



**Joint Meeting of the
Estuary Implementation Committee (EIC) and the
Science & Technical Advisory Committee (STAC)
December 2, 2021, 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM**

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89977056364>

Attendees:

STAC

David Bushek (HSRL)
Lance Butler (PWD)
Dorina Frizzera (Getting To Resilience LLC)
Kevin Hess (PADEP)
Douglas Janeic (Sovereign Consulting)
Desmond Kahn (Fisheries Inc)
Danielle Kreeger (PDE)
Sue Kilham (ANSDU)
Josh Moody (PDE)
Jason Morson (HSRL)
Daphne Munroe (HSRL)
Drew Reif (USGS)
Alison Rogerson (DNREC)
Pete Rowe (NJSGC)
Rachel Phillos (DNREC)
Dave Smith (USGS)
Kelly Somers (EPA)
Kari St. Laurent (DNREC)
Ken Strait (PSEG)
Namsoo Suk (DRBC)
Roger Thomas (ANSDU)

STAC (ctd)

Bart Wilson (USFWS)
Dave Wolanski (DNREC)
Metthea Yepsen (NJDEP)

EIC

Kelly Anderson (PWD)
Liz Butler (EPA)
Kim Cole (DNREC)
Kathy Klein (PDE)
Lynette Lurig (NJDEP)
Megan Mackey (EPA)
Cathy Magliochetti (EPA)
Chad Pindar (DRBC)
Kristina Peacock-Jones (PADEP)

Other attendees

Haley Burns (PDE)
LeeAnn Haaf (PDE)
Benjamin Maurer (NREL)
Leah Morgan (PDE)
Erica Rossetti (PDE)

Welcome & Introductions

Monitoring Inventory and Needs Assessment (MINA) Report - LeeAnn Haaf

- PDE is currently finalizing the checklist for EPA to submit and concur to EPA HQ

2022 TREB progress update – LeeAnn Haaf

- We don't have many drafts yet but we are still on schedule with progress
- 70% of the 60 indicators are being updated

- Sediments chapter and other key indicators that haven't been updated since 2012 will be updated for this report
- Academy of Natural Sciences will be considering DEIJ portion
- Currently receiving first drafts for all chapters, but final first drafts will be reviewed in March
- Final version goal date is October 2022
- TREB will be translated into SOE which is an NEP deliverable
- Photos are requested for use in the report

2021 PDE Summit Recap, 2023 PDE Summit Discussion Initiation – Leah Morgan, Danielle Kreeger

- 2021 Summit was held virtually via Sched platform
- Generally the summit was well perceived by attendees who responded to a survey about the virtual experience
- For 2023 Summit: Virtual, hybrid, or face to face?
 - Hybrid provides the best of both worlds but the downside is price—staff time will be more expensive as well, and hybrid will likely be cost-restrictive
- Timing should also be considered. Would attendance be as good in person in the springtime? If the next summit is in person, PDE would consider reverting back to January
 - January Cape May meeting was a nice “winter retreat” for people who don't typically intersect
- D. Kahn: how long were the talks?
 - D. Kreeger: 12 min and 3 min for questions
 - D. Kahn: this is too short – typically conference talks are 20 min
 - D. Janeic agreed with D. Kahn regarding conference talk length.
- K. St. Laurent – CERF's format this year was good – anchor talk started the session and was followed by a handful of lightning talks which typically lead to more in depth conversation.
- D. Kreeger: what are STAC's feelings and how do they feel about hybrid, virtual, face to face?
 - B. Wilson: do not do a hybrid due to the inconsistency in talks, virtual to face to face to virtual back to back in the same session is difficult as is organizing it
 - D. Kahn: AFS was a hybrid of in person and virtual and was a disaster due to poor coordination
 - M. Yepsen: might be good to offer virtual if possible

- A. Rogerson: DE watersheds conference is being put on by DNREC in February 2022 and is encouraging in person participation – hybrid was considered but all components were overwhelming
- D. Kreeger: what about programming? We should begin to consider and discuss this for the 2023 meeting.

DELEP Agreement Update – Kathy Klein

- The DELEP Agreement Update is not an EPA requirement but is involved in the Delaware Estuary Program
- The agreement that has been in place for the last 7 years is expiring at the end of this year. EIC is in the process of finalizing, has been presented to the steering committee.
- This will hopefully be in place on January 1, 2022.
- The agreement outlines the roles and responsibilities and expectations of all partners and breaks out specific responsibilities of EIC, PDE, and SC
- If anyone wants to see the current version, Kathy can share it, and the final version of the new agreement can be sent around once it's done
- Thanks to the EIC and SC for reviewing and input.
- Agreement is changing from 7 years to 10 years with a review at 5 years and the opportunity to adjust at any time

NEP 2023 Budgeting/Base Funding and Infrastructure Act Supplemental Funding – Kathy Klein

