



**Science and Technical Advisory Committee Meeting
Ocean County College, Technology Building
February 17, 2016, 9:00 am**

Attending STAC Members: Dr. Matthew Poach (Chair, NOAA), Dr. Jim Vasslides (BBP), Charles Caruso (PPA), Matt Csik (OC Health Dept.), Dorina Frizzera (NJDEP), Dr. Steve Yergeau (RCE-Ocean), Rob Karl (Brick MUA), Alena Baldwin-Brown (DEP/DWM&S), Patrick Burritt (NJ Pinelands Commission), Dr. Ryan Rebozo (PPA), Jim Nickels (Monmouth Univ.), Bob Schuster (NJDEP), Scott Conklin (OCUA), Clint Lehman (RCTB), Victoria Pecchioli (OCPD), Nelson Santiago (OCHD), Eric Schradling (USFWS-NJFO).

On the Phone: Barbara Spinweber (USEPA, R2), Dr. Pete Rowe (NJ Sea Grant), Dr. Louise Wootton (GCU).

Guests: Bob Schuster (NJDEP), Britta Wenzel (SBB),

Barnegat Bay Partnership Staff: Dr. Stan Hales, Mary Judge.

Welcome and Introductions – M. Poach

The meeting was called to order at 9:15 am and introductions were made.

Review of draft agenda and minutes of October 13th and December 8th STAC Meeting – M. Poach

Two corrections were made to the October Minutes (adding Dr. Yergeau as an attendee and changing his title). Ms. Spinweber requested that the forwarding email contain the year of the minutes in future. With no other changes, the October and December minutes were approved as corrected.

2016 State of the Bay Report draft – J. Vasslides

Objective: Review and discussion of the indicators for the State of the Bay report.

Dr. Vasslides had previously circulated the draft State of the Bay (SOB) report. The working group met and identified 17 indicators. The STAC will review these to ensure the best science available is being used. Comments included a concern that 17 indicators may be too many (monitoring, resources, public alarm, data overload) and a question was asked if there were any commonalities to bring down the number. A discussion was held about how the use of the SOB report was tracked. As much of the information in the SOB will be based on data generated by

other groups a request was made to specifically cite those reports; therefore, if any information proves incorrect, the BBP will not be held responsible.

A discussion was held regarding bathing beach and shellfish bed closures and the need to properly account for data which is reflective of natural variation (weather issues).

Some indicators didn't seem to have any data gaps identified, so consistency in format between indicators was discussed.

A suggestion was made regarding the pH indicator and its importance to fresh water areas; language needs to be added to address acidification and its impact to estuarine environments. This needs to be measured and documented in and of itself before a trend can be determined. A suggestion was made to box out the coastal acidification issue and add this to the climate change section.

The statistical formulas in the trends and data analysis sections will be moved out of the public piece as possibly being overly confusing to the public.

A comment was made that the text doesn't reflect where the meter is, e.g., freshwater macroinvertebrates. Mr. Caruso will send Dr. Vasslides a write-up of other instances for the working group to re-visit. Also mentioned were: dissolved oxygen; turbidity (one exceedance might not reflect an overall trend and the group will determine how to address this); and shellfish bed closures (potentially).

A discussion was held on stream flow. Dr. Vasslides is working with the USGS on this as it needs a better explanation.

Mr. Karl will be amending his dataset and suggested that each author go back to their trends section and provide a brief explanation.

A discussion was held on Chlorophyll A, its subjective nature, and the difficulty in providing a concise, public-friendly piece. Mr. Schuster will try to provide a better explanation for the public.

As to wetland and protected land areas, it was agreed to use a percentage for protected lands and to cite both acreage and percentage.

A comment was made that many items are being looked at separately, but in reality they're linked and the relationship between them is what's causing the problem.

Any additional comments can be emailed to Dr. Vasslides for presentation to the Working Group. Any substantive changes will be re-distributed; clarification-type changes will not.

The SOB Conference is June 15th; the document should be completed and printed by May.

The Executive Summary will attempt to bind all of these things together so that the public can get a better idea of what they can do to help. This will also be addressed in the introduction and conclusion section.

