SCIENTIFIC & TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

NOTES

DATE & TIME: *April 26, 2024 -- 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.*

LOCATION: **Hybrid**

In Person: DNREC Lewes Field Facility (901 Pilottown Rd, Lewes, DE

Zoom: https://udel.zoom.us/j/97089727665, Passcode = science

Phone: 1-646-876-9923; Meeting ID: 94562636341

NOTES

Call to order, Welcome, Introductions - *Jenn Volk, Chair*

Announcements

Meghan Noe Fellows, Center for Inland Bays

Activities

DNREC water family fun fest May 4, 2024 James Farm

Applicants program - Managers oyster reefs aquaculture program intern

May 11 Georgetown master gardeners

Center Staffing Updates - added Melina Vela, GIS Spatial Data Specialist to the staff

New Business

Maryland Coastal Bays Program - Carly Toulan, Environmental Scientist

The Maryland Coastal Bays Program (MCBP) is responsible for the watersheds from Sussex, Delaware Virginia and covers the Assawoman, Isle of Wight, Sinepuxent, Newport, and Chincoteague Bays. They protect the bays through scientific monitoring, restoration efforts, environmental education, and outreach and communications.

The MBCP Restoration projects included Living Shorelines for Coastal Resiliency, Island Restoration for Colonial Nesting Birds and Wetland Restoration of the Saltmarsh Sparrow Habitat. The Living Shoreline projects included:

1. Assateague Living Shoreline (Implemented 2018)
2. Sinepuxent South (Planning/Design Stage)
3. Jenkins Point (Permitting Stage)

The Island Restoration projects for Colonial Nesting birds included:

1. Reedy Island (Phase 1 Completed 2024)
2. Tizzard Island, South Point Spoils, Skimmer Island

The Wetland Restoration: Saltmarsh Sparrow Habitat projects included:

- Rum Point Runnels (Implemented Summer 2022)
- EA Vaughn Ditch Plug Modification (Implemented 2021)
- 9 other marsh projects in planning/implementation phase

Ms. Toulan noted that the MCBP is looking for partners to work with on future projects.

Water Quality Monitoring

Monthly WQ Sampling is conducted throughout the bays by MCBP and Maryland Department of Natural Resources personnel assisted by volunteers. A total of 23 sites are monitored with sampling started in 1997. Ten volunteer sampling locations are showing significant improvements in at least one parameter (DO, Chl a, TN, or TP).

NOAA Phytoplankton Monitoring is also conducted by MCBP, MDNR, ANP, ACT and volunteers. Nine sites are monitored; sampling began in Summer 2023 and occurs every two weeks. In the spring, sampling is conducted on fifty eight streams every April. The latest analysis shows that 46 streams are showing significant improvement in at least one parameter (DO, chl a, TN, or TP).

Report Cards and State of the Bays

The overall grading of the bays has increased from a C+ to a B. DO, TN and TP have all shown signs of improvement. Chlorophyll a has maintained an A grade. Submerged Aquatic Vegetation and Hard Clams still need improvement although a recent increase in hard clams has been noticed and is promising.

The greatest challenges facing the bay are sea level rise (SLR and climate change with the warming waters. Emerging contaminants, such as PFAs, endocrine disruptors, and microplastics, and harmful algal blooms are also major concerns.

The MCBP established a Stranded Spawning Horseshoe Crab (HSC) Recovery Team in 2022. Over 6,900 stranded HSCs have been rescued to date.

Carly also discussed their Oyster Gardening Program which is a collaborative effort between ORP, Horn Point, MDNR, and Protectors of the St. Martin River. Over 43,000 oysters have been planted in the Coastal Bays for oyster restoration since 2014. Most oysters do not make it past 2-3 years due to disease.

To address the island loss and declines in colonial nesting bird populations, the MCBP created the artificial nesting platform for Common Terns. In 2021, there were 22 fledglings; in 2022 there were 153 fledglings; and in 2023, there were 170 fledglings. They have also continued mapping and quantifying Island loss in the Coastal Bays as part of the program with the Maryland Coastal Restoration Alliance (MCRA). The MCRA partners include USFWS, UMCES, MDNR, Audubon Mid-Atlantic, Lower Shore Land Trust, National Park Service, and others. They are prioritizing restoration of Saltmarsh Sparrow and Black Rail habitat and working to understandg differences in marsh loss such as internal marsh loss cause by vegetation dieback/pooling and marsh loss caused by shoreline erosion. They are using mapping layers such as UVVR to identify marshes that have a better chance of surviving sea level rise.

