



Maryland Water Monitoring Council
Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources
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Mat Pajerowski
Vice-chair

Katherine Hanna, Maryland DNR
Executive Secretary

Directors

Andy Becker, KCI Technologies
Megan Brosh, Baltimore County DEPS
Lindsay DeMarzo, Howard Co. OCS
Jason Dubow, MD Dept. Planning
Bob Hilderbrand, UMCES
Ken Mack, Mont. Co. DEP
Byron Madigan, Carroll Co. BRM
Richard Mitchell, US EPA

Jeff Reagan, Biohabitats, Inc.
Nancy Roth, Tetra Tech, Inc.
Ken Staver, Univ. of MD WREC
Matt Stover, Maryland Dept. of the Environment
Chris Victoria, Anne Arundel DPW
Alice Volpitta, Blue Water Baltimore
Michael Williams, Univ. of MD College Park

MINUTES

MARYLAND WATER MONITORING COUNCIL BOARD MEETING – JULY 19, 2022

(HYBRID VIRTUAL/IN-PERSON)

In Attendance

In-person: Katherine Hanna, Matt Stover, Nancy Roth, Najma Khokhar, Mike McMahon, and Christine Knauss (guest speaker)

Online: Mat Pajerowski, Byron Madigan, Megan Brosh, Mark Southerland, Ken Mack, Alice Volpitta, Michael Williams, Lindsay DeMarzo, Chris Victoria, Ken Staver, Bob Hilderbrand, Mark Trice, and Jason Dubow

Mat Pajerowski [Vice-Chair] called the meeting to order. (10:05 AM)

The Minutes (10:06 AM)

Katherine Hanna [Executive Secretary]: Minutes from the May Board meeting went out. Please review. Edits will be accepted through the end of this week, and then a vote will be shared for their approval.

Mat: Motioned to approve minutes from March meeting, which was seconded by Chris Victoria, then a vote and approval.)

Michael Williams added an edit to the May minutes.

New Chair Election (10:11 AM)

Katherine: 12 votes were received; all were in favor of Matt Stover becoming the Chair.

Mat thanked Matt for volunteering and offered congratulations.

Nominating Committee (10:12 AM)

Matt named candidates for 5 board vacancies:

Intergovernmental – Matt Harper (MNCPPC)

(2) at Large – Micah Miles (FEMA, may be unable to participate with her new job)

Rupert Rosetti (Octoraro Watershed Association)

(2) State Government – Brian Smith (DNR)

John Denniston (MDTA)

Matt held a vote through Google Forms for those online, and by paper for the 2 Board members in person.

Mat facilitated a discussion on each of the 5 nominees as the voting was set up.

All 5 candidates were unanimously approved. Matt will reach out to all 5 candidates.

Michael Williams asked how these nominees were discovered or selected. Matt explained that it was from word-of-mouth or people who current Board members think might be good contributors, who are energetic, willing to pitch in, and have a wide network, which might help get us speakers for the conference.

Matt read off whose terms on the Board was ending at the end of 2022: Ken Staver, Chris Victoria, Michael Williams, and Byron Madigan. Matt asked if they are eligible for another term.

Matt: Ken and Chris are at the end of their third term, and Michael his second term, which would require a special vote of the rest of the Board for them to continue.

Matt: For a member to enter a second term, only the willingness of the member is required. He requested a few months' notice if a Board member plans to step down.

Matt requested that the Nomination Committee Chair duties be passed on now that he is Board Chair. He has set up SOPs and templates for the job. Mat noted that these duties can be shared and asked for anyone interested to contact him, Katherine, or Matt.

Committee Reports (10:34AM)

Monitoring and Assessment (Andy Becker): Katherine reported that Andy had emergency field work, and that there were no announcements from his committee.

Citizen Science and Community Stewardship (Jeff Reagan, not present): Mat asked for any member of the committee to report, but none were present.

