

# INTERSTATE COMMISSION ON THE POTOMAC RIVER BASIN

## Advisory Committee

### for the Comprehensive Water Resources Plan

September 26, 2016 Meeting

#### Meeting Summary

#### **Welcome and Introductions**

Carlton Haywood, Executive Director of the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin (ICPRB) opened the meeting, welcomed the Advisory Committee (AC) members, and thanked them for serving on the committee. He introduced ICPRB staff members (Heidi Moltz, Jim Palmer) and the facilitators for the AC (Kristin Rowles, Mark Masters). Next, the committee members briefly introduced themselves.

#### **ICPRB and the Potomac River Basin**

Carlton provided an overview of ICPRB, the water resources of the Potomac Basin and the overall Comprehensive Planning Process (slides available). Key themes in his presentation included:

- The Potomac is an interstate river basin.
- ICPRB provides a linkage between various jurisdictions in the watershed and their respective water management planning efforts.
- Consistent with the authorities in the ICPRB Compact (1940, updated in 1970), ICPRB is not a regulatory agency but can serve in a coordination capacity among the jurisdictions in the river basin.
- Annual average precipitation is variable across the watershed (36” – 45” annually).
- Flows in the Potomac are relatively unregulated and, therefore, it has high levels of variability in streamflows.
- Generally, the Potomac Basin has plenty of water, but it is not always where we want it, when we want it, and in the quality that we need. Certain localities in the watershed have water availability concerns (e.g., Rock Creek in Adams County, PA).

- Population in the watershed is highly concentrated in the metropolitan Washington DC area, where 75% of the basin's 6.2 million people live. Population is one driver of quantity and quality concerns in the watershed.
- From a basin-wide perspective, water withdrawals by the power sector account for 68% of total withdrawals, but consumptive use in the basin is highest from domestic and public supply uses (84% of consumptive use). We have limited information on agricultural water use in the basin. At the small watershed scale, the break-down of water uses may be much different (e.g. local impacts from agricultural, industrial, mining, or other water uses).
- The Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) is the primary driver for water quality programs in the basin.

Carlton also presented a list of challenges for planning in the basin that will be discussed later in the meeting.

### **ICPRB Comprehensive Water Resources Plan Overview**

Heidi Moltz (ICPRB) provided a detailed overview of the Potomac Basin Comprehensive Water Resources Plan development process (slides available). Key themes in her presentation included:

- The planning process is designed to be collaborative, adaptive, integrated, and participatory.
- Stakeholder participation in the planning process will be through the AC and through channels for participation by a broader audience (e.g., "keep informed" list, website).
- The planning process will have five phases:
  - Phase 1: Scoping
  - Phase 2: Review and Finalize Challenges
  - Phase 3: Develop Recommendations
  - Phase 4: Write the Plan
  - Phase 5: Develop Adaptive Implementation Strategy
- Phase 1 (Scoping) is just about complete. It included the development of a scoping document, the initiation of stakeholder input, and the development of the introductory sections of the plan.
- The AC has received the introductory sections for review. These sections provide the planning context, information on the basin, and a preliminary attempt to identify challenges for sustainable water resources management in the basin.
- The timeline for completion of the final plan is Spring 2018.

At the conclusion of her presentation, an AC member asked if slides from the presentations could be made available to the members. The facilitators will distribute the slides to the AC after the meeting.

### **Advisory Committee Operations**

Kristin Rowles provided an introduction of the facilitation team. She then walked through the AC meeting timeline, procedures for the committee, and decision-making (slides available). Key themes in her presentation included:

- Meeting date selection for the remainder of the meetings is underway. A calendar of meetings should be available in October 2016.
- The AC will seek consensus where possible. The AC is an advisory body, and so when it cannot come to consensus, reporting on different perspectives will be an important committee output.
- Meeting summaries will record areas of agreement and describe alternative positions when there is disagreement.
- Members should review the draft meeting summaries to be sure it captures the important outcomes of AC discussions.
- Meeting summaries will be an important tool for plan development.