In addition, MCBP is developing a Sediment Management Plan (SMP) which will include dredging for restoration purposes and not just navigation. They are working with various agencies to align dredging projects with marsh and island restoration in the Coastal Bays. They are also prioritizing restoration projects and identifying sediment needs.

Questions

Nanticoke Watershed Alliance - Lisa Wool, Executive Director (via Zoom)

In June 1992, Maryland and Delaware Conservation groups adopted a formal agreement to create the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance (NWA). Now a small non-profit based out of Vienna, Maryland, the NWA

works with organizations in both states to help preserve the characteristics of this river that make it such vibrant and diverse community. Their Partners in Conservation include foresters, industries, small business owners, government agencies, environmental groups, land trusts, realtors, academicians, fishermen, restoration groups, farmers, and citizen groups. Their strategic plan includes the following goals:

1. Creekwatchers - Every year, the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance releases a report card that delivers information about the health of the Nanticoke River and its creeks. The Alliance uses data collected by volunteer Creekwatchers from late March through early November to develop the report card. The report card is used to inform decision makers, encourage environmental stewardship, and prioritize restoration strategies.
2. Environmental Education and Outreach – Educate and empower individuals and groups by providing watershed-focused, fact-based educational programs, workshops, events, and information to inspire action.
3. Recreation and Ecotourism – Create opportunities to connect more people in environmentally sustainable ways to the Nanticoke River and its tributaries.
4. Community Collaboration – Work together with community members, conservation partners, businesses, government, agriculture, and other industries on projects to improve the health of the Nanticoke River Watershed.

Lisa discussed the septic tank operation classes that NWA offers and how they encourage septic tank testing to ensure proper operation to minimize groundwater and stream pollution. NWA also encourages proper residential conservation landscaping practices.

The NWA also operates a Green Infrastructure (GI) Intern program each year. GI Interns work mostly in the summer months, although they may continue working part time in the autumn. GI Interns mostly work in the Delaware portion of the Nanticoke River watershed. Work locations vary and may include Laurel, Seaford, and Bethel, DE, as well as Cambridge, MD.

The GI Interns perform the following tasks:

1. Actively maintain green infrastructure projects by weeding, watering, and mulching,
2. Read and follow storm water and planting plan,
3. Plant herbaceous perennials, shrubs, and trees according to best management practices,
4. Remove invasive plant species, and
5. Remove trash from GI installations.

The Nanticoke Watershed Alliance forms partnerships with local farmers to help keep our waterways clean while supporting the farming community.

NWA helps implement best management practices (BMP) — like vegetative buffers and bioreactors — to reduce the runoff going into local waterways. Several of our board members and partners are soil conservation districts, which help farmers use cover crops and other BMPs. In the past, the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance has worked with the Dorchester County Soil Conservation District to implement a flexible buffers program.

NWA has worked with religious organizations by providing funding for tree plantings, rain gardens and pollinator gardens on church properties. The NWA has also worked with the City of Seaford on a new venture that allows locals and visitors to rent kayaks directly on the Nanticoke River. The Kayak

Rentals, from company "Rent.Fun" will give customers the convenience of scanning a QR code, unlocking a cage, and finding a kayak ready for use right on the river.

Lisa also discussed the work NWA is doing with poultry farmers. Poultry farms on the Delmarva Peninsula already must follow a set of practices called Best Management Practices. Currently, BMPs in both Maryland and Delaware require an 8-foot wide, flat bottom, grass swale between poultry houses. Swales planted with native wildflowers, grasses, sedges, or rushes play a major role in the effectiveness of a swale. Their extensive fibrous root systems are better suited to anchor soil, slow down water flow, and increase groundwater replenishment. When planting the swales with native plants, the immediate area around the houses should remain open so as to not create harborage areas for rodents.

Partnership for the Delaware Estuary – John Harrod Engagement Director

The Partnership for the Delaware Estuary, host of the Delaware Estuary Program, leads collaborative, science–based efforts to improve the Delaware River and Bay, which covers portions of Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. They envision everyone working together for clean water, thriving fish and wildlife, and accessible recreational activities in and around the Delaware River and Bay to support people, communities, and a robust economy.

Their Core Values include:

1. Collaboration – working together across diverse sectors and jurisdictions to set common goals, share responsibility for actions, and achieve powerful results.
2. Science – using science as an objective basis for decision–making and holistic action.
3. Innovation – combining science and forward–looking creativity to develop and implement new and better tools, projects, and programs.
4. Engagement – promoting knowledge and stewardship of diverse stakeholders with inclusivity, integrity, respect, and objectivity.
5. Social Justice – increasing dialogue and awareness and building partnerships to address issues around diversity, equity, inclusion, and environmental justice.

