



Chesapeake Research Consortium

Annual Report 2023

DRC



From the Director

Commitment is what transforms a promise into reality. ... It is making the time when there is none. Coming through time after time after time, year after year after year. Commitment is the stuff character is made of; the power to change the face of things. It is the daily triumph of integrity over skepticism.
Abraham Lincoln

As we always do at the end of the calendar year, the CRC staff were collectively reflecting on the experiences and work of the previous 12 months and exploring what sort of theme ran through it all. Melissa Fagan generously offered the theme of commitment, a fantastic onion of a word with layers and layers of meaning and interpretation. While we might not have immediately understood its resonance in our individual work, it certainly described the driving force of CRC's collective work this past year. So why this word, at this time, by these people?



This has been a unique year for the Chesapeake Bay partnership effort in which we all take part, as the 2025 deadline for all management actions to be in place to meet the reductions in nitrogen, phosphorous, and sediment¹ that were agreed to come into view. As one approaches a big goal, assessing the remaining distance and strategizing what is needed to cover the final distance is the normal reaction, and the partnership did just that². But the partnership took the next step, embarking on an effort to envision what was beyond 2025³, in a Bay with changing climate, population, land cover, etc. In other words, articulating its promise for the future and determining what is needed to make that a reality. As it turns out, commitment is necessary, at this time, by all of us.

The Chesapeake Bay Program celebrated its 40th anniversary this year, as the CRC celebrated its 51st birthday. Over the decades, both organizations have repeatedly demonstrated the belief that the reality can match vision only if science and management work shoulder to shoulder, and this year upped the ante on putting practice to that belief. On the CRC end, the Chesapeake Bay Program's Science and Technical Advisory Committee published the Comprehensive Evaluation of System Response, which highlighted opportunities for improved effectiveness in reaching our goals beyond 2025. The preparation of such a far-reaching consensus report was a first for STAC and the demonstration of this leadership is having ripples nationally. We have continued to prepare the critical next generation of leaders that will be tasked with fulfilling that vision, through the EMDCP and C-StREAM programs. While maintaining their everyday roles, it should be noted that the "Staffers" of the EMDCP program have been critical during this intense period of work, providing infrastructure, expertise, consistency, and stability. The work of the C-StREAM interns continues to demonstrate the power of diverse voices and diverse solutions. We continued to convene scientists, managers, and educators around a variety of issues, always in a context of mutual respect, as demonstrated by the continuing engagement of the community with the CRC Roundtable, our monthly webinar series now in its fourth year. The evidence suggests hundreds of incidences of "the daily triumph of integrity over skepticism", fulfilling the definition of fulfillment. As you review each program's summary, look for the taglines that further articulate the connection to our theme of commitment.

As always, our profound thanks for your engagement and passion in common cause.

Denice Wardrop
Executive Director, Chesapeake Research Consortium

¹ [The Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load \(put into place in December 2010\) called for all pollution reducing practices to be in place across the watershed by 2025. Additionally, 11 outcomes in the most recent Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement also adopted the 2025 deadline for achieving their goals.](#)

² [Executive Council Charge to the Principals' Staff Committee: Charting a Course to 2025 and Beyond.](#)

³ [The Beyond 2025 Steering Committee is currently advising the development of recommendations to meet the Chesapeake Executive Council charge to the Principals' Staff Committee on charting a course beyond 2025.](#)

CESR: A Case Study in Commitment

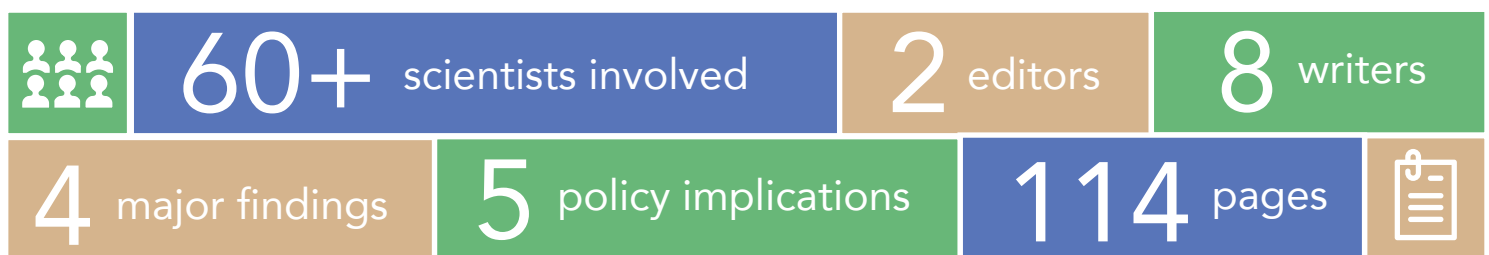
In May of 2023, [A Comprehensive Evaluation of System Response \(CESR\)](#), was released. The report demonstrates CRC's commitment to the continuing 40 year effort to reduce nutrient loads to Chesapeake Bay. CESR summarizes the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee's (STAC) evaluation of why progress toward meeting the TMDL and water quality standards has been slower than expected and offers options for how progress can be accelerated.

