The Potomac River Basin Drinking Water Source Protection Partnership

Quarterly Meeting Summary held via webinar on August 5, 2020

Attendees

Water Suppliers

Berkeley County PSWD:
Brooks Waybright

City of Rockville:

DC Water:
Saul Kinter

Fairfax Water:
Nicki Bellezza
Steve Edgemon
Doug Grimes
Jamie Hedges
Susan Miller
Scott Powers
Gregory Prelewicz
Niffy Saji
Joel Thompson

Frederick County DUSWM:

Loudoun Water:
Thomas Barrack
Cathy Cogswell
Jessica Edwards-Brandt
Pam Kenel
Bradley Schmitz

Town of Leesburg:
Russell Chambers

Washington Aqueduct:
Anne Spiesman

WSSC Water:
Joel Caudill
Martin Chandler
Robin Forte
Nicole Horvath
Robert Hsu
Julie Karceski
Jay Price
Jin Shin
Priscilla To

State and Local Agencies

DOEE:
Hamid Karimi
Joshua Rodriguez

MDE:
John Anthony
John Grace
Saeid Kasraei
Jonathan Leiman
Janice Outen
Robert People
Michael Roberts
Rebecca Warns

MD DNR:
Christine Conn

PA DEP:
Rhonda Manning

VA DEQ:
David Evans
Will Isenberg
Craig Lott
Ruth Minich-Hobson
Sarah Sivers
Tara Wyrick

VDH:
Raven Jarvis

WV DHHR:
Monica Whyte

Federal and Regional Agencies

EPA Region 3:
Michelle Audie
Renee Bryant
Nick Holomuzki
Raffaela Marano
Irene Shandruk

ICPRB:
Curtis Dalpra
Christina Davis
Rikke Jepsen
Heidi Moltz
Michael Nardolilli
Cherie Schultz
Carlington Wallace

MWCOG:
Steve Bieber
Christine Howard

USFS:
Anne Timm

USGS:
Doug Chambers
Jon Dillow
Mary Kay Foley
Leah Staub

Others

Jefferson Co. Water Advisory Committee:

Loudoun County Government:

Business Meeting

Due to government-mandated social distancing requirements resulting from the coronavirus pandemic, the August 5, 2020 Quarterly Meeting was held via webinar. There were 65 attendees, including the moderator and presenters.

A recording of the webinar is available on the ICPRB YouTube page.

Presentations

Collaboration to Improve TMDL Implementation
Jonathan Leiman, MDE & Dr. Christine Conn, MD DNR (presentation)

The MDE Integrated Water Planning Program (IWPP) includes the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Development, Watershed Restoration, and Water and Sewer Plan Review Divisions of the Water and Science Administration. Mr. Leiman discussed the data generated for various Clean Water Act (CWA) and Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) requirements. MDE IWPP is interested in promoting collaborative efforts to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of pollution reductions called for by TMDL models by aggregating information from stormwater wasteload allocation implementation plans. These plans are Phase I stormwater permit requirements. Mr. Leiman described the three components of a TMDL and explained how implementation occurs locally and is primarily driven by National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) surface water discharge permits and NPDES MS4 permits. Implementing based on TMDL models, and specifically targeting wasteload allocations, provides an opportunity for utilities and partnerships like DWSPP to collaborate with jurisdictions and advocate for the protection of drinking water supplies (waters designated as Use Class -P in Maryland) using regulatory frameworks and powerful data driven tools.

Dr. Conn provided an overview of various DNR programs and funding opportunities related to watershed implementation plans (WIPs). The Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund awards $60-$80 million per year based an annual solicitation for proposals. The statute specifically requires the most cost-effective nutrient and sediment load reductions, and most funds are awarded to projects in high-priority or medium-priority watersheds. She also described various land conservation and resource conservation opportunities through the Chesapeake Bay program, Stateside Open Space, and the Rural Legacy Program. Dr. Conn shared the MD GreenPrint map and implementation quilt showing how DNR has classified areas of ecological significance and how various programs and funding opportunities can be woven together for watershed protection and restoration. Finally, Dr. Conn noted that resiliency planning and implementation represents a possibly untapped opportunity for watershed protection.

Salt Management Strategy (SaMS): An Overview of SaMS Development
Sarah Sivers, VA DEQ (presentation)

In January 2018, a diverse group of stakeholders, facilitated by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VA DEQ), began developing the Salt Management Strategy (SaMS). This project began in response to a benthic impairment in Fairfax County's Accotink Creek watershed and the subsequent identification of chloride as one of four stressors contributing to its impairment. While winter salts are beneficial for public safety and economic activity during winter storms, they are associated with a host of negative impacts, including environmental impacts, infrastructure corrosion, and increasing the salinity of drinking water.

