



**Semi-annual Meeting I of the PDE
Science & Technical Advisory Committee (STAC)
February 8, 2023, 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM**

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82094026766>

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

STAC Members

Randy Brown (PACZM)
Lance Butler (PWD)
Laura Craig
Ron Heun (Constellation)
Doug Janiec (Sovereign Consulting)
Greg Lech (PA Fish & Boat)
Danielle Kreeger (PDE)
Josh Moody (NJDEP)
Drew Reif (USGS)
Alison Rogerson (DNREC)

Pete Rowe (NJSGC)
Kelly Somers (EPA)
Ken Strait (PSEG)
Bart Wilson (USFWS)

Other attendees

Haley Burns (PDE)
LeeAnn Haaf (PDE)
Kathy Klein (PDE)
Martha Maxwell Doyle (PDE)

Welcome and Introductions

- Members introduced themselves and identified their affiliations.

STAC Business

- Minutes review and approval
 - Motion to approve minutes from the last meeting was seconded and meetings
- Spring elections
 - There will be a few open slots on the ballot
 - Dorina is STAC Chair and has been for the last few years, we will touch base with her to see that she's still open to sit as chair
 - How do we engage the STAC past peer review and meetings?
 - STAC-led speaker series is an idea that was brought up
 - Monthly or every-other-monthly speaker series that is open to the public
 - PDE lead this for with the Urban Waters program as a webinar and it was well-attended

- Where are knowledge gaps that can be addressed via a speaker series?
- Leah to start a Google sheet for sign-ups and ideas for speakers and topic ideas
- Delaware Living Shorelines Committee has had success with topic and speaker ideas/suggestions via Google Sheet
- We may be able to use BIL funds to help with this idea
- STAC speaker series will be a continuous, “between the summit” idea
- [STAC Bulletin Board - February](#) – members should review regularly for updates, links, news, job postings, and other info

PDE Summit – Leah Morgan, Danielle Kreeger

- Recap 2023
 - Feedback form was completed by about one third of attendees; 96 responses with about 315 attendees
 - Respondents were from a variety of sectors, with the majority from government (~44%)
 - Over half of respondents defined themselves as “scientist” or “environmental professional,” among others
 - About half of respondents attended the summit for the first time in person in 2023
 - The summit overall and the Sched platform were generally well received
 - Variety of responses regarding registration price, the event venue (Harrah’s Resort), location (Atlantic City), and hotel accommodations
 - Generally respondents found keynote speakers, variety of sessions, networking opportunities, restoration sessions, Dr. Hensel’s keynote, and the climate panel the most useful and/or interesting
 - When asked which aspects respondents found least useful and/or interesting, responses indicated the NYT keynote, food selection, the lack of afternoon coffee availability, the time allotted for lunch and breaks, and the lack of time available for questions of the climate panel. Most responses said “none” or “N/A.”
 - Topics not addressed that should be included in future summits included funding, DEI, education and communication, and PFAS
 - Feedback to consider for future summits included not hosting at a casino hotel or in AC, provision of lunch or further discussion with government leaders,

provision of coffee at breaks, and better food selection. Some respondents indicated their preference for The Grand in Cape May.

- Bart Wilson suggested The Grand in Cape May is too small!
 - PFAS was never defined – there were too many new faces to not define scientific acronyms, etc for folks who aren't as immersed in the field
 - STAC should be more engaged/challenged with getting special sessions – PDE should approach specific groups and have STAC be more responsible for building the program more with regard to special sessions
 - Josh suggested that it become the responsibility of the STAC to gather speakers/ensure they can attend for specific sessions
- Kelly Somers thought there were not as many options for concurrent sessions; especially the second day attendees were not able to jump around as much
 - Being in a casino caused a feeling of disconnect from the natural environment
 - Chief Coker's remarks were cool and that kind of outreach should be continued in future meetings
 - At future meetings, we could potentially assign students to STAC members to attend sessions together and engage STAC more with
- Kathy Klein indicated that there are pros and cons to every location, and all locations are pricy for this kind of event. We will look at other venues for 2025
- Laura: how do we make folks feel welcome who are first-timers?
 - Mentor/mentee lunch every day might be beneficial to continue conversations across multiple days.
 - Danielle Kreeger: main goal of this meeting is to make connections
 - Josh: if the STAC hosts a webinar series, we could potentially get early career people to participate – two 20-min talks with one student? Could provide the opportunity to offer variety
- Pete Rowe added that price was comparable to The Grand – if we did it in Delaware or Philly it would be much pricier
- Leah can share preliminary schedule with STAC when sessions are first decided upon
- Randy Brown suggested we use the speaker series to gauge whether those folks would be viable for the summit
- Ideas for 2025 – reprise [2005 needs assessment](#)?
 - We will start looking at venues for the next meeting in the next 6 months or so

- White paper focus on the summit may change the nature of the meeting compared to other years
- Theme could tie into the top assessment needs focus on updated white paper
- No one at the meeting voiced opposition to this concept and it will likely be brought to the EIC along with more promotion of special sessions.

