

## **Improving Communication with Local Leaders Regarding Watershed Restoration Goals**

The Local Leadership Workgroup and the Local Government Advisory Committee of the Chesapeake Bay Program are reaching out to local leaders to discuss how the Bay Program can improve communication and understanding of Bay watershed restoration goals and information and technical support needs of local government leaders.

A new Bay agreement was signed by the Bay watershed jurisdictions in 2014. One of the agreement's key goals is to increase the knowledge base and capacity of local officials so that they are able to be more effectively engaged in the watershed restoration effort in ways that benefit their local community, environment and their impact on those living downstream. This goal came out of a recognition that local officials are key players in restoring and protecting our watersheds, but they have not received enough support from the Bay Program for them to have the tools they need to be more knowledgeable, supportive and engaged.

The purpose of this meeting and the questions listed below is to get your feedback on what issues are most important to your communities, how clean water, healthy fish and wildlife, conserved forest and wetlands and outdoor recreational access fit within these priorities, what information and support local leaders need about these subjects and the most effective way to convey the information and support they want.

The following questions were developed by the Bay Program to get a better understanding of the interests, concerns and needs of local leaders. We are interested in your feedback on these questions or related issues that you think are important for leaders and citizens of the Watershed to understand and where additional information, training or other support from the Bay Program would be helpful.

If you have any questions or comments or to simply provide your own answers to these questions, please contact Bob Hoyt ([bhoyt@ecologixgroup.com](mailto:bhoyt@ecologixgroup.com)), Bob Summers ([Robert.Summers.PhD@gmail.com](mailto:Robert.Summers.PhD@gmail.com)) or Diane Cameron ([dianecameron60@gmail.com](mailto:dianecameron60@gmail.com)).

Thank you.

### **Importance of environmental restoration and protection**

1. What would you say are your community's top three priorities?
2. Where do clean water, healthy fish and wildlife, conserved forest and wetlands and/or outdoor recreational access fit within these priorities?
3. Have you been able to adopt policies or take actions that protected and improved these environmental resources in your jurisdiction? Please provide examples.
4. Which considerations (e.g. lack of interest or concern by constituents, knowledge of what to do, high cost, etc.) most often prevent or make it difficult for you to adopt policies or take actions to protect and improve these environmental resources in your jurisdiction? Please provide examples.

### **Information needed to take action in your jurisdiction**

5. What information is useful and important to support your efforts to protect and restore your environmental resources? (For example: risks to public health, economic benefits, recreational opportunities, regulatory requirements, grant/funding opportunities, innovative approaches by peers, potential for job creation, others)
6. What did you know (or wish you had known) about environmental restoration and protection prior to becoming a local leader that was (or would have been) most helpful in addressing your constituents' environmental health protection and restoration concerns?

### **Best sources and methods of delivery of information**

7. What sources of information do you rely upon to better understand the impacts and risks of actions (or lack of action) to protect and restore your environmental resources? (e.g. studies, organizations, educational programs and/or people you find most helpful and reliable)
8. What educational programs have you and your colleagues participated in and what impact did they have? Were field trips and site visits an important and useful part of the programs?
9. What existing programs are most effective at conveying such information and what features of these programs stand out, making them especially effective?
10. What is the best way for you and others in similar leadership positions to get the information you need about issues surrounding environmental health protection and restoration?

### **Additional information and educational programs needed**

11. What new or different information or educational programs would help you and/or your community to commit more resources to environmental restoration -- clean water, healthy fish and wildlife, conserved forest and wetlands and outdoor recreational access?