A committee member asked what “consensus” will mean for this process. Kristin said that she would suggest “Can you live with this?” as a standard for consensus, and group indicated general support for this approach.

Another committee member asked if the attendance list will be included in the meeting summaries so that it will be clear who agreed when consensus is reached (and who was not present). Kristin said that the attendance list would be included in the meeting summaries.

A committee member noted that AC members are individuals and also many represent organizations. It was noted that at times it will be important for members to be clear if they are commenting on behalf of his/her organization or as an individual.

Kristin asked the members to comment on the composition of the AC and whether it appears that any interests are missing. AC members offered the following input:

- Agriculture seems to be missing from the AC and the introductory sections of the plan. NRCS and/or local county conservation districts might be able to participate and offer this perspective.
- The energy sector should be represented.

- Recreational interests are not represented. They could be represented by the National Park Service.
- Federal agencies are not participating in the committee, and a lack of coordination with federal agencies could be a problem. The ICPRB recently hosted a coordination meeting with federal agencies to improve these connections, but further work is needed to keep the federal agencies engaged.
- Do we have environmental interests represented? The Potomac Conservancy is here, but should we consider how to engage other organizations, too? (e.g., The Nature Conservancy, Riverkeepers, American Rivers)
- Transportation sector issues are important to water quality, especially road salt. It would help to engage this sector in the process.

Kristin noted that while additional AC members is one possible way to address concerns about representation, other channels for engagement, such as the “keep informed” list are being developed. The staff will consider these comments from the AC.

A committee member asked if there is a public participation process envisioned, such as an official posting of the draft document and public review. She noted that it might be important to have a formal public participation component. Heidi Moltz (ICPRB) commented that there will be an on-going broad stakeholder engagement through the “keep informed” list, website, and other distribution channels. The “keep informed” list has 118 contacts at this time. AC members will be sent the list and can make suggestions for additions to the list.

### **Shared Vision Statement**

Kristin discussed development of a Shared Vision Statement and provided the AC with a few examples (slides available). The vision statement will be a description of desired future conditions for the Potomac River Basin. Today, the AC will suggest themes and concepts. Then, the ICPRB Staff will draft a shared vision statement for review by the AC and ICPRB Commissioners.

The group reviewed the pictures that AC members submitted to the facilitation team as a kick-off to the vision statement discussion. Members offered comments on the pictures they provided. Then, the AC broke into small groups for an idea-writing exercise to answer questions about the desired future conditions for the basin and the role of the Comprehensive Plan and the ICPRB in fulfilling that vision. The idea-writing exercise allowed the small groups to work in both writing and discussion to identify shared ideas for the plan’s vision statement.

Summaries of the group reports are provided in the table below.

**Table: Summary of Vision Statement Small Group Discussions**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Desired Future Conditions of Basin (in fifty years)</b>	<b>Role of the Plan</b>	<b>Role of ICPRB</b>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable quantity of water</li> <li>• Improved quality</li> <li>• Affordable, desirable, economically prosperous</li> <li>• Cultural connection to waters (fishing, kayaking, watermen, etc.)</li> <li>• Public awareness of presence and values, how we affect it, and individual's role</li> </ul>		
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable watershed</li> <li>• Providing water in adequate quantity and quality to support humans, living organisms, and ecosystems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify challenges, unified shared vision, recommended solutions to share resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leader in research, education, facilitating coordination in implementation</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of recreational opportunities</li> <li>• Source of adequate (quantity and quality) water</li> <li>• Improved health of aquatic ecosystems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a collaborative mechanism for integrating participation by all agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop milestones, goals, metrics, etc. that can be used to determine if progress has been made/achieved</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensively managed to balance multiple water resource needs, including industry, agriculture, water quality/quantity for a growing population, recreation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide an adaptive framework for determining basin-wide goals and how to achieve them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner with agencies, entities, and resources to adaptively manage the plan</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A model for sustainable resources supporting potable and recreational uses of diverse viable populations of naturally occurring plants, animals, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concisely describe needs</li> <li>• Provide means for updates and adaptive management, including communication and education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate plan to all stakeholders</li> <li>• Coordinate and facilitate prioritized aspects of plan</li> </ul>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable water use, ecosystems, water quality, and recreation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent standards</li> <li>• Roadmap to achieve vision</li> <li>• Clear recommendations to achieve vision: implementation, funding, coordination (cross-jurisdictional)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead agency, catalyst, and facilitator for plan execution</li> </ul>