- Base funding from EPA is increasing from \$700K to \$750K for FY23 – in addition to base funding, totals \$950K
- Base funding is 1:1 match
- Association of NEPs is working to encourage EPA to not require match
- Work plan needs to be ready by June of 2022
- C. Magliochetti: EPA regions are waiting for more info from EPA HQ, particularly about match component

CCMP Implementation Tracking – Megan Mackey

- First subcommittee meeting has taken place and importance of tracking was discussed
- Dec 13 is the next meeting and will review efforts that have been done so far and ID any gaps that are being seen
- Third meeting will be scheduled and topics of discussion will include what other efforts are going on, and what can we do to get to where we might be most valuable. During this meeting next steps will also be identified that will be reported out to the EIC at the next meeting, including how will we move on from where we are to where we want to go next

NEPORT Update – Haley Burns

- Update encompasses Annual process where we ask partners to provide info on the project they completed between Oct 1, 2020 and September 30, 2021
- Fewer projects and acres restored compared to 2020
- NJ submitted the highest number of projects and acres
- Of money leveraged, 1/3 came from federal agencies
- D. Janeic: does NEPORT use land acquisition as restoration?
 - H. Burns: Yes – land acquisition accounts for 75% of restoration techniques
- D. Kahn: what does NEPORT stand for?
 - Haley: National Estuary Program Online Reporting Tool – it is the portal that is used to collect these data.

Urban Waters Federal Partnership Update – Erica Rossetti (10 minutes)

- In this position Erica is an EPA ambassador for the Urban Waters program
- Urban Waters Federal Partnership is run by EPA and is mainly managed by EPA but 15 federal agencies and 59 agencies also partly run the program
- UWFP mostly revolves around environmental justice in urban communities and provides funding sources for local projects in underserved or economically distressed communities
- PDE CCMP has priorities associated with DEIJ that this partnership helps achieve
- Operates in Camden, Chester, Philadelphia, and Wilmington
 - POC are the majority in all of these cities
- Recent accomplishments – PDE Summit participation, Delaware Watershed Forum participation, partnership buildings, Chester River Festival
- Upcoming webinar series coming up in January:
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_1GxELNTJRgyBZK158dSmbw
- Urban Waters Learning Network: urbanwaterslearningnetwork.org
- Erica will send emails about upcoming events to the STAC
- More about the nationwide EPA Urban Waters Federal Partnership at <https://www.epa.gov/urbanwaterspartners> and more about the Delaware River UWFP work at PDE's website: <https://delawareestuary.org/save-the-estuary/urban-waters/>

Waterborne Plastics Assessment and Collection Technologies (WaterPACT) in the Delaware River and Bay – Ben Maurer, Sustainable Oceans Lead, NREL

- Vision involves cleaner waterways and healthier communities by 2040
- Project is evaluating microplastics at 5 different rivers, including the Delaware River
- Field work is beginning mid 2022, sampling 3 times per year with 150-200 samples per event
- Data will be accessible on an online portal
- EPA helping NREL pick site in the DE river

- N. Suk: DRBC got a grant last year to do microplastics work, Rutgers and UD also do microplastic work, and USGS is sampling for microplastics, so a potential meeting with these entities could be helpful.
- D. Frizzera: the Maurice River and the area in near Tinicum Wildlife Refuge would be good to include as study sites

STAC Futures

- What topics do we need to focus on in the coming years?
 - K. Somers: habitat suitability requirements for SAV – what requirements are needed for *Vallisneria* or the tidal freshwater? Could this information as a citing tool for potential future restoration projects and formulate methods?
 - Side scan versus acoustics
 - D. Kreeger: PDE submitted a grant proposal for a similar project – if accepted funding will be about 1 year away.
 - K. Somers to follow up when PDE begins working on SAV
 - K. Klein: outreach that STAC could be involved in with regard to the TREB to make information more accessible to the public
 - D. Kreeger suggested seminar series, translation series for TREB chapters
 - B. Wilson: climate change effects on urban communities and flood alleviation at Eastwick by Heinz refuge
 - D. Janeic: more understanding of what's impacting our habitats; e.g., wetlands, etc, more holistic picture of restoration and how ecosystems are changing

Roundtable Discussion

- Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) – Chad Pindar
 - DRBC will have public hearings on a proposed rule regarding the importation of wastewater from the basin on December 8 and December 15: <https://www.nj.gov/drbc/meetings/advisory/index.html>. This rule is to address concerns. DRBC has not approved these types of discharges but this will be discussed at the meeting.
 - Info on how to participate is on the DRBC website.
 - Two advisory committee meetings for RFAC and MACC are also upcoming.
- Philadelphia Water Department (PWD) – no partners present during this agenda item to provide updates.
- Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) – Kristina Peacock-Jones
 - PADEP will be announcing coastal zone grant awards within the next month.
- New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) – Metthea Yepsen

