



York River & Small Coastal Basin Roundtable

Community · Literacy · Capacity · Resilience

Biannual All-Hands Meeting
December 7, 2021
1:30 PM – 4:30 PM
virtual via Zoom

Recording [found here](https://wmedu.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=d7e1381f-dc2e-4411-a0a8-adf70184141b&start=0) or at:
<https://wmedu.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=d7e1381f-dc2e-4411-a0a8-adf70184141b&start=0>

Meeting Purpose:

To convene the Roundtable membership for updates and discussion on forward movement.

Meeting Objectives:

- Participants will learn of Roundtable progress and updates, and discuss emerging opportunities for this stakeholder body
- Participants will provide input on Roundtable governance and the next edition of the Strategic Plan

MEETING MINUTES

1:30pm

Welcome/Opening

Cirse Gonzalez, Coastal Training Program Coordinator, CBNERR-VA

- Cirse Gonzalez provided stats and facts on the collective York River watershed and small coastal basins in addition to reviewing the Roundtable's Cornerstones.

1:40pm

Updates

Cirse Gonzalez, Coastal Training Program Coordinator, CBNERR-VA

Andrew Larkin, Chesapeake Bay Office, NOAA

Paula Jasinski, President, Green Fin Studio

- Andrew Larkin described NOAA's interest in, and support for, restoration efforts in the York-Piankatank-Mobjack watershed geography leading to, for example, support of a Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) oyster restoration effort and a NOAA contract with Green Fin that provides additional capacity for the Roundtable.
- Paula Jasinski introduced the Green Fin team members who would be working most closely with the Roundtable and previewed some of the deliverables they would be helping with.
 - Mike Rigdon, Lake Anna Civic Association (LACA), made note of a possible connection with a Soil and Water Conservation District contractor, GW.

- Cirse Gonzalez reminded the group about the Middle Peninsula Restoration Workshop hosted by CBNERR-VA and held on Sep. 21-23, in concert with the Nearshore Habitat Steering Committee and with support from NOAA and Green Fin. Ms. Gonzalez shared the following links related to this event:
 - **Padlet:** <https://padlet.com/ctpcoordinatorcbnerr/midpenrestoworkshop>
 - For all related materials and resources
 - **Restoration Resource Inventory:** <https://www.vims.edu/cbnerr/roundtable/members/habitat-restoration-steering-committee/restoration-resources/index.php>
 - a one-stop shop for restoration related resources focused on the Middle Peninsula.
- Ms. Gonzalez described restoration as one of many topics that would be included in a State of the York report - a two-year effort that began in October. A project team, led by CBNERR-VA and inclusive of members from CCRM and VIMS, with support from Green Fin, is driving this effort; the result would be a print-ready report and digital interface depicting the status, trends and opportunities related to the York River watershed and that of its communities. Ms. Gonzalez noted that CBNERR-VA received 100k from the NERR Science Collaborative for this effort.
 - State of the York Report, project page: <https://nerrssciencecollaborative.org/project/Gonzalez21>

1:50pm

Group Governance Discussion

Cirse Gonzalez, Coastal Training Program Coordinator, CBNERR-VA

Paula Jasinski, President, Green Fin Studio

Lily Huffman, Environmental Communications Digital Specialist, Green Fin Studio

- Cirse Gonzalez reviewed the Roundtable's current governance structure and its origins, questioning whether it was working, and where it could be augmented, if not rewritten.
- Paula Jasinski described governance structures as a platform for success, noting where there was overlap with strategic planning, and where the two processes distinguished themselves. Mrs. Jasinski then provided example governance topics that by-laws could address.
- Participants then participated in two polls addressing the following questions, with results respective to each:
 - **Does the Roundtable need a set of by-laws?**
 - Results:
 - 67% - need more information
 - 27% - yes
 - 7% - no
 - Mrs. Jasinski noted for Aaron Wendt, DCR SEAS, that Green Fin has reached out to other collaboratives for example structures that could be shared on the Roundtable member drive. Mr. Wendt offered the following examples:
 - **Potomac Watershed Roundtable and Council:** <https://www.potomacroundtable.org/about-us-1.html>
 - **Middle James Roundtable:** <http://www.mjrt.org/documents.html>
 - Ms. Gonzalez and Mrs. Jasinski clarified for Curt Smith, MPPDC, that there were internal discussions on whether to pursue a strategic plan or governance structure first, though there was resulting forward movement

on the governance structure to help facilitate implementation of a new strategic plan.