The effort began in March 2019, after Kurt Stephenson, Zach Easton, and Brian Benham proposed the idea of a report that would identify gaps and uncertainties in system response—physical, chemical, biological, and socioeconomic—that impact efforts designed to attain water quality standards in Chesapeake Bay. As STAC Chair at the time, Benham facilitated the development of a collaborative process that would engage the entire committee. This process consisted of two major components:

1 Workgroups were formed around the subsystems of the chain linking management action to water quality and living resource response: nutrient and sediment reductions (watershed), water quality response to nutrient and sediment reductions (estuary) and living resource response to water quality (living resources). Reports were generated by each workgroup.

2 A steering committee guided the preparation of CESR to ensure it achieved the goal of identifying gaps and uncertainties in achieving the Bay TMDL and water quality standards. Coeditors Kurt Stephenson and Denice Wardrop, supported by a writing team (Leonard Shabman, Zach Easton, Jeremy Testa, William Dennison, Kenny Rose, and Mark Monaco), assembled a draft that drew from the aforementioned workgroup reports, STAC and Chesapeake Bay Program reports, the scientific literature, and a limited amount of additional analyses performed in collaboration with Bay Program scientists. The resulting report was then submitted for several reviews by both steering committee members and the membership at-large to produce a consensus report.

CESR by the numbers:

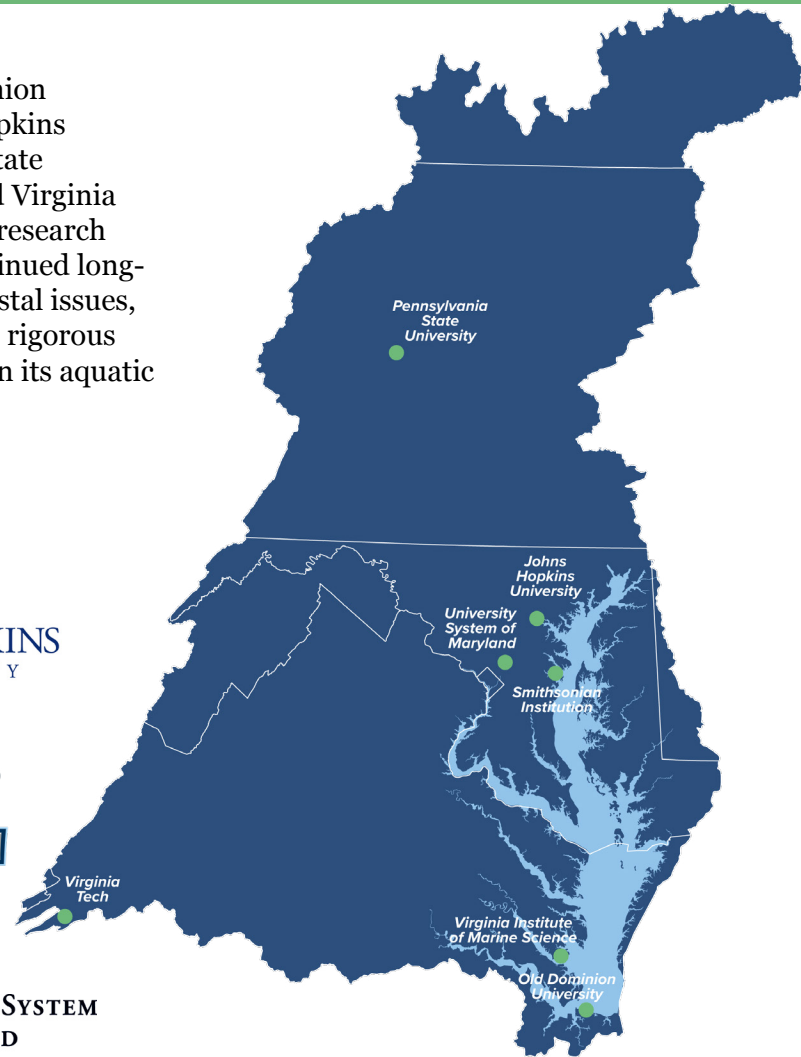


Once the report was out, the work continued. The communication effort was (and still is) robust, showcasing CRC's commitment to getting this information into the hands of people who need it to make decisions about our watershed. CRC refused to let CESR be a report that sits on a shelf, locked within an academic ivory tower. Some of the numbers attached to that commitment can be seen below.

