**Adaptation & Resiliency Working Group Meeting**

HYBRID MEETING

Wednesday, May 29, 2024 · 2:00 – 4:00pm

Maryland Department of Natural Resources

580 Taylor Avenue, Annapolis, MD 21401

Room C-1

Meeting link: <https://meet.google.com/bkj-nyxw-zjx>

Or dial:

*Chair:* Secretary of Natural Resources, Josh Kurtz

*Coordinator*: Ryland Taylor, [ryland.taylor@maryland.gov](mailto:ryland.taylor@maryland.gov)

**Agenda**

1. **Welcome and Introductions 2:00 - 2:05p**

*Secretary, Josh Kurtz, Department of Natural Resources (DNR)* Meeting Call to Order, Roll Call, and Approve Minutes from Feb 28, 2023 meeting.

Action: Members approve meeting minutes via vote

Materials: [DRAFT Meeting Notes ARWG 2.28.24](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VJ93pep4KNuNv7N69-6yT8xC90qJW9pf_2MHHzVamOE/edit)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| State Delegate | Del. Dana Stein - Yes |
| The Conservation Fund | Erik Meyers - Yes |
| The Nature Conservancy | Bob Allen - Yes |
| UMD Sea Grant Extension | Fredrika Moser - Yes |
| UMD Environmental Finance Center | Brandy Espinola - Yes |
| MDE | Matthew Rowe - Yes, Jim George |
| DNR | Anne Hairston-Strang - Yes |
| MDEM | Sara Bender - No |
| DNR | Tom Parham - Yes |
| MDH | Clifford Mitchell - No |
| MDP | Jason Dubow - Yes, Debbie Herr Cornwell |
| MDA | Alisha Mulkey - Yes |
| MDOT | Allison Breitenother - Yes |
| DNR | Catherine McCall - No |
| MEA | Brandon Bowser - No |
| Commerce | John Papavasiliou - Yes |
| MIA | Bill Fawcett - No |

Erik Meyers motion to approve, Anne Hairston-Strang Seconded. Meeting Minutes approved

1. **Session Recap and Policy Development Discussion 2:05 - 2:25p**

*Dylan Behler (DNR)* will recap bills from this past session and lead a discussion on policy items the group is interested in targeting for next session.

Action: Informative talk, members come prepared to discuss high priority policy items for next session

Materials: None

* thank you Delegate Stein for your leadership
* DNR introduced 11 departmentals (10 passed ranging from parks to coastsmart to CCS)
  + senate bill 299: CoastSmart Council duties and authority
    - codified the practise of the current CoastSmart council to recommend regulations for adoption
    - gives CoastSmart a little more teeth
    - this was a great opportunity to educate legislators
  + Senate Bill 253: Pay for Success procurement exemptions
    - targeted procurement exemption for DNR when we do pay for success
    - Conservation finance act of 2022?
    - allows us to target additional co benefits and get more ban from our buck
* CAC also put forth bills
  + House Bill 233 - incorporates resilience and equity throughout the critical area commission. allows them to prioritize these outcomes moving forward
  + allows us to incorporate resilience throughout entire programs
* Private sponsored bills
  + Senate Bill 148- sponsored by Alonzo Washington
    - ensures that 40% of MDE comprehensive flood management programs has to be spent in underserved communities
  + Whole Watershed Act - incorporates the pillars of the CESAR report into policy
    - creates a framework for DNR and sister agencies to select 5 watersheds for targeted comprehensive restoration
    - exciting opportunity
* Next legislative session
  + top priority for DNR for next year → want to have a heightened focus on resilience and adaptation for our package next year
* IDEAS:
  + Commissioner Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi: ensure that we have the ample money that we need to do the work we need. Unify behind a funding plan
  + Delegate Stein- thank you for your work!
    - the CAC bill focus on equity and resilience
    - maybe next session we can include specific elements of resilience and adaptation into comprehensive plans
  + Send ideas to Sec Kurtz and Dylan moving forward
  + We are going to be responsible for drafting recommendations for the commission’s annual report → this is a great space for ideas that aren’t fully formed
    - we don’t need bill language just ideas!

1. **Community Liaisons Panel Discussion 2:25 - 3:40p**

Panelists *Sasha Land (DNR), Joan Peacock (DBM), Joanna Ogburn (Envision the Choptank), and Shirley Lake (Community Ambassador)* will lead a discussion on the utilization of community liaisons as a mechanism to increase community engagement and empowerment.

