



**Advisory Committee Minutes  
Meeting of September 10, 2013 – Conference Call**

**Advisory Committee (AC) Members on the Call:** Stan Hales (BBP, AC Co-Chair), Tim Dillingham (ALS, AC Co-Chair), Angela Andersen (Long Beach Township, CEC Chair), Kerry Pflugh (NJDEP), Barbara Spinweber (USEPA, R2), Clint Lehman (RCTB), Bruce Freeman (Jersey Coast Anglers), Bob Nicholson (USGS), Heather Saffert (COA, STAC Co-Chair), Lisa Auermuller (Jacques Cousteau NERR), Chelsea Simpkins (MTANJ), Virginia Rettig (EB Forsythe NWR), Victoria Pecchioli (Ocean County Dept. of Planning), Tom Belton (NJDEP), Dave McKeon (Ocean County Dept. of Planning), Janice Rollwagen (USEPA, R2).

**Guests on the Call:** Christine Bell (Ocean County Dept. of Planning), Michael Craghan (USEPA).

**BBP Staff on the Call:** Mary Judge, Martha Maxwell-Doyle, Karen Walzer.

**Welcome and Introductions:**

**Review and approval of March 13<sup>th</sup> Joint AC-STAC Meeting Minutes and Sept. 10<sup>th</sup>**

**Agenda – S. Hales:** The agenda was reviewed and a discussion of regarding BBP’s annual NEPORT habitat acreage was added to the agenda. Ms. Spinweber asked if the Public Use Plan for the Brown’s Woods property would be developed within one year. Dr. Hales confirmed that to be the case and explained that a committee was being formed. A motion was made to approve the March 13, 2013 minutes by Ms. Spinweber. The motion was seconded by Ms. Rettig and was passed with Lisa Auermuller abstaining.

**Director’s Report – S. Hales:**

The BBP upcoming budget was discussed. The total budget was \$512,000 reflecting a 15% cut from last year. The FY07 grant has been closed out and the FY10 grant will be closed out on time (September 30, 2013). After October 1<sup>st</sup>, the BBP will only have two open multi-year 320 grants.

Dr. Hales will distribute the USEPA response (regarding budget cuts) received by Congressman Runyan’s office. Mr. Dillingham would like a summary (budget and outstanding grant amounts) in order to give the committee a sense of where things stand.

**Action:** Dr. Hales will distribute the USEPA response and the requested budget information.

### **STAC Committee Updates – H. Saffert, J. Vasslides:**

Dr. Saffert read from Mr. Vasslides STAC update reports on crab trap removals, the soil health project at Jake's Branch County Park, the sea grass modeling project, the phytoplankton functional taxonomic group, and the Riparian plant and soil community studies. No questions were posed.

The Pathogen Work Group met this summer and discussed concerns about beach replenishment using bay sand. A letter was written to the NJDEP and work group is still waiting for a response. The group also continued to discuss problems in the Toms River and Beachwood areas.

Dr. Hales, Mr. McKeon and the Ocean County Health Dept. met with a Beachwood Boro representatives and their engineering consultant to look at discharge points on Beachwood Beach. The Health Department will be conducting further investigative studies, taking additional samples both up- and down-stream. Once data is received, they will meet again to discuss next steps. There is an odd circular flow of the water in the cove area and the dye seems to run backwards and loop back, which may be resulting in poor flushing in that immediate cove area. More tests will be done this fall and it may be necessary to get a private contractor on board with more sophisticated equipment. The NJDEP is embarking on its own effort and is taking water quality samples. They will coordinate with the BBP and the OCPD on the testing protocols and strategies.

A beneficial dredging group was formed last spring to discuss restoration ideas and locations to support NJDEP's restoration work.

**Action:** The Pathogen Work Group will meet again to review the NJDEP's activities and determine how to support and facilitate their efforts. The beneficial dredging group might also meet to discuss potential projects.

### **CEC Updates – A. Andersen, W. Dalzell, K. Walzer:**

Ms. Walzer reported that Ms. Andersen will serve another term as chair of the CEC with Mr. Dalzell serving as co-chair. A report was given outlining ongoing projects. The Communication Plan has been drafted and will be reviewed at the CEC meeting tomorrow. A 2013 Barnegat Bay Festival update was given (attendance of over 3,300 people). Due to budget cuts, there will be no further printed newsletters other than the *State of the Bay* issue in the early part of the year.

### **9/16 Events Updates – S. Hales:**

The "River Lady" tour and Policy Committee meeting details were reviewed by Dr. Hales.

### **BBP's annual NEPORT Habitat Acreage (B. Spinweber)**

Within the Barnegat Bay region annual habitat acreage preserved usually averages around 1,000 preserved acres per year; however, due to Hurricane Sandy, we're only at 335 acres this year. Partners were asked to provide any additional information on habitat recovery to Ms. Maxwell-Doyle. Mr. McKeon reported that some large land acquisitions being finalized through the Ocean County Natural Lands Trust but cannot be reported out on at this time. When the Sandy money comes in and restoration, a question arose as to whether or not this should be reported as NEPORT. BBP/EPA Region 2 and Headquarters will need to discuss this as projects would not

have happened without disaster funding. Mr. Craghan will look at examples from the Gulf to come to some conclusions.