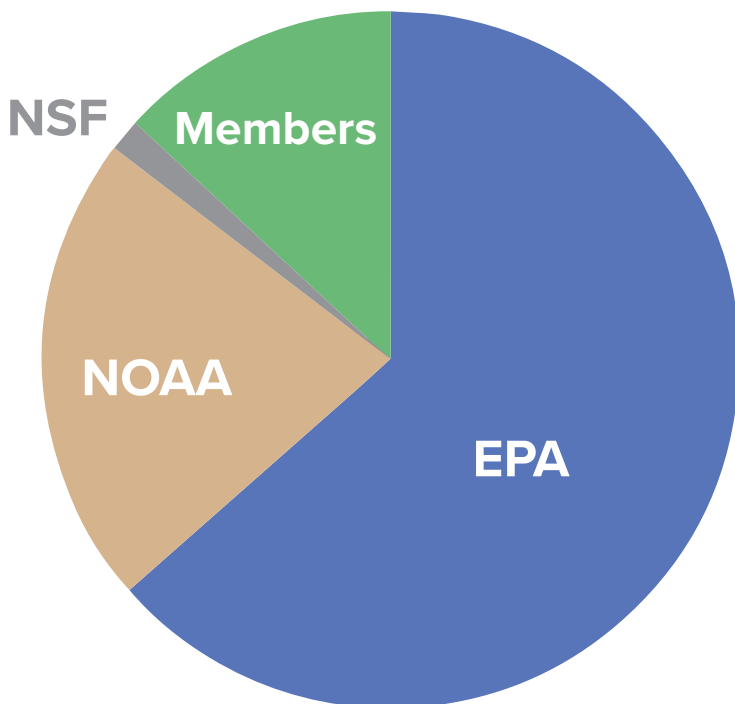


Institutions & Funding

Established in 1972, the CRC represents Old Dominion University, Smithsonian Institution, The Johns Hopkins University, University System of Maryland, Penn State University, Virginia Institute of Marine Science and Virginia Tech. As an association of some of the most active research centers in the U.S., a primary goal is to ensure continued long-term support for basic and applied research for coastal issues, from land-based watershed considerations through rigorous investigation of water quality and living resources in its aquatic ecosystems.



Smithsonian Environmental Research Center



Thank you to the funders of CRC!

The generous support of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), CRC's member institutions, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the National Science Foundation (NSF), allowed us to continue our commitment to convening, training, amplifying, and supporting in 2023.

Board of Trustees



Fred Dobbs
*Old Dominion University
(Chair)*



Anson Hines
*Smithsonian Environmental
Research Center (Secretary)*



William Dennison
*University System of
Maryland (Trustee)*



Andrew Warner
*Pennsylvania State
University
(Trustee)*



Derek Aday
*Virginia Institute of Marine
Science (Trustee)*



Harihar Rajaram
*Johns Hopkins University
(Trustee)*



Kang Xia
Virginia Tech (Trustee)

Our Vision

A sustainable and regenerative Chesapeake Bay ecosystem that plays a vital role in the health and well-being of all stakeholders.

Our Mission

The Chesapeake Research Consortium (CRC) fully enables its member institutions and the broader scientific community in the region to inspire and implement solutions to the understanding and management of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed, by defining, coordinating, and disseminating the research and education needed for its science-based management.

To transition from this mission to strategic action, we translate “to fully enable” into four “enabling” roles: convening managers and provisioners of science, filling the pipeline of environmental professionals, building the big stage for dissemination of solutions, and supporting member institutions in the research and education efforts that are relevant to the Chesapeake Bay partnership efforts. This framework of enabling roles allows us to plot a course forward in our daily work, resulting in the portfolio of programs and efforts highlighted below.



Convening

Convening brings together a diverse team with different areas of expertise to tackle a shared problem, taking advantage of collective intelligence. It requires a clear purpose that participants can work towards in a collaborative effort. In the case of the CRC, restoration of the Bay and watershed provides this clear purpose, albeit at a large scale. Currently, coordination of STAC, the biennial conference, and the CRC Roundtable are examples.



Filling the Pipeline

CRC’s aim is to evolve and strengthen a leadership pipeline that attracts and retains a diverse community so that the necessary diversity of perspectives is applied to the protection and restoration of complex human-impacted ecosystems. We do this at two professional levels; the Staffer’s program is notably recognized as having high value for young professionals, and the relatively new C-StREAM program serves undergraduate students from diverse backgrounds. These are examples of programs that cannot be provided at the scale of individual institutions, and are effectively delivered by the CRC.



Building the Big Stage

Exchange of information must happen at a large scale within the restoration effort, both between scientists and managers, as well as among scientists with Bay-related expertise. The CRC newsletter, CRC Roundtable, and accompanying social media efforts serve to provide platforms for targeted, inclusive, and informed conversations that match scientific advances and management needs, as well as provide topical areas around which networks of scientists can form. Both are necessary elements to move us collectively toward decision-making for effective and sustainable management of the Chesapeake Bay, its watershed, and its living resources.



Member Support

The seven member institutions of the CRC collectively represent an astounding portfolio of research and educational resources, across a large geographic area. The CRC aims to bring this collective expertise to bear on the restoration effort through the facilitation of collaborative and multi-institutional efforts of both higher education and interdisciplinary research. The three roles above (convening, filling the pipeline, building the big stage) all interweave to serve this purpose, as well as additional tools such as the Chesapeake Bay Expertise Database and the participation in multi-institutional research proposals.

2023 Accomplishments



Chesapeake Bay Program's Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC)

Prepared by Meg Cole

Since its creation in December 1984, the Chesapeake Bay Program's (CBP) Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) has worked to enhance scientific communication and outreach throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed and beyond. STAC provides independent scientific and technical advice through all activities. STAC serves as a liaison between the region's scientific community and the CBP. Through professional and academic contacts and organizational networks of its members, STAC ensures close cooperation among and between the various research institutions and management agencies represented in the Bay watershed.

Funding for the STAC is provided through a cooperative agreement with the US EPA.

Commitment for STAC was powerfully demonstrated in the production of the CESR report, which represented a four year effort by a voluntary group of over 60 contributors to produce. Their intent to discuss and reach consensus on a variety of issues as they advise the partnership demonstrates the very notion of integrity over skepticism.

