

## Adaptation & Resiliency Working Group Meeting

Wednesday, Nov 29, 2023 · 2:00 – 4:00pm

Maryland Department of Natural Resources  
580 Taylor Avenue, Annapolis, MD 21401  
Room C-1

Google Meet Video call link: [meet.google.com/sxq-puae-jvt](https://meet.google.com/sxq-puae-jvt)

Or dial: (US) +1 575-378-3289 PIN: 420 068 375#

*Chair:* Secretary of Natural Resources, Josh Kurtz  
*Coordinator:* Ryland Taylor, [ryland.taylor@maryland.gov](mailto:ryland.taylor@maryland.gov)

### Agenda

- I. Welcome and Introductions** **2:00 - 2:05p**  
Meeting Call to Order, Roll Call, and Approve Minutes from Aug 30, 2023 meeting - *Secretary, Josh Kurtz, Department of Natural Resources (DNR)*

State Delegate	Del. Dana Stein - yes
The Conservation Fund	Erik Meyers - yes
UMD Sea Grant Extension	<del>Fredrika Moser</del> - (Kate M) yes
UMD Environmental Finance Center	Brandy Espinola - yes (late)
MDE	<del>Matthew Rowe</del> - (Jim G) yes
DNR	Anne Hairston-Strang - yes
MDEM	Sara Bender - yes
DNR	Tom Parham - no
MDH	Clifford Mitchell - no
MDP	Jason Dubow - yes
MDA	Alisha Mulkey - yes
MDOT	Allison Breitenother - yes
DNR	Catherine McCall - yes
MEA	Brandon Bowser - no
Commerce	John Papavasiliou - no
MIA	Alex Borkowski - no

Action: Members approve meeting minutes via vote

Materials: [DRAFT Notes ARWG 8.30.23](#)

Motion to approve August 31, 2023 meeting notes by Jason Dubow and seconded by Anne Hairston-Strang.

Sec Kurtz: Introduces the agenda items for the meeting.

## II. State Wetland Strategy Update

2:05 - 2:30p

Jason Dubow, MDP and Elliott Campbell, DNR will provide a progress update on the state's wetland adaptation strategy with an opportunity for questions and feedback.

Action: Informative talk

Materials: [Draft Outline - Wetland Adaptation Strategy](#) and [Wetland Adaptation Strategy - Slides](#)

Jason Dubow: Saltwater Intrusion Plan released in 2019. Item in the plan is a change in the makeup of coastal wetlands, which are a priority area. Recommendation to develop statewide adaptation plan (makeup and migration). Saltwater Intrusion team facilitating plan implementation. In 2022 MCCC gave a directive to identify strategies and solutions for migration. The State Wetland Team inventoried strategies already in place then analyzed what more can be done (modifying or developing programs).

Elliott Campbell: Maryland's Wetland Adaptation Strategy; complements the Bay Program's initiatives. Purpose is to pull together existing resources into a single document with common definitions. Explained the need for common definitions. The plan lists out threats and strategies, priority regions (based on adaptability and ecosystem service value). On a landscape scale looking at feasibility along with the Bay Agreement and Beyond 2025, then suggest policies. Need for a plan that pulls together climate and wetlands. With climate change and hardened shorelines, wetlands are limited in their ability to migrate. Acknowledge funding challenges for wetland restoration, even though their ecosystem service value is high. Reviewed state of the science, acknowledging that there is less data available for inland wetlands rather than coastal wetlands.

Jason D: Highlight the SLAMM model results and geographic analyses. Need for policies and programs to implement geographic targeting. Need a quantitative goal for wetland protection to see if the work is effective. Ask for feedback on the outline to create a draft strategy. Moving towards review and approval.

### Discussion:

Erik Myers (The Conservation Fund): Question about the SLAMM model and if they are considering the impact of phragmites degrading the quality of the wetlands and vegetation and what interventions may be required.

- Elliott: Model does not address the nature of the vegetation. Does not believe it is realistic to control phragmites if it provides some ecosystem services (erosion).
- Erik M: Pointed out current research on this topic and concern over habitat quality. Ex: salt marsh sparrow
- Elliott: Elevation in addition to vegetation issues

Jim George (MDE): MDE is hosting a series of meetings related to permitting restoration projects. Challenge of vast areas of flat marshes that are 1 ft of elevation; these will rapidly disappear and have limited opportunity for migration. Potential for wide loss of these acres. Larger strategic question.

