



**Maryland Water Monitoring Council**  
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**Vice-chair**

Matt Stover, Maryland Dept. of the Environment  
**Chair**

Katherine Hanna, Maryland DNR

**Executive Secretary**

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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

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

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## **BOARD MEETING REPORT**

### **MARYLAND WATER MONITORING COUNCIL BOARD MEETING**

#### **APRIL 23, 2024 – HYBRID**

#### **In Attendance**

*Virtual:* Matt Stover, Mat Pajerowski, Brian Smith, Byron Madigan, Chris Victoria, John Denniston, Ken Staver, Lindsay DeMarzo, Mark Trice, Matt (H)arper, Megan Brosh, Michael Williams, Mike McMahon, Nancy Roth, Bob Hilderbrand, Tom Parham; *In person:* Katherine Hanna, Nancy Roth, Heather Quinn

*Matt* called the meeting to order at 10:04 AM. *Katherine* introduced Heather from DNR (Board Candidate). *Matt* reminded Heather's nomination needs to be forwarded to the secretary of DNR for approval. We plan to have three other board vacancies filled soon.

#### **Last Meeting Report**

*Matt* called for the review of the last Meeting Report. *Katherine* asked for any edits. *Mike* explained some of the details of the report. *John* provided one correction. The report was approved by a “hands up” vote.

#### **Minor Items**

*Matt* noted that candidate resumés need to go out, so board members can vote. He explained to *Heather*, a plan for a quick orientation once voting was complete.

*Mike* noted that some people’s names were dropped from the Board email list, thinking it might be a Google issue. *Katherine* explained there was a smaller Board list which she was correcting. *Brian* commented that he gets duplicate announcement emails. *Matt & Byron* suggested that it was due to a second email address from the old State system. *Katherine* explained that large email transmissions go out through their Office of Communications and the GovDelivery email system.

*Katherine* corrected that we will go to Brighton Dam for the next board meeting. Ken Mack has all the contact and other information. *Matt* explained the onsite trip for the next meeting.

## Committee Updates

### Student

*Lindsay* thanked *Mike* for university contacts he provided. Please keep sending contacts for student outreach. She recognized the discussion at the last board meeting, reinforcing that students need to develop research in the spring to give presentations in the fall. She will start working on student committee issues. *Matt* offered contacts from Towson and Washington College.

### Monitoring and Assessment

*Byron* reported on the monitoring roundtable on February 26. Andy organized it with Katharine's help. There were 20 presentations from state, local, academia, NGOs, and watershed groups. 20 people attended in person: unknown number online. Next committee meeting is this Friday. *Matt* commented that the Stream Monitoring Roundtable went well and was well attended.

### Information Management

*Matt* reported Najma is retiring and we are looking for a chair. She started a seminar series on quality assurance, two of which were successful (50 & 60 attendees). The same speaker spoke on two different topics. January - *Water quality assurance from an EPA perspective*. February - *The three Rs of QAAPs*, which was recorded. He asked for space on the website to store recordings. *Katherine* will pursue. Other webinar subjects have been selected. The plan is for webinars every other month or twice a year. Future topics: electronic capture collection & continuous monitoring. *Brian* asked for a possible date for the "con-mon" webinar. *Matt* had no set date. *Matt & Brian* discussed issues with storing con-mon data sets. *Chris & Lindsay* noted that they never received announcements for these webinars. *Katherine* will check whether people have been unsubscribed from the email list. *Matt* suggested a separate list for the board.

### Groundwater

*Mat* welcomed Heather and had invited her to join the Board specifically to serve on the Groundwater Committee. He related his plan to review Maryland's well monitoring network annually. Drought status is related to groundwater levels in particular parts of the state. He will ask Andy Staley from MGS also to serve on the committee. The salinization report should be wrapped up. *Matt* asked for clarification on the salinization report. *Mat* explained it was a comprehensive look at salinization of local tributaries, groundwater, and low-lying soils. It is a review of the State report with comments. *Matt* described the State report as the status of the science or what we now know on salinization as a baseline evaluating this issue in the future...to identify areas of concern and...*Mat* added, potential problems rising from salinization.

### Citizen Science and Community Stewardship

*Rupert* was absent, due to prior obligation.

### Annual Conference Planning

*Katherine* noted the last Planning Committee meeting was January 25. Since then, first round venue bidding closed, and prospects are much higher. There are not enough funds to cover these costs. She explained that we could cover \$40K, but the current low bid is \$90K. Reports are that our usual venue was not on the bidding list. She was looking into state Universities as possible venues. MRSA was able to book directly last year. *Matt* pointed out the other issue is finding a place that has enough rooms to support the number of concurrent sessions we have. Board members continued discussing procurement issues and ideas resolution to the venue situation.

*Chris* suggested a 5-year contract (blanket purchase order). *Mat* voiced concern about needing to scale back the conference. *Mike* warned if we scale back, which means canceling speakers, we should give them as much notice as possible. *Katherine* recommended we reach out to potential speakers with the understanding that the plan could change completely.

*Matt* brought up the nominations for the Above & Beyond and the Carl Weber awards. Clark Howells will continue to chair the Awards Nominating Committee. We need people to help review nominations. He thanked Ken and John for joining the Awards Committee. He said we are looking for more nominations this year. He discussed with *Katherine* about an earlier announcement. *Katherine* & *Mat* agreed that nominations can be submitted without a date or venue set.

### Nominating Committee

*Matt* tabled issues to the July 30 meeting. Look for email updates.