30 institutions were represented by members contributing



5,000+ hours valued at

\$500,000+

Membership and Leadership Updates

Larry Sanford (UMCES) moved into the role of Committee Chair and Bill Dennison (UMCES) assumed the role of Vice-Chair in September 2023. At the same time, STAC introduced the following at large-members: Matt Baker (UMBC), Charles Bott (HRSD), John Dawes (The Commons), KC Filippino (HRPDC), Kathy Gee (Longwood University), Christine Kirchhoff (PSU), Yusuke Yuwayama (UMBC), Theo Lim (VT), Joe Reustle (Hampton University), Valerie Were (CIRA), and Joe Wood (CBF). A self-nomination process for new members started in March 2022. With self-nominations encouraging a more diverse pool of candidates than a traditional nomination process, STAC solicited a broad range of scientists from underrepresented backgrounds and expertise for consideration. The committee continues to stay committed to evaluating and selecting appointees holistically, based on their qualifications, expertise, and contributions to the scientific community.

A two-and-a-half-hour virtual New Member Orientation was convened in November. The orientation was hosted by STAC Staff, with invited Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) partners and included presentations and discussions with STAC Leadership, experienced STAC members, STAC Staff, and close CBP partners. The session was to onboard new members and better to integrate them into regular STAC business. Participation ensured new members have a strong foundation of the committee's purpose, understand their role within it, and can actively contribute to the CBP mission moving forward.

2023 Quarterly Meetings

STAC Staff and leadership coordinated four quarterly meetings, two of which were held in-person and two virtually. In June, STAC members met at the Potomac Science Center in Woodbridge, Virginia and in September, the Frederick Douglass-Isaac Myers Maritime Park in Baltimore, Maryland. Links to the meeting webpages can be found at [June 2023 Quarterly Meeting page](#) and [September 2023 Quarterly Meeting page](#) and includes meeting recordings, presentations, and materials. Field trips were organized for participants in June and September to [Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge](#) and [Masonville Dredged Material Containment Facility](#). These outings helped deepen our member's connection to the Bay, through fostering commitment via firsthand experiences.

All quarterly meetings centered around addressing topics critical to the Chesapeake Bay, with the second day entirely committed to exploring the critical uncertainty. Each meeting theme included 1-2 panels with invited speakers and were followed by a plenary discussion. Starting in March, the themes explored were:

- Update on Waterborne Human Health Concerns and Incidence Rates
- Current Use of Multiple Models to Support CBP Management
- Exploring the Successes and Challenges of Water Resource Management Programs that Compare in Scale to the Chesapeake Bay Program
- Maximizing STAC's Impact Post-CESR



STAC-led Workshops

STAC hosted five technical workshops in 2023, totaling over \$50,000 of funding dedicated to understanding gaps in research, developing programmatic and actionable next-steps, and increasing interagency partnerships. With the release of three workshop reports, STAC has provided over 35 recommendations and findings to the partnership in 2023. The following STAC-funded workshops commenced during the second half of the project year:

1. [Using Local Monitoring Results to Inform the Chesapeake Bay Program's Watershed Model](#) (Programmatic Workshop), March 7-8, 2023, Fairfax, VA
2. Using Ecosystem Services to Increase Progress Toward, and Quantify the Benefits of, Multiple CBP Outcomes (Programmatic Workshop), [Day 1](#), March 16, 2023, Kent Island, MD; [Day 1.5](#), April 18, 2023, Annapolis, MD; and [Day 2](#) : June 6, 2023, Annapolis, MD.
3. [The State of the Science and Practice of Stream Restoration in the Chesapeake: Lessons Learned to Inform Better Implementation, Assessment and Outcomes](#) (State of the Science Workshop), March 21-23, 2023, Woodbridge, VA
4. [Best Management Practices to Minimize Impacts of Solar Farms on Landscape Hydrology and Water Quality](#) (State of the Science Workshop), April 6-7, 2023, Manassas, VA.
5. [Using Carbon to Achieve Chesapeake Bay \(and Watershed\) Water Quality Goals and Climate Resiliency: The Science, Gaps, Implementation Activities and Opportunities](#) (State of the Science Workshop), May 25-26, 2023, Hershey, PA.

STAC interaction in the Strategy Review System (SRS) and the Strategic Science and Research Framework (SSRF)

As approved at the STAC September 2023 quarterly meeting, STAC members now play a crucial role in the revised Strategy Review System (SRS) process by participating as mentors and experts to the Cohorts of workgroups and Goal Implementation Teams (GITs). This early interaction has enhanced STAC engagement with the Outcomes, enabling members to better provide valuable insights, assist in refining analysis plans, and promote adaptive learning through science across all Bay Program Cohorts and Outcome teams. By connecting with these groups before their Quarterly Progress Meeting with the Management Board (MB), STAC is more effective in identifying critical research gaps and crosscutting needs than in previous SRS cycles.

Looking Forward

In 2024 and beyond, STAC aims to continue providing vital research findings, actionable programmatic recommendations, and increased collaboration to the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership. We will focus on improving communication of recommendations and findings and providing scientific guidance to assist the partnership into 2025 and after. Currently, one technical workshop is planned to convene in 2023. 2024 quarterly meetings dates are the following: March 5-6, 2024; June 4-5, 2024; September 10-11, 2024; December 3-4, 2024.



