



SCIENTIFIC & TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Notes

DATE & TIME: October 18, 2024 -- 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Virtual and 901 Pilottown Road, Lewes, Delaware

Zoom: <https://udel.zoom.us/j/97089727665>; Passcode = science

Phone: 1-646-876-9923; Meeting ID: 970 8972 7665

AGENDA ITEMS

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

Announcements - *Meghan Noe Fellows, Center*

Center Staffing Updates and STAC Membership

Bryanna Liesweski and Anna Fagan have left the CIB and the Center is recruiting

New STAC members: Nick Ray and Alison Rogerson

Old Business

RFP for Hydrodynamic Model Development, Meghan Noe Fellows, Center

Work progressing on the RFP; need volunteers from STAC to provide contacts for the vendor for technical expertise during development of the product. Contact Jenn Volk for questions about the scope of this project.

Update from the Nearshore Impacts of Offshore Wind Subcommittee, Christophe Tulou

DNREC is considering four permits, and CIB offered perspectives in the open comments period on these permits. From a broader perspective, renewable energy is needed, but responsible renewable energy is needed. We need monitoring to make sure that promises are implemented and evaluated. This is built on STAC comments to BOEM. Also, Sussex County is working on a permit for the building of a new substation at the Indian River Power Station.

Update from the Wastewater Planning Subcommittee, Michelle Koenig, Center

The Center has received the data from partners, entered into a database and completed initial calculations. Michelle needs additional expertise in interpreting the data. Suggestions offered included DNREC and Extension nutrient management expertise. There are additional questions to explore including factors on spray wastewater that need further interpretation. CIB is supporting Sussex County's request to tap into Rehoboth's excess capacity.

Update on Habitat Plan - Michelle Koenig, Center

The plan was presented to CIB Board who approved the plan and executive summary; the final editing is underway and will be sent to EPA for review and approval to meet the submittal deadline. It will be posted on the website when approved.

Update on James Farm - Bob Collins, Center

Optimistic for late spring or early summer finish of the Education Center and other improvements.

New Business

New Member Presentation - Dr. Nick Ray, UD School of Marine Science and Policy

Particularly interested in the role of plants and animals in biogeochemistry, as well as ecosystem responses to anthropogenic pressures and impacts. Particularly interested in constructed ponds which should be considered in greenhouse gas production and other effects. Not currently included in DE calculations. There should be more buffers around the constructed ponds. Another interest is solar panels on ponds. Water gets colder, oxygen crashes, and still studying other effects on plants, insects, and birds. Also interested in aquaculture and fisheries consequences for ecosystems. Interested in how oysters affect ecosystem effects; oysters have a low greenhouse emission.

Coastal Marsh Restoration: A Mid-Atlantic Approach - Bart Wilson, Regional Geomorphologist U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

A whole ecosystem examination with restoration projects is needed. Should be more proactive in looking at benefits and trade-offs for resiliency, looking for short-term and long-term effects. Think about enhancing resiliency over time with the greatest likelihood of success with a mosaic of projects. The regulatory context of reviewing projects needs better framing of the purpose of the project and constructing applications with better recognition of the trade-offs with discussion of "no action" alternatives. Most sites have multiple stressors, so need multiple approaches. Effectiveness monitoring is important and qualitative metrics are useful. Prime Hook is a good example of marsh restoration success. Need accessibility communication in an easily digestible form for on-the-ground users.

Osprey Reproduction, Population, Diet and Stressors in the Chesapeake Bay - Dr. Barnett A. Rattner, and Daniel D. Day, USGS-Eastern Ecological Science Center

A brief overview of osprey biology and reproduction and its use as a sentinel of environmental quality was presented. Current reproductive problems in parts of the Chesapeake were described, including reproductive success data from 2024.