Partnership for the Delaware Estuary (PDE) and the Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority(PENNVEST) have signed a multi-million dollar funding agreement for the development and construction of a large-scale freshwater mussel hatchery and research center. This agreement is the culmination of two years of work toward the Mussels for Clean Water Initiative (MuCWI).
Nearly 300 mussel species are native to North America. Over a dozen of these species were historically found in streams throughout the Delaware Estuary. Unfortunately, few of these are commonly found in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware today. The decline of mussels can be blamed on a combination of known and unknown factors. These factors include polluted water, toxic spills, over harvesting, loss of forests along streams, loss of fish hosts needed for reproduction and dams that block fish passage.

The PDE recognizes the need to conserve existing mussel populations and restore native freshwater mussels to the Delaware Estuary and River Basin. PDE Scientists conduct surveys to collect data on where mussels currently exist, which species are abundant, and how healthy the populations are. PDE teaches mussel workshops to train citizen scientists to help in these efforts. PDE Scientists also assess current stream health throughout the region. If a stream is healthy and has contained mussels in the past, PDE will attempt to restore native freshwater mussels to the area by transplanting mussels from a nearby healthy population.

PDE also has an established Oyster Shell Recycling Program. Recycled oyster shells are returned to the Delaware Bay, and help support the development of oyster reefs. Oyster reefs provide important ecosystem services, such as water filtration, habitat creation, and erosion control. Disposing of harvested oyster shells hurts our bay, our shorelines, and ultimately each of us. In partnership with local restaurants and community organizations, we are changing that. We are returning oyster shells to the Bay so that new oysters can grow, habitats get created, and shorelines are protected.

The PDE is also using Song Meter Mini acoustic recorders at four sites in the Delaware Estuary to see if restoration projects positively impact birds and other wildlife and to check biodiversity.

Delaware Nature Society - Jen Adkins, Executive Director

The Delaware Nature Society (DNS) is a statewide nonprofit with four locations:

1. Abbott's Mill Nature Center, Milton, DE,
2. Ashland Nature Center, Hockessin, DE,
3. Coverdale Farm Preserve, Greenville, DE, and
4. DuPont Environmental Education Center, Wilmington, DE

Their Mission Statement is "Connecting people and nature to create a healthy environment for all, through education, conservation and advocacy". Their primary goal is to create healthy and plentiful ecosystems and communities that host a diversity of life and are resilient to changing conditions. In fact, their latest strategic plan for 2024-2027 is entitled "Life Depends on Us".

Their primary effort is to foster conservation education; they have been rebuilding their programs since the onset of Covid-19. Their Environmental Education Center on the Wilmington Riverfront and the Abbott's Mill Preserve in Milton are the primary sites. In the past two years, the attendance at event offerings has increased over 80%. They have been very active with school programs with over 25,000 participants per year. They also have over 2,000 children participate in summer camp programs. Their goal is to reach over 100,000 people per year for all programs.

In addition, the DNS conducts native plant sales. They also plant about 2000 trees per year and 7000 native plants per year (from our regenerative farm) and care for 2000 acres of land. They are also part of a group that helps preserve over 120,000 acres of land.

They are also seeking opportunities to partner with DCIB, particularly in advocacy for climate change and environmental justice. They are also working actively to obtain grants to support their various programs, particularly the school programs.

Questions

Question - How are you dealing with community members who have very strong opposition to your projects? We are not supporting investment; we support the development of renewables because we cannot meet the States Climate Action Plan goals without doing so.

Question - Are you coordinated with places like taking the point where they have to do some of the butterfly numbers, or just kind of exclusively?

Response - We are doing some coordination and probably could do more especially with folks at Cape May. Some of those bird conservation efforts in the past have been more upstate. We're actively involved with on the Conservation Trust. I believe that building more collaborations is one of the things that we would like to do. We are tied into a lot of the regional coalition work, too, and have been active with the Delaware River Basin Conservation fund.

Question - How are you navigating through and dealing with community members who have very strong opposition to your work?

Response - I would say is that we are not supporting investment. We are very careful to say that we do not support any specific project. We support the development of renewables, because we cannot meet the climate action goals that the State has set without renewables. We recently get our Board to approve our policy statement on offshore wind power which defines exactly what we are supporting.