Environmental Management Career Development Program (EMCDP)

Prepared by Melissa Fagan

CRC's Environmental Management Career Development Program (EMCDP) gives early career environmental managers and scientists an entry point into the Chesapeake Bay's restoration community in a way that not only provides critical professional experience but that also advances individual growth so that future leaders are prepared to continue the restoration and management of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed.

Funding for CRC's Environmental Management Career Development Program is generously provided through a cooperative agreement with the US EPA Chesapeake Bay Program.

Excellent mentoring demands commitment, as it requires day to day assessment and advising that is directed at a long term prospect – the development of the next generation of leaders. The accomplishments and leadership of EMDCP graduates is a direct reflection of the commitment that CRC makes to the future through this program.

If 2023 was the year of demonstrated commitment, there is no better example of that commitment than the work and dedication of the CRC Staffers. Despite a great deal of transition, both within the Chesapeake Bay Program and the Environmental Management Career Development Program itself, the Staffers continued to coordinate the Bay Program's complex array of activities with expert professionalism and grace.



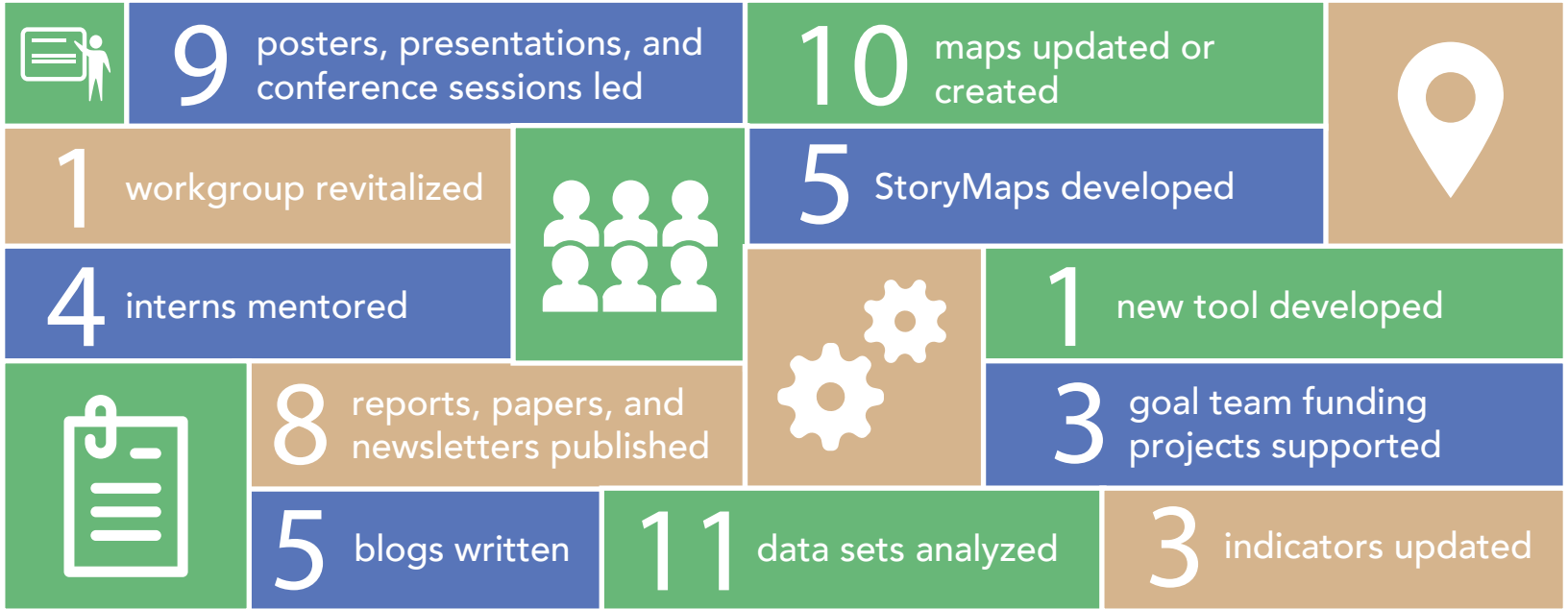
The Staffers enjoyed a weekend of learning and beautiful scenery at the Chesapeake Watershed Forum.



Sophie Waterman and Jackie Pickford led "Geospatial Targeting Tools for Grant Applications" at the Chesapeake Watershed Forum. Photo credit: Will Parson, Chesapeake Bay Program.

During 2023, CRC also demonstrated our commitment to the Staffers and the overall Staffer experience by resolving to maintain a balanced portfolio of work for all Staffers despite increasing demands and diminishing capacity. Most people are likely familiar with the Staffers' day-to-day work that keeps Bay Program activities moving forward in an organized, collaborative manner. It's also common knowledge that offering focused, individualized professional development opportunities is what makes the career development program unique. However, there is a third pillar of this program that is sometimes overlooked. Staffers bring incredible skills and talent to the program along with fresh ideas and limitless enthusiasm. This rare combination is what

drives innovative work and progress. To fully utilize the opportunity that the Staffers' insights, skills, and enthusiasm provide, we make room for the Staffers to take on work that requires technical analysis, creativity, and/or leadership. These opportunities not only add more substance to Staffer positions, but they also add tremendous value to the work of the Bay Program and the support that the program office provides to the larger Chesapeake Bay Program partnership.