Information Management and Communications (Najma Khokhar): The Committee had a meeting on May 4, with 13 attendees. The main question asked was regarding best practices for data management. She had asked the participants for their experience in data management in their organization. No one had a complete, stable solution. Most organizations use an Access database. The next Committee meeting is in August.

Groundwater (Mat): The Committee has not met; no progress to report.

Student (Lindsay DeMarzo): The Committee has not met either. Lindsay asked if there was interest in doing another student career chat. It was held last year in October with good timing and response. The Committee would continue to hold it virtually.

Nancy Roth said it was a good idea to do it again, and maybe make it annual. She volunteered to help plan and run the event.

Matt estimated 15 to 20 students participated last year. Lindsay and Matt said it was enough for good conversation and questions, with a positive response. Mat encouraged the committee to email the Board and keep them abreast of plans, so members or people they know might participate.

Annual Conference Planning (Katherine Hanna): The committee met with the Maritime Institute's planner to discuss an in-person meeting. They are willing to allow us to cancel up to a month in advance with no financial obligation. The auditorium seats 350, which would be a good limit to attendance for a smaller conference this year.

Mike McMahon: What has been the usual past registration deadline?

Katherine: It has been up to a week before in the past. This year we will work with the date of a month before as the registration deadline date. We are negotiating the reserving the auditorium plus 4 break-out rooms. No contracts have been signed and no bids have been made yet. I am working with our financial people to expedite the process. A contract with the Maritime Institute would cost about \$80 per person. To recoup this cost and other expenses over the year, the registration fee would be \$95 and \$85 early bird.

Mat explained that in their May 2022 meeting, the committee determined that a hybrid meeting would be too expensive and adds logistical difficulty. He also made the point that the attendance at our virtual conferences over the last 2 year greatly decreased, referring to "zoom fatigue." This was all behind their decision to go with an in-person conference. We also concluded the need for a cut-off date to cancel the conference, which would be 30 days before. Matt asked Katherine if we get all our money back with no obligation if we cancelled 30 days before the proposed meeting date.

Katherine: That's what I understood from our meeting with the Maritime Institute planner.

Mat: We could cancel if there is another variant outbreak or low registration. We could cancel by early November without losing the cost of holding the conference.

Michael asked last year's attendance, and why it was decided to cap attendance at 350 this year?

Mat: attendance last year was 250, a significant drop-off from 600 in 2019. Logistical reasons to limit attendance to 350 include: seating capacity in the auditorium (satellite rooms would cost more), the lunch room also seats about 350, and we would need to pay for more breakout rooms.

Michael asked how we will judge the minimal registrants needed by early November, especially considering many people register late.

Mat: Both the early bird and final registration date will be earlier to get a better count. 290 is the minimal registrant we can have. Katherine explained this was due to the Institute willing to adjust down to no less than 85% (Mat: based on a pro rata price). Nancy asked what is that cost. Matt explained that we would be charged \$80 per person for 290 people. If we get 250 people, we are losing money.

Mat calculated a \$3,200 dollar loss with only 250 people and asked Katherine if we could afford that loss and if we lost money last year.

Katherine: we had a slight loss last year and with \$16,000 in reserve, we could absorb Mat's calculated loss. Still, it would be better to not have a loss.

Michael asked if the conference format would be all day. Mat verified yes, in the format of our past years' conferences.

Mike asked if the in-person conference was cancelled would we go to a virtual format.

Mat: We would try to set up a virtual conference, maybe a few months later (February 2023?). The delay would be necessitated by re-scheduling the speakers and to acquire a vendor for the virtual platform.

Matt noted that our Google Meets license now covers new functions making it equivalent to Zoom, which can accommodate 600+ people with breakout sessions of 150 people. This would be free.

Mike suggested that we inform the speakers of the potential for cancelation and switch to virtual a couple of months later. This would give speakers the opportunity to plan to reschedule. Mat agreed.

