

Meeting Notes

Delaware Center for the Inland Bays
Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee
August 03, 2022, 9:00 a.m. to noon - Hybrid Meeting
In-person: DNREC Lewes Field Office, 901 Pilottown Rd, Lewes, DE 19958
OR
Zoom: <https://udel.zoom.us/j/91577822831>; Passcode = science
Phone: 1-646-876-9923; Meeting ID: 915 7782 2831



Attendees:

13 in person (P); 21 Zoom (Z) = 34

STAC Members Attending:

Z Scott Andres DGS, ret.
Z Michael Bott, DNREC
P Kristen Covaleski, Inter-Fluve
Z Rob Gano, DNREC
Z Aaron Givens, DDA
Z Zina Hense, DNREC
Z Andrew Homsey, UD
P Douglas Janiec, Sovereign, STAC Vice Chair
P Chris Main, DNREC
Z Bhanu Paudel, DNREC
Z Claire Simmers, CAC
Z Kelly Somers, USEPA
P Kari St. Laurent, DNREC
P Jennifer Volk, UD Coop Ext, STAC Chair
P Sunita Shah Walter, UD
Z Ed Whereat, DESG
P Andrew Wozniak, UD

CIB Staff Attending:

Z Anna Fagan
P Zachary Garmoe
Z Andrew McGowan
P Nivette Pérez-Pérez
P Michelle Schmidt
P Marianne Walch, STAC Liaison

Others Attending:

Z Lori Mae Brown
Z Meghan Fellows
P Justin Guider
Z Will Helt
Z Nicole Marks
Z Ian McMullen
Z A.G. Robbins, Citizen Monitoring Program
P Alison Rogerson, DNREC
Z Ross Ruschman
Z Karen Steenhoudt
Z Brittany Sturgis

The meeting was called to order by Jenn Volk at 9:06 a.m. with roll call and introductions.

Announcements

1. Decked Out

Anna Fagan provided information on [DECKED OUT - Annual Fundraiser \(link\)](#)



2. Center Staffing Updates

Marianne Walch provided Center Staffing Updates

New Hires:

- Mark Carter: Development Director
- Marina Feeser: Development Specialist
- Maddie Fox: Environmental Educator Specialist.
- Bryanna Lisiewski: Watershed Coordinator
- Laurie Snyder: Director of Finance

Ongoing Searches:

- Executive Director - Kittleman & Associates, LLC conducting search
- Director of Science Restoration - Interviews in-process; news soon
- Part-Time "Don't Chuck Your Shucks" Project Specialist – main role is to drive to pick up oyster shells from participating restaurants

Old Business

State of the Bays Report Update - Marianne Walch, CIB

The State of the Bays Report was presented to the Board of Directors at the June, 2022 meeting. It was well received and it is on schedule for release in the Fall. There may be some contact with STAC for additional information to finalize before going to press.

New Business

Center for the Inland Bays' Strategic Plan - Anna Fagan, CIB

[Link to the presentation](#)

Strong and attainable plan. Based on three moderated meetings with CIB board and consultant. Wrote Mission, Vision and Values statements.

Six Goals – Growth Management and Operations (3 objectives); Fund Development and Sustainability (3 objectives); Outreach and Education (4 objectives); Science, Restoration and Watershed Coordination (7 objectives – STAC emphasis; Land Preservation and Restoration (3 objectives); Advocacy (4 objectives)

Andrew Homsey – question about easements – hold (financial as well as capacity responsibility) or just manage? CIB will explore this (Michele Schmidt)

Kelly Somers – can STAC also get regular updates from CIB; Anna and Jenn will work out how to make this happen

Jenn Volk – questions about how committees will be set up and composition and standing etc.
Anna – still discussing how best to manage; likely to broaden membership to include a range of partners in addition to staff and volunteers.

Specifics in the Strategic Plan for STAC discussed at this meeting:

Objective 4: Complete 50% of hydrodynamic and water quality model for the Inland Bays

Jenn and Marianne – KPI (Key Performance Indicator). Marianne – thought is to focus on areas of lower water quality to help manage time and costs. STAC does have a RFP for modeling of Inland Bays and will reach out to those who might still be interested. Focus on data gaps and where it might be best to achieve the goals.

Jenn heard support for modeling a portion of the system KPI 2. Reaching out to previous RFP and reconstituting the Modeling Committee/Working Group with calls for new members. Go back and talk to Lydia to clarify. Topic for future meetings – bring everyone back or wait for funding? Purpose of modeling is important – for research or for solving specific questions/problem (Kerry). Attempting to do

both with the CIB modeling.

Objective 5: Wastewater Planning Subcommittee develops wastewater nutrient loading budget and initiates priority recommendations of white paper.