- Andrew Larkin, NOAA CBO, noted that a strategic plan was in place, though needed updating.
- **Should there be a limit on Roundtable membership?**
 - Results:
 - 75% - no
 - 17% - need more information
 - 8% - yes
 - Mrs. Jasinski noted that memberships above 30 start to get a little unwieldy.
 - Participants commented that there could be varying levels of participation. Matt Wells, WestRock, suggested capping the functional leadership body but allowing for additional, more general participation. Dave Evans, DEQ noted that DEQ would advocate for allowing all interested to participate as Roundtable members, though recognized that functional working size is an important consideration for the Steering Committees and Board.
- Mrs. Jasinski described various decision-making models using a sailboat framework; these models included the individual, minority, majority, consensus and unanimous consent models.
 - Participants were then polled on what decision model was appropriate for the Roundtable.
 - Results:
 - 62% - consensus based
 - 31% - majority
 - 8% - need more information
 - Participants were also polled on whether the Roundtable Board should be empowered to make decisions between Roundtable meetings.
 - Results:
 - 75% - yes
 - Finally, participants were asked if they would join the Board if it had decision-making authorities.
 - Results:
 - 50% - yes
 - 29% - no
 - 21% - need more information
 - Ms. Gonzalez clarified for Mr. Larkin that while a nine-member Board is what had been in place beginning in 2019, the number was open for discussion. Were nine members to be seated in Board positions, there would remain one opening at present.
- Mrs. Jasinski clarified for Lauren Taneyhill, NOAA CBO, that members would receive a draft governance structure, inclusive of decision-making powers for the Board, in their pursuit of more information on the poll questions.
- Mr. Smith described the challenges local government officials may face in participating on the Roundtable with added layers of governance and noted that knowing the duties of the Board would be most useful at present, as would clarity on the problem the Roundtable was trying to solve, or the improvements it was hoping to make.
 - Mrs. Jasinski offered examples of potential Board duties, including: spearheading grants and acting as liaisons and bridges to partner organizations. She

emphasized that a Board was not meant to be restrictive. Mrs. Jasinski also noted that the work of the Roundtable was focused on the Strategic Plan, though an update and accompanying buy-in from the members were necessary.

- Ms. Gonzalez clarified for participants that the current Board had been largely serving in an advisory capacity, offering her suggestions and clarity on the direction of the Roundtable and the implementation of its strategic plan; she noted that it was not exercising decision-making power.
- Pam Mason, Center for Coastal Resources Management (CCRM), used the chat to offer that the Board could weigh in on policy issues and provide letters of support; she followed with a comment describing the importance of a board in providing balance for a team representative of diverse sectors, politics and perspectives.

2:20pm Break!

- A real-time, crowd-sourced representation of where the watershed work of our participants is focused:



2:35pm Strategic Plan Review and Process

Cirse Gonzalez, Coastal Training Program Coordinator, CBNERR-VA

Paula Jasinski, President, Green Fin Studio

- Cirse Gonzalez described the contents and origins of the Roundtable's Strategic Plan, noting that it was a two-year plan, developed to garner low hanging fruit for the collective.
 - **Strategic Plan:** <https://www.vims.edu/cbnerr/roundtable/yrsccb-roundtable-strategic-plan---april-2020---webdoc.pdf>
- Ms. Gonzalez then described some of the low-hanging fruit the Roundtable capitalized on over the last two years. She also noted that the plan remained a laundry list of deliverables, and that her focus for its next iteration was to streamline these. To this end, she engaged steering committees to provide feedback on what has worked, what hasn't, and what they would like to see more of; examples of considerations were provided to participants and included, but were not limited to: an evaluation objectives, outcomes, and steering committees; development of a communications plan; pursuit on