Question - Could you share that policy statement. It would be helpful for the Center to review it.

Response – Yes, we can share it with the Center.

Question - So there's just tremendous growth in Sussex County. What is your involvement in controlling this growth?

Response – Better planning will result in less congestion. Our new advocacy director has been actively involved in discussions on controlling growth. This is a state wide issue with different implications in different places and obviously very important in Sussex County.

The Nature Conservancy of Pennsylvania and Delaware - Keith Fisher, Director of Conservation (via Zoom)

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is tackling the dual threats of accelerated climate change and unprecedented biodiversity loss. Science determines where we focus and equity guides how we achieve lasting results. Grounded by decades of local on-the-ground experience, we maximize our ability to affect change by bringing together real-world solutions, policy expertise, sustainable financing and collaborative partnerships. The Nature Conservancy's Goals for 2030 - Our approach reflects decades of learning and refining, and the special role TNC can play side-by-side with partners, communities and decision-makers across the globe. Our goals are:

1. Reduce or store 3 gigatons of CO2 emissions yearly;
2. Benefit 100 million people;
3. Conserve nearly 10 billion acres of ocean;
4. Conserve 1.6 billion acres of land;
5. Conserve more than 620,000 miles of rivers; and
6. Support 45 million local stewards.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a global international organization, with a mission to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. We work in all fifty US states and seventy-seven countries around the globe. The foundation of our work, our 2030 goals, are focused on the dual "crises" of climate change and biodiversity loss. And here in Pennsylvania and Delaware, the TNC is a combined chapter.

We have a broad cross section of climate related conservation work across Pennsylvania and Delaware, in Appalachian forest, fresh water and renewable energy issues. We are equally concerned with our Delaware coast and bays. Our work is both "on the ground" and in policy development.

TNC has long been doing is our land protection work. TNC has protected almost 135,000 acres, and we own and manage 32 preserves of which six are located in Delaware. Almost all of them are in Sussex County. One of them is on the Kent County - Sussex County line. We also have nine easements in our preserves that total about 5,000 acres of which a little over 1,500 acres are located in Delaware. TNC has protected a total of 31,000 acres in Delaware.

A majority of TNC work involves their preserves; they utilize them as a platform to demonstrate the science behind their work practices. They employ these practices to influence the practitioners, decision makers, and the public on how to manage for climate change resilience.

In Delaware, TNC is focused on restoring and maintaining the biodiversity of habitats that historically occurred. We employ a number of management strategies across our preserves depending on where they are located and what the particular issues are. (Keith provided several examples).

How we adjust to sea level rise, how we adjust to climate change, and how we maintain coastal ecosystems are the biggest challenges that we face. One of our biggest strategies in Delaware are focused on coastal restoration monitoring. We are implementing, monitoring and researching on how we look at salt water intrusion and marsh inundation as well as a full range of coastal ecosystems, particularly along the Delaware Bay.

There is a major development effort, particularly in Sussex County; how do we adjust to that? How do we protect those natural systems? We use those natural systems as part of the solution.

In 2017, TNC evaluated over 10,000 sites across the northeast looking for coastal sites that had the ability to remain resilient despite changing climate conditions. The resilience was based upon the ability of those systems to be able to "move" (migrate). In other words, was there hard infrastructure in place that was restricting their movement. By 2030, TNC would like to see 50% of Delaware's coastal habitats "resilient. How do we make sure that these at risk communities are positioned to utilize available sources of funding particularly for natural infrastructure that will help them adapt to sea level rise? Through the end of this year, TNC will be performing an analysis to identify the best places where we should focus our efforts to increase the resilience of coastal ecosystems. We are building awareness and support for nature based solutions, helping those communities understand the importance of those marshes and maintaining their resilience. We expect to start the implementation stage of this process by the end of 2025.

We are also focused in Delaware on a number of policy issues. Many in support of coastal ecosystems. We continue to address issues such as developing a statewide building codes, wetlands protection, comprehensive land use planning and zoning, at risk community funding, FEMA grants, and Clean Water issues.

Question – You mentioned the "roadmap"? Who are some of the partners that are involved with developing that.

Response - Well, we have many partners from the Delmarva area, including federal agencies such as US Fish and Wildlife and state agencies such as Delaware Sea Grant. We're also engaging local communities such as Bethany Beach and Slaughter Beach around the Inland Bays. We are holding workshops with state and federal partners and nonprofit conservation partners. We're also conducting small group meetings with the local communities.

