

PBT Reduction Strategy Team Conference Call Summary
March 16, 2005, 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm Central Time

Approximately 35 conference lines participated in the call.

Introduction and Agenda Review

Gary Gulezian began the teleconference by reviewing the agenda and discussing the progress made at recent meetings. The main topics of discussion for the teleconference included: 1) the team's goal statements, 2) a review of some action items that were suggested at the Maumee Bay retreat, and 3) next steps for the team. Gary then thanked everyone who attended the retreat at Maumee Bay, where the team had a productive discussion that helped them to focus on the purpose of the group. He also briefly discussed a meeting that he and several others attended in Washington, D.C., where they met with representatives of a Congressional delegation. An important point raised at this meeting was that the work produced by the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration (GLRC) must not be viewed as merely a request for new resources; the GLRC must clearly identify how its members are using their current resources and working together to meet present and future needs.

Goal Statements

Gary Gulezian asked Ted Smith to open discussion on the first agenda item: the goal statements that were established as a result of the Maumee Bay meeting. Ted noted that, in response to recommendations made at Maumee Bay, the long-term and short-term goal categories have been eliminated. This was done because the short-term goals established for the team were presented in such a way that they more closely resembled actions than goals. It made sense to create broad goal statements and present the details of how these goals will be accomplished via the list of actions that will be recommended in the strategy document. Another message that resulted from the Maumee Bay meeting was that goals should be modeled to reflect language that has already been developed and accepted by parties throughout the Great Lakes. As a result, the team's goal statements borrow from language found in documents such as the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA), the Great Lakes Strategy, and the Binational Toxics Strategy (BTS). Four goal statements have been developed:

1. Prevent the release of toxic substances in toxic amounts and virtually eliminate the release of any or all persistent toxic substances to the Great Lakes Basin ecosystem.
2. Allow unrestricted consumption of fish from the Great Lakes Basin ecosystem.
3. Clean up all sediments and other reservoir sources contaminated with persistent toxic substances in the Great Lakes Basin ecosystem.
4. Protect the general public from toxic substances through effective and consistent outreach and education, including consistently protective fish consumption advice throughout the Great Lakes Basin ecosystem.

Ted Smith has received several comments on these goals. In particular, Peter Landrum recommended adding a fifth goal: Continue to monitor for and assess new potential toxicants for regulatory action. Dale Bryson also sent out a memo commenting that the goal statements should be more action-oriented. Ted responded that detailed language should be saved for the actions that will be recommended in the strategy. He then invited Dale and others to comment on the goals in general.

Gary Gulezian reminded the group that attendees at Maumee Bay did not wish to spend a great deal of time defining goal statements but preferred to build on existing agreements (e.g., the GLWQA, BTS, and Great Lakes Strategy). This will allow the team to focus on defining objectives and specific actions needed to meet broader goals. Dale Bryson responded with concern that the team is taking great ideas and watering them down into lofty statements, with

little thought as to how the goals will be implemented. Gary indicated that many on the team share that concern but that it was important to follow the guidance that each strategy team received in terms of how the report should be structured. Goals defined up-front are intended to be endpoint goals, and it is important to get past those quickly so that the team can focus on actions that need to be implemented.

Ted Smith responded to a question about the source of the other three goal statements, since he had already identified the first as originating from the GLWQA. The second goal is a paraphrase of ideas from the Great Lakes Strategy. Both the Great Lakes Strategy and BTS identify a need to restore sediments and areas of concern, so the third goal has been adapted from these sources. The fourth goal was created by members of the drafting team in response to complaints that fish consumption advice is not consistent throughout all states in the Great Lakes region. Gary commented that the fourth goal can be perceived as a tactical action to help achieve the second goal.

Laura Rauwerda asked if there was a way to modify the goals to reflect the broad scope of uses within the Basin, rather than focusing primarily on fish consumption. Gary responded that the team might be able to adapt a goal from the Great Lakes Strategy that focuses on protection of wildlife and people within the Basin. Ted reminded the group that it needs to be careful not to step outside the purview of the PBT Reduction Strategy Team. Sue Brauer commented that the goals should address the impacts of toxic substances on other elements of the ecosystem besides humans (e.g., protect plants and animals from toxic substances to prevent bioaccumulation in the food web; maintain or improve habitat).