Mat returned to last week's discussion of the theme and break-out sessions for the conference. Mat would like the speakers booked and agenda set up by the end of September. He asked board members to reach out and recruit speakers. He asked Katherine to review our plans for the conference to date.

Katherine: Our overall theme - *What are you drinking? Protecting the Source*. Source water protection would be the emphasis. She reviewed a list of potential breakout sessions:

- Source Water Protection
- Water Utilities
- Agricultural BMPs
- Forestry
- Groundwater/PFAS/microplastics/other contaminants
- Implementation of Local TMDLs
- Climate Change
- Equity and water resources/environmental justice
- Vernal Pools – Mark Southerland will be moderator
- Restoration

Scott Stranko in Katherine's office would like to have considerable office representation in each session.

Michael stated that Scott would manage the stream restoration session and he would work with him.

Mat asked how many speakers for any given topic. Katherine suggested that if we followed previous formats, that would mean 20 minutes per speaker with a 5 minute for questions & answers, which would mean 4 speakers per session. In person that varied a little depending on the session. Matt said this gives us a reasonable goal per session.

There was a general discussion of getting speakers for each topic who would lead the effort to recruit speakers. Mat stated we will send a general solicitation for speakers in September. By then we will know how many more we will need. Katherine verified that we usually are still looking to fill speaker slots in October. In the rare instance we have too many speakers, we can ask them to present a poster.

Nancy Roth volunteered to lead the Local TMDL session.

Mat and Michael discussed the fact that the conference is booked later this year, with the potential for academic conflicts.

Mat: Looking for ideas for plenary speakers. Maybe we can bring back the social this year – will talk to Andy about this. We will have a student poster flyer and will ask people to distribute it. There are a lot of students with projects that ought to be able to share. We decided to open our Weber Award nominations early this year; in June, to give people a chance for submissions.

Michael asked if volunteers are needed to chair sessions. Katherine welcomed volunteers. Michael volunteered to chair the Stream Restoration break-out sessions. He suggested a broader topic of restoration and if it should be multiple sessions. Mat thanked him for volunteering and agreed it could be done as a series of sessions. Nancy volunteered to help Michael or chair another session.

Katherine had nothing to report regarding getting a plenary speaker. She will ask Clark for suggestions. Lindsay volunteered to reach out to WSSC for a plenary speaker.

Katherine asked for volunteers to moderate two sessions: Forestry and Equity/Environmental Justice. Matt volunteered to recruit someone for the forestry session. She then initiated a discussion for speakers for each session. Ken Staver is working on a short list for his session in Agriculture. Matt reached out to Robert

Peoples for the Source Water Protection session. Katherine asked people to update her with lists of potential/invited/confirmed speakers. She will send out forms that can be delivered to invited speakers. Mike volunteered to recruit speakers for missing slots throughout the program.

Lindsay asked about the student poster session. Katherine recommended that she coordinate with Andy. Michael asked if only undergraduates qualified to have a poster. Katherine said they could also be high or middle school students.

Special Topic (11:35 AM)

Ken opened discussion about having a metric for future conferences identifying where we are on all the big issues of water quality and stream health. Michael had thought about a similar idea describing trends. Nancy suggested it be presented in the format of *What is the Latest?* Mat suggested we may have stumbled upon our overall theme our 2023 conference and should develop this idea further during the next meeting.

Break (11:38 AM)

Guest Speaker (11:48 AM)

Christine Knauss: Microplastic Impacts on Oyster Larvae from the Chesapeake Bay

Christine presented and answered questions during and after. Following her presentation, Christine was invited to speak at the conference on microplastics. She accepted.

News Roundtable (12:52 PM)

Chris Victoria: Nothing to report at this time.

Ken Mack: In the depths of monitoring season, hot and rainy.

