

Director's Report – July 2015

Events and Activities

We hosted a successful Meeting of our Honorary Directors in June and have been in touch with everyone since then. I have received good response from Honorary Directors when I have called upon them for information or advice. In April, we hosted our annual Stormwater Partners Retreat at NCTC with over 100 local stormwater practitioners and local government officials present. I provided an opening presentation on the variety of Alliance stormwater programs and we were recognized for our successes and the 2 days provided some meaty technical sessions. Mary Gattis organized a closing panel discussion with Local elected officials from across the watershed which was a highlight of the Retreat.

Grants

The last few months have been a busy time for grant applications. We competed for an application for an additional EPA 6-year contracts in addition to the ones we had already won (LGAC/CAC, Citizen Monitoring Program, and Communications Support) but this grant went to the CBT instead. In addition we have applied for several million in grants from USDA, NFWF, PA Growing Greener, MD State WQ Trust Fund, Dominion Foundation (received 3 grants!), BG&E, CBT, and others (see grants summary in Financials).

Financial management and Operations

We completed all support work for the 2014 audit this quarter and just this week found out that we have received another clean audit (3 in a row!). We have been focused internally on tracking administrative costs as well as better defining our employee benefits. We are looking at working with an outside contractor to develop an automated grants management system. Negotiations with the Landlord have gone well and it looks like we will be able to reach agreement on a lease extension at our current location.

Fundraising

We completed design and mailing of a mid-year fundraising appeal that went out to over 12,000 people in the watershed. This has utilized the purchased mailing list that we acquired last Fall. Intensive efforts have been underway to push forward on the Taste of the Chesapeake sponsorships and event organization. We have begun working with a new design firm on displays for the Taste and with Redhead on the photo documentary for the event. Our Development staff is investigating a collection of foundations who may be able to provide general support to the Alliance as well.

Outreach and Program Development

We have renewed our efforts to establish relationships with some new business partners. Al made a presentation to the Baltimore Port Alliance, Pepco (with follow-up meetings with staff) and PNC Bank. Staff also had successful meetings with Norfolk Southern that are already paying off in some support for new projects.

We are working on several new initiatives related to strategic programs of the Alliance. We are developing a Native Plant Center with USFWS data that will be housed on our website. We have begun to launch "ForumPlus" a set of regional forums building on the watershed-wide Forum in the Fall. Regional forums in the Shenendoah and on MD's Eastern shore are in the works. In addition, we have gotten the green light to pilot a scaled down READY program in Annapolis/AA County and are having discussions regarding developing a similar effort in PA. The Payne Foundation provided a \$300,000 unsolicited grant to the Alliance to further work on the Native Plant Center and READY.

In May, I worked with a film crew from New York who was producing a piece in advance of Pope Francis's encyclical on the environment. The Alliance and its partnership with the Interfaith partners for the Chesapeake were prominently featured in this film entitled "Custody and Creation". In addition we have been very active in communications, social media, and press releases and have seen Alliance projects in the news. We are continuing discussions with IPC about their future status as a 501(3)c or Alliance program.

Chesapeake Watershed Agreement Support

The CBP released management strategies for the new agreement on June 1 and they will be formally adopted by the Executive Council at their meeting on July 23. I am leading the development of the Citizen Stewardship strategy and Eric Sprague and I have been leading a regional Task force developing recommendations for Riparian Forest Buffers. We have had multiple meetings with USDAS and State leadership regarding the RFB Initiative and have drafted materials for the Governors including a Resolution adopting our recommendations that will likely be signed at the July 23 Meeting. Staff and I are also involved in development of urban tree canopy, local leadership and diversity strategies.

Businesses for the Bay

With Corinne Stephens on board our work on developing the B4B program has really ramped up. We have met with the Steering Committee on several occasions, developed program materials, and a draft web site. We are currently developing the tracking system for business commitments related to the Chesapeake Bay Goals and are aiming for a formal release of the program in November of 2015. I will schedule B4B for our Program Highlight at the October Board Meeting.

Submitted on 7/17/2015 by



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