

Chesapeake Bay Watershed Region Freshwater Mussel Partnership

Steering Committee Meeting Summary for Friday 04/25/2025 | 09:00 to 10:00

Meeting Agenda

| No. | Description |
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| 1. | Annie's (NYSDEC) request for tech guidance re: FWM restoration and eDNA |
| 2. | AMAAB Round-Table discussion re-cap |
| 3. | Tactics to integrate with Chesapeake Bay Program/Partnership framework |
| 4. | News/Announcements |

Meeting Summary

Participants: Joe Wood/CBF; Ashley Hullinger/PADEP; Annie Stupik/NYSDEC; Scott Heidel/PADEP; John Lancaster/PADEP; Ellyn Campbell – Tyler Shenk – Jamie Shallenberger/SRBC

1. During the AMAAB round-table discussion, Annie asked if anyone had technical guidance, protocols, or comparable written documents to share that pertain to: (i) FWM restoration project planning; and, (ii) use of eDNA for FWM detection. Annie said she did receive materials. Note: The online Zotero **FWM Partnership** Group has lots of peer-reviewed literature and other technical publications. There are several items relevant to FWM restoration – may not be much on topic of eDNA.

2. AMAAB Round-Table re-cap: (refer to separate document previously circulated for details about the R/T). Main take-aways: we attracted and reached multiple new people including several from PADEP, USGS, MDNR, VADEQ, and ICPRB who joined the Partnership. In addition to introductions and “what do you do?”, the round-table discussion covered: an overview by NFWF representative about grant-funding programs for FWM-related projects; then free-form discussions about FWM re-introduction applications that use silos; propagation/hatchery facilities; biosecurity discussions; habitat suitability models; and water quality/ecosystem services.

3. Tactics to integrate with CBP framework: Scott referenced the “Beyond 2025” activities that CBP is undertaking this year and he highlighted that FWM seemingly fit well with Goal Implementation Teams (GITs) focused on: Habitat, Fisheries, and Water Quality. An early outcome for Beyond 2025 is to elevate conservation to comparable status in CBP as “restoration” and another noteworthy consensus item is greater emphasis on “living resources throughout the ecosystem” with overt acknowledgements that: (i) living resources in non-tidal parts of the Bay ecosystem warrant parity with those in tidal realm; and, (ii) de-emphasis of numeric pollutant load reductions and WQ metrics may be advantageous.

Group discussion also included the VA Habitat Suitability Model that we’ve discussed in past <https://vanhde.org/content/map>. At AMAAB, NFWF mentioned the value of having a Bay watershed-wide HSM in context of layering with its prioritization schema for certain grant programs. There are multiple lines and sources of evidence that riparian corridor restoration and riparian forest buffer projects are effective means to conserve existing FWM populations and increase FWM carrying capacity.

4. News and Announcements

- From Joe, Pamunkey Tribe funded by NFWF WILD to develop a FWM grow-out facility to support on-going mussel restoration
- Jamie and Annie mentioned that the Upper Susquehanna Coalition was funded by NFWF and this year will be performing FWM surveys and planning for projects in Central NYS.
- NFWF WILD and Small Watershed Grant applications are due 5/12

Thank you all for your time, input, feed-back, and insight. If you have questions, comments, or suggestions, don't hesitate to contact me/SRBC.

Thank you.

Jamie Shallenberger

Susquehanna River Basin Commission

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