Priority Projects for Future BIL funding (20 min) – Kathy Klein, Danielle Kreeger

- Leah sent around Excel sheet for STAC input for projects for BIL funding
- Money can be used for a variety of projects in any year or across a number of years
- Some funds will be used for summit and other PDE projects
- STAC Speaker Series could use BIL funds to be run
- Focus on EJ is ideal for use of funds
 - Elements should be incorporated that can directly be applied to communities
- Young Professionals training program – if interested, contact Doug
 - Bart also interested in joining
- Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund, Delaware River Conservation Program – funds available via these avenues as well
- Please reach out to PDE with any potential partnerships and other ideas for use of funds
- Links shared in the meeting chat by Kathy relative to
- <https://www.deseagrant.org/workforce-development>
- <https://www.nfwf.org/programs/delaware-river-program>
- <https://www.nfwf.org/programs/delaware-river-program/delaware-watershed-conservation-fund-2023-request-proposals>
- Tabs in Google Sheet will provide members the opportunity to give suggestions for the speaker series, young professionals training program, white paper brief ideas, and session ideas for the 2025 Summit.

Roundtable Discussion

- Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) - shared by Namsoo Suk via email and shared by Danielle in the meeting:
 - For the BIL proposed project (year 3 – 5): DRBC is preparing one focused on dealing with bacteria (recreation use) issue. The project will include bacteria monitoring, MST (expansion of library) & MST monitoring and modeling component. DRBC's proposed project will be submitted through EIC. (MST: microbial source tracking)
 - General DRBC update:
 - Dr. Jeremy Conkle, Senior Chemist and Toxicologist, joined DRBC in December

- Continue monitoring PFAS in water/ sediment/ fish in 2023
 - Continue monitoring bacteria in 2023
 - Development of revised aquatic life use and dissolved oxygen criteria in 2023
- Philadelphia Water Department (PWD) – Lance Butler
 - Hatchery work will begin again in April
 - STAC members interested in hatchery propagation of mussels should reach out to Lance via email
- Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) – Randy Brown
 - Working on protocol for storm mitigation
 - Condensation protocol is on hold – not sure how that will relate to mitigation banks
 - Waiver 16 is in the process of revising; shortening environmental assessment which should shorten and simplify process
 - Restoration activities will be reviewed
- PA Fish and Boat Commission – Greg Lech
 - Nontidal stretches will be focused on for mussel surveys
 - Streamlining of data sharing opportunities from PA fish and boat will be upcoming – requests of data will be made easier
- New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP)
 - None as Josh was no longer on the call at this time.
- NJ Sea Grant – Pete Rowe
 - Funding opportunities that PDE might be interested in may be available, specifically regarding contaminants of emerging concern
 - NJS GC is currently behind on omnibus RFP but Delaware Estuary research is always welcomed
 - Green infrastructure and low impact development
 - Annual Ocean Fun Day: May 20 – Island Beach State Park, May 21 – Sandy Hook
- Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) – Alison Rogerson
 - Kari St. Laurent's position should be filled soon
 - MAWWG meeting in Lancaster, PA in mid -November
 - Living shorelines committee will have the spring meeting on April 20 in Dover
 - Delaware Cost Share Program for living shorelines recently got a lot of media attention
 - Sediment and Stormwater Program CCR Training program will be in person in march

- Webinar: focused on Gandy's beach on February 22 – sign up online
- Restoration work group: focused on nontidal restoration work but dabbles in tidal work, all in Delaware, meeting in May
- Tidal SAV work currently includes monitoring with CIB, with restoration goals to be discussed later
- Stream monitoring was done in the fall
- Many DNREC employees were at the summit, with some presentations
- DE Wetlands Conference will begin planning this year for next year
- US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 2 & 3 – Kelly Somers
 - Wetlands program development grants out in spring
 - RFA (request for applications) for wetlands regional workshop
 - How to address EJ, climate change through these grants
 - Webinar series link: <https://nawm.org/nawm/10443-webinar-series-on-wetland-program-development-grants>
- Partnership for the Delaware Estuary (PDE)
 - TREB will be translated into the State of the Estuary report in 2023
 - New BIL projects are in development and BIL DELEP funds will also be used for growth of current projects
 - PDE is currently experiencing staffing constraints – we are looking for other ways to hire because of too much work and loss of staff
 - Martha Maxwell Doyle is now back at PDE and will help with science implementation
- USGS – Drew Reif
 - PFAS work with PA is ongoing
 - Sixteen sites statewide are being sampled monthly for PFAS, 9 in DE basin
 - If anyone knows of sites in PA that have foam bodies, reach out to Drew for collection
 - Fluidian being installed at Independence Seaport Museum in March and functioning by April – sampling will occur throughout summer and 6 samples can be taken independently before servicing is needed
 - NJ USGS is using this on NJ side of the river
 - NGWAS projects are finishing up and will be reporting soon
 - Paired air/water temperature sensors were pulled last month
 - Sediment turbidity monitoring in White Clay Creek is continuing
 - Domestic well monitoring is also ongoing
 - Basic USGS monitoring of gauges is continuous
- US Fish and Wildlife – Bart Wilson

- Supawna meadows restoration project is going to construction this summer; this work will aim to restore hydrology and is being done alongside ACPE. Two hundred ten thousand cubic yards of material will be used.

Other Business

- Upcoming events and meetings
- Future STAC meetings
 - Next STAC meeting will be with MACC on May 17

2:00 Adjourn

- Motion to adjourn by Randy Brown, seconded by Pete Rowe. Meeting adjourned at 2:09 PM.

Attachments:

1. **2023 PDE Summit Feedback**
2. **DELEP BIL Years 3-5 Proposed Projects Template (STAC)**
3. **PDE_EIC_STAC_Minutes_Oct2022 DRAFT**
4. **White Paper on the Status and Needs of Science in the Delaware Estuary**