Delaware Herps - Nathan Nazdrowicz, DNREC

His job is the preservation of reptiles and amphibians in the Inland Bays, excluding sea turtles. In the Inland Bays, 54 species, 19 critically imperiled, imperiled or vulnerable, and 5 endangered. The number 1 threat is the growing human population and changes in land use. Climate change is a threat, and diseases are a growing area of concern. Some populations of herps are growing as temperatures rise (Green treefrogs and Cope's grey treefrogs). A population declining is the grey tree frog. Actions to take are habitat protection, habitat management and creation, research and monitoring, population augmentation, and partnering to help spread information or collect data. Four species of focus to set up long-term data sets are Eastern Tiger Salamander, Barking Treefrog, Spotted Turtle, and Diamond-backed Terrapins. Difficult to study in the Inland Bays because many sites are on private lands with little access. Projects for Diamond-backed turtles are derelict crab trap removal, especially ghost pots, which are submerged pots with no on-surface marker, and habitat creation for a dune in 2005.

Center Project Updates on SAV, Oyster, Living Shoreline, and Terrapins - Taylor Hoffman, Center Science Coordinator

The update was shortened due to lack of time, slides were shared with committee members via email after the meeting, however, there was a brief discussion regarding current efforts to improve Terrapin Participatory Science tools:

The Center (staff and partners) has created an online survey for volunteers to use during the Terrapin survey used in 2024 surveys. Now, expanding this survey tool to develop a regional survey from Virginia to Maine.

STAC Leadership and Work Planning for FY25

- Discussion of STAC leadership. Jenn and Doug have been in these leadership positions for six years. Looking for nominations for new chair and new vice chair
- Update ByLaws
 - Unanimously approved: Chair-Emeritus Position - Motion “Creation of a position for the immediate past-Chair to advise the Executive Director and leadership of STAC on an as-needed basis. This position would be in effect for no longer than two years, and remain vacant if there is not an immediate past-Chair. The Chair is under no obligation to accept this position.”
- Members List –
 - Make sure to submit your current CV to Meghan Noe Fellows if she contacts you about membership renewal.
- Subcommittees – e.g. State of the Bays Report

Announcements

Adjourn

Next Meeting: DEIJA and Resilience February 7, 2025, 9:00 am to 12:00 pm, Hybrid Lewes

CY25 Schedule:

STAC
9AM - 12PM
DNREC Lewes Facility OR TBD
Friday, February 7, 2025
Friday, April 18, 2025
Friday, August 22, 2025
Friday, October 17, 2025

Attendance *October 18, 2024 -- 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.*

STAC Committee Members (21)

Leslie Baggett
Aaron Givens
Zina Hense
Andrew Homsey
Doug Janiec
Mi-Ling Li
Christopher Main
Ashley Norton
Bhanu Paudel
Nick Ray new member
Alison Rogerson
Claire Simmers
Kelly Somers
Jennifer Volk
Richard Watson
Ed Whereat
Andrew Wozniak
Mollie Yacono

STAC not in attendance

Andres, Scott
Bott, Michael
Brosch, Chris
Coveleski, Kristen
Clark, John
Hale, Ed
Hauser, Chris
Jaisi, Deb
Luther, George
McKenna, Tom
Michael, Holly
Mohan, Ram
Nardi, Mark
Shah Walter, Sunita
Shepherd, Roger
Tabibian, Ashley
Tyler, Robin
Waidner, Lisa

CIB (7)

Bob Collins
Meghan Noe Fellows
Taylor Hoffman
Michelle Koenig
Nivette Perez-Perez
Christophe Tulou
Melina Vella

Guests (11)

Barnett A. Rattner USGS-Eastern Ecological
Science Center
Daniel D. Day USGS-Eastern Ecological
Science Center
Nathan Nazdrowicz, DNREC
Bart Wilson, Regional Geomorphologist U.S.
Fish and Wildlife Service
Allison Stouffer
Josh Barth, DNREC
Chris Vanuga
Lori Mae Brown, DNREC
A.G. Robbins Citizen's Monitoring Programs
Jodi McLaughlin
Mark Casey
Robert Biciocchi