## Water Resources Challenges

Kristin introduced the “Challenges List” that was provided to the AC in the pre-meeting packet (attached). This list was developed initially by ICPRB based on stakeholder input from a survey, and the list was adapted based on further input during the AC member interviews. Kristin said that the AC members would conduct a prioritization exercise today, and before the next AC meeting, a subcommittee would work on re-ordering, re-organizing, and re-stating the challenges to provide a recommended prioritization of the challenges that the plan should address. At the next meeting, the AC will review the revised list and make recommendations on prioritization to the Commission.

Before asking the AC members to indicate their priorities, Kristin asked the members for additions to the list. The following suggestions were added:

- Agricultural pollution prevention
- Sewer system infrastructure maintenance and combined sewer overflows (CSOs)
- Industrial pollution
- Road salt
- Accountability
- Abandoned mine drainage
- Metals, toxics and pathogens as water quality parameters of concern

These items were added to the challenges list for the prioritization exercise. In response to a question, it was clarified that "declining groundwater levels" is an issue primarily in the Coastal Plain.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, it was clarified that emerging contaminants included pharmaceuticals and endocrine disruptors.

Next, Kristin asked the AC members to pick six separate items on the list of challenges, which was posted on flip charts around the room. The AC members used stickers to mark their selections on the flip charts. She said that they should choose their priorities to indicate what they think the plan should definitely address. She also commented that the list has different types of challenges, including external threats, management needs, implementation strategies, and environmental objectives, and some challenges are overlapping. While noting that this might make comparisons difficult, she asked members to do their best to indicate their priorities.

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<sup>1</sup> It was later suggested by two AC members that this challenge be broadened to include the whole basin because of concerns over declining groundwater levels outside of the coastal plain. The fractured rock aquifers (above the fall line) are generally susceptible to drought stress, while coastal plain aquifers (below the fall line) are more susceptible to withdrawal stress (which is affected both by population and drought).

Additional discussion would follow to help clarify difficulties in selection. Also, she said that if members needed to add a few words to clarify a selection on the flip charts, they could use the provided post-it notes.

The AC members made their selections. Photos of the flip charts are available. Kristin asked the AC members what was difficult for them in making their selections. The members made the following comments:

- If “preventing negative water quality and quality impacts of impervious services” were stated to address stormwater issues more broadly, I would have selected it.
- Integrated water management implies taking all of these issues into consideration, and so the exercise was challenging.
- It is a challenge to know our future challenges.
- Some of the challenges can be combined (e.g., stormwater items under Human Land Use).
- Climate change will impact water availability, and therefore, one challenge is embedded in the other.
- Development of water resource education materials can be a helpful byproduct of the planning process.
- Water availability and water use go hand-in-hand, and I do not see them as separate categories.
- “Preserving and expanding stream buffers” is a component of developing a broader program of enhanced interconnected green infrastructure, which should be an important objective for the basin.
- Some of the listed items might be sub-basin priorities that are less of a priority at the basin-wide level (e.g., acid mine drainage, stormwater, groundwater availability).