Michelle Schmidt discussed. Working on this for quite some time. Not much has happened since Aviah Stillman left. Wastewater nutrient loading ambiguous goal; looking for assistance. Once the budget is completed then there is a need to discuss; write white paper and make recommendations. Hoping for STAC to help with this, including joining the committee. Brianna and Michelle will be leading, but need help. Are there similar examples? No exact nutrient budget project, but please let Michelle know of any sources. STAC can help with review as concerns from starting from scratch, but what else can STAC do? Michelle will re-group a sub-committee. Michelle is looking for experience, knowledge, examples. What is the content of Aviah's research – good information, but just a beginning. Need more of a strategy to get data and then try to build a budget. Big lift – collecting data from large systems, 2011-2021 monthly data which is a lot of data. Looking for someone to input data into a system – maybe an intern? Some consultants expressed concerns for conflict of interest, but consultants might be a good solution.

Feels like there should be some academic expertise somewhere, maybe not in Delaware. Maryland might be a resource/expertise. Regional conversations might be helpful. Rutgers and mid-Atlantic outreach possibilities.

Presentations:

Community Structure and Biogeochemical Role of Planktonic Archaea in the Tidal Broadkill River,
Justin Guider, UD MS graduate

[Link to the presentation](#)

Archaea play important but somewhat undefined roles in carbon cycling in rivers, estuaries and the ocean. A year-long study of water samples from the mouth of the Broadkill River revealed a heavily size-partitioned community, with different assemblages of archaea present in large vs. small size fractions. Tidal influence was less important than anticipated, indicating no major differences in the archaeal community between estuarine and riverine end-members. A recurring summer bloom of Marine Group II archaea, a group of uncultured photoheterotrophs, was identified, as well as the presence of methanogens in the water column, suggesting the possibility of in-situ methane production.

Comments and discussions about the contribution of the research and impact of in-situ methane production.

DNREC Inland Bays Restoration Strategy, *Alison Rogerson, DNREC*

[Link to the presentation](#)

In early 2022 DNREC released the Inland Bays Restoration Strategy, a guiding document that outlines pressing threats facing wetlands and submerged aquatic vegetation and action items to address them. The evaluation process utilized stakeholder input, wetland condition data, and spatial analysis to identify and prioritize areas for conservation action.

Q&A – any plans to go back and check? No, not really directly as few resources. Lots of public and political outreach opportunities and building support for policy initiatives. DNREC can't be advocates, so rely on partners, but open to widely share the results. Team big picture (DNREC) and CIB report for HOA for educational outreach. Need for resources and interest in restoring and preserving wetlands and shorelines. Interest growing, but few resources to help. Knowledgeable stewards key, but not adequately resourced. Workshops are useful tools, so partnering with the organizations and DNREC is helpful. Partner meetings to share DNREC outputs are important. Need to convince some of the need for these

efforts which this information might help. Look to outreach to private landowners next to public lands as an additional avenue of communication. Opportunities for private funding sources to implement in FY2023. Recreating tidal mud wetlands in winter and collecting information and designing – beneficial use and living shoreline. Natural recruitment was surprising and first time recreated wetland with dredging material.

Round Robin Updates - updates from Center staff and ALL STAC members on current or upcoming projects or initiatives

Bhanu Paudel, DNREC

1. Inland Bays' water quality paper coauthored by myself and Lori Brown, published just today. <https://www.mdpi.com/2306-5338/9/8/138>
2. Monitoring sites selected

Andrew McGowan, CIB

1. Shellfish planning – bringing together stakeholders for sites, funding, implementation; steering committee formed to suggest 5 reef sites and get partner commitments. Report by March 2024.
2. Continuous quality monitoring network. Now there is a 5th station in the upper right quadrant of Rehoboth Bay. Discussing using discretionary internal funding to expand this project; need assistance in identifying monitoring sites. Love, Herring and White Creeks possible targets. Problem finding fully submerged site.
3. Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) – CIB had planned to collect light at the bottom, but had not received permits yet, so grabbing weekly spot checks in Indian River Bay.

Jenn Volk, STAC

1. Recommends climate change film with local farmers dealing with this issue. Opportunities for larger audience screenings. <https://youtu.be/CO3fSrnbrS8>

Kelly Somers, EPA

1. NOAA is accepting proposals for marine debris removal projects from BIL funding. Here is just a helpful guide if interested <https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/funding-opportunities/proposal-submission-guidance-applicants>

Chris Main, DNREC

1. Job opening - contact Chris for more details.
2. There is some money for the north side of the state looking at ponds, etc. After three years it will extend to the rest of the state.

Michelle Schmidt, CIB

1. Little Assawoman Bay installing green bulkheads; install remaining portions in the fall. CIB has been monitoring and bi-monthly seining. Ongoing project.
2. Looking at elevation and sediment data

Kari St. Laurent, DNREC

1. The Delaware Environmental Monitoring Coordination Council is looking to host an in-person workshop, likely in Newark, in the fall.
2. The Delaware NERR has been hosting a NOAA Hollings Scholar who conducted a project using trail cameras to assess wildlife use of the St. Jones Reserve boardwalk.

Marianne Walch, CIB

1. Seining at Sassafra and combining this with green bulkheads

Open – no comments

Adjourn Meeting adjourned at noon

Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 19, 2022 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. hybrid