

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Attendees: Elizabeth Butler (EPA2), Haley Burns (PDE), Kathy Klein (PDE), Danielle Kreeger (PDE), Lynette Lurig (NJDEP), Megan Mackey (EPA3), Catherine Magliocchetti (EPA3), Rachael Phillos (DNREC), Chad Pindar (DRBC), Irene Purdy (EPA2), Sue Weaver (PADEP), Will Whalon (PWD)

Welcome

- Kathy Klein welcomed everyone to the meeting and said that it has been a crazy few weeks at PDE since Angela Padeletti and Kate Hutelmyer announced they will be leaving PDE. We are working on transferring responsibilities and reassuring partners, especially on the engagement side. We rebuilt a strong engagement team over the past few years, but it will still be a challenge to lose both Kate and Angela at the same time. PDE did fill the new Coastal Resiliency Manager position– Martha Maxwell Doyle will take on this role. Martha spent the last 14 years at Barnegat Bay Partnership, and worked at PDE before that; her extensive experience with NEPs may allow her role to evolve.

Steering Committee Meeting Recap + Spring Meeting Discussion

- Kathy asked if anyone has thoughts or has heard feedback on the Steering Committee (SC) meeting from SC members.
 - Irene Purdy said that she did not hear any specific feedback, but thought the presentations on the Hatchery and Urban Waters were good to give insight into things that SC members don't always get to see.
- Usually there are two SC meetings a year, one in the fall and one in the spring. We will try to get the spring meeting on calendars soon and are developing a timeline for everything that needs to be done before next summer (NEP and BIL workplans and accompanying products) looking for opportunities for SC involvement and decision-making.
- Irene and Megan Mackey both said that there would be value in engaging the SC in the Equity Strategy since this is new to all. Irene also said that it would be helpful to have a short powerpoint from PDE explaining the background and steps to creating the Equity Strategy so that the EIC has clear and consistent information for support in briefing their SC members.
- Kathy said that at the CDRW Forum there was discussion about how public health/health outcomes play a role in determining what happens in disadvantaged communities, and there seems to be room for a bigger conversation with the healthcare community, possibly making a connection to the Estuary Program. Kathy noted that her husband is the Chair of the Infant Mortality Task Force in Delaware, and it is clear that environmental factors play a role in life expectancy for all, beginning in infancy. We may want to consider ways to bring together representatives from new sectors and different organizations to work on improving and supporting communities in new ways.

Summit Update

- Summit planning is moving along. Registration is open and abstract submitters were notified of their acceptance status last week.
- Danielle provided an overview of the draft program schedule. The meeting will kick off Monday at 9am with a welcome from Kathy, followed by a plenary talk by Ray Najjar to be focused on the climate chapter of the TREB. Tuesday's Climate Change Forum will include a keynote then concurrent sessions, and after lunch a panel discussion, plenary talk, and finally a session with invited speakers. While there will be three tracks/concurrent sessions at points on Monday and

Tuesday, during most of those time periods there are not a lot of similar things scheduled so there shouldn't be too many competing sessions. Wednesday will consist of two tracks, finishing with Hot Topics. Student awards will close out the Summit, expected to end no later than 4:30pm.

- Kathy said that sponsorship is going well. We surpassed our initial goal but really want to raise more. The budget is based on 300 people but attendance is really unknown and there are more things that will need to be added to the budget. The CDRW Forum had a lot of non-profit sponsors at the lower level, and PDE is considering offering a non-profit discount for exhibitor level at the Summit in order to get more of these groups involved (they would still need to pay for registration).
- DRBC is offering a \$100 discount on registration to Our Shared Waters partners through the month of November.

DELEP Agreement/LOU

- After the last EIC meeting, Kathy sent out the draft DELEP Agreement in PADEP's LOU format, on PDE letterhead, with the request for each partner agency's legal team to review to be sure they could sign it. We have heard back from everyone except PA.
- Sue Weaver said that if Kathy sends her the final LOU she will initiate the final approval process which can take 30+ days.
- The EIC requested to hold off on final review and signing until PA signs it. After that it will be sent to each agency for signature.