2016 Prospectus – Matt Poach

Objective: Review the 2010 Research Prospectus and discuss potential updates.

Committee members were sent a copy of the monitoring and research prospectus from 2010. Many of the research priorities have been completed. The NJDEP will provide information to the BBP on all follow-up research. There will be a discussion as to what can be removed, what will remain for continued monitoring, and then suggestions can be sent to Drs. Poach and Vasslides as to any needed additions.

Comprehensive Water Quality and Biotic Monitoring did not exist in 2010, so Ms. Baldwin-Brown was encouraged to provide feedback from the NJDEP as to whether they would like it included. She indicated there was a plan to continue this through 2018.

Dr. Poach requested members send comments by April 4th on what's been completed, what has additional ongoing work, and information on research areas and priorities which need to be included prior to revising the document.

The NJ Sea Grant RFP is still on-line and they will be posting priorities in the fall. If there are focused questions Sea Grant can forward to their researchers, a cross-walk would be possible.

A request was made to add research addressing issues of climate change and sea-level rise.

STAC Composition – J. Vasslides

Objective: Review current membership roster and assess if changes are needed.

A calendar of meeting dates was previously distributed. Per the Charter, the STAC composition (size and expertise) is reviewed every two years. The new STAC term will begin in June 2016. We currently have 30 standing organization-members. The STAC charter says it can have a minimum of 15 and a maximum of 30. Our at-large members puts us over the 30 and these seats will be expiring in June, potentially leaving room for additional at-large members. Currently 8 organizations have vacated their positions. The Trust for Public Land always vacates its seat due to lack of personnel/expertise. A discussion was held on STAC composition. Dr. Wnek will be joining the STAC for Save Barnegat Bay.

An error on the roster regarding Rob Karl will be fixed. If any suggestions for new STAC members (for their areas of expertise) are made, keep in mind this would raise the number needed to achieve quorum. At-large members would count as quorum, as they are seated members; their purpose and function is to fill gaps in expertise. The at-large term is two years, but attendance has historically not been very good. They must attend at least one meeting per year, per the charter, before removal, at which point they would need to re-apply and be re-selected by STAC vote.

Action: Dr. Vasslides will send at-large members a letter telling them their term is expiring.

A suggestion was made to add someone from Monmouth County Planning Department to the list.

If the STAC needs technical assistance, it can always call in outside help without the need to appoint them as a voting, standing member.

Other suggestions for missing expertise include someone with experience in: developing a TMDL; green infrastructure; economics; and land-use planning.

STAC Vice-Chair nominations – M. Poach

Mr. Karl was nominated as vice-chair. With no other nominations being received, Mr. Karl left the room and a vote was taken wherein he was approved unanimously. His term will start immediately and run until June of 2017, when Dr. Poach's tenure ends and Mr. Karl will be elevated to chair.

CCMP revision update – S. Hales

Dr. Hales discussed the USEPA requirement to update the CCMP and requested help with some of its components. This 15-year-old document does not mention climate change. The USEPA would also like the BBP to reach out to new stakeholders/partners. This is an opportunity to re-think how to proceed.

Action: Dr. Hales will distribute documents later this week, and will specifically solicit help with some sections.

Partner Updates

Ms. Spinweber reported that per the discussion at the last Advisory Committee meeting, the USEPA has agreed to look into translating the State of the Bay report into Spanish. She will need a word count in order to get final approval.

The next STAC meeting is April 20th.

The NEPs will gather in Washington for the directors' meeting and EPA personnel next week.

The E&O retreat is the first week in April. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Walzer or Ms. Andersen.

The Barnegat Bay Festival will be held on Sunday, June 5.

The NJDOT forwarded the landscaping plans to Save Barnegat Bay and conversations have been held. The lining of pipes will be finished by April 15th (hopefully) and they are concerned about traffic for the Polar Bear plunge and the St. Patrick's Day parade. Landscaping and docking on the pump stations will be complete by Memorial Day weekend. Generators may be purchased to have on a stand-by basis for emergencies.

If you are interested in the DOT's attendance at AC meetings or elsewhere, please let Dr. Vasslides know and he will keep you informed.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 AM