

Science and Technical Advisory Committee Meeting
Technology Building (Rm 107), Ocean County College

October 16, 2019; 9 am-12:00 pm

Attending STAC Members: Dr. Steven Yergeau (Vice-Chair, RCE- Ocean), Alena Baldwin-Brown (NJDEP), Charles Caruso (PPA), Gregg Sakowicz (JCNEER), Dr. Elizabeth Lacey (Stockton), Rick Bushnell (RCTB), Will Ruocco (BTMUA), Becky Laboy (OCSCD), Linda Brennen (MCPD), Dr. Jim Vasslides (BBP)

Attending Guests: Daphne Munroe (Rutgers), Cassie Snugart (OCPD)

On Phone: Barbara Spinweber (USEPA-R2), Amber Mallm (MCDP), Christine Wieben (USGS)

Staff Members in Attendance: Dr. Stan Hales (ex officio), Martha Maxwell-Doyle, Emily Pirl, Nicole Petersen, Shannon Vasquez

Welcome and Introductions.

The meeting was called to order at 9:12am and introductions were made.

Review of June 12th Meeting Minutes and draft agenda – S. Yergeau

Suggested revisions for the June 12th Meeting Minutes:

- Missing guest attendee (Sherie Shiffrin, NJDEP) was added to minutes

Suggested revisions for the draft agenda:

- Dr. Hales suggested two additional regulatory items including the US Army Corps of Engineers revision to SPGP-17 and an opportunity to comment on the Federal decommissioning process at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission Meeting

A motion to approve the amended June 12th Meeting Minutes and the draft agenda was called by Dr. Lacey, seconded by Mr. Caruso and approved by consensus.

STAC Charter Revision/Membership – S. Yergeau

Discussion at the April and June STAC meetings recommended changes to the STAC Charter, including the min/max number of people and overall composition. The Advisory Committee approved the recommended changes in July and the new membership list was sent out last week. The process to formally request membership as part of the STAC is listed in the charter; for standing members the Advisory Committee must vote on additions after a formal request to join.

CCMP Update – S. Hales

The BBP received a number of constructive comments during the Public Comment period. The Program office has been working to respond to comments, and Dr. Hales indicated that they are almost done with the revisions. There will be a conference call with EPA Region 2 and HQ on October 17, 2019. Once all of the public comments have been addressed Dr. Hales will send the document back out to EPA, NJDEP and the Advisory Committee, and they will have two weeks

for final review. The anticipated timeline is about a month, however no new signing event date has been determined. K. Waltzer has been working on a “public friendly” brochure. Dr. Hales thanked everyone for their patience and support.

Barnegat Bay Shellfish Research – Dr. Daphne Munroe, Rutgers University

Dr. Munroe presented on *New and Ongoing Shellfish Projects in Barnegat Bay*.

The three projects in Barnegat Bay are:

1. A Fish-eye View: Oyster Farms as Marine Habitat
 - More information and GoPro clips can be found at:
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/new-england-mid-atlantic/aquaculture/milford-labs-gopro-aquaculture-project>
 - Dr. Munroe also has a YouTube channel “Munroe Lab”
2. Enhancing NJ Back Bay Aquaculture Opportunities through Species Diversification
3. Back Bay Shellfish Farms as a Model for Studying Coastal Ecosystem Feedback Systems

All 3 projects are fairly new and have little or no data so Dr. Munroe would like to come back in the future to present on findings.

Shellfish Working Group Recommendations – J. Vasslides

The document from the Shellfish Working Group was shared. Dr. Vasslides mentioned the progress made since the original document (2014), including the NJDEP’s hard clam population survey, Rutgers’ broodstock program, increased aquaculture opportunities for hard clams and oysters, identification of demonstration/pilot projects (Tuckerton reef site), and a revision to the moratorium on restoration/enhancement in restricted waters (2016 regulation changes). Most recommendations in the new document are hold-overs from the 2015 document and are in the short/medium term. New recommendations include researching the effects of changing hydrodynamics and physical parameters, making the website more robust (so it can be used as a resource), Submerged Aquatic Vegetation mapping (establish routine mapping program), and the assessment of life history bottlenecks for hard clam.

Ms. Baldwin-Brown inquired about who the Shellfish Working Group thought would be responsible for the Brown Tide monitoring that is included in the document; Dr. Vasslides indicated that the consensus of the group would be that NJDEP would re-establish their monitoring program. Ms. Baldwin-Brown indicated that she will take that recommendation back to NJDEP. Dr. Hales suggested that where there are items that are included in the document and also identified in the CCMP the connection should be made explicit.

A motion to accept the document was made by Mr. Bushnell, seconded by Ms. Brennen, and passed by consensus.

A second motion to provide the document to the Advisory Committee was called by Dr. Lacey, seconded by Mr. Caruso and passed by consensus. Dr. Vasslides added that he would also like to present the document to the Atlantic Coast Shellfish Advisory Council, after it is approved by the BBP Advisory Committee.

Working Groups’ Updates – S. Yergeau

There was no report from the Pathogen Working Group.