The graphic above illustrates the contributions CRC Staffers have made to the Bay Program’s objectives in 2023. And while impressive, that graphic does not tell the full story. The full list of Staffer accomplishments is over five pages long, much too long to include in detail in an annual report. That list includes additional items such as being a key member of the Environmental Literacy Leadership Summit planning team, organizing partnership activities during Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week and the Bay Program’s 40th Anniversary celebrations, and managing a year- long planning process leading up to the Chesapeake Executive Council meeting where the program’s highest tier of leadership reaffirms *their* commitment to the Bay. Staffers also helped make the work of the Chesapeake Bay Program more accessible through the development of an accessibility best practices guide and showed continued commitment to advancing diversity and inclusion goals by assisting with training for Bay Program staff focused on allyship and active listening.

As we begin 2024, we are carrying forward that same level of commitment to the continued evolution of the career development program, to supporting the Staffers within it, and to highlighting the amazing contributions Staffers make to our work to improve the Chesapeake Bay, its watershed, and its communities.



Chesapeake-Student Recruitment, Early Advisement, and Mentoring (C-StREAM)

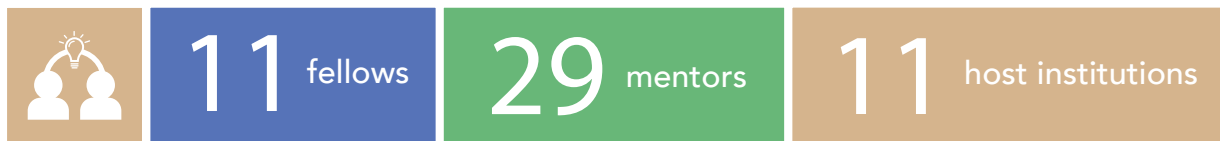
Prepared by Randy Kenyatta Rowel

The Chesapeake-Student Recruitment, Early Advisement, and Mentoring (C-StREAM) is a program focused on recruiting, advising, and mentoring college students from populations who have been historically excluded from the environmental field and are therefore currently underrepresented in environmental research and management professions. The original program, began in 2018, consisted of eight funded internship positions, with the CRC initially providing matching of students to internships and delivering professional development support.

Funding for the C-StREAM program is generously provided by the US EPA, NOAA, NSF, and CRC's member institutions.

Ensuring that the necessary diversity of perspectives and solutions is applied to the protection and restoration of the unique and human-impacted ecosystem of the Bay requires commitment to the development and training of a diverse population of future leaders in environmental research, restoration, and protection. C-StREAM does exactly that, as it mentors college students from populations who have been historically excluded from the environmental field and are therefore underrepresented in environmental research and management professions.

C-StREAM 2023 by the numbers:



With the challenges of the pandemic behind us, we charted forward in 2023 with in-person engagement as a main goal. We hosted many in-person activities, some of which for the first time, including our first ever “Fellows Event”. The Fellows Event, which will now occur annually, was held at Virginia Tech (Arlington Capital Region), one of CRC’s institutional partners. The purpose of this event was for Fellows to meet in person with their cohort members, learn about each other’s summer projects, connect with previous C-StREAM fellows, and participate in team building activities hosted by our Executive Director, Denice Wardrop.

We also hosted our first Mentor Training Workshop at the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center to prepare our incoming mentors for the summer. The sessions empowered mentors to learn and grow by presenting best practices around how to engage with diverse students, learning more about the programmatic components of the C-StREAM Summer Program, and networking with other mentors in person. For this event, we were able to bring in the visionary founders of the C-StREAM Program, Darius Stanton and Bill Ball, to talk about how the program came about and why. Other specialists shared their insights including Kimberley Mitchell-James and Derek Mathews. The presenters were recorded and the edited videos will be made available as part of new Mentor Training Modules.

In 2023, 11 C-StREAM fellows were joined by three with NOAA (supervised by Bart Merrick, CBPO). Fellowships this year were successfully delivered in person with some remote work accessibility. We also made a fellowship connection with the five UMCES Global Scholars Program students with Bill Dennison. Lastly, we had a returning intern, Mackenzie Smith, which speaks to the value of the program.

2023 Accomplishments

The 2023 C-StREAM fellows started their summers with an orientation event. Secretary Josh Kurtz, the new Secretary of Natural Resources at the Office of Secretary for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, attended and gave the opening greeting. Under the Wes Moore administration, who is the 63rd Governor of the state of Maryland and Maryland's first Black Governor in the state's 246-year history and just the third African American elected Governor in the history of the United States, Secretary Josh Kurtz leads teams across the state, working to improve water quality and bay resilience, restore and conserve forested land, expand access to our state parks, monitor and slow the spread of invasive species, and ensure the state maintains sustainable fisheries.

To end the summer, we organized our annual Symposium at SERC and hosted Suzanne Dorsey, Maryland Department of the Environment's Deputy Secretary, for opening remarks. Suzanne is a trailblazer in bridging disparity gaps in the environmental sectors. Her expertise spans regulation and enforcement of state and federal environmental laws, multi-jurisdictional restoration projects, climate policy, and environmental justice.

Our C-StREAM Program Coordinator, Randy K. Rowel, and Bart Merrick (NOAA CBPO) jointly managed orientation, professional development, and a final symposium, all in a hybrid format. The C-StREAM program was able to build programmatic and developmental opportunities and experiences during the summer of 2023, host events in person, and engage with a wider network of underserved students.



