

CCMP Implementation Committee

Meeting Agenda & Notes



DELAWARE CENTER FOR THE
INLAND BAYS
Research. Educate. Restore.

DATE & TIME: 25 FEB 2021 9:30-11:30AM

LOCATION: Zoom

AGENDA ITEMS

I. Call to order

Attendees: Michelle Schmidt, Chris Bason, Marianne Walch, Hans Medlarz, Kasey Taylor, Jenn Volk, Ted Becker, Steve Williams, Aaron Givens, Bryan Jones, Jaime Argo, Megan Mackey, Ferry Akbar, Kelly Sommers

II. Meeting agenda review

III. CIB Updates

CCMP Revision - Draft sent to EPA for their official review at the end of January and will hopefully hear back sometime in the middle of March. EPA might come back with comments or things to address but we hope it isn't anything major. Depending on how that review goes, we are working on the design and print portion of this project and will start planning the press event in the coming weeks as well. The timeline is always somewhat in flux because of the review process but if all goes well we are hoping to have the press event in August. The press event will officially wrap this project up so hopefully we will be completing this project this fiscal year. Michelle asks if there are any questions.

Chris - While we have folks from EPA on the call, do you have any updates that you would like to provide?

Megan - We are very appreciative of the Center for their receptivity to our comments and suggestions that we have had throughout the process and how inclusive you guys have been. We are in the process of review in coordination with HQ and are very hopeful to meet the timeline. As soon as we have the final word you will find out when I do but thank you so much for a great submission.

IV. Partner Updates

Ted Becker - ACT received word that the USACE turned down their dredging project for the Fenwick area and that is disconcerting and something that I have spoken to Mayor Langan about. We have a meeting scheduled for the 4th. I know ACT has been in contact with Senator Carper and Coons expressing the surprise and disappointment. Also understand that the USACE decided not to dredge the Wilmington area as well. Does anyone have any information on what is going on with that?

Chris - Can I confirm what waterway are we talking about specifically for Fenwick?

Ted - I believe it was the beach area. Beach nourishment.

Chris - That's very unusual isn't it?

Ted - Yes I think so. I was very surprised. Apparently the letter came late Friday afternoon. Steve it looks like you were aware of it?

Steve - Yes I am pulling up an email from Mike Powell since that isn't the section that I oversee. But Secretary Garvin asked for updates and I am trying to look it up on my phone.

Chris - I can add to that the fact that there continues to be an ongoing issue with maintenance at the Indian River inlet which is under the Corps responsibility. It is my number 1 example of America's crumbling infrastructure. You go down to our inlet and it is falling into the water. I don't want to be hyperbolic but it is a revolving door of people that show up from the Corps and then disappear. It doesn't seem like there is a clear path forward to addressing the erosion on the north side inlet, addressing the help with operating the sand bypassing system or addressing the integrity of the shoreline itself. And even at the Center we have a shoreline that is eroding and jeopardizing our building. All this to say that that is a key relationship between the state and the Corps and if there is anything the Center can do to organize communication. I know ACT is involved in that but maybe a wider coalition with a louder voice, I'm not sure.

Steve - Email from Mike that the Bethany/S Bethany project the cost share was provided and these projects are nearly complete. Rehoboth/Dewey is slated for the fall of 2022 cost share of \$4mill due by Spring 2022 and then of course for Fenwick the Corps was planning on doing this in the Fall of 2021 but they didn't receive any funding and will request the funding in 2022. They want to combine that with the Dewey/Rehoboth project under 1 contract if they can make that happen. They are talking about shovel ready projects again with funding from the federal government and I don't know if one can mix beach replenishment with shovel ready projects but maybe that is another avenue that can be pursued. We just learned yesterday that they are looking for ideas for shovel ready projects but we have to have them submitted by Friday. I can reach out to Mike Powell to see if he thinks that can be included. I don't know if it would be faster than going with the typical Corps process.

Chris - Steve, is that call for shovel ready projects, can you provide some more specifics about what types of projects would be eligible?

Steve - I just received the email yesterday that has to do with the American Recovery and Investment Act era looking for shovel ready projects. The guidance we said is that things need to be submitted by March 1st and have to begin between 0-18 months but other than that I don't know. They want to know how many new jobs. Very similar to what the Obama administration put out several years ago. How many new jobs, short term vs long term, these shovel ready projects would create. I don't know where this is all coming from in terms of how wide open this solicitation is. It might be wide so you might want to do some digging around. The info I have is very limited. Project name, project cost, number of jobs.

Chris - Michelle can you work with Marianne to submit the Quillens point LSL and Dewey Beach LSL. Is there a contact for that?