Action: Panel discussion, members come prepared with questions for panel discussion

Materials: [Speaker Bios](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1zuovP6BvlwRL4okGRWjq44VBwPG9rr9Se83HOWTes8c/edit), Slides to be presented

Introduction to the panel

* in 2023 we submitted a recommendation that state agencies should prioritize funding to support local community liaisons - the goal of this panel is to help support that goal
* definitions of community liaison and cultural competency (see slides)
* community engagement spectrum: inform → consult → involve → collaborate → empower (increasing difficulty and level of public impact)
  + having a community liaison relationship allows you to build up teh community trust to move towards the empower side of the spectrum

Moderators: Ryland and Sabine

* Shirley Lake - lives in Jonestown. Works as a community ambassador for Envision the Choptank
* Joanna Ogburn - coordinator for Envision the Choptank partnership. works for JBO focused on building multi-layered partnerships
  + partnership is focused on improving the health of the Choptank both environmental health and community health
  + workgroup on engaging disenfranchised communities
  + worked with three communities to listen to the challenges and identity opportunity (jonestown is one of them)
  + Lead the Shore
    - trying to provide the tools information, connections to the community so that people can affect change in their community
* Joan Peacock - Department of Budget and Management
  + hoping to provide guidance and support to figure out how we can make community liaisons happen for the state
* Sasha Land - Department of Natural Resources
  + community engagement has been something we’ve thought about a lot, but have not been able to invest the time necessary
  + started at the community level and place based very much focused on flood vulnerability
  + from the state: where can we help be the seeds to get this started → we can’t be everywhere, but maybe we can advance this forward and help be the push

What are the benefits and opportunities of working with a community liaison? or being a liaison working with a partner organization?

* JO: community ambassadors play a variety of roles, but most importantly they are in the community, they have the on the ground knowledge and the cultural competency
  + trusted person to help build relationships and they know when the project needs to be adjusted to meet needs (do we need to slow down or move faster, have we missed the mark?)
  + helps ensure that a project will be long lasting
  + making sure to address the vulnerability that the community is interested in addressing
* Shirley : As someone living in the community who knows the people and understands the history
  + in Jonestown for example, there was not a huge trust with government agencies (questions like “if they come in and do this project, can they come and take my land?”)
    - you need a trusted individual to help be that bridge
  + “translating” → we have our own jargon, the community liaison can help explain all of our terms to the community
    - the education piece of project development is important
  + on the community engagement spectrum → add trust to the end of the spectrum because that is where you can ultimately get to
* Sasha: there is not necessarily a record of why there is such a strong distrust between the community and the agency. A community liaison can help provide that context and perspective to the agencies
  + at times we are naive or unaware of the lack of trust
  + lack of trust can take years to overcome
  + the issues we’re working on are complex and interconnected with other issues → when we’re sitting at our computer doing a desk audit, we can be kind of detached from these complexities
    - how does this manifest in a neighborhood? a community liaison can help shed light on this
* JP: this is an opportunity to ensure the success of our projects ,
  + the more you develop a relationship, the more open you are to feedback so that you can do it even better and more efficient next time

What are the challenges of setting up a community liaison program/position?

* JP: We are struggling with what is the best vehicle for the state to use to compensate?
  + is it better to have them hired through a partner organization or directly hired by the state. This could be contractual position or independent contractor through state procurement
  + something that’s top of mind: how do you find those people and set the criteria to ensure that the right person gets the job
  + Time is important factor: how long are you engaging this person? is this for one project, multiple projects, how big is your geography
* Sabine: we also want to be aware of how we manage the burden on the community liaison who would be filling this role. Are we asking them to track time? what paperwork will they need to fill out?
  + JP: probably at the very minimum, you would need them to track their time,
    - depending on type of position, may need to work with office of personnel, procurement
* Sasha: one of the greatest challenges is creating a network of liaisons across a landscape
  + state is one piece of a framework of public, private, ngo network
  + how do we put these networks together to be most effective
* Shirley- as a community ambassador
  + there are often multiple people who are really trusted messengers in highly specific areas. so hiring one person to fill this role is tricky because she’s trusted on her street.
  + A stipend system could be the best option. She has a full time job and she teaches so she is doing this in her free time.
* Sabine: Need to have flexibility in the vehicle we use to compensate community liaisons
* Sasha: Need to be flexible to use multiple people. A community liaison is often not just one person. This is hard with how contracts work
* JP: we probably can’t just create one set standard way and will need to find a way to be flexible in the suite of options in how we manage this.
  + from a payroll perspective, we need to know what the performance measures are or the “deliverables”
  + John Nickerson (DBM): maybe we need a matrix of what we want.
    - are we trying to do this state-wide or just at the agency level?
    - codifying the relationship on paper
    - money goes out the door in two ways: HR action or contract (tax implications for both)
* JO: flexibility is so critical and want to re-emphasize importance of public-private partnerships
  + continuity is so important → if you’re going to start it, you need to see it through
  + need to think about whether or not all community ambassadors are going to be comfortable with being on contract with the state
  + Funding is a such a challenge!
    - grants need to support this kind of work! Not a lot of grant programs can be flexible to support these programs
  + It takes multiple people to cover everything. Different ambassadors focus on different functions as well as different geographies
  + Question: how do you equitably distribute community ambassador funds? If you have 6 people interested, can you afford to pay them all

How do you identify or connect with potential liaisons?