C-StREAM fellows at the 2023 Symposium.

In preparation for the coming summer of 2024, several events will be held in person to continue to enhance connectivity within our program. We will also continue to look for ways to set our fellows up for success in their careers. One step forward that we achieved with the support of NOAA's Office of Education and the Office of Habitat Conservation is the eligibility of both the NCBO Internship Program and the C-STREAM Program under the Conservation Corps Act Direct Hiring Authority (DHA). This authority allows NOAA to hire qualified recent graduates into entry-level federal positions through a more direct process than the typical USA Jobs process. We will be sending each student who qualifies a Certificate of Eligibility confirming that the student has completed the internship program, and as a result, are now eligible for this new hiring authority. This announcement furthers our work of building up the future workforce pipeline.



The Chesapeake Community Modeling Program (CCMP)

Prepared by Allison Burbach & Raleigh Hood

The Chesapeake Community Modeling Program (CCMP) is a long-term collaborative effort between CRC, the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science – Horn Point Laboratory (UMCES-HPL), and the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office, that is dedicated to advancing the cause of accessible, open-source environmental models in support of research and management efforts.

Funding for CCMP is provided by NOAA's Chesapeake Bay Office.



CCMP represents commitment to the ideals of accessibility and transparency through both its approach to environmental modeling and its Community Research Symposium that offers a forum for access to, and vetting of, the newest discoveries.

CCMP welcomed one new steering committee member in 2023; Theodore Lim of Virginia Tech brings his expertise on coupled natural and human systems to the CCMP leadership. We are glad to have him onboard!

CCMP and CRC are gearing up to host the 2024 Chesapeake Community Research Symposium on June 10 - 12, 2024, in Annapolis, MD. The theme for the symposium is Chesapeake Bay Restoration: Managing Water Quality for Living Resources in a Changing Climate. As in the past, the symposium will feature invited speakers, panel discussions, and special sessions with oral and poster presentations. Participants will be able to attend the symposium in person or remotely.

CCMP is committed to promoting diversity, equity and inclusion of underrepresented groups and is actively working toward increasing the diversity of the steering committee and participation in the Community Research Symposium.





Water Quality Goal Implementation Team Coordination

Prepared by Jeremy Hanson

Since 2022, CRC has provided coordination support to the Bay Program's Water Quality Goal Implementation Team (WQGIT). This Coordinator support includes a range of strategic functions, primarily interacting with the WQGIT leadership (Chair, Vice-Chair, CRC staffers) to spearhead the preparation, planning and adaptive management of the WQGIT in collaboration with the breadth of Bay Program partnership groups.

For the past year in particular, commitment has been evident. Like other GITs and the many Bay Program workgroups, there has been tremendous effort to understand shortcomings to meet partnership outcomes and possible resolutions or adjustments partners can consider by 2025. During that time, the WQGIT and its workgroups were instrumental in the review and resolution of extensive technical issues that arose in the latest update to the watershed model and its online planning interface, the Chesapeake Assessment Scenario Tool (CAST). The CRC's WQGIT Coordinator position is one cog in the larger machine, working alongside CBPO co-workers and Bay Program partners to find solutions and chart the course to 2025 and beyond.

The partnership-wide efforts to understand our status and potential future paths has been, and will remain, a considerable effort. Fortunately, by working with WQGIT leadership we added a new tool to the WQGIT's kit when we launched the Submersion Series in 2023 as a new approach to delve into important, complex topics that we otherwise struggle to fit into monthly WQGIT agendas. These conversations also seek to attract new participants or perspectives, and the format enables options that we do not have for our recurring monthly meetings.

This was a way to use our existing capacity and the WQGIT Coordinator to leverage our partnership network to meaningfully enhance the value of our efforts. After two sessions we continue to refine the current formula for this quarterly webinar series, whereby volunteer content leads bring their expertise to plan the content and format of the webinar with WQGIT leadership there to support and host. This effectively shares the burden of the vital content planning while bringing fresh ideas to the fold.

By breaking the mold of our recurring monthly meetings we hope to find new and exciting ways to tap our WQGIT members and partners who have intimate knowledge and in-depth experience with day-to-day regulatory and programmatic functions that are ripe for innovation. The WQGIT's time is often very focused on modeling and accounting, which will remain a common agenda item, but we hope 2024 and future years will see balance between reactive problem-solving and proactive partnership solutions.

WQGIT Submersion Series (2023)

Reviewing our accounting framework: How can we promote investment in innovation and outcome-based management?



The Submersion Series is a new quarterly discussion series hosted by the Water Quality Goal Implementation Team (WQGIT) to convene for exploratory, collaborative conversations on topics that rarely find sufficient time within our typical monthly meeting schedule. These conversations will seek to dive under the surface and challenge us to contribute and exchange ideas in partners with varied local experiences. The thoughts or questions expressed in this shared space are our own and do not necessarily reflect the views of our organizations, the WQGIT and its leadership, or the Bay Program.

Please join us for a webinar focused on our non-point source crediting framework and how it influences Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts. Speakers will review some of the challenges our current framework presents and explore new ideas with participants for how we can improve the partnership's ability to incentivize real-world outcomes.