Winter salt issues are not limited to a single watershed in an urban landscape and thus are more effectively addressed by taking a jurisdiction- or region-wide approach. With facilitative leadership by DEQ, the SaMS project encompasses all of the Northern Virginia region, including the Counties of Loudon, Prince William, Fairfax, and Arlington and five cities in Northern Virginia. The SaMS ultimately provides a toolbox or collection of best practices, recommendations and resources for various audiences, ranging from local governments to private contractors to water purveyors to the general public. Ms. Sivers explained the goals, objectives, outcomes, and implementation for SaMS and provided an overview of the toolkit. She also detailed the framework, which included a Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC), six workgroups, and a steering committee. The six workgroups included: (1) Traditional Best Management Practices (BMPs), (2) Nontraditional BMPs, (3) Education & Outreach, (4) Water Quality Monitoring & Research, (5) Salt Tracking & Reporting, and (6) Government Coordination. The strategy document and technical appendices are scheduled to be finalized by February 2021.

Workgroup Updates

Agricultural Issues
Pam Kenel, Loudoun Water

The Agricultural Issues workgroup has been working to leverage funds available for watershed protection through the 2018 Farm Bill.

- Various workgroup members participated in stakeholder discussions with Maryland NRCS. The Little Pipe Creek watershed in Frederick Co. and Carroll Co. was submitted for National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) implementation phase funding in July 2020. The watershed was not selected due to a lack of information. However, there is an opportunity to resubmit for Planning/Readiness Phase funding to develop the watershed assessments necessary to move forward for the Implementation Phase.
- Workgroup members, including representatives of EPA Region 3 and VDH, have participated in calls to discuss priority watersheds to recommend to Virginia NRCS. These discussions have led to a possible focus on the Shenandoah Valley and the Goose Creek watershed. DEQ's TMDL and watershed planning process for Goose Creek provide data.

Contaminants of Emerging Concern
Martin Chandler, WSSC Water

M. Chandler recognized the contributions of Pat Bowling who recently retired from PA DEP after 33 years of service. P. Bowling was a founding member of DWSPP and served as the co-chair for the Contaminants of Emerging Concern committee.

Workgroup members have been monitoring the following:

- UCMR4 – EPA's database was updated in July. Data are available for 43 of 50 Potomac River Basin water utilities. Similar patterns of frequent detection for haloacetic acids (HAAs) and manganese continue, while no cyanotoxins have been found. A few traces of semivolatile organic compounds (SVOCs) and one pesticide have been detected.

- A planktothrix bloom and die-off was detected between Harpers Ferry and Point of Rocks in July 2020. The organism is capable of producing microcystin, anatoxins, and undesirable taste and odor. MDE analyzed the algal mat and detected microcystins, but cyanotoxins were not detectable at the WSSC intake.

- PFAS – This is still a very active topic nationally and locally. Related news includes:
  - EPA added 172 PFAS compounds to the toxic release inventory (TRI) in May 2020.
  - EPA is in the process of implementing the 2019 PFAS Action Plan. The Plan includes new analytical methods 533 and 537.1 for analyzing up to 29 PFAS compounds. EPA is also considering drinking water MCLs for PFOA and PFOS.
  - Several states have established PFOA and PFOS limits that are very stringent in comparison to the EPA Drinking Water Health Advisory of 70 ppt either individually or combined.
    - Michigan: 6 ppt and 8 ppt
    - New Jersey: 14 ppt and 13 ppt
    - New York: 10 ppt for both
    - New Hampshire: 12 ppt and 15 ppt
  - The following resources were publicized:
    - DOE Analytical Services Program – multiple seminars
    - EPA webinar on PFAS Removal in DW Treatment Systems
    - SERDP/ESTCP webinar on PFAS fate and transport and innovated hydrothermal destruction

- Perchlorate – EPA made a final determination not to regulate perchlorate. A recent study suggested that perchlorate is more hazardous to thyroid function than previously thought.

Early Warning & Emergency Response
Joel Thompson, Fairfax Water

The spill exercise is scheduled for October 14-15, 2020. While the first day was scheduled to be held on site at Loudoun Water, it now appears that the entire exercise will be held virtually due to the ongoing pandemic.

The workgroup has been in discussions about how to spend the $50,000 received from DC DOEE from the GenOn settlement. J. Thompson shared a table summarizing two projects that the workgroup has discussed. These project opportunities include: (1) October 2020 collection of LIDAR bathymetric data from Shepherdstown to Hancock by USGS and (2) Installation and maintenance of multi-parameter sonde at Point of Rocks by USGS. Both of these tasks are part of larger projects which are slated to receive UASI funding, but UASI funds cannot be used to support USGS contract work without a waiver from the Department of Homeland Security. Steve Bieber has submitted a waiver request. Since the LIDAR survey must be scheduled with USGS immediately, the EW/ER Workgroup's recommendation to DWSPP is to spend the $50,000 GenOn settlement on the bathymetric data collection.