* JO: **TIME**!
  + they need to get to know you. JBO started working with Jonestown in 2019, and they were probably three years in before they started the community ambassador program
  + started with community meetings and they kept an eye out for people who seemed interested, who were stepping up, and who was trusted and then reached out to those people to see if they were interested
* JP: one of the challenges of working with the state on this is that it will make it more of a “job” with an official position description that is advertised
  + is there a proven program out there from another state?
  + the way the JBO team did it, sounds perfect. Hard to get that right person through a contract that goes through an interview process. How can we be sure that the community actually trusts that person and not just that the person is self identifying as familiar with them
  + NGOs or CBOs may be more ingrained in the community than state agencies
* Sabine: we acknowledge that CBOs may be better positioned to do this, but how can we do this when we ant to at the state
* JP: Maybe there is another way to put this out?
  + Mark Townend - you don’t have to do a public posting. There is a way to make an effort to assess “potential applicants”

What are the existing or needed mechanisms to maintain relationships between the organization and community liaisons?

* Sasha: the mechanism is going to be different for each project/program
  + we need to think about how we create that framework. We have more pathways available to us. We live in a more digital world so we can lean into that.
  + what is that level of commitment and continuity that is needed from both sides (community and organization)
  + also important to understand the roles and responsibilities. avoid misconceptions about what others can do
    - also need to create a framework for the relationship to shift and change and evolve as things ebb and flow
* Sabine: we have to be adaptive. Let’s keep thinking about what is the role of the state in helping to maintain and continue these relationships
* JO: you need to put in the time and be in person as much as possible, but maybe the state has a different role
  + communication is incredibly important → what can we do, life happens so be flexible when someone has to step back, having multiple community liaisons helps to build in resilience
  + it’s after hours and on the weekends
  + transparency and continuity → you have to commit over the long term, this is a real relationship
* Shirley: disagree with the digital communication piece
  + they were having meetings on zoom, and her dad doesn’t even have a cell phone
  + a lot of older people communicate through their children
* JO: this will really depend on the community and the age of the community
  + also think about language barriers as well as technology barriers

Audience Questions:

Erik Meyers - The role of a non-profit is vital . To Saha’s point about state agencies having trust. Can you speak to the role of grants in helping to allow nonprofits to be that more trusted person, and you avoid being a state contractor

* JO: yes it is a little easier for the community to work with a local non-profit than the state. this is how JBO always does it.
  + as an example, they work with someone who needs everything printed so having that non-profit local partner is critical
  + you need to find the right community liaison and the right non-profit
  + it’s hard to find a non-profit that is working with communities of color or low income communities and environmental issues. So they are often pairing two non-profits to meet both those needs.
* Sasha: there are different networks we can lean in on such as the CBO-CBI
  + state agencies may not always be the most trusted, but we also want to work to break those barriers down.
  + we aren’t all regulatory which is where some of the distrust comes from so it’s important that we have a seat at the table. it’s an opportunity to build up trust
  + it’s really hard to be that consistent, present role in a community when you don’t live there. So that is still important for partners to come in.
  + need to work to utilize all our different resources

Commissioner Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi: How do you train or support your community liaisons to accommodate disabilities? Especially as people with disabilities are disproportionately impacted by climate change. Maryland’s disabled population would actually make great community ambassadors especially since they are under-employed,often limited to part time work, and they are looking for that long term working.

* JO: we don’t have that training,, but they are often working in very small communities and their community ambassadors know what accommodations people need.
  + this is an area we could potentially improve
* Shirley: this could be a good Lead the Shore session since the community ambassadors will be there along with other community members
  + Commissioner Mizrahi would be willing to support this

Frederika Mosier MD Sea Grant: Building trust is very important but it also means delivering solutions

* JO: engaging with the state and SeaGrant extension throughout this process has been critical in finding creating funding solutions
  + Eric Behul has been so great at supporting this work. He always says “DO NOT OVER PROMISE” before each community meeting.
  + so always be honest about the time it takes to get to implementation
    - study to identify the project, then design the project, then permit and implement the project and there are months between each phase of these.
    - communicating that timeline and being honest and open throughout the project
  + having as many partners engaged as possible
    - example: Carrie Decker (DNR) was able to bring DNR engineering and construction in to do pro bono survey work which was hard to find funding for. this helped them overcome a hurdle and now they know what projects could actually work
  + working really closely with the community members to identify a solution that will actually solve the problem and meet community needs
    - if they need to maintain a project for example, they need to have buy in
* Shirley: saw her dad fight with stormwater issues for years, many people in the house had asthma, and learned that the stormwater problems may have been contributing
  + not only are they fixing the problem, but they are educating and explaining what they are doing.
  + Before Lead the shore sessions - Shirely didn’t like going outside, had a fear of the environment, → the education piece was really important in bringing people on board.
  + Seeing all these organizations working together on solutions is helping to heal that broken trust