Next, Kristin noted the areas that were most frequently selected to include (in no particular order):

- Agricultural pollution prevention
- Enhancing public awareness
- Ensuring adequate current and future water supply
- Protecting high value waters
- Identifying and addressing threats of concern (water quality)
- Fixing impaired waters

- Improving infrastructure of public water and wastewater utilities and expanding service areas
- Improving coordination in water resources management and planning
- Protecting environmental flows
- Preparing for emergencies (floods/drought)
- Coordinating messaging regarding drought preparedness and response
- Managing stormwater
- Preserving and expanding stream buffers

Kristin commented that while these items received the most stickers in the exercise, it is more important as a qualitative exercise. Comments from the AC members on the selections are as important as the selections themselves. Next, Kristin asked the AC members to consider items that did not receive many votes. AC member comments included:

- It is odd that “planning and mitigation to reduce flood risk” did not receive any votes. Perhaps we should modify the challenge listed above it to read: “Coordinating messaging regarding drought and flood preparedness, response, and mitigation.” Another member noted that this item relates closely to stormwater management.
- “Maintaining biological diversity” did not receive votes, but it is important. Diversity is an indicator regarding the effectiveness of management. Maintaining large tracks of forest, implementing green infrastructure, and maintaining habitat will lead to maintaining biological diversity.
- “Protecting supplies for instream recreational use” is oddly stated because it uses the term “supplies.” It could be modified to say “protect in-stream recreation.”
- Road salt did not get votes, but it has demonstrable impacts and should be addressed.
- Preserving agricultural and forest lands did not get many votes, and neither did preventing the negative impacts of impervious surfaces, but these items are related. Preserving agricultural and forest lands helps address the spread of impervious surfaces.
- Management of groundwater should be a priority even if it is only an issue in part of the basin.

Next, the committee generally discussed the prioritization of challenges in the context of the planning process. The following is summary of the key themes in that discussion:

- Implementation will be key to the success of the plan. AC members can become advocates for implementation if they support the outcomes of the process.



- AC members emphasized the importance of an implementable plan and identification of funding for plan implementation. Implementation will depend on the availability of funding.
- It's an honor and a challenge to participate in this process. "It's a super-awesome thing."
- It will be most helpful to have a few clear, discrete priorities to focus public policy and funding for implementation.
- Carlton Haywood (ICPRB) noted that the Commission is still developing its ideas for the planning process and looking to the AC for guidance. He said that the Commission has limited resources, and therefore, prioritization is necessary.
- Education and public awareness should be a priority to build an understanding of why a true "watershed approach" to planning is most beneficial. An AC member suggested that the colleges and universities in the watershed can be a resource to develop a basin-wide approach to management through exchanges of students and information across the basin.
- An AC member suggested the review other watershed plans to consider what happened with their recommendations and what lessons can be learned, especially with regard to implementation. He provided an example of a plan for the Potomac Basin from 1967. (A link to an on-line version of this plan was sent to AC members in follow-up to the meeting.<sup>2</sup>)
- We should start with the end in mind for the planning process. It was suggested to develop the plan so that it will achieve the end goals and provide the needed information.

In conclusion, Kristin asked for volunteers for a subcommittee that will work on revising the challenges list to reflect today's input from the AC. The following members will serve on the subcommittee: Willem Brakel, Mark Peterson, and Mark Symborski, and they will work with Kristin, Mark, and ICPRB staff on this task to bring a draft back to the AC for its next meeting.

### **Meeting Wrap-Up and Next Steps**

Kristin reviewed the next steps for the AC including:

- Review the meeting summary (next week)
- Submit comments on the Draft Introductory Sections of the Potomac Basin Comprehensive Water Resources Plan to Heidi Moltz ([hmoltz@icprb.org](mailto:hmoltz@icprb.org)) by October 17
- Respond to Kristin's e-mail (forthcoming) regarding availability for future meetings

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<sup>2</sup> *The Potomac: a report on its imperiled future and a guide for its orderly development*: <https://books.google.com/books?id=VHNx6mTGBBsC&dq=The%20Potomac%3A%20a%20report%20on%20its%20imperiled%20future%20and%20a%20guide%20for%20its%20orderly&pg=PA3#v=onepage&q&f=false>

- Subcommittee work on revising the Challenges List

The next meeting will be a teleconference in late November or early December. AC members will receive the schedule for meetings in the next few weeks.

Kristin and Carlton thanked the AC for their commitment and contributions and for a productive meeting. The meeting was adjourned.