Larger trends need to be noted such as no new sources of funding for open space. Ocean County is talking about reducing their open space tax (mentioned at Freeholders meeting), which will reduce the ability to acquire land in the watershed. Sandy recovery money is a legitimate source of funding to acquire at-risk lands, which will increase the resiliency of the communities and add to the goal of protecting and restoring open space. There's a need for a bigger push to acquire open space and damaged and flood-prone areas. This strategy is not being pursued by the state at this time, as there is a focus on the Raritan communities. Blue Acres funding has been channeled to north Jersey due to the previous year's Hurricane Irene damage. Several large properties are currently in negotiation in the Ocean County Natural Lands Trust program so the numbers should go back up. It was recommended to keep the goal at 1000 acres for next year. Reducing the open space tax is all due to Sandy and the resultant fiscal blow to the taxpayers, particularly those who are out of their homes but still receiving tax bills.

It was suggested that the BBP advise the county about the role open space plays in local economics and advise them to look elsewhere for priorities. Buying land always saves money in the long run.

**Action:** Dr. Hales will put together a consensus letter to speak positively about the benefits of open space acquisition for circulation to partners.

#### **BBP Sandy Science and Restoration Consensus Statement – S. Hales/all partners**

The draft statement was circulated and comments were received and incorporated. The purpose was to provide a simple statement of consensus to potential funders (DOI and State of NJ) of restoration projects in the bay. While this is an important piece for collective prioritizing, the BBP needs multiple communication pieces. Ms. Walzer, Ms. Andersen and the CEC were asked to consider ways to create message pieces for the public. This document is important to the recovery of the bay and the community after the storm. Dr. Hales believes it could use some additional revision and modification. A suggestion was made that some of the terms (*e.g.*, “gray and green infrastructure”) need to be defined better, and could be made stronger with some modifications in verbiage. The document also seems a bit weak on wildlife and marine species (no mention of forage species).

A comment was made that the document does not give enough credence to the role the BBP can play with its science and monitoring to inform future policy and to inform the public. Science must have a broader impact and inform a variety of audiences and the document should do a better job of positioning the BBP to do this. Ms. Auermuller provided some language to connect science to action. A request was made to get this out as soon as possible.

The CEC needs to demonstrate what the BBP represents and the document does not accomplish this. Ms. Walzer and Ms. Auermuller will make some changes for a quick turn-around. Dr. Hales would like it for the Policy Committee meeting on Monday and suggested stronger recognition of why addressing eutrophication is important. Target species also need to be added.

A motion was made by Mr. Freeman that a revision be presented to the Policy Committee. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dillingham and passed, with Mr. Nicholson abstaining.

**Action:** After comments are received, Dr. Hales will revise and re-circulate the document.

### **Partner Updates**

Mr. Dillingham reported that Stacy McCormick has been hired as Director of Governmental Affairs working with the agencies, the legislature, and the administration out of Trenton. The first year will focus on storm recovery programs. Bill Shadel has moved on to be associate director at the Interstate Pollution Commission and ALSO is currently looking for a habitat restoration director.

Mr. McKeon reported that the pumpout boats were in service again this year. There were some logistical issues with the county's ability to off-load was due to marinas that were damaged by Sandy, so alternate locations had to be found. Currently, there are five pump out boats and a sixth boat will go into service in the northern section of the bay to cover a shortfall. The original "Circle of Life" is showing its age and a replacement boat is needed.

The Marine Trades boat show is scheduled for the 20<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> of this month. They continue to work on the "Go Boating" campaign and are working with the EPA to organize workshops for marinas to get help applying for business grants and loans.

Mr. Nicholson reported on: 1) Water quality monitoring at two locations and will be continuing this program for another year through 2014 so that data will coincide with all of the flow monitoring through 2014. He is working with the state to extend the agreement. After 2014, all monitoring will be discontinued unless a new funding source is found; 2) their piece of NEIWPC report will be published at the end of October and will include detailed nutrient loading estimates for the estuary going back to 1989; 3) the final round of bathymetric field work is in progress this week. Woods Hole is here for final surveys of Little Egg Harbor and the inlets. Their data will be merged with the bathymetric LIDAR data and that information will go public sometime next year.

Clean Ocean Action reported on its education forums, TEDEX presentation, rain barrels and cleanups, and encouraged all partners to register projects on For the Shore.org. Clean Ocean Action is working on candidate environmental forums with ALO and ReClam the Bay.

Dr. Hales announced that Michael Craghan will be the new EPA Headquarters liaison as of October 1. Dr. Wootton would like to set up a climate-change symposium at Georgian Court University. Dr. Hales along with several other NEP Directors will be meeting new EPA Administrator on Tuesday in Washington.

**Meeting adjourned.**