- Elliott: Clarified the question about wetland loss (not migration). Emissions scenarios and probabilities, wide range in how much wetlands are expected to be lost (gain or loss). Tremendous amount of uncertainty in what the outputs are. Emissions are globally determined beyond just MD.
- Jim G: Patches of water in center of marshes, SLAMM does not account for.
- Elliott: Other indices can be used to track wetland quality rather than just elevation.
- Erik M: Thin layer placement to help protect marsh quality.

Erik Fisher (CAC): Question about criteria for the goal setting. Shoreline hardening, science of natural migration, etc.

- Jason and Elliot: Still working on the goal setting process. Pointed out how the Bay Program developed their wetland goal. Start with technical feasibility and resource assessment.
- Erik F: Goal we need to back into. With mitigation we know the goal, but for this it's "as much as possible" since theoretically no loss is possible. Could back into a number.

- Sec Kurtz: Governor's watershed council as a place to have discussions. General concept of adaptation that more is always better, which makes defining goals a fascinating question.

Sec Kurtz: Also an ecosystem, quality is not always quantitative (concept we can bring to the Bay Program).

### III. **NextGen Next Steps**

**2:30 - 3:00p**

*Josh Kurtz, DNR* will update the ARWG on progress and plans for NextGen.

Action: Informative Talk.

Materials: None

Sec Kurtz thanked the NextGen team. The Plan is getting a lot of attention and support. Introduced the new resiliency officer (Mike Hinson) who is in the room. Timeline for the draft has been extended to collect information in the spring. Think about agency structure, capacity, and teams. Need to slow down and take a look at what the overall goal of resilience is. Next steps are collecting information from new team members and partners. We want our plan to be flexible to accommodate new data and resources as we go along (long term plan). Don't hold back on the agency actions that are in motion. Use the recommendations as a starting point for discussion.

### IV. **ARWG 2024 Work Plan Discussion**

**3:00 - 3:40p**

*Ryland Taylor, DNR* will introduce and lead a discussion on what the ARWG work plan goals should be for the next year. This includes establishing the next years' meeting dates.

Action: Members participate in a discussion about the draft 2024 Work Plan.

Materials: [ARWG Draft Work Plan](#)

Ryland Taylor: Introduced the 2024 Work Plan items and Ongoing Work sections. Paused at the top of the priority list for questions.

Jason Dubow (MDP): Happy to see that the Local capacity group is continuing to meet. There is overlap with other workplan items for them to focus on. Question of what the final or intermediate deliverable could be (#4).

- Allison Breitenother (MDOT): Reconnecting with the group. The deliverable is currently a document and portfolio of resources (grants, partners, etc.) that can inform the recommendations for how to build capacity in underserved communities. Not set in stone and can be refined. Literature review completed last year was shared with the toolkit group. Important to commit to a deliverable that is usable and aligned with other efforts. The assessment is looking at this topic holistically rather than specific to each grant or plan. When meetings kick off, she will send a note through Ryland to invite members to join. Deliverable expected in 2024, with a draft version ahead.

Jennifer Mizrahi (virtual): Think about updating and publicizing the framework guidelines for what projects are available for funding. Don't waste time and resources on proposals that won't get funded. Transparency in funding frameworks would help people know what's being looked for.

Ryland: Highlighted the second part of the work plan that focuses on ongoing work among the state agencies. Open floor for additional work to be noted.

- Sara Bender (MDEM): Healthy Soils Initiative - Food resilience council (operating under the Office of Resilience) will have input that would be useful.
- Alisha Mulkey (MDA) - positive response

Del. Stein: New York Times article on challenges to aquifers, might be worth adding this as an item. Charles County was specifically pointed out, but unsure if this is a broader problem.