Jennifer Volk - If you wouldn't mind, maybe following up, if it's if it's something that people are able to attend, we could share that information out. Keith Fisher agreed to share that information.

Sussex County Land Trust - Mark Chura, Executive Director

Formed in 2001, the Sussex County Land Trust (SCLT) is a nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to protecting natural, cultural, agricultural and recreational resources through land preservation, stewardship and education. Since its inception the SCLT has partnered with Sussex

County Council, state government, federal agencies and other nonprofit conservation agencies on numerous projects to protect over 6000 of land in Sussex County.

SCLT Properties include:
• Oyster Rocks - Ownership (In Fee) - Acquired 2003
• The Peninsula - Ownership (Conservation Easement) - Acquired 2003
• Bayside - Ownership (Conservation Easement) - Acquired 2003
• Wolfe House - Ownership (Curatorship) - Acquired in 2004
• Ickford Park - Ownership (In Fee) - Acquired 2008
• Delaware Botanic Gardens Lands - Ownership (In Fee) - Acquired 2008
• Stephen P. Hudson Park - Ownership (In Fee) - Acquired 2018
• Nanticoke Crossing Park - Ownership (In Fee) - Acquired 2021
• Hopkins Preserve - Ownership (Conservation Easement) - Acquired 2022
• Gills Neck Road Trail - Ownership (In Fee) - Acquired 2022
• Forest of the Broadkill - Ownership (Leasehold/Fee Simple) - Acquired 2023
• Ard Na Gréine - Under Contract

The following status of Park and Preserve Development was provided:

1. Hudson Park
    a. First phase of Hudson Park has been completed.
    b. The park is currently operating, and open for public use.
    c. Phase 2 is starting in Summer 2024 and will include Paving of the existing parking area and reforestation along the existing tree line.
    d. Phase 3 (Summer 20250 will includes expanding the parking area, building a bath house, and creating new site amenities for the proposed Can-Do Playground.
2. Nanticoke Crossing Park
    a. The SCLT completed their master plan for Nanticoke Crossing.
    b. The plan is currently being reviewed by project partners.
    c. Moving forward, the SCLT will be focused on opening the park for public use.
3. Ickford Park – Litchford Williams House
    a. Undergoing restoration to restore the home back to its early 1900's state.
    b. House will be furnished to period of interpretation mid 1930's timing of electrification to that area of count.
    c. The SCLT plans to open the house in Fall 2024 for event use.
4. Ickford Park – Cannon-Maston House
    a. The Cannon Maston house is currently in the final review stages from SHPO for Historic Tax Credit Approval.
    b. The SCLT has completed design work, and begun the bidding process for the first phase of construction.
    c. Construction is anticipated to begin once final approval is received from the state.
5. Hopkins Preserve
    a. The Sussex County Council provided the necessary funding to complete the first phase of construction at Hopkins Preserve.
    b. The SCLT is currently waiting on final DELDOT approval for the Preserve. Once that is obtained, the SCLT will submit the project for final sign off from Sussex Conservation District.

    c. The SCLT will also start the bidding process in the coming month and expects to start construction in fall 2024.
    d. The SCLT plans to open the park for public access in spring 2025.
6. Forest of the Broadkill Preserve
    a. Sussex County Council provided funding to the SCLT to purchase three parcels that comprise the Forest of the Broadkill Preserve.
    b. The SCLT has completed trail renovations and is currently working on the master plan and forestry management plan for the project.
    c. The SCLT is working on their opening plan for the park and hopes to have public access in Fall 2024.
7. Are na Greene – create open space corridor
    a. Ard na Greine is the third parcel of the SCLT that will contribute to the goal of creating a continuous open space corridor from Lewes to Georgetown (16 Miles)
    b. The spine of the corridor is the Lewes to Georgetown rail-to-trail.
    c. The goals of this corridor are open space preservation, habitat preservation and enhancement, and public access.

Mark emphasized the need for continued funding to support their work: Current funding is as follows:

1. Sussex County Council- $11,200,000
2. SCLT - $3,125,500
3. Individual Donors - $1,773,200
4. Business Donors - $2,103,025
5. Schell Brothers - $1,950,825
6. NV Homes- $ 42,400 (of $146,000 pledged)
7. Dogfish - $ 63,275 plus additional In-Kind donations
8. Freeman Companies - $ 46,525

Question - When you're designing and implementing these trail systems and parks, are you working with the local communities to listen to what their needs are for these public spaces? In addition to that, are you creating a more naturalized trail system? Are you also creating ADA accessible trails?