Speakers and organizers also wish to understand partners' stance on some of these issues through a survey (linked here). The survey is open to all who would like to participate, even if you cannot attend the webinar. The survey is open now and we will walk through some of the results at the webinar so please submit responses no later than close of business on Friday, June 2.

SPEAKERS:

- Joe Wood (Chesapeake Bay Foundation)
- Kurt Sheeherson (Virginia Tech)
- Zachary Easton (Virginia Tech)

Tuesday, June 6th
11 am - 12:30 pm
Zoom

Registration required.
Register at: bit.ly/submersion-series-1
or scan the QR code





Communications

Prepared by Lauren Huey & Allison Burbach

Funding for CRC's communication partnership with Green Fin Studio is provided by US EPA, NOAA, and CRC's member institutions.

Our communications strategy is founded on a commitment to sharing knowledge as broadly and openly as possible, as well as providing the spaces necessary for the vetting of that knowledge and discussion of how to implement it in the ongoing work.



CRC Streamline

In 2023, CRC sent a monthly newsletter, the [CRC Streamline](#). Each Streamline was centered on the theme of the previous month's Roundtable webinar and included the link to the recorded discussion as well as additional resources related to that month's theme.

2023 CRC Streamline by the numbers:



CRC Social Media

CRC uses LinkedIn to support our mission and vision, along with Facebook and X. From job announcements to posts about upcoming events, social media is an important and growing part of CRC's virtual presence.

2023 CRC social media by the numbers:





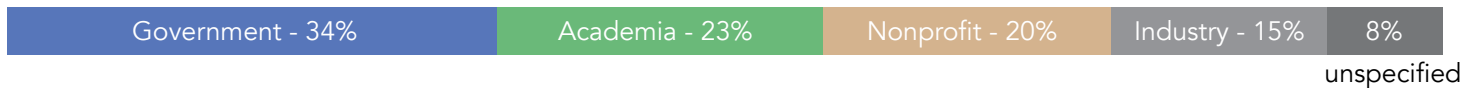
CRC Roundtable

[CRC Roundtable](#) is a monthly virtual seminar series that hosts targeted, inclusive, and informed conversations matching scientific advances and management needs related to the Chesapeake partnership. The seminars aim to build connectivity across organizations and identify ways to increase our collective decision-making competency. Each webinar invites a diverse range of speakers to set the stage, followed by facilitated discussion. We've built a gathering space for awkward questions and open dialogue. The webinars are also recorded and uploaded to the [CRC YouTube channel](#) as a resource for all.

2023 by the numbers:



The CRC Roundtable attracted a diverse audience in 2023:



The CRC Roundtable is facilitated and supported by Green Fin Studio. These seminars could not happen without our generous speakers sharing their time and expertise with our audience. Thank you!

<p>JAN <i>CRC Member Take-Over: Old Dominion University (ODU)</i> Richard Zimmerman, ODU Margaret Mulholland, ODU Moderator: Fred Dobbs, ODU</p>	<p>FEB <i>Social Science and Stakeholder Engagement</i> Lisa Wainger, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES) Daniel Read, UMCES Wes Eaton, University of Wyoming</p>	<p>MAR <i>Implementing clean water solutions for agriculture in Pennsylvania</i> Lara Fowler, Penn State Jill Whitcomb, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection</p>	<p>APR <i>Improving Understanding and Coordination of Science Activities for PFAS in Chesapeake Bay</i> Kelly Smalling, USGS Emily Majcher, USGS</p>
<p>MAY <i>CRC Member Take-Over: UMCES</i> Eric Schott, UMCES Katie May Laumann, UMCES Moderator: Peter Goodwin, UMCES</p>	<p>JUN <i>Harvesting Restoration Opportunities from the Farm Bill</i> Leon Tillman, US Department of Agriculture Anna Killius, Chesapeake Bay Commission</p>	<p>JUL <i>Expanding the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Report Card</i> Bill Dennison, UMCES Vanessa Vargas-Nguyen, UMCES</p>	<p>AUG <i>The Bay Stewards, Scientists, and Managers of the Future</i> Erik Michelsen, Anne Arundel County Alexus Stelfox, C-StREAM Fellow Anoosh Tauqir, C-StREAM Fellow Moderator: Randy K. Rowel, C-StREAM Program Coordinator</p>
<p>SEP <i>Evaluating Chesapeake Bay System Response: A CESR Q&A</i> Denice Wardrop, CRC/Pennsylvania State University Kurt Stephenson, Virginia Tech</p>	<p>OCT <i>Refocusing Chesapeake Restoration Efforts</i> Pam Mason, Virginia Institute of Marine Science Jeff Corbin, Native Shorelines</p>	<p>NOV <i>Informed Site Selection</i> Carly Dean, Chesapeake Conservancy Taylor Lilley, Chesapeake Bay Foundation</p>	<p>DEC <i>Blending Art and Science</i> Lauren Huey, Green Fin Studio Will Parson, Chesapeake Bay Program Annie Carew, UMCES</p>



Connect With Us



ChesResearch



www.linkedin.com/company/chesapeake-research-consortium



@ChesResearch



CRC Streamline



Chesapeake Bay
Expertise Database



410.798.1283



645 Contees Wharf Road,
Edgewater, MD 21037



www.chesapeake.org