NEP EJ Fall Forum Update

- Haley Burns provided an update on the Fall Forum that is underway and focused on Equity Strategy requirements and integration of environmental justice into NEP work. The Forum consists of 6 sessions, alternating workshops and discussions about the previous workshop.
- The first workshop focused on defining "disadvantaged communities". While EPA did establish a definition/criteria of 80%+ average across 5 socioeconomic indices, there is flexibility for NEPs to adopt a different definition or tool already used by a state/partner agency. EPA will not be approving specific definitions of disadvantaged communities but the overall equity strategy, which includes this definition.
- The second workshop focused on the Equity Strategy template and baseline calculation. The draft template has not yet been shared as EPA is still working on criteria for approval of the strategy. Sections in the strategy include: Governance Overview, Definition of Disadvantaged Communities or Alternatives, Baseline*, Numeric Targets, Key Activities, Tracking Benefits, Stakeholder Engagement Strategy.
 - *EPA will conduct baseline calculation for each NEP to get an idea of past work in disadvantaged communities so they can see how much progress is made with BIL funds. They will determine the baseline by overlaying NEPmap (from NEPORT) with EJScreen Supplemental Demographic Index for 2017-2021. They said that they understand that habitat projects don't tell the whole story of NEPs work, but are looking for consistent methodology.
 - There were number of questions and discussions about looking not just where the money goes, but more broadly where the benefits are experienced (dam removal upstream in a non-disadvantaged community may lead to benefits elsewhere). It seems like at least to start project locations will be identified via lat/long, but NEPs expressed desire to reflect more than just that point to capture wider benefit boundaries.
- Kathy said that PDE has not yet decided how to treat the disadvantaged community definition. Covering three states adds complication. Erica Rossetti is looking at different maps and tools and seeing how much of our focus area meets EPA's criteria. Once we find the areas that meet those criteria, we will figure out a plan moving forward.
 - Irene recommended keeping a decision tree of how we get to the decisions we make

Timeline for BIL Deliverables and NEP FY24 Work Plan

- Haley reviewed a draft timeline (which had been emailed out ahead of this meeting) for getting the NEP FY24 Work plan and BIL Work Plan approved and submitted by June 1, 2023. This is still pretty broad at least until we have the next Steering Committee meeting date set as that will dictate when certain steps have to be completed and review processes begun.
- It was decided that it would be more beneficial to create a timeline on a spreadsheet that shows each of the 4 products (both Work Plans, 5-year BIL strategic Plan, Equity Strategy), though there will be some overlap across some of them. Haley will get this new format started for the next EIC meeting.
- Megan said that it might make sense to have the BIL Year 3 work plan and the long-term plan done at the same time, but the Equity Strategy and FY24 Work Plan should be kept separate. Kathy noted that we already have some framework ready for the strategic plan based on how we have planned for Years 1&2 of funding.
- Since the disadvantaged community definition in the Equity Strategy will determine how we spend the last three years of BIL money, we will need an approved Equity Strategy in order to have an approved work plan, so this piece should come first. As soon as EPA provides the template we can start working on the Equity Strategy.

2023 EIC Meetings

- With the added BIL requirements on top of the base funding work plan, like last year we will need additional meetings to move these items along. We will aim for two a month: our standard monthly EIC call on the first Thursday and an additional meeting on the third Thursday. If any are not needed or have a conflict we will cancel or reschedule. Haley will send out calendar invitations.

Partner Updates

- Lynette Lurig said that NJDEP understands that they will be heading up the DELEP SC for the next two years. The Assistant Commissioner is changing, with may result in a re-org, but then they would like to meet with PDE to understand the responsibilities involved. Kathy asked whether they are still looking to name a permanent EIC member; Lynette said she is pushing for that, and thinks this change could be helpful as the new Assistant Commissioner has more knowledge about NEPs.
- Rachael Phillos reported that DNREC Coastal Programs is hiring for an environmental scientist position that closes November 20.
- Kathy shared the following updates on behalf of PDE:
 - On Friday we learned that the proposal to the William Penn Foundation for funding for the Water Table Project was approved. This will be \$200k over 3 years. Some BIL money will help supplement this. Kathy and Haley were both written into the proposal, and we are determining who will take over the roles for which Kate Hutelmyer was included.
 - Kathy has been involved with helping Meg Maguire and Beth Brown on a video project utilizing aerial video of the whole watershed from LightHawk. They are currently putting together a narrative to accompany it. It was shown at the CDRW Forum and we may want to share it at the Summit as well.
 - As Kathy noted early, there was some interesting discussion at the CDRW Forum, and she said that it seems there are many similar efforts that need to somehow be coordinated. Maybe there is a way to help with this through the Urban Waters Federal Partnership.

Action Items

- Kathy/Haley will send Sue the DELEP LOU addressed to PADEP for their review and signature
- Haley will work on a new timeline for all of the items due by June 1.
- Haley will send out calendar invitations to 2023 EIC meetings.

Upcoming/Important Dates:

- December monthly EIC meeting: Thursday, December 1, 2022, 10am-12pm

- PDE Board Meeting: Tuesday, December 13, 2022, 9am-12pm
- [Delaware Estuary Science & Environmental Summit](#): January 30-February 1, 2023