

# **INTERSTATE COMMISSION ON THE POTOMAC RIVER BASIN**

## **Advisory Committee**

### **for the Comprehensive Water Resources Plan**

**March 1, 2018**

**ICPRB – Rockville, MD**

#### **Meeting Summary**

#### **Welcome, Introduction and Agenda Review**

Kristin Rowles (Policy Works LLC) welcomed the Advisory Committee (AC) and thanked them for their participation. Members and guests introduced themselves and are listed at the end of this meeting summary. Kristin reviewed the meeting agenda.

#### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

#### **ICPRB Progress Report**

Carlton Haywood (ICPRB) thanked members for attending the meeting. He then reviewed the plan development schedule and draft plan review process. The draft plan is currently being reviewed by the Advisory Committee and ICPRB Commissioners, and a revised draft will be sent to state agencies for their review on March 21. A third review draft and review period will follow for Commissioners, Advisory Committee members, and other interested stakeholders. It is anticipated that the final plan will be approved by the Commissioners in June 2018 (timeline slides available on website).

#### **Comprehensive Plan Overview**

Heidi Moltz described the development of the draft plan document that is currently in review, and she pointed out parts of the document that are new to the Advisory Committee, since its last meeting, including:

- ICPRB has worked to produce a “user-friendly” document that is visually appealing and useful to readers via photos, appealing page design, hyperlinks, and intuitive layout.
- Heidi asked members to confirm their names and affiliations for the Advisory Committee member section.
- She noted that this is the first draft of the Ecological Health, Human Land Use, Communications, and Synthesis Sections.

- Heidi pointed out new language in the Implementation Section related to roles and responsibilities and coordination with other plans. This section will not be specifically reviewed in today's meeting (unless brought up by a member), but Heidi asked that Advisory Committee members review these sections and offer comments during the open comment period.
- Heidi noted that the new section on the plan review process states that this plan is a 15-year plan with a review scheduled every five years.

### **General Comments on Draft Plan**

Next, Kristin asked the AC members what review comments they would like to discuss today. She asked them to list things first so that she could determine a plan to cover these comments in the day's discussion. Member comments included:

- Add a large watershed map toward the front of the document; this will help provide context to the general public or others not as familiar with the watershed.
- The draft is very well done. The Advisory Committee has been a great process. How ambitious do we want this plan to be? Are we just endorsing the status quo, or do we want the plan to be more challenging and "forward leaning?" I suggest more language that "calls people to action."
- Should the plan be "less technical" or include certain sections that are less technical?
- The current language is at an appropriate level but perhaps the language should be more ambitious. There is a lot of text about process, but much less that specifically addresses how to make the river better. Should we consider tweaking language on the recommendations?
- The discussion of land use could be more substantial and address coordination with local planning entities more on topics including buffers, planning policy, and water quality.
- The draft plan is missing a discussion of road salt impacts to water quality.
- The section on state regulatory mechanisms could be expanded.
- The boxes that are marked "Outcomes" should be changed to "Desired Outcomes."
- Should the draft plan address the current political environment?
- Index the Challenge Areas and related Recommendations with a numbering system for easier reference.
- Can we add at least one milestone for each recommendation? Also, each milestone should reference related Recommendations.
- A recommendation to encourage local green infrastructure should be added to the Ecological Health challenge area.
- Provide an outline of the statutory framework of tools available to protect water quantity and quality with a possible milestone related to assess effectiveness of these tools.

Kristin asked that several of these points be addressed in the small group sessions or later in the day. Then she asked for further discussion of comments about how ambitiousness the plan's recommendations are. The following is a summary of that discussion:

- The plan can influence but not require.
- We cannot incorporate mandates in the plan, but we can encourage adoption of beneficial management actions by pointing out what is needed and what benefits these actions will provide (e.g., Pennsylvania adopting well construction standards).
- We should not over-emphasize the voluntary nature of the plan, particularly in the Executive Summary, where it is the first sentence now.
- In some places, a bit of “language tweaking” may help to make the recommendation a bit stronger. However, we still need to be careful with the tone.
- The plan is focused on comprehensive issues, not specific issues, and the recommendations address issues at a comprehensive level.
- We do not need a document that helps to feed “hysteria.” If the plan comes across as too much of an advocacy document, it will lose its impact.

### **Challenge Area Review Stations**

Kristin divided the committee members into three small groups for facilitated discussion on the following sections of the draft plan:

- Water Use and Supply and Water Quality Challenge Areas
- Ecological Health and Human Land Use Challenge Areas
- Synthesis

In the small groups, the discussion was focused on reviewing the recommendations, milestones, and measures of progress associated with the above challenge areas and considering the content of the newly drafted synthesis section. The small group discussion was facilitated by Kristin and Mark and ICPRB staff. Approximately every 15 minutes, each group changed to a new topic so that all AC members spent time in discussions of each of these parts of the plan.

### **Lunch**

During lunch, members provided written responses on notecards to the following questions:

1. Now that you have worked through this planning process, what do you think is most important to improving water resource management in the Potomac River Basin?
2. Why were you committed to being a part of this planning process?