Response - We're not, there's a need for active recreation in Sussex County and we are trying to provide that type of recreation. We're not a government entity. We try to partner with other agencies and organizations. For example, the Delaware Botanic Gardens is actually a property that's owned by trust and we partnered with Botanic gardens. They are managing the property for ecological diversity. We also try to provide trail access so that people have the ability to get on a bike or hike across the county. In answer to your question, we don't hold formal master plan meetings. We haven't had opportunities for people to talk to us first.

Question – How do you obtain financing for the land acquisition?

Response - Before we acquire the property, we work on getting donations, primarily from the developers. As an example, Schell Brothers donates $1,000 for every house that they sell which goes into our operating budgets for land acquisition. It would be nice if we could get more money from other sources. But it's difficult relying on public sources.

Question – Regarding the Hopkins Farm Property, what is planned for that site?

Response – There are no specific plans for this site as yet but it may be left as open space.

FY 2025 Annual Workplan Review – Meghan Noe Fellows, Center for Inland Bays

Meghan requested that all STAC members review and comment on the plan.

Bays to Backyards Community Engagement Pilot Program - In collaboration with multiple partners (to be determined), the development and implementation of the Center's new "Bays to Backyards Community Engagement" pilot program will continue in FY25. The goal of the program is to increase awareness about the Inland Bays and their watershed and foster neighborhood engagement in their protection through the implementation of responsible actions within residential communities that promote healthy communities for both people and wildlife. The program will offer a high-level action framework, guiding local neighborhoods to prioritize their collective efforts that address persistent threats facing the Bays and their watershed, and public recognition for their respective activities.

Environmental Monitoring: Diamondback Terrapin Survey - Currently, no long-term population data exists for terrapins in the Inland Bays. The Center has piloted a diamondback terrapin survey starting in FY20, which is currently in a five-year-long evaluation period to determine if it will be an annual event. The results of this survey can be used to track terrapin abundance and distribution over time and provide optimal locations for terrapin enhancement projects such as beach nesting habitat creation or derelict crab pot removal efforts. A grant from the Wildlife Management Institute is facilitating a shift from paper data sheets to electronic field collection. An intern from the University of Delaware has drafted a version of electronic data collection for FY24, which will be finalized in FY25. In addition, the Center serves as liaison to the Northeast region to start the regional standardization of terrapin survey protocols and create a regional terrapin database.

Salt Marsh Enhancement - Coastal wetlands are critical habitats within the mid-Atlantic region but historic grid ditching led to altered hydrology and drowning marshes. Simultaneously, increased sea level rise is exacerbating this conversion of marshes to open water. Restoring wetlands in both fresh and saltwater areas is critical to the improvement of bay health and in ensuring the continuation of the important ecosystem services they provide. The Center received the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's (NFWF) National Coastal Resilience Grant to support the Southern Delaware Coastal Resilience plan. This capacity-building grant will support the Center's efforts to understand where nature-based wetland restoration can positively affect coastal resilience and natural communities. The start date for the project is mid-summer 2024 and it will span 2 years.

Meghan also indicated that the Herring Creek Preserve project was canceled because the County could not acquire all the necessary property. She also indicated that the Oyster Gardening Program was completed.

The meeting was then adjourned.

Next Meeting: August 09, 2024 9:00am to 12:00pm – This meeting will be **Virtual only.**

Attendance *April 26, 2024 -- 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.*

STAC Committee Members
Bott, Michael
Brosch, Chris
Givens, Aaron
Hense, Zina

Homsey, Andrew
Jaisi, Deb
Janiec, Douglas
Li, Miling
Main, Christopher
Norton, Ashley
Paudel, Bhanu
Somers, Kelly
Tabibian, Ashley
Volk, Jennifer
Watson, Richard
Wozniak, Andrew
Yacono, Mollie

Center Inland Bays
Casey, Mark
Collins, Bob
Fagan, Anna
Fellows, Meghan Noe
Hartnett, Mary
Hoffman, Taylor
Koenig, Michelle
Krell, Morgan
Perez-Perez, Nivette
Vella Marina

Guests
Lisa Wool
Catie Soriano DNREC
John Harrod PDE
Keith Fischer TNC
Sam Clem DEI
Stephen Williams DNREC Division of Watershed Stewardship, Watershed Assessment & Management
Lori Mae Brown, DNREC
Angela Padeletti EPA R3
Roman Jesien MCBP
Brooke Eckert MCBP
Carly Toulan MCBP
Jessie Buckner Sovereign Consulting
Mark Chura SCLT