Discussion turned to the definition of PBTs and whether the team is focusing on chemicals with specific physical characteristics. Ted indicated that the problem statement addresses that issue. He further explained that the team is focusing on substances that pose a threat through waterways; for example, air toxics will not be covered. Also, the team is not necessarily confined to the strict definition of persistent bioaccumulative toxics. Some substances that get into the waterways technically may not be persistent or bioaccumulative but may be present in sufficient quantities to pose a threat.

A question was raised as to whether source reduction or pollution prevention should be included in the goal statements. Ted responded that activities such as pollution prevention are programmatic tools that will be included in the recommended actions.

Recommended Action Items

Gary Gulezian asked Ted to discuss how the list of action items was generated and how it will be used by the drafting team. Ted explained that Melissa Hulting compiled the list, which represents a combination of ideas suggested during a brainstorming session at Maumee Bay and the results of gap analyses conducted by white paper authors. Team members should continue adding items to the list this week; afterwards, the drafting team will consolidate ideas and attempt to make the final list of suggestions as concrete as possible. Eventually, action items will be placed in a matrix that identifies needs and responsible parties, and a cost-benefit analysis will be conducted to estimate resource requirements. Team members should use the PBT website to continue listing other ideas, using the memo created by Dave Ullrich on Guidance for Strategy Teams on Setting Priorities for direction. All ideas should be posted on the website by COB on Friday, March 18.

Dale Bryson asked for clarification on who is responsible for the actions that have been identified. Ted and Gary responded that responsible parties (e.g., federal government, state governments, municipalities, and various sectors) will be identified in the matrix. The issue of responsibility may be used as an organizing principle for the whole report. Team members who are suggesting action items to the drafting team should also submit ideas about who would be responsible for those actions.

Dale Bryson emphasized that the PBT Team must be willing to identify gaps in current programs, as opposed to assuming that current programs are achieving their intended goals. Some programs may need to be reviewed and upgraded in order to accomplish what they were designed to do. This review and upgrade will require additional resources, and this information needs to be conveyed to Congress. Gary responded that such specifics need to be captured in the list of actions submitted in the report. He also invited Dale to participate in the drafting team.

Next Steps of the PBT Team

Gary Gulezian invited Jim Zorn to discuss the next steps of the PBT Team. Jim reminded the group that an initial draft of the team's contribution to the overall strategy document is due by April 21. This first draft is not expected to be complete or to represent an absolute consensus among all parties involved; it will continue to be refined until the final draft is submitted. The drafts submitted on April 21 will be shared among all strategy teams. When reviewing these drafts, it will be important to start thinking about overlapping or cross-cutting issues. This review will be conducted during the next meeting at the Grand Traverse Resort on April 28 and 29. Ted Smith has distributed details about the Grand Traverse retreat to the PBT Team. The agenda for this retreat will be structured very much like the Maumee Bay meeting. Strategy team breakout sessions will begin in the afternoon of the first day and will be complete by 3:00 pm on the second day of the retreat. Those planning to attend the Grand Traverse retreat should make their reservations by March 27 or 28, since the Grand Traverse Tribe will be forced to cover the cost of any unreserved rooms.

Jim brought up two practical considerations for drafting the strategy. First, there is an effort underway to develop a uniform format to save everyone time in the long run. Second, the Executive Committee is developing guidance on appendices for the final product.

Gary summarized the specific tasks that need to be completed in the immediate future:

- The drafting team is looking for comments on desired goals.
- Team members should add to or comment on the list of action items developed thus far (in particular, it is important to identify who should be responsible for taking those actions).
- Next week, the drafting team will look at the entire list of actions and compare it to the prioritization piece that has been distributed. Team members should comment on how they think the actions on the list compare to the prioritization criteria, to the extent possible.
- The drafting team will meet next Tuesday, March 22.
- The PBT Team will meet again two weeks from today (March 30) at the same time.

Seth Dibblee asked Gary Gulezian and Jim Zorn if they are generally content with the progress made by the team thus far. Jim responded that he was very pleased with the Maumee Bay retreat and the degree to which everyone collaborated during the breakout sessions. Gary is also pleased with progress to date but reminded everyone that the team has a great deal of work ahead of it.