September 26, 2016, Advisory Committee Meeting Attendance

**Members:**

Hedrick Belin  
Willem Brakel  
Pat Campbell  
Tolessa Deksissa  
Tom Devilbiss  
Marty Gary  
John Grace  
Nancy Hausrath  
Sara Jordan  
Adam McClain  
Jennifer Orr  
Mishelle Noble  
Mark Peterson  
Dusty Rood  
Herb Sachs  
Donald Schwartz  
Roland Steiner  
Mark Symborski

**Staff:**

Carlton Haywood (ICPRB)  
Heidi Moltz (ICPRB)  
Jim Palmer (ICPRB)  
Kristin Rowles (facilitator)  
Mark Masters (facilitator)

Topic Areas	Challenge
Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Increasing severity of weather events</li> <li>– Changing precipitation regimes</li> <li>– Rising sea level</li> <li>– Increasing temperatures and associated changes in water cycle (e.g. evapotranspiration rate) and migration of species</li> </ul>
Ecological Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Protecting environmental flows</li> <li>– Maintaining biological diversity</li> <li>– Promoting native species and reducing/managing invasive and exotic species</li> <li>– Promoting healthy habitats</li> <li>– Maintaining large, continuous tracks of forest and minimizing fragmentation/edges</li> </ul>
Floods and/or Droughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Preparing for emergencies</li> <li>– Coordinating messaging regarding drought preparedness and response</li> <li>– Planning and mitigation to reduce flood risk and improve response during a flood</li> </ul>
Human Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Preventing negative water quality and quantity impacts of impervious surfaces</li> <li>– Managing stormwater</li> <li>– Preserving and expanding stream buffers</li> <li>– Managing forestry activities</li> <li>– Discouraging development in floodplains</li> <li>– Focusing development and growth into areas with public services</li> <li>– Preserving agricultural lands</li> <li>– Discouraging development on steep slopes</li> </ul>
Natural Landscape Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Protecting and restoring wetlands</li> <li>– Protecting groundwater recharge areas (e.g. karst, fractured bedrock, and confined aquifer recharge zones)</li> <li>– Preserving natural and scenic resources</li> <li>– Managing land subsidence</li> </ul>
Science and Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Enhancing public awareness of water resources issues</li> <li>– Collecting additional information to enhance understanding of the water resources systems (e.g. monitoring, remote sensing)</li> <li>– Teaching water conservation principles</li> <li>– Encouraging public education and outreach</li> <li>– Identifying potential water resources conflicts</li> <li>– Improve availability of water resources data</li> </ul>

Topic Areas	Challenge
Source Water Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Protecting source waters</li> <li>– Preventing and responding to spills</li> </ul>
Water Availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Ensuring adequate current and future water supply</li> <li>– Identifying areas where future demands may exceed supply</li> <li>– Understanding groundwater availability</li> <li>– Declining groundwater levels in the Coastal Plain aquifers</li> <li>– Identifying water storage opportunities</li> </ul>
Water Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Protecting high value waters</li> <li>– Identifying and addressing threats of concern: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ sediments/nutrients</li> <li>○ emerging contaminants</li> <li>○ pesticides</li> <li>○ hydraulic fracturing</li> </ul> </li> <li>– Fixing impaired waters</li> </ul>
Water Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Improving infrastructure of public water and wastewater utilities and expanding service areas</li> <li>– Managing increasing consumptive water use</li> <li>– Conserving water to reduce overall demand</li> <li>– Balancing increases in wastewater reuse with the need for minimum in-stream flows</li> <li>– Protecting supplies for instream recreational uses</li> <li>– Improving estimates of agricultural and irrigation water use</li> <li>– Improving estimates on private well use and existing non-permitted withdrawals</li> </ul>
Government Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Improving coordination in water resources management and planning</li> </ul>
Water/Energy Nexus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Integrating water and energy sector planning and management to address interdependencies of energy production and water resources</li> </ul>

**NOTE:** This list has been updated from the list on pp. 31-32 in the draft introductory sections of the Comprehensive Plan (Aug 2016 draft). Items have been added based on stakeholder review and advisory committee member interviews.