Kristin said that these questions were a chance for AC members to reflect on the process and noted that some of the responses might be used as quotes to include in call-out boxes in the plan or other

documents related to the plan. Responses to the questions are lists in Appendix A of this meeting summary.

Following lunch, Mark, Heidi and Kristin reported out on small group discussion. Notes and take-away messages from the discussion were captured on flip charts and are summarized below:

### **Reporting from Review Station Discussions**

After lunch, the facilitators presented a summary of each of the review station discussions. Comments are summarized below.

#### Water Use and Supply/Water Quality Challenge Areas

- The plan lacks mention of specific pollutants and issues (e.g., PCBs, metals, nutrients).
- Tier 1 and Tier 2 lists and 303(d) lists can help to provide more information on pollutants of concern and sources.
- Need more education about connections between pollutants and human activities.
- Don't change the length of the plan sections but do add more details to support more understanding.
- Add a call-out box addressing "10 Things I Can Do to Make a Difference." Do this for individuals, but also for local governments and other potential actors.
- Add reference to the on-going review of the Low Flow Allocation Agreement and Water Supply Coordination Agreement.
- Clarify on p. 39 "changes in physical..." text to address whether and how consumptive use has affected flow patterns.
- Road salts are a very specific but up and coming issue. Consider the following to address road salts in the plan:
  - Note that there are COG workgroups on road salts.
  - Education and coordination with state and local governments is needed.
  - Add a section on road salts to the literature review in the plan document.
  - Raise this issue, but do not a new recommendation on it.
  - Consider a one-page pull-out on road salts to provide information. Could put this in the section that discusses source water protection.
  - Describe the impact on water quality and describe associated pollutants.
  - If you focus on road salts, which are just one issue, do you need to add more detail on other issues?
- In the milestones, acknowledge the efforts of other organizations.
- For the recommendations about "complementary actions," add a full list of complementary actions or put a list in the appendices.
- Note that source water protection is a complementary action for the water quality challenge area.

- State that the recommendations are a first step in achieving the desired outcomes.
- Can we better address we the recommendations should be implemented? Where does the synthesis of results come into the plan?

### Ecological Health/Human Land Use Challenge Areas

- A “key messages” section should be added to the document that may highlight recurring themes throughout each section.
- Add a milestone to address coordination on ecological health.
- Regulatory ambiguity on ecological health issues makes forward movement challenging. The example of state differences in identifying aquatic life use impairments in streams was discussed.
- Specificity in the ecological health section is good.
- Address the lack of consistency in stressor identification and evaluations of biological communities in the discussion of ecological health.
- For Human Land Use, add more detail to the recommendations.
- Human Land Use seems like the weakest of the challenge area sections.
- Use the term “impervious surface” on page 51 in discussion of practices that “harden” the surface.
- Need public outreach that link land use to water impacts and ecological health. Cultivate understanding. Address these links in the Executive Summary.
- Make the Human Land Use section more concrete. What are the actions that others can do that would be beneficial? (e.g., zoning) Consider providing some examples in call-out boxes.
- Address agriculture and forestry land uses in the Human Land Use discussion.

### Synthesis Section

- Can this section be more clearly tied to the Challenge Areas and Recommendations? Address how the synthesis topics connect with the Challenge Areas, Recommendations, Milestones, and Measures of Success.
- Add a diagram of the synthesis issues and their relationships to the Challenge Areas and/or Recommendations.
- Many of the Synthesis topics are related to outcomes.
- Can we call this section something other than “Synthesis?” Does every recommendation improve resilience? Maybe “resilience” is an organizing theme.
- For the water/energy nexus section, consider adding more specificity to improve the concreteness of the discussion. It currently does not include specific reference to topics including fracking, coal ash ponds, oil spills, acid rain, PCB, lead, and mercury.
- Clarify what is meant by the reference to “energy efficiency of water management” in the list of water-energy planning strategic pillars. Most utilities are already addressing this.

- Explain more about the list of strategic pillars on page 61 so they are not interpreted as recommendations of this plan.
- In the map on page 62, note that landfill gas facilities do not consume water. Might need to clarify the intent of the map. Is it addressing water consumption in power generation or other issues, too?

### **Continued Plan Review Discussion**

Kristin then facilitated the group through discussion of outstanding issues from the morning. The following is a summary of the discussion:

#### General Comments

- The plan is very ICPRB-centric. It needs to bring in other players and identify opportunities for their involvement.
- When recommendations are very broad, include some examples to provide more concreteness.
- The photos in the plan make it a very attractive document, but most of the photos are very positive and beautiful. Do we need pictures that show conditions that are not quite as pristine, as well as the nice ones?
- The plan title “One Basin, One Future” is great.
- The plan is implementable given the general nature of the recommendations. The more specificity included in the plan, the harder it will become to implement the plan.