- Scientific advisory board publications that came out in the last year; changes in precipitation due to climate change, mapping, lessons learned on beneficial use of dredge material, etc - <https://www.nj.gov/dep/dsr/>, <https://www.nj.gov/dep/sab/>
- 319 program will put out an RFP soon for water quality grants for \$8 million total, with a priority in upper and lower Delaware.
- Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) – Kim Cole
 - 319 non point grant proposals will be open from Dec 6 to Feb 9 - <https://news.delaware.gov/2021/11/29/dnrec-makes-1-2-million-in-nonpoint-source-pollution-grant-funding-available-for-delaware-clean-water-projects/>
 - Governor Carney released a climate action plan and will be holding 2 public webinars to go over what's in the it. It will encompass the last decade's work and how DNREC is leading greenhouse gas reductions reductions and maximizing resilience. Webinars are taking place Dec 6 and Dec 9. <https://news.delaware.gov/2021/12/02/delaware-climate-action-plan-virtual-presentations-scheduled-dec-6-and-9/>
 - K. St. Laurent: DNREC is also working on phragmites denitrification in Blackbird Creek and St Jones watershed, marsh migration, NASA develop program project, and coastal forest retreat in the DE coastal area using LIDAR and aerial imagery projects
 - R. Phillos: Delaware Wetlands conference will be on Feb 1 and 2, 2022 at the Chase Center on the Riverfront in Wilmington, early bird registration ends on December 21
- US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 2 & 3
 - K. Somers: already provided updates throughout the meeting earlier.
- USGS: Drew Reif
 - Ecomapper in the Delaware in the summer to investigate salt front
 - Sediment in the White Clay Creek
 - Regional chloride model in the northeast is being developed with winter runoff samples recently collected towards that
 - Soil moisture probe in Glen Mills has been in place. Data collected from this probe will improve soil moisture components of models and associated calculations
- USFWS: Bart Wilson
 - USFWS is holding a large hydrology restoration project at Heinz refuge restoring tidal freshwater flow to 70 acres of wetland area.
 - Wave attenuation project is also ongoing in mudflat environments.

- A comparative study at Fowler Beach and Broadkill Beach to track performances over time in the same wave climate is being done with USGS.
- A large NFWF grant was received to monitor sandy resilience projects – ending soon and doing analysis and sharing information in the next year
- ANDSU: Roger Thomas
 - Sea grant project is ongoing
 - Freshwater mussel genetics information being gathered for project with PDE
- Haskin Lab: Dave Bushek
 - Working with PDE in Maurice River on living shorelines – completed with work for the year
 - Gandy's Beach living shoreline work is going well
 - Oyster monitoring is still being completed between now and the end of the year – contact Dave if interested in joining
 - For a Pew oyster project involving work on NJ side of DE bay mapping oysters work is being done on a tool that would allow people to cite aquaculture or restoration projects
 - PDE helping to hold stakeholder workshop in spring or summer
 - A Darpa project involving military funding agency that uses living shorelines to protect bases will be done out of state. The impact is large due to the adaptive nature of the project and the integration of multiple projects.
 - Living shoreline project in Cape May that is going well, which will be done through the DELSI initiative and should protect drainage swale
 - D. Munroe: NJ Sea grant project involves nexus of interactions between oyster farms, horseshoe crabs, and red knots
 - Stock assessment work is going well and will be reported on in February
- NJ Sea Grant Consortium: Pete Rowe
 - NJ Sea grant will support 9 research projects – none are specific to the Delaware Estuary but may be of interest to PDE
 - \$15 million in aquaculture funding
 - \$50 million per year in marine debris work from infrastructure act
- Fisheries, Incorporated: Des Kahn
 - There is concern about the Delaware river American shad population as it has been at relatively low abundance since ~2000. ASMFC is pushing to revive stock by restricting commercial fishing
 - D. Kreeger: this information would be good for a callout box for the TREB
- PDE: Kathy Klein

- PDE is wrapping up budget planning for 2022 – PDE has lots of grants that have come in for the new year.
- Capital campaign is in the meeting phase and potential funders are being talked to
- D Kreeger: hatchery is moving along well. The main issue has been getting a lease for the city which is being worked now with the city now to get a final draft lease.
 - On a parallel track PDE is working with the design firm to design the hatchery and education center.
- Satellite facilities are being considered for rearing locations for mussels.
- Oysters and ribbed mussels being focused on for ecosystem services
- Coastal forest retreat, MACWA also being considered
- Submitted proposal for coastal resilience work

Other Business (30 minutes)

- Upcoming events and meetings
 - L. Morgan to send out Doodle polls to schedule the 2022 STAC meetings

Adjourn

- D. Bushek set a motion to end the meeting at 2:00 PM which was seconded by D. Munroe.

Attachments:

1. 11.18.21 EIC Minutes DRAFT
2. STAC-MACC Meeting Notes Draft 2021-06-09