- collective efforts; and continued internal connection and support through social media. Ms. Gonzalez reported that her next steps would include garnering member input with the support of Green Fin.
- Paula Jasinski then asked participants to review the Roundtable's Vision and Mission and provide feedback via poll on whether they needed to be rewritten; results below.
 - Mike Rigdon, LACA, commented on the advocacy inherent in the vision and mission, noting that it was relevant.
 - Dave Evans offered clarifying comments on the nature of this advocacy, noting that Roundtable would want to steer away from the advocacy of policies, i.e. any lobbying – a sentiment echoed by Lauren Taneyhill in the chat.
 - Pam Mason offered that she framed vision and mission statements as promotional material for the group and advocacy towards a common goal to this end.
 - **Vision results:**
 - 43% - support as written
 - 50% - believe it could benefit from minor edits
 - 7% - want a deeper dive
 - **Mission results:**
 - 47% - support as written
 - 40% - believe it could benefit from minor edits
 - 13% - want a deeper dive
 - Mrs. Jasinski then asked participants what they thought was working best within the Roundtable.
 - Participant feedback included: staying up to date and information sharing, connecting with partners, the Nearshore Habitat Steering Committee, and discussion of emerging problems and best practices.
 - Mrs. Jasinski followed with a question to participants on what they thought was not working well within the Roundtable.
 - Participant feedback included: the Roundtable's inability to do something as a group, e.g. grant proposals; the Roundtable's understanding of its connectivity to other river groups; collaborative goal setting; frequency of discussion and momentum across all teams; and leadership responsibilities by members lacking. Suggestions included having regional subgroups, collective promotion of participation in protection/restoration work, and simplification of the strategic plan so it's well understood who is doing what and to what end – and so that everyone knows how to draw on the group's resources and capacity.
 - Ms. Gonzalez offered her appreciation for the feedback, noting that it was a reassuring signal, given that it aligned with her planned her own perspectives and planned next steps for the Roundtable.
 - Mrs. Jasinski echoed the thanks and noted that next steps included digesting the input and reporting back to the membership in the new year.
 - In response to a question posted by Mr. Rigdon, Ms. Gonzalez mentioned that CBNERR-VA, via VIMS, currently serves as the Roundtable's fiduciary agent and that given this structure, incurs significant overhead costs in grant application. To this end, there have been internal discussions on alternative fiduciary agents for Roundtable grants; Ms. Gonzalez invited participants to offer related suggestions and stressed that exploring options was important to her.
 - Dave Evans noted the possibility of interested members volunteering to work together with the Roundtable coordinator to develop a grant application, which might be approved by a steering committee or the Board.

- Mrs. Jasinski noted that Green Fin is in place as a Roundtable resource and happy to help on related matters.

3:05pm

Creative Breakout: Review New Logo Designs

Cirse Gonzalez, Coastal Training Program Coordinator, CBNERR-VA

Paula Jasinski, President, Green Fin Studio

Lauren Huey, Communications Specialist/Graphic Designer, Green Fin Studio

Lily Huffman, Environmental Communications Digital Specialist, Green Fin Studio

- Cirse Gonzalez offered her perspective on the importance of branding for consistent messaging, describing its many facets, including a logo. She described the origins of the current Roundtable logo, noting that Green Fin, having related expertise, would be helping elevate it, in concert with Roundtable members towards a more inclusive process wherein members would have more agency.
- Lauren Huey reiterated the importance of a logo noting that the renditions she would showcase were reflective of an inclusive approach that was focused on a concept both simple and memorable. Ms. Huey also described the inclusion of resources, including humans, specific to the Roundtable’s geographies. Finally, she noted that her concepts included an abbreviated title for the Roundtable, requesting related input from participants on it – in addition to their thoughts on the different logo iterations.
- Ms. Huey then introduced participants to five new versions of the logo via Jamboard, detailing the unique aspects of each. Comments on shapes, font, colors and name surfaced in conversation and the chat; meanwhile a poll was conducted.



- Participants discussed alternating use of “York River Roundtable” and “York River and Small Coastal Basin Roundtable” depending on context, using the latter in more formal circumstances, and the former in places like the logo. The use of “basin” and its plural form was also discussed and needs to be reconciled.
- **Polling results:** The winner of the poll was option C, featuring a water drop that makes an impression (!) with a color scheme reminiscent of the current logo.
- With regard to next steps, Ms. Huey offered to incorporate participant feedback in modified concepts, which would be circulated with the meeting minutes, at which point the membership could vote on their final pick.
 - Visit: https://PollEv.com/multiple_choice_polls/DAY3fMi7OHi9WpKEkRio3/respond

3:30pm

Learning Session: River Trends and the Chesapeake Monitoring Cooperative

Liz Chudoba, Water Quality Monitoring Initiative Director, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay

- Liz Chudoba began by noting that she oversaw the community-based water quality monitoring programs of the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay (Alliance), mentioning that the term citizen science had transitioned to community science to be more inclusive.
- Ms. Chudoba noted that the two related monitoring programs that the Alliance engaged in were the Chesapeake Monitoring Cooperative (CMC) and the River Trends program, and provided some background on the Alliance including its four pillars: Agriculture, Forests, Green Infrastructure, and Stewardship and Engagement.
- The River Trends program, which began in 1985, works with volunteer monitors to collect water quality data throughout Virginia. To this end, the Alliance provides training, equipment and technical support. This data, Ms. Chudoba mentioned, supplemented state and federal datasets; accordingly, the Alliance works closely with VA DEQ, which uses this data to help summarize state water quality conditions. Ms. Chudoba then detailed where River Trends sites were located, as well as the type of data collected, including: observational data, water temperature, dissolved oxygen, pH and water clarity – with some regionally dependent indicators. She noted that monitors follow strict protocols, and typically collect on a monthly basis, year-round. Virginia, Ms. Chudoba explained, is one of the only states that has codified using community-collected data in their state reporting.
- Ms. Chudoba mentioned that the CMC reflects an expansion of the RiverTrends program throughout the Bay, something the Chesapeake Bay Program saw value in, and awarded the Alliance and its collaborators funds to build out. The CMC brings together programs like RiverTrends from throughout the watershed that would have been operating independently otherwise. Ms. Chudoba then shared a map detailing the collective reach of the CMC sites, past and present.
 - Ms. Chudoba then mentioned the challenge of standardizing water quality data from among the cooperative's members, sharing CMC's three-tiered approach to data classification for integrated analysis. She noted that the most rigorous tier of data was produced in tidal regions.
 - Ms. Chudoba next described the technical support services CMC offers, including a suite of training opportunities, data interpretation and troubleshooting.
 - Finally, Ms. Chudoba described the Chesapeake Data Explorer, which houses all of the data collected by community-based monitoring groups member to the CMC, which translates to 448,000 data points; 2,500 stations; 7 Bay jurisdictions and 116 organizations. Notably, all data is publicly accessible, made possible by a strategic dataflow process that also informs EPA's Water Quality Exchange and state agencies.
 - **Chesapeake Data Explorer:** <https://cmc.vims.edu/#/home>
 - Ms. Chudoba described Hack the Bay as one initiative that the Alliance pursued to think more broadly about data applications.
 - **Link to the hackathon submissions:**
<https://www.chesapeakemonitoringcoop.org/hackthebay/>
- Cirse Gonzalez asked participants to provide input on any community science efforts they work on.
 - Ross Weaver, Wetlands Watch, used the chat to mention the **Catch the Tide effort:** https://www.vims.edu/people/loftis_jd/Catch%20the%20King/index.php
 - Harry Looney, LACA, noted that LACA has been certified to collect data for DEQ since approx. 2002, and that they upload their data to the CMC database. Mr. Looney noted that they have a quality assurance plan that is updated annually and follow protocols outlined in a DEQ manual. In addition to the parameters Ms. Chudoba mentioned, Mr. Looney described the collection of E. coli and total

phosphorus samples at 25 lake stations. In addition, he noted that nitrogen and chlorophyll samples were collected at sites prone to cyanobacteria/harmful algal bloom issues, some of which have had longstanding recreational restrictions. Ms. Gonzalez noted that the LACA work serves as a star model for community engagement.

- Ms. Chudoba noted that fostering stewardship and ownership of the waterways is a highlight of community monitoring; to this end, she described the River Trends program's architecture, which pairs a volunteer to a site, cultivating an attachment to place for volunteer monitors. She noted that teachers and students, including those in college, are eager to engage, and are motivated by volunteers whose enthusiasm snowballs. The largest successes, Ms. Chudoba mentioned, were rooted in group work – where monitoring took place as a collective and volunteers felt part of/contributed toward a group effort.
 - Mr. Looney described a positive experience with a college intern, noting that LACA was eager for opportunities to further engage with students as part of their studies/degrees. He also described additional collection programs LACA partners on with Virginia Tech and Randolph-Macon.
- Ms. Gonzalez made mention of a presentation on a community monitoring program during the Middle Peninsula Restoration Workshop; details found here: <https://padlet.com/ctpcordinatorcbtnerr/midpenrestoworkshop>
- Robin Broder, Waterkeepers Chesapeake, mentioned a related article on nutrient trends in the watershed: “Nutrient trends in the Rappahannock, Appomattox, Pamunkey and Mattaponi rivers in Virginia, and the Choptank River in Maryland are generally degrading.” https://www.bayjournal.com/news/pollution/nutrient-pollution-in-bay-s-3-largest-rivers-trending-downward/article_17e9d43e-5387-11ec-a3e7-1b98d46f9888.html
- **Liz Chudoba** can be reached at lchudoba@allianceforthebay.org or (804) 775-0951.