Ken Staver: Lots of talk about drought, but the Eastern Shore has been getting plenty of rain. Busy with monitoring. Working on a paper with a national conference regarding conservation trade-offs impacted by phosphorous (P). A continued push for less tillage results in lower erosion, but this results in dissolved P runoff. It's a national issue and will likely be more significant in agricultural management.

Lindsay: Nothing to report.

Mark Southerland: First National Stream Restoration Conference on August 1 - 3, in Nashville. Soliciting input for a CBP project, with a TetraTech colleague and Rich Starr, developing hydraulic and geomorphic indicators of stream health. This is in addition to biological indicators.

Mark Trice: In addition to the paper already sent out, we will have the hypoxia report for what we record in May, and for the 2 cruises in June. Both June cruises were below the norm, which tracks the CBP, USGS, UMCES, etal. Bay forecast. Out on the water again in the next few days, depending upon factors. Colleagues and myself at MDE recently updated an ocean acidification action plan. This updates progress made in carbon reduction in the estuary and greenhouse gas reductions and nutrient reductions. Update was presented at US oceans conference in May.

Megan Broch: Field work like everyone else.

Najma Khokhar: Nothing to report.

Byron Madigan: A lot of field work right now with MBSS and Army Corps monitoring. Relocating our NPDES/MS4 station with the change in new monitoring parameters, over the next month or so (installing new equipment inner flowmeters).

Katherine: We are hiring three Natural Resources Biologist IV positions, posted.

Mat: USGS will be recruiting for a hydrological technician position, doing field monitoring and field sampling, an entry level position. Probably posted this fall. I will send out a notice to the Board.

Jason Dubow: I have been working on the new guidance on how to meet the water resource requirement for local comprehensive plans. It's a state requirement, developed in conjunction with MDE and DNR. It includes information on how to integrate climate change adaptation and new information on various valuable receiving waters and how to protect them. There will be training webinars on the topic this year, and I am pointing out the link to the relevant website.

Mat encouraged members of the board to reactivate the various committees. A lot of the work done by the Board is done through these committees. Hold meetings for these committees and decide what issues are important for your group to work on. We have a lot of leeway to choose what issues to focus on. Matt would like to hear where you're headed with the committees at the next meeting.

Also, before COVID, we would hold two or three annual workshops of smaller groups focused on specific topics. Mat encouraged committees to consider topics for our workshops. We would pull together people from various institutions and agencies. They could be presented virtually. It's a good way to share information, as well as to move forward with some of these monitoring issues that are challenging us.

Nancy Roth: We are wrapping up production of the Maryland Healthy Watersheds Assessment for the Bay Program. We have been working with the Maintain Healthy Watersheds Goal Team and MDE's Tier II Waters Program. The goal is to have these indicators across the state of Maryland. The information will be available to everyone, including online, where you can view GIS data. The data source was the high resolution landuse/land cover data the Bay Program just put out. We are using as indicators on how to predict models. Once it is available, I can send out online links.

Matt Stover: At MDE, still working on the responses to the triennial review of water quality standards. Got many comments, many towards the changes we are proposing for cold water resources anti-degradation protection. We also got many comments related to PFAS criteria. We also propose to adopt new ammonia criteria that are more protective over freshwater mussels, and got many comments on this topic. We also have projects for lake assessment and the EPA's new criteria on lake nutrients. Some other major projects regarding Tier II waters include the developing maglev project between DC and New York.

Jason asked if there were permits involved with the project.

Matt replied that there was a Wetlands and Waterways authorization submitted, and a stormwater permit associated with construction activity will be due. Either one of those permits triggers a Tier II review.

Jason asked if there would be public notification. Matt said yes, but did not know when. Review has been paused by the Army Corps of Engineers.

Mike McMahon: Anyone with comments regarding formatting of the minutes should contact him.

Matt reminded everyone that Mike or Katherine would send out minutes for this meeting. Approval for the previous meeting has not yet happened. Look for an e-mail to address this.

Adjournment (1:51 PM)