Steve - We have an internal contact but I don't know where it all originated from. You might be able to google the American Recovery and Investment Act and you might get some hits.

Chris - Do you think those projects can be submitted through the State or can they come from anywhere?

Steve - I'm really not sure, when this call came out several years ago, we mimicked a solicitation and did it by state and scored big out of 176 applicants under the Bush administration but under Obama we got nothing.

Chris - Ted is ACT aware of this at all?

Ted - Not aware of it, no. I will reach out to Gene and find out.

Steve - Maybe it is through states only but I don't know anything other than what I just said.

Ted - I just quickly looked up the ARIA and all it refers back to 2009.

Steve - It says that Congressional members reached out and are planning on developing a stimulus package with an infrastructure focus similar to the ARIA. So it isn't baked, so maybe you can get your ducks in a row to get ready should this pass.

Ted - Hopefully through Senator Carper's office we can learn a little bit more about this.

Chris - Would the State of Delaware put in for an inlet sand bypass system? That could be a shovel ready project.

Steve - Not that I know of and Mike Powell would probably be a better person to talk to about that. I don't know what Mike plans on submitting. And who knows if this will even get passed.

Chris - Yeah and my experience with this is that these things happen and it is a quick "get your projects in" and then you never hear anything. But it looks like we have been hearing about a big infrastructure bill for sometime and if it isn't going to happen then it won't. It might be an important opportunity for the towns.

Michelle - Thanks Steve for bringing that up. If anyone hears of any other information please let us all know.

Steve - Just to close out, I can't envision it only being a DNREC solicitation but if it is, we can work something out and submit on behalf.

Hans - County has reengaged with DNREC on the water quality enhancement side (stormwater projects).

Chris - Hans we just finished up a conversation and there is a call out for shovel ready projects from Congressional delegation that could be funded under a large federal infrastructure bill. Understanding is that it doesn't have to be from the state but we aren't sure about that. So if

you have any ideas on those projects it is something we should talk about and submit.

Hans - Todd and I have a conversation scheduled with Carper's head team to discuss that particular thing. As long as you have NEPA compliance, shovel ready means 2 years from now.

Chris - Yeah. So we know very little about this call but there has been a lot of talk about green infrastructure and just throwing it out there to the group, land protection and acquisition is green infrastructure.

Hans - The good thing about acquisition is you don't have to have NEPA compliance.

Chris - Just a willing seller!

Hans - I'm sure the mayor told you but the acquisition of the Lewes piece certainly falls into that. Ted did you talk about that?

Ted - I haven't, no. There was a really good situation that came together between the City, Board of Public Works, and the County. We purchased a 30 acre farm at Clay Rd and Kings Hwy in late November. The only thing to go on that is a new water tower but other than that it will be open in perpetuity. It has high visibility and the main corridor into Lewes is there. Just recently DelDOT added a stop light because there is so much traffic coming off of Clay Road onto Kings Hwy. We will put up signage that will represent that partnership that went into it. It was a \$5mill purchase and the City put in \$1.5mill and Board and County put in another \$2mill each. Thanks to the County. IG Burton was instrumental in putting it together.

Hans - There is a quirky aspect to this purchase . The BOPW is using the SRF to fund their portion and you would think that this being a wellhead protection area that the drinking water side would fund this but it came across as a watershed project and via clean water side funded it because the drinking water side does not allow for acquisitions. Which speaks to if there is money coming down, if it falls on the drinking water side then you can't buy land with it but the clean water side you can.

Chris - Ted did you take out a loan too?

Ted - BOPW paid it out of reserves right now but loan is still pending. It is coming through the Council.

Chris - Just curious what the interest rate or terms of the loan might be?

Hans - 2%.

Chris - I think that is a great case study on how to do acquisition. You need to have money on hand and then you can pay yourself back with a loan.

Hans - It is a great project and I think it is very beneficial.

Aaron - Governor's \$2.9mill for cover crops is going to be a go for this year so we are getting

the full amount and administered the same way. This year for annual reporting they are using an advanced questionnaire to capture more of the nutrient management practices on farms in Delaware. That might be useful for you guys. The report will come out in December 2021.