Reaching Out
Lisa Ragain, MWCOG

S. Bieber provided the update on behalf of L. Ragain. Due to COVID-19 response, the workgroup has not been active over the last two quarters. S. Bieber shared an idea for the workgroup to set up a communications strategy framework for 2021. Possible objectives for the framework include:

- Increasing community awareness of benefits of the Potomac River
- Reaching and impacting stakeholders
- Inspiring action by stakeholders to engage in behaviors that lead to source water protection

The framework would also identify metrics for success, such as message recall on surveys or event attendance. COG has used strategies for a similar framework for the Anacostia watershed.

Urban and Industrial Issues
Greg Prelewicz, Fairfax Water

G. Prelewicz provided follow-up on two issues from the May meeting:

- On May 4, GenOn submitted a request to MDE to participate in the voluntary incentive program related to flue gas desulphurization. Some of the DWSPP members that submitted comments to MDE in May received an MDE notice of final determination dated July 27. However, through subsequent filing permits on the energy side and public statements that GenOn has made, it appears that GenOn is proposing to deactivate or retire three coal-fired generators on August 13. Various utilities are following up with MDE, but it is possible that the July 27 final determination may only be applicable if these generators remain online.
- Regarding the NPDES permit renewal for George's Chicken, Fairfax Water submitted a comment letter to VA DEQ in May requesting that the permittee be required to notify ICPRB of any spills or upsets. DEQ's response dated June 29 indicated that DEQ notifies VDH and that DEQ's spill notification phone numbers are staffed 24 hours/day.

G. Prelewicz noted that a new sub-group may be assembled to address issues related to spill reporting to ICPRB.

MWCOG has coordinated WaterSuite workgroup meetings. The workgroup has refined the scope for FY21, and user training will be scheduled for the fall. One of the key issues for discussion has been ensuring the availability of appropriate chemical data.

The U&II workgroup has posted the SaMS DEQ toolkit on the Samepage site for review and comment. There are some new projects related to salt planned for 2021 and beyond. MWCOG held a salinization monitoring webinar on June 17 detailing a 10-15 year effort to focus on salinization in the region via collaborative efforts with Virginia Tech, University of Maryland, and USGS. Within the past few weeks, we have learned that the National Science Foundation has recommended multi-year, multi-organization funding for a project aimed at diagnosing and addressing the barriers that limit bottom-up management of freshwater salinization. The workgroup may also host a webinar focused on salt management.

In terms of permit tracking, there is an open comment period for statewide small, domestic sewage disposal systems in WV through September 8.

Workgroup goals were discussed during the most recent meeting. A key goal is to work within the watershed to highlight successes with salt management and to work with local and regional entities to make salt a focus parameter.

Water Quality
Niffy Saji, Fairfax Water

N. Saji provided an overview of workgroup tasks, including:
- Monitoring data
- Creating a map of monitoring locations for salt (i.e., sodium, chloride, or surrogates) in the watershed. A subgroup that includes M. Chandler (WSSC), M. Audie (EPA), and N. Saji are working on this task.
- Updating the existing map on harmful algal blooms (HABs) in the watershed

The workgroup is also pursuing whether there is submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) monitoring in the Potomac River because some intake filters have experienced clogging.

The workgroup is planning to sponsor a webinar on ICPRB modeling tools in September. The agenda will feature:
- Introduction to Spill Response in the Potomac Basin (H. Moltz)
- ICPRB's Current Spill Response Models (C. Schultz)
- Oil Spill Models of the Occoquan and Patuxent Reservoirs (A. Seck)
- CSOs in the Potomac Basin (C. Davis)

The workgroup maintains responsibility for keeping the Utility Spill Response Plan updated and intends to test during the October spill exercise.

Other Updates

DWSPP Land Prioritization Project
Christy Davis, ICPRB

The project team, comprised of eight DWSPP member utilities and ICPRB, held a technical review meeting on July 27. A second meeting was held on August 3 with land conservation organizations. The purpose of both meetings was to review preliminary results with stakeholders. ICPRB staff presented the project background, an explanation of opportunity areas, a discussion of short- and long-term metrics, the draft cumulative prioritization, and the project schedule. Stakeholders had opportunities to discuss the metric weighting scheme.

Administration Updates
Christy Davis, ICPRB

The draft DWSPP FY21 Financial Workplan was made available for members to download from the GoToWebinar panel. C. Davis requested that members email any comments on 2020 accomplishments or 2021 goals for incorporation into the Workplan. She shared the FY21 budget and noted that member dues will remain the same in the new fiscal year.

C. Davis discussed the two malicious emails that were recently sent to the PotomacSpills listserv. The messages appeared to come from the members' accounts, but the members did not send them. C. Davis reviewed precautions and advised members not to open attachments or click links without context.

S. Edgemon commented that reporting each CSO on PotomacSpills has led to an increased burden on ICPRB. Although it is important for water suppliers to be informed about source water quality, he proposed CSO reporting be adjusted to perhaps a quarterly schedule.