### Special Items

*Mike* brought up the Pooled Monitoring Forum hosted by the Chesapeake Bay Trust at MDE on June 17, 2024. He wondered if anyone else was aware of it. *Matt* explained that there are a variety of funders including NFWF, DNR, MDOT, MS4 permittees and others. Research funded by the Pooled Monitoring Program covers work on a variety of water quality issues, many of them focusing on stream restoration practices. MDE is just one organization, along with DNR and others, that serve to review the proposals submitted to the CBT. *Nancy* was involved with the planning group for the forum. She had not gotten an announcement and did not know how widely announcements were sent. *Byron* said he received funding through the forum and thought it was by invite only. *Matt* shared the forum website and said Sadie Drescher handled most issues [Director of Restoration Programs]. *Katherine* suggested the forum might be a good place to find speakers for our conference. *Bob* announced he would speak at the forum. *Some additional details were added to these notes to clarify/correct information about the Pooled Monitoring Program.*

*Katherine* cited MSRA's webinar series, which encourages authors to have online presentations, furthering the goals of the restoration community.

### News Roundtable

*Mat*: shared a link for a study comparing 30 years of data for nutrient reduction from implementation for three major watersheds of the Bay. He shared another study that LIDAR mapped gullying in the Piedmont headwaters. A third study combined hyperspectral satellite imagery and microscopic analysis of water samples to develop a image library of Harmful Algal Blooms by genus. EPA has finalized the rule for PFAS, and we have discovered microbes in groundwater that can partially break down their fluoride bonds.

*Brian*: shallow water monitoring is well underway with 20 or 22 continuous monitoring stations deployed. The Back River station is yet to be deployed, hopefully next month. We hope to deploy our vertical profiler in Fishing Bay this week. From discussions with NOAA and the Chesapeake Bay Program, we may deploy additional continuous monitoring stations in the Choptank River. These would be in conjunction with DO arrays already deployed. Preparations are being made for our summer hypoxia cruises.

*Byron:* wrapped up spring MBBS sampling last week and launched our Piney Run boat two weeks ago. Out on the reservoir every two weeks doing stream cross-sections for NPDES and our CBT restoration research grants. Completed cross-sections for the geomorphic component. By the end of the month, we'll have a watershedwide plan to MDE for bacteria, macroinvertebrates, and chlorides for our NPDES requirements. In April, we'll get temperature sensors out and do QA/QC on temperatures all season. In mid-May we will give MDE a BMP tour.

*Chris:* wrapping up our spring monitoring and gearing up for our summer fish work.

*Katherine:* completing MBSS sampling this week. Putting the boat in for anadromous herring sampling every week through mid-May. Getting ready for summer MBSS training at Bowie State.

*Nancy:* doing morphometric monitoring, looking at the biggest erosion issues first and cycles over the next 10 years. Started planning PCB monitoring in Harford County, including GIS work looking for potential sources of PCBs.

*Ken S:* discussed that we will not make the Bay TMDL requirements by the 2025 deadline. He provided a link to a website for real time data from a network of weather stations across the state, including soil temperature and moisture. Gearing up for spring planting in the ag sector. Last year rainfall was recorded 7" under for the year. This year is started out wet, by April it went dry. I'm doing my usual edge of field work looking at small scale cause and effect.

*Matt H:* completing spring monitoring and planning for the summer. Per agreement with UM, establishing a messnet station at Northwest Branch Rec Park. They are looking for other sites in a few target areas to fill gaps in the system. *Ken & Matt H* discussed that UM would provide maintenance for these site.

*Megan:* added microbial source tracking to Baltimore's IDDE to detect sewage leaks. At an outfall testing for *E coli*, she takes another sample for MST and determine if it's worth pursuing. Five test samples were high in human fecal with low ammonia and no odor or visual indication.

*Mike:* reported on the NEIWPC conference, work on MOU with the EPA and UMES to provide MDE funding for student research experience at this HBCU. He also described his project for improvement of water operator recruitment to stem looming retirements, and a stream headwaters macrobenthic ecology talk given by Greg pond from EPA-WV.

*Bob:* is finding an unexpected diversity of freshwater sponges and jellyfish. eDNA is better at identifying many species then traditional sampling. However, it misses some taxa and is not yet efficient enough to replace traditional sampling. He has a project to use eDNA of stocked fauna to track migration/dispersal. *Matt* asked for future updates.

*Matt:* MDE proposed a bill during this recent session that would raise permit fees and tried to add a fee onto Tier 2 anti-degradation reviews so as to cover the increased costs of processing. However the bill died. To date, there were no major water pollution incidents due to the Key Bridge collapse, i.e. - fuel tank ruptures. MDE is monitoring from boats a couple times a week both up and downstream. We finished the Integrated Report/303(D) list a little late, which is under review and will be available in a couple of months. Unfortunately, there are new impairments. We have a new advisory list of PFOS in fish tissue for human consumption. We are discussing forest conservation with the counties.

## Special Presentation

### *Back River Midge Control*

Kevin Brittingham, Baltimore County DEP, Watershed Monitoring Section

#### Action Items

- Send *Lindsay* any academic contacts
- We need a volunteer to chair the Information Management Committee
- *Brian* will look into a possible speaker

*Katherine* will:

- Share the online attendance for the Streams Round Table
- Look into getting the 3 *Rs* presentation video online
- Check that emails are going out to the full Board
- Investigate what might be of issue with the Maritime Institute's bid

Adjournment (12:56 PM)