Kasey - Thank you Aaron for the update, that is excellent news. Right now NRCS does not have a level budget, we are about \$1mill under for our environmental quality program or working lands program. What we are looking at is that we can still provide that key support independent of where those funds did dip. Looking at what we still have as available funds from RCPP and with what Aaron just shared, that is where we are seeing being able to leverage that off whether it is cover crops or other management activities. We are still seeing an increase in applications submitted to us. To date we have about 286 applications in Sussex County alone and are now trying to prepare for the rankings and obligation timeline. Normally we have continuous batching periods and we know that we are fully able to obligate our funds in that first round. So more to come on that but we are excited to hear the update from Aaron and knowing we still have the RCPP funds. We also met with the State Technical Advisory committee back on Feb 11th and in there we had a litany of updates that we wanted to do as a walk through. Starting first with our subcommittees. We have two that are established: Soil Health Subcommittee and State Wildlife Subcommittee. The wildlife committee is getting more focus because we do have this partnership with the Working Lands for Wildlife, USFWS, and other services in the state are now going to look at reemergence of North American Bobwhite Quail. We are looking at practices, standards, specs, and funding to prepare for FY22. Vast majority of this will impact next year. We also looked at establishing an urban ag committee that would focus on where we can have more of a piloted effort that is happening in NCC and then take lessons learned and expand it out. We will have a subcommittee and advisory group to help us focus more in on urban ag and look at that suite of practices - high tunnels, micro irrigation, etc. Want to have a more expansive conversation of what is urban ag and want to have interested parties involved. We will have that Committee stand up and then look at it as a collaborative action. Last, we have been partnering with USGS and EPA to launch 3 teams to look more at a continued enhancement communication and coordination across the federal partnership. We are looking at our ag conservation practice implementation, water quality monitoring, and taking that to local workshops planning, meeting, and functionality. From there what we are going to be able to do is see where we have opportunity in Chesapeake Bay to have a more coordinated effort to see how that funding is being used to affect change. We are preparing for our workshops and would love to have you all engaged in these conversations where we talk about funding, etc.

Jenn - On behalf of STAC, I have been working on a funding strategy for the models to identify paths forward for how we can fund model development including add-ons to the DTAP as well as a water quality and hydrodynamic model for the Inland Bays.

Kasey - I want to make sure you are all aware about the Upper Nanticoke Watershed improvement project that started in 2019. Watershed and Flood Operations program to address aging ditches in the watershed. DDK Engineering was brought on to help with this project. This is one of many that we need in the state and we will then move across the state.

Bryan - I can add a few things from the SCD perspective. For cover crop, we have on the ground about 7,750 ac currently planted. We do have a secondary program that we just

finished taking applications for through RCPP. Those are in the planning stages for next cover crop season - about 17 applications and it is a 3 year program. There is another RCPP project for bank stabilization that is coming to an end but it is looking good that we will get a viable project. We have had some issues with lining everything up with landowners, etc. but there is a site that is going to design and contracting and will be located off of Pepper Creek tax ditch off of Piney Neck road. It will be a good project with some good BMPs tied into that. Hopefully that will be fully funded by Spring and construction by following Fall. Also worked with Jim Passwaters to do some additional ag BMPs sort of outside of the work people did with EQIP. They are talking about renewing this but we tracked 6 projects that were implemented in the Inland Bays, mostly on poultry farms. Ranged from wind breaks, hedgerow plantings, grass buffer strips, etc. Fairly successful and will renew that again. Our planners are working through 5 nutrient management plans for about 2500 acres. Last thing I want to touch on is we have been working with Center for Inland Bays on a grant we received from NRCS for planning looking at larger tracts of land that may be susceptible to SLR and saltwater intrusion. We ranked some properties and are doing the outreach through the district. We are going to work through our outreach person and however the Center wants to help. We will do some planning on BMPs in the future.

Marianne - Bryan do you know anything about the current state of the Living Shoreline cost share program that the District manages?

Bryan - I don't have those numbers in front of me but we do actively manage that cost share funding but a lot of the on the ground planning and inspection is done through DNREC. I can follow up with Bobbi Heck.

Marianne - Ok, I have had some inquiries about that and the fact sheet isn't on your website anymore.

Chris - I took a moment to give John Kane with Carper's EPW and he said they have a call out right now for infrastructure projects for transportation in prep for a bill. He said that they would be working on Corps of Engineer projects which tend to be the coastal green infrastructure and a wide range of watershed management projects in August. So I just wanted to double back on that and confirm if that is correct. Steve, is there any info in your email that would corroborate that?

Steve - No not at all. I gave you everything I know which is very limited.

Chris - Hans does that line up with what you heard?

Hans - Yes, transportation and beach replenishment.

Chris - Ok. So Steve I don't know if you are willing to share that email but I'm still not exactly sure what the call is for.

Hans - Just to be clear, transportation you aren't talking about the Millsboro bypass you are talking about pave and rehab projects.

Steve - Chris the only word I got was shovel ready projects defined as 0-18 months. I have no other guidelines.