#### How do we demonstrate the complexity of the regulatory framework?

- Add a diagram or table that shows the federal/state/local entities tied to the regulations or programs that they address. Could focus on Safe Drinking Water Act and Clean Water Act programs at federal level, with tables for each state and one general table on local programs.
- This might be too complicated to do because of the various levels and degrees of implementation.
- Look for examples of charts/diagrams from other plans that address the regulatory framework.
- Add Conservation Districts to the list of potential state funding sources on page 69.

#### Evaluation of programs and regulatory tools

- At the five-year comprehensive plan review, it may be a good time to evaluate existing regulatory tools.
- This type of review can support adaptive management in the plan.

#### Recommendations, Milestones, and Measures of Success

- The measures of success do not include quantitative measures.

- At this stage, the types of metrics that are listed might be the most appropriate. This is a young plan, and at this stage, the recommendations are focused on collecting better information. More concrete actions will be added based on that information.
- What will we measure to evaluate if the basin is better off in five years? Consider metrics used by others, including Chesapeake Bay Program indicators.
- Do we want to set ourselves up for evaluation of the comprehensive plan based on a specific quantitative metric(s)? This is a voluntary plan, and we have no control over implementation by others.
- How much accountability can we expect only five years after completion of the first comprehensive plan in 40+ years? Accountability measures will come later.
- The ICPRB comprehensive plan is not the driver of current activities, but the plan can reflect work that is ongoing. The plan can act as a driver for future action.

### **Meeting Wrap-Up**

Kristin thanked the AC for the commitment that they have shown to this process. She reminded the AC members that their comments on this draft are due on March 15, and two additional review periods will follow between March and May. She said that it has been a privilege and a pleasure to work with this highly motivated and hard-working group of people. Carlton thanked the AC members for their support over the last two years in developing the draft plan and offered a special note of thanks to Kristin and Mark for their support of the AC and contributing toward completing the comprehensive plan. The members celebrated the completion of the process by enjoying some cake. The meeting was adjourned.

**March 1, 2018 Advisory Committee Meeting Participation**

**Members:**

Willem Brakel  
Tom Devilbiss  
Mark Guise  
Nancy Hausrath  
Tom Hilton  
Sara Jordan  
Adam McClain  
John Odenkirk  
Mark Peterson  
Donald Schwartz  
Mark Symborski  
Rhonda Manning  
John Wirts (phone)

**Staff:**

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



## Appendix A: Advisory Committee Member Responses to Reflection Questions

The following is a list of Advisory Committee member responses to the reflect questions posed to them at the committee's March 1, 2018 meeting:

### ***1. Now that you have worked through this planning process, what do you think is most important to improving water resource management in the Potomac River Basin?***

- Public awareness and their understanding that every little effort is important and helpful to the overall quality of water.
- Will require a comprehensive and collective approach from all major stakeholders to identify and prioritize the issues; solutions to include a funding commitment.
- Recognition by local, state, and regional partners that basinwide planning and implementation of protective strategies is a top priority.
- Cooperation – such a large land area, so many competing issues/goals. Cooperation and consensus.
- Continued relationship development and coordination amongst water resource management stakeholders is key to continued improvement. Long-term evolution of governance is also key.
- Improving water resource management in the Potomac River Basin is necessary not only for the quality of life for the residents, but for economic vitality and ecological habitat for long-term sustainability. Additionally, this resource, the quantity and quality of water, is vital to the Metropolitan Washington area for a source of drinking water and fire protection.
- Outreach and education at all levels. Cooperation and coordination of implementation of existing policies, programs, and regulations. Strategic enhancements, as identified by adaptive management, to improve the effectiveness of existing policies, programs, and regulation in achieving the desired outcomes.
- The most pressing issue related to the successful implementation of the Potomac River Basin Plan is interjurisdictional coordination and cooperation.
- Gaining the support of a fully educated and vested citizenry.
- About 60% of the human body is water, and for the 6 million residents of the Potomac River Basin, that water comes most often from the river. We have an obligation to conserve and protect those water resources.
- Consistency of water management across the basin.

### ***2. Why were you committed to being a part of this planning process?***

- To be a part of an important plan to help ensure water quality and sustainability for years to come and to learn from industry experts of efforts already in place contributing to this effort.
- Personal and professional dedication to protecting and preserving our natural resources to help ensure sustainability into the future.
- Because I believe that the Potomac River Basin is a resource of national significance that can be—and should be—protected for future generations.
- I live in the headwaters of the Potomac Basin. This is my home.

- The Potomac is such an important shared resource counted on by so many.
- WSSC is committed to being a part of the planning process since it is reliant on the river as a raw water source to supply potable water to over 1.8 million residents in Montgomery County and Prince George's County, MD.
- Because I am committed to better conserving, preserving, and managing the availability and quality of our water resources.
- To provide input into a process which is much larger than my individual efforts. In addition, providing a local government perspective, which in many respects is foundational to successful plan implementation.
- Desire to provide input to the process based on my experience and background in aquatic natural resource management. Gratifying to be part of such a diverse panel.
- Wanted to provide staff resources back to ICPRB.