### I. Build Internal Communications Structure

**Action Steps Assessment:**

1. Designate communications liaisons and hold weekly meetings for communications updates across regions/programs.
   - Action step complete/will continue to be in progress.
   - Communications liaisons have been appointed, and weekly update meetings are held on Tuesdays at 11:30 am. There is representation from Maryland, DC, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Local Government.

2. Hold quarterly communications retreats for information sharing, training opportunities, and larger conversations about the liaison responsibilities.
   - Action step is in progress.
   - We had our first communications retreat in February 2019. The Alliance’s web contractor prepared a Wordpress training for the liaisons, and we spent the morning learning how to make updates, changes, and edit the Alliance website. In the afternoon, we used consensus building to review/approve Alliance social media guideline and to create a set of website responsibilities to share between liaisons and communications manager.

3. Create a place for communications resources, training notes, SOPs, and other materials that communications teams may need to share between regions.
   - Action step is complete.
   - We are currently utilizing the Google Drive and have created a Communications Team folder to organize weekly meeting notes, training notes, resources, blogs, and logos/style guide.

4. Utilize a messaging system for an internal communication between liaisons.
   - Action is complete.
   - We have been utilizing Google Group Chat to message between liaisons when we have questions or resources to share.
   - We also have a group email account that we use to email the entire communications team at once. This has also been an efficient way for us to communicate.

4. Train liaisons to update events, blog posts, and program pages on the Alliance website, create defined web responsibilities, and create a set of best practices for website maintenance.
   - Action is complete except for set of best practices for website management.
   - At the first communications retreat, liaisons were trained on how to update events, blog posts, and program pages on the Alliance website.
   - We will continue to build best practices for website maintenance as we continue the year.

**Measuring Success:**

1. One designated communications liaisons for each region/programmatic office.
   - Success

2. Hold four communications retreats with training opportunities for communications liaisons by December.
   - One already held. Another is currently being planned for this summer. We will hold a third in the fall.

3. Create standard operating procedures for liaisons and staff, and a place to house all of the resources and content by August 31, 2019.
   - We have created a place to house all of the resources and content (Google Drive).
   - We have begun having conversations about standard operating procedures, and are on track to have them completed by August 31, 2019.
4. Poll communications liaisons and staff members to learn how the internal communications process has improved, and what ways it could still be improved (by January 31, 2020).
   • This will take place after SOPs are created (after August 31). On track to be completed by January 31, 2020.

### II. Improve Branding & Consistency of Messaging Across the Regions in Alignment with Strategic Vision

**Action Steps Assessment:**

1. Complete internal and external stakeholder surveys to uncover findings about perceptions about the Alliance’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and values (completed and presented February 2019).
   • Action is complete.
   • Due East conducted these surveys and results have been presented.
2. Conduct strategic alignment at March and May Board Meetings and staff retreat in May.
   • Action is complete.
   • Strategic alignment conducted at March Board meeting, and will continue at May meeting. Strategic planning work conducted at staff retreat.
3. Train Board and Staff on how to communicate the Alliance’s mission, vision, values, and work by December 31st, 2019.
   • On track to be completed after strategic plan refresh is complete, by December 31st, 2019.
4. Update our website based on the findings from the surveys, strategic alignment, and trainings by December 31st, 2019.
   • On track to be completed after strategic plan refresh is complete, by December 31st, 2019.

**Measuring Success:**

   • Success
2. Create a refreshed mission and vision by July 31st, 2019.
   • On track
3. Hold a training for Board and Staff members about communicating our mission and vision by November 31st, 2019.
   • On track

### III. Expand Alliance Visibility & Recognition to New Audiences, and Move Existing Supporters through the Donor Timeline

**Action Steps Assessment:**

1. Email our listserv at least one time per month in addition to our monthly newsletter; direct mail to our mailing list at least six times per year, including mid-year and year end appeals.
   • In progress/will continue:
2. Boost Facebook posts and use Facebook advertisements at least six times per year to gain more followers (outside of special event promotion).
   • In progress.
   • Facebook likes are at 4,000. We were at 2,000 in May of 2017, so we have been gaining about 1,000 followers per year.
3. Create SOPs for Mailchimp in order to streamline lists and processes, and manage them efficiently, with the goal to send more geographically targeted communications.
   - In progress.
   - We are working to plan the next communications retreat, with the focus on Mailchimp and how we can better manage the platform to send more geo-targeted emails.
4. Create a monthly editorial calendar, and designate a number of social media posts, newsletter stories, and blogs that each region/program is responsible for creating.
   - In progress.
   - This will be created along with SOPs for each region.

**Measuring Success:**

1. Send one email per month in addition to monthly newsletter.
   - Success/will continue
     - January - Happy New Year, Wild & Scenic Film Festival invitation
     - February - Valentine’s Day email, Chesapeake Watershed Forum Save the Date, Recycling Perks (RVA only)
     - March - World Water Day fundraiser email (PA only)
     - April - Earth Day email
     - May - Spring events
     - June - Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week

2. Send six hard mailings to our mailing list by December.
   - In progress
     - Valentine’s Day, Taste invitation, midyear appeal, annual appeal, Holiday card

3. Develop an editorial calendar for each month of the year, beginning in March.
   - In progress.

4. Create Mailchimp SOPs for list creation and management.
   - In progress.

5. Gain 2,500 followers on Facebook, 1,000 followers on Instagram, and 1,000 followers on Twitter by December 31, 2019.
   - In progress.

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**IV. Utilize Storytelling for Fundraising**

**Action Steps Assessment:**

1. Hold storytelling for fundraising training at staff retreat in May.
   - We did not hold this training at our staff retreat. We prioritized doing strategic planning work as a group.
   - We will shift this goal to complete by the end of 2019.

2. Hold basic and ongoing fundraising training for Board members at all Board meetings.
   - In progress. We have not achieved this goal yet, but hope to incorporate trainings once the strategic planning work is complete.

3. Highlight one donor per quarter for our online communications.
   - We have not started this yet, but will have four donor stories by the end of the year.

**Measuring Success:**

1. Create four donor stories by December 31st, 2019, one per quarter.
   - In progress.

2. Hold a training at the staff retreat in May on storytelling for fundraising.
   - We will shift this goal to complete by the end of 2019.

3. Hold a Fundraising 101 training for all Board members by December 31st, 2019.
   - On track.