4:00pm

State of the York Needs Assessment

Cirse Gonzalez, Coastal Training Program Coordinator, CBNERR

Lily Huffman, Environmental Communications Digital Specialist, Green Fin Studio

- Cirse Gonzalez reminded participants that the State of the York is an effort funded by the NERRS Science Collaborative that will result in the production of a watershed-wide report fit for print and in digital format, and focused on the status, trends and opportunities around watershed issues and communities.
- Ms. Gonzalez then detailed the effort's logic model, describing the pre and post-proposal phases, in addition to the funded proposal effort. The latter she noted, includes a needs assessment, the subsequent synthesis of content relevant to watershed stakeholders, and the development of the final deliverables, one for paper and one for web. Ms. Gonzalez commented that this co-production process was taking place alongside that of a similar process spearheaded by the Upper Mattaponi. Once a report and related digital interface have been developed, Ms. Gonzalez noted that the intent was for the Roundtable to continue to work in the dissemination of content, specific to member audiences.
- With respect to timing, Ms. Gonzalez noted that the needs assessment would take place in conjunction with qualitative informational interviews beginning at present and lasting through January 2022. In February, the grant team would begin to evaluate and synthesize relevant content, finalizing a draft report/digital interface, for release and feedback during the summer of 2023.

- Ms. Gonzalez emphasized the importance of member input in the creation of this report.
- Lily Huffman described the development of the assessment, noting that the project team with support from Green Fin, worked to create survey questions that would effectively inform a final report. Ms. Huffman noted that while the report would primarily target Roundtable members, it would also reach members of the public, hence development of questions that would reach a wide variety of stakeholders. Ms. Huffman reported that an unfortunate outage was barring the team from sharing out links to the survey during the meeting, though they would be shared in meeting minutes (see below).
- Ms. Huffman then described the structure of the survey, noting there were four sections of related questions focused on: demographics, data and trend types, format, and Roundtable, respectively.
- Ms. Huffman then asked participants to note what types of information they'd like to see in this report.
 - Curt Smith noted that the most effective output would highlight priority needs in the watershed; these would help strengthen locality grant applications.
 - Participants also added, among other ideas, wetland extent, water quality, watershed implementation plan goals, population trends, land use/cover, riparian forest cover, oyster reef acreage, freshwater wetland creation/restoration, socio/economic information, and any info that would serve formal and informal educators.
- Ms. Huffman next asked participants to provide feedback on the presentation of report content; how could it be most effectively communicated?
 - Participants recommended interactive maps, infographics, one pagers for a Roundtable library,
 - Aaron Wendt noted that if a dashboard were created, the team should consider offering as much consistency as possible with the pdf report. He also noted that USGS reports have a website that includes pngs of the tables and charts in their pdfs.
- Ms. Huffman urged participants to take the survey before December 14, 2021 and provide feedback on any needed changes as representative beta testers before widespread dissemination of the survey occurred. She cautioned sharing both surveys, noting that the member survey was developed for Roundtable members and their affiliate watershed practitioners; she encouraged everyone to share the public survey.
- Ms. Huffman also noted that informational interviews would accompany survey distribution, and shared potential sectors targeted for interviews. She then asked participants to provide input on any gaps.
 - Participants suggested expanding the targeted list to include soil and water conservation districts, and a broader business representation (e.g. chambers of commerce, water-based/waterfront businesses).
 - Ms. Gonzalez encouraged submission of related contacts as well.
 - **Member survey:** <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/sv/F9nczJT/SOTYMember>
 - **Public survey:** <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/sv/Ev5ZwEt/SOTYPublic>

4:25pm

Kudos and Close-Out

Cirse Gonzalez, Coastal Training Program Coordinator, CBNERR

- Cirse Gonzalez offered kudos to Mike Gelber from LACA who was recognized by meeting registrants for his work on floating hydroponic gardens designed to help remove nutrients from freshwater.

- Ms. Gonzalez also expressed kudos to the Green Fin team and NOAA CBO for all their support on the Roundtable and credited the photographers featured in the day's slides.
- Ms. Gonzalez then reminded participants of meeting objectives, asking them to connect with her if they felt any were unmet. She expressed gratitude for everyone's participation, noting that participatory processes were tough and time consuming, but important.

4:30pm Adjourned