- Kate Vogel (DNR): Recent drought warnings went out in multiple MD counties related to the depletion of aquifers. Cecil County community partners are being impacted with agriculture and drinking water. Suggestion for resilience and comp planning. [Anne HS agreed and suggested a surface water as well as a groundwater component; Ryland added as something to look into]
- Beth Groth (chat): Since it was brought up, I would like to share a second article about Charles County's aquifer situation since staff was miss-quoted in the NY Times article:  
<https://www.thebaltimorebanner.com/community/climate-environment/charles-county-water-supply-new-york-times-FVJHC6F6FBD6ZCCORMBKKKSVEBY/>

Jason D: Suggestion to coordinate with the Office of Resilience and possibly integrate regular updates about how we can support their work [agreement from Sec Kurtz, added maybe even all resilience officers across other agencies]

Kate V: MD resiliency partnership meetings should tie in agency updates; how ARWG mutually supports work

Allison B: Ask for clarity on the role of ARWG facilitation vs. action, give updates, or support. Clarify that the agencies are doing work that is outside the ARWG. Specify for groups the goals and how frequently the groups need to meet. Might also be good to include some outcome or deliverable for each priority action.

Jason D: Good to understand how the ongoing work updates help move NextGen forward. Way to put the pieces together.

Kate V: SEAFARE could give presentations at ARWG meetings. Diverse group that looked at funding barriers for communities to fund adaptation projects. Report finalized in the next month, developing policy and action items.

ACTION: Ryland will update the workplan with these suggestions and send out a final version.

## V. Policy Development

3:40 - 3:55p

This time is set aside at every meeting to allow for discussion of policy recommendations that would help increase resiliency and adaptation across Maryland. This meeting we will be recapping how things went at the MCCC meeting and looking ahead to what we want to work toward for next year.

Action: Members discuss the most important policy items from ARWG

Materials: None

Ryland T: Recapped what happened at the MCCC meeting. One was combined with the ECO group. 4/5 submitted under ARWG went forward.

1. JEDI was amended to add the word "metrics" 20/0
2. Comp plans amended 19/1 abstained
3. Funding task force - uncontested
4. Hiring people with cultural competency - uncontested
5. Adding commission members - tabled for 2024 MCCC discussion on membership
6. ECO's climate education did not pass 10 yes/11 no [Anne HS suggests working with State Department of Education]

Ryland T: Opened discussion for new ideas.

Jason D: 1) Draft plan for wetlands, 2) deliverable local gov, 3) finalize NextGen. What else can we do this year regardless of the NextGen timeline? The ARWG has participation, we may have capacity. Achievable in the interim.

- Anne Hairston-Strang (DNR): Workforce training to build capacity. Show people opportunities.
- Ryland T: CCS's education team maybe present on how we do this; Climate Workforce
- Sarah Lane (DNR): NOAA Climate Ready Workforce NOFO; would give funding but no deliverables
- Anne HS: Tracking people in each industry (IN #1 for CJT); Chesapeake Bay Landscaping Professionals for restoration contractors; Helping transfer businesses and skills
- Ryland T: NextGen plan is not finalized, but agencies can move ahead with implementation
- Allison B: For the Framework they had a discussion about existing reporting structures. We could pick this back up and find what can be consistent across agencies. What reports can we pull data from ourselves rather than asking partners to tell us what they have done to track adaptation actions.
- Jackie Specht (DNR): Expand on the report card, focus on numerical goals that we can achieve. We need a way to measure adaptation.

## **VI. Public Comment, Wrap Up and Next Steps - Josh Kurtz (DNR)**

**3:55-4:00p**

Public Comment:

Jeff Silva: Gratitude for the ARWG members. Raise revenue for climate emergency corrective actions. Brings up the issue of property taxes, revenue, and threats with SLR. Urges to find a source of funding for climate initiatives.

Sec. Kurtz: 2024 meetings are scheduled for February 28, May 29, August 28, and November 20 (moved up a week to not conflict with the day before Thanksgiving). There was no opposition to these meeting dates so Ryland will set them for next year. Meeting dates and times approved.

Next Meeting: February 28, 2024 2-4pm

Meeting Adjourned

31 Online Attendees, 24 In Person

In Person:

1. Laura Canton
2. Dave Nemazie
3. Sara Bender
4. Mike Hinson
5. Kate Charbonneau
6. Sarah Lane
7. Erik Meyer
8. Jackie Specht
9. Elliott Campbell
10. Jason Dubow
11. Allison Breitenother
12. Erik Fisher
13. Sara Coleman
14. Anne Hairston-Strang
15. Kamil Williams
16. Dylan Taillie
17. Sabine Bailey
18. Christine Burns
19. Kate Vogel

20. Amanda Small
21. Catherine McCall
22. Jillian Seagraves
23. Ryland Taylor
24. Secretary Josh Kurtz