Chris - Marianne, I still think that the Dewey Beach stormwater retrofit project is something that could be eligible. Maybe we just confirm with John and write something up and submit it.

Hans - I thought about the living shoreline projects. That is something that I think would fit the bill.

Chris - For a transportation project?

Hans - No but for a larger beach type protection project vs. just pure sand pumping.

Chris - I agree and we have two of them at least.

Hans - Aren't they scalable where you can say we can replicate these projects without having to go through a more than 18month permitting process?

Chris - In Dewey Beach we would.

Marianne - I think Dewey Beach might qualify under transportation because it is protecting some of the roadways and DelDOT was a partner.

Chris - Maybe we should reach out to DelDOT and they do typically come to this meeting. Maybe we should reach out to them to talk about their coastal infrastructure needs. Highways are in danger from SLR.

Michelle - Let's keep this in mind and I would like to move into the next part of our agenda.

V. CCMP Implementation in FY22

Overview of CIB ongoing and new projects for FY22. Open discussion on project goals and partnership and funding opportunities. Discuss CCMP Committee member workplans that include CCMP implementation projects.

Michelle begins to talk through the list of projects that was sent around to all members and details the Center's ongoing and potentially new projects that might go into the workplan. Each year the Center puts together this workplan that goes to EPA for approval. The workplan details what are ongoing and new projects are, deliverables, funding, etc. The list sent around is not a complete list. We have other projects that are not included such as environmental education, James Farm, etc. After, it will be opened up to the group for anyone to talk about other projects.

[See project list here.](#)

Under Shellfish Enhancement Action Plan -

Kasey - I am excited to hear this. This is a practice we just recently added back into our payment schedule so we are going in and working with producers now to do this restoration

work. If there is an opportunity to have more conversations about this, bring you into the conversation that we are having through the local workgroups and through the STAC. The next one is in May but I would love for you to sit down and look at this and see which producers you already have a relationship with above and beyond who our planners are currently working with as well. I think we can do a win-win here.

Bryan - I would like to be involved at some level. I have been actively talking with NRCS and whoever will listen about trying to develop more of a relationship with the growers in the Inland Bays. Part of what the district does is farmer interaction, developing those relationships and I have been talking with Dave and Debbie about how we can incorporate those guys into our programs and how we can assist them. I am also interested in looking into the secondary income question as well.

Marianne - Absolutely. One thing we have been talking about is a buy-back program where we would buy diploid oysters and potentially provide a little bit of payment for those oysters and then use them in restoration projects.

Kasey - Working to schedule a meeting to continue discussing.

Marianne - Sounds good. We should include Ed Hale as well.

Reforestation

Chris - Steve or anyone else do you have information on the Governor's initiative called something like a tree for every Delawarean? It seems like he maybe has some money in the budget to do some tree planting which could start as early as this fiscal year.

Steve - I heard it in his State of the State address but that is all I know.

Baygrass Restoration

Kelly - I talked to someone about freshwater seeding in the Delaware River and I have worked with some folks in MD before but if you need some more connections on that topic and success stories on seeding I'd be happy to connect you folks. I have helped Andrew review some of his monitoring plans in the past and am always happy to help.

Marianne - Thank you Kelly and Steve we have been working with Mike Bott on this as well.

Steve - I will be talking to Mike and he has a plan developed I think to create an SAV Seed Curing system that we might want to install at our Lewes station where you take the harvested seeds and put them into some type of chamber or whatever. I think he has something pretty well baked on this idea and it is relatively low cost. We think we could pry the money out of somewhere but stay tuned.

Chris - Does the district or NRCS involve themselves or have programs that support SAV restoration?

Bryan - I'm not aware of anything from the district.

Kasey - Great question. We are doing a project right now for the subaqueous soils that is more of a mapping exercise. Once we have that we could look at next steps. That is internally with NRCS. But if there is a specific thought you had, I wouldn't say we would be opposed but we would have to see if it is something that our producer's are working on to date. We are still fairly new to the aquatic landscape vs. on the land.

Bryan - Kasey, do any of the regional plant centers do any work with aquatic plants?

Kasey - I think some of the NE ones do because of what is happening up north but I'm not certain as to what the current overview is for that. If we need to I can do some reach out and see what updates they can share.

*Michelle asks how other entities handle work planning processes and if anyone has input on this process in the future. This is the first year we have done this, was it helpful?
General consensus that this was a helpful process.*

VI. Upcoming tasks for CCMP Committee
Development of CCMP tracking database.

The CCMP Committee will be charged with developing a CCMP Tracker to track implementation of the Revised CCMP. This could look like several different things, could be really simple or really complex, the Committee will have to decide.

VII. Adjourn