Committee

Ken M reported that we have two open board positions for 2024. We have a small list of people who have expressed interest. Tom Guay from the Severn River Association remains interested. He will send out a poll to vote on him following the meeting. He will shift *Rupert* from an At-large position to a Volunteer position. That leaves two openings, At-large and Federal. He called for nominations. *Matt* had reached out to Greg Voigt at the EPA. *Ken M* restated Claire Welty (UMBC) and Leah (Ettema) (EPA) as possible candidates. He asked for further suggested candidates by the middle of February. He targeted voting before or at the next board meeting. He verified that Heather Quinn filled the open spot in 2023, which needs DNR secretary approval.

Matt asked for possible candidates. *Andy* asked if we are looking for candidates for the Volunteer position. *Ken M* re-stated that we are asking to fill a Volunteer Monitoring, a Federal Government, and an At-large position. *Andy* recommended Lily Edmonds with EPA for the Federal position. He also suggested that we recruit somebody from the Army Corps of Engineers. *Ken M* will talk to a couple of people he works with from the Corps.

News Roundtable

Andy: MS4 reporting, preparing for biomonitoring, Patuxent Charles County de-listing effort, & **Sanal Rand** joined KCI.

Brian: Bay hypoxia down to 1985 levels, CBP STAC has new evaluation of systems' response to BMPs, recommended more shallow water monitoring, & considering deploying more con-mons.

Byron: submitted MS4 reporting, ACoE reports were due this year, 10 acres of fall tree plantings, & finishing watershed-wide assessment monitoring plan.

Chris: gearing up for monitoring season & submitted MS4 reports.

John: developing GIS map of all MDOT assets to identify modal partnership opportunities for water quality efforts.

Katherine: cleaning up 2023 MBSS data & announced MBSS summer/spring training dates.

Ken M: prepping spring benthic monitoring, new QR code raised registration, expanded conductivity monitoring at WSSC reservoirs, & reported lower conductivity due to fewer salt events.

Ken S: involved in Phase 7 Bay TMDL model development for agricultural nutrient load, pondered monitoring difficulties for private farmers, & shifting focus to overall watershed health.

Mat: starting second phase of (PFAS) monitoring Patapsco WWTPs & a USGS X account. *Matt* & *Ken S* discussed the cycling of pfas.

Chris suggested a PFAS workshop. *Matt* noted MDE's PFAS report to the State Legislature.

Megan: {reported in the chat} Baltimore County has received initial results from PCB samplers in the Jones Falls. Three out of 15 passive samplers exceeded limits.

Najma: nothing to report.

Nancy: supporting MBSS, instituted the QR code mentioned by *Ken M*, using the QR code for landowner permissions, gearing up for PCB, bacteriological, MBSS, and benthic monitoring.

Matt: plan to complete the Integrated Water Report in the next couple of months, working on the 2025 triannual assessment—adopting new human health and algal toxin criteria, identifying cold water uses in those currently designated warm water, & developing early detection tool for WWTP non-compliance (Back River and Patapsco WWTPs now exceed ENR goals).

Action Items

- *Conference Planning Committee*
 - Solicit nominees earlier
 - Solicit contributed talks as opposed to planned session talks
 - Simulcasts should show both the speaker and the slides
- *Nancy & Lindsey* are soliciting ongoing university contacts for student posters/presentations
- *Nancy* will reach out for a speaker at the October meeting on the stream health report—Claire Buchanan as a possible speaker
- *Ken M* asked for suggestions for at-large or volunteer committee candidates
- Please get Board alternates to *Ken M*
- *Andy* asked for people to submit monitoring station points for the map. There is a linked excel spreadsheet, which will be forwarded to Mark Trice
- Suggestion for a webinar on converting from paper to digital
- Volunteers needed for the awards committee—email Clark Howells, Matt, or Mat
- Organize a PFAS workshop
- A meeting of the committee chairs to plan for the year to come?

Adjournment (12:27 PM)