Sabine: building capacity in both social and environmental literacy is so important

Anne Hairston-Strang (DNR) How can funding be structured in a way that would work better? How do you want the grant to look? It’s hard to have continuous projects with one to two year grants

* Sasha: We are in an operations world of 12-18 months even with our federal agencies. If we could structure on a 5 year level then we would have more flexibility to create consistency across partnerships
  + There are a lot of hurdles from state through federal level. Having sustained sources of federal funding for these larger projects would be helpful for us to be able to support these longer term projects.
  + We’re on a constant hamster wheel with the year over year
* AHS: Looking at the CESAR report and the Whole watershed act, how do we do this more holistically?
* JO: longer timelines for grants is a big piece of it. Can we combine the phases of grants? It takes a lot of time to develop grant proposals and manage on the back end. Currently you apply for design, and implementation and capacity building all differently. anyway to combine those phases would be great
  + on implementation grants - we’d love to see money for capacity building too
  + flexible options on what you can spend on.
    - for example Lead the Coast paid for transportation to the meetings and child care
    - example of paying for tire disposal after a clean up
  + these projects are in small communities, low income communities etc → not always right on the waterfront
    - they are not always going to give the big numbers on nutrient reduction.
    - we need other criteria to help these smaller communities compete

Josh: one of the most important things we can do for resilience is build social cohesion

1. **Office of Resilience Update 3:40 - 3:55p**

*Mike Hinson, Chief Resilience Officer* will address the group on the Office of Resilience objectives for the year.

Action: Informative Update

Materials: None

Summer Modelfinio - our statutory role is coordinating across state and local government to put together a comprehensive resilience strategy and offer technical assistance

* taking a three tiered approach to engaging partners across state agencies
  + executive stakeholders
    - annual group meeting of secretaries in state government
    - presented to MRP
    - established that group
  + leadership council - this one is the furthest behind
  + operations and planning - making progress on establishing this group
* will also be engaging local governments too, business, and CBOs, NGOs and civic leaders
* officially hired all their staff!

1. **Public Comment, Wrap Up and Next Steps**  **3:55 - 4:00p**

* Jeff - thank you for having this meeting. This sounds very integrated with the desire to open up and serve the communities that are most difficult to reach about climate change
  + outreach should be focused on low income and racially disadvantaged communities
  + State should pour initial resources into those communities. It will catch the attention of the racial majority and they will see that we’re taking climate change seriously. this will be their wake up call
  + a lot of climate change denying rhetoric, and I think helping underserved communities directly will draw attention and will show that we’re not backing down.
* Comment from Jeff Silva in the chat: “utilization of community liaisons as a mechanism to increase community engagement and empowerment.” The best path to Climate Crisis empowerment is to vote for a candidate that is endorsed by a credible environmental non-profit organization. But, has DNR attempted to use the local police to ID properties affected by climate related damage? Once those locations are ID’d then attempt to approach the property owner, with a brochure to leave with them, that discusses helpful climate programs. Has DNR instructed the local police what are the signs of climate destruction on humans and vegetation, such as water intrusion leads to mold allergens, etc. to assist the State to assist the community with adaptation and response to climate change? Police should be able to ask for free MDE livability inspections of rentals and low income property owners to start that population’s improvement of their quality of life.

Next Meeting: August 28, 2024 2-4pm

Attendees: 37 online, 27 in person

1. [Christine Burns -DNR-](mailto:christine.burns1@maryland.gov)
2. [Jennifer Raulin -DNR-](mailto:jennifer.raulin@maryland.gov)
3. Bob Allan
4. [Sasha Land -DNR-](mailto:sasha.land@maryland.gov)
5. Fredrika Moser
6. [Kate Vogel -DNR-](mailto:kate.vogel@maryland.gov)
7. [Christine Conn -DNR-](mailto:christine.conn@maryland.gov)
8. [Jillian Seagraves -DNR-](mailto:jillian.seagraves@maryland.gov)
9. Emily Thorpe
10. Hillary Gibson
11. Shirley Lake
12. John Nickerson
13. [Joan Peacock -DBM-](mailto:joan.peacock@maryland.gov)
14. Erik Meyers
15. [Sabine Bailey -DNR-](mailto:sabine.bailey@maryland.gov)
16. Carrie Decker
17. [Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi](mailto:jlm@laszlostrategies.com)