The Stormwater Working Group is meeting for the first time today following the STAC meeting, so they had nothing to report at this time.

Regulatory Updates – S. Yergeau

a. NJDEP 2016 Integrated Report 303(d) list

Ms. Baldwin-Brown discussed the integrated water quality assessment report. The report is due to EPA every two years. NJDEP is currently finishing the 2016 report; the draft went out in September for review and comment (today is the deadline for comments). Between now and March 2020, they will publish responses to comments, and submit to EPA for review and approval. Their intention is to have the 2016 report final by April 2020.

NJDEP is also in the process of working on the 2018/2020 combined report. Requests for data for the 2018 report were sent out one year ago, and a team is assessing the data with the preliminary assessment to be complete January 2020. Ms. Baldwin-Brown mentioned that the draft report will then go to internal review and will be out to the public during Summer 2020. Dr. Hales requested that the Program Office receive notice when documents are available for public review, and Ms. Baldwin-Brown agreed. She also requested that interested members go to the Division's website (<https://www.nj.gov/dep/wms/>) and add their email addresses to the list-serves.

Dr. Vasslides mentioned that the only comment the Program Office anticipates submitting in response to the 2016 303(d) List is that there appear to be inconsistencies in how the TMDL priorities are assigned to adjoining Assessment Units.

b. US Army Corps of Engineers revision to SPGP-19/17

Dr. Hales started a discussion about the proposed revisions to the SPGP-19 and SPGP-17 rules, particularly in regarding to the rollback of restrictions on the use on polluting materials (CCA and other treated bulkhead and dock material). NJ has more rigorous requirements in their SPGPs, primarily due to local conditions. The US Army Corps of Engineers has suggested that they are revising the rules to make all the SPGP permits uniform nationwide. Dr. Hales said that the Program Office supports existing prohibitions of toxic materials based on the best available science, and intends on submitting additional comments to support keeping toxic materials out of the bay. Discussion ensued. EPA will reclude themselves from the comment letters.

c. Federal decommissioning process at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission Meeting

Dr. Hales attended a meeting held recently in Lacey Township to discuss the decommissioning plan for Oyster Creek NGS. One of the main points of discussion at that meeting was the fact that the current laws do not require federal/state oversight committees of the organizations undertaking the decommissioning process of nuclear plants. Dr. Hales asked the STAC if they would like to comment on this issue, given that one of the proposed routes for removing spent fuel from the site would be to dredge Oyster Creek/Forked River to barge the material out. Ms. Spinweber expressed concerns regarding the potential expansiveness of the scope of comments, and Dr. Yergeau suggested that this discussion be continued during the December STAC meeting. Dr. Hales suggested that it may be worthwhile to invite a representative of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to a STAC or AC meeting to provide additional details and insight.

Barnegat Bay Monitoring Plan revision– S. Yergeau/J. Vasslides

The CCMP is moving towards completion so Dr. Vasslides started a discussion on the monitoring plan. The existing plan, developed in 2003, contains a listing of partners' monitoring activities and some associated metadata. This document formed the basis for the initial State of the Bay Report. Dr. Vasslides suggested the use of a different suite of indicators that reflect movement towards achieving the targets outlined in the CCMP. Discussion ensued about making the revised Monitoring Plan similar to the NY-NJ Harbor & Estuary Environmental Monitoring Sites interactive map and Bureau of Freshwater and Biological Monitoring Sampling Inventory, with a separate recommendations document. Ms. Baldwin-Brown suggested that Dr. Vasslides contact Ms. Leigh Lager at the NJDEP/BFBM for more information on their experience building their website. There was discussion about data sharing and problems that may be encountered with an interactive map and possible ways to navigate them.

In order to support the development of the Monitoring Plan Dr. Yergeau announced the formation of the Monitoring Plan Group, which is an *ad hoc* working group of the STAC. Dr. Vasslides will chair the group and asked for volunteers. Ms. Baldwin-Brown volunteered and Ms. Spinweber mentioned that she would spread the word at EPA and get back to Dr. Vasslides.

ANEP Meeting report – J. Vasslides

Dr. Vasslides provide a brief report out of the Association of National Estuary Programs meeting in Dewey Beach, Delaware held earlier this month. The meeting is an opportunity for the NEPs to gather and talk about ideas and projects they are doing. Ms. Pirl presented on BBP's Paddle for the Edge program and received a lot of interest from other NEPs.

Partner Updates

- Monmouth Environmental Council is hosting a plastics workshop on October 29th at 6pm in the Monmouth County Agricultural Building. Ms. Mallm will share the flyer with Dr. Vasslides to share with everyone.
- Mr. Sakowicz mentioned that Dr. Thomas Grothues will be the JCNEER's alternate representative.
- Mr. Bushnell reminded everyone that Save Barnegat Bay will be having "Charting the Course for Barnegat Bay" on October 22-24, 2019.
- Dr. Yergeau mentioned that OCC will host the 3rd annual Jersey Friendly Yards on October 19, 2019. He said the registration for the event is completely full! The conference will include speakers, workshops and a native plant sale.

Dr. Yergeau thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Meeting adjourned 11:41am