



Science and Technical Advisory Committee Meeting
WebEx Meeting
9:00 am
April 8th 2020

Attending STAC Members: Dr. Steven Yergeau (Chair, RCE-Ocean), Dr. Elizabeth Lacey (Vice-Chair, Stockton University), Alena Baldwin-Brown (NJDEP), Linda Brennen (MCPD), Amber Mallm (MCDP), Barbara Spinweber (USEPA-R2), Charles Caruso (PPA), Christine Wieben (USGS), Christine Raabe (OCSCD), Gregg Sakowicz (JCNERR), Joe Smith (Forsythe NWR), Rick Bushnell (RCTB), Robert Karl (BTMUA), Will Ruocco (BTMUA), Robert Tunstead (NRCS), Robert Shertenlieb (OCUA), Dr. Swarna Muthukrishnan (COA), Vicki Pecchioli (OC Planning), Dr. Peter Rowe (NJ Sea Grant), Dr. Jim Vasslides (BBP)

Attending Guests: Britta Wenzel (SBB), Jessie Murray (NOAA), Murray Rosenberg (BBP Citizen rep), Nicole Leaf (OC Planning), Sheri Shifren (NJDEP/WMS), Monica Chasten (USACE), Karen Argenti (SBB), Lynette Lurig (NJDEP/WMS), Patricia Pechko (USEPA-R2),

Staff Members in Attendance: Dr. Stan Hales, Martha Maxwell-Doyle, Karen Walzer, Emily Pirl, Ceili Pestalozzi, Shannon Vasquez

Welcome and introductions –S. Yergeau

The meeting was called to order at 9:03am and introductions were made.

Review of February 19th Meeting Minutes and draft agenda – S. Yergeau

No changes were proposed for the February Meeting Minutes

Suggested revisions for the draft agenda:

- Update from USACE regarding their 1122 project

No one on the call had any objections to the change.

BBP Office Update – J. Vasslides

Dr. Vasslides said that BBP staff can get onto campus and into the office but most of the work is being done remotely. The Water Quality project is still running- Nicole Petersen has been occasionally going into the lab by herself for WQ maintenance activities. The Long-term Juvenile Eel Project has continued with field sampling while practicing social distancing. All other field work is on hold. Dr. Hales mentioned that he discussed limited field work with the college, and they were comfortable with it.

BBP Programmatic Update – S. Hales

Dr. Hales will be having a call from 10am-12pm on May 12th with the Policy committee to review the budget and work plan. Dr. Hales mentioned that he will send out the work plan before the WebEx call.

CCMP- Dr. Hales said that the CCMP edits will be made top priority again after the work plan is finalized. He has no completion date yet.

Program Evaluation- Dr. Hales said that the Program Evaluation package was submitted and the site visit is planned for June 30th- July 2nd.

Working Groups' Updates

Shellfish- Dr. Vasslides

- The group had a phone call to discuss the COVID-19 concerns in the shellfish industry. The group will be getting together on WebEx to discuss ideas to connect the aquaculture industry with restoration projects and other ways to lessen impacts associated with the pandemic.

Pathogen- Ms. Shifren

- The DEP is working remotely; only essential employees are working and laboratories are not running.
- The DEP held their annual pre-season meeting to go over program changes and potential new activities. They will be starting a new Environmental Monitoring Program. The sites have been selected but the Department has not been able to sample yet.
- Dr. Vasslides enquired about the site locations. Ms. Shifren said they worked with local health agencies to find locations. She will send Dr. Vasslides a map and list of locations.

Stormwater- Mr. Caruso

- DEP released two new chapters of manual for comment. Comments are due on May 1st. Mr. Caruso has started draft comments for Chapter 5 but has not started draft comments for Chapter 12. Mr. Tunstead and Ms. Raabe both commented that they would be willing to help in drafting comments for Chapter 12. Mr. Caruso requested that draft comments be submitted to him by April 15th.

Seagrass Restoration Workshop recap – J. Vasslides

The workshop was held in the beginning of March. Dr. Vasslides said they had almost 30 people attend including researchers and restoration practitioners from Long Island Sound, CT, NY, and MD. The goal was to come up with an outline for a best practices document. Dr. Vasslides will be writing up all the comments from the meeting and will send the document to the collective group for feedback and to start filling in details to create a full document. Dr. Vasslides said the meeting was very successful. Dr. Lacey agreed that the meeting was successful, and she mentioned that she would be happy to assist holding a WebEx with the core group from the meeting to keep momentum in getting a best practices document done.

USACE 1122 Project Update- M. Chasten

The Environmental Assessment document went out for public review on April 1st for the near-shore placement project. Ms. Chasten said they are planning to dredge Barnegat Inlet with placement in a near-shore configuration off Harvey Cedars beach. She mentioned that the 1122 component provides funding to take dredge material further than the usual USACE standard. They are hoping to start dredging in July but may be delayed due to the current world situation. The island component of the project is still in planning; there is a meeting planned on April 21st to discuss island restoration in back bay. Discussion ensued.

DEP REP Project Coordination – NJDEP

Ms. Lurig stated that NJDEP wanted to have an event at OCC but due to the current situation they will instead have a Microsoft Teams meeting with the grant recipients on April 28th. Ms.

Lurig is asking for grant recipients to send her their questions ahead of time so she can have answers for the call.

Fieldwork in the time of Covid-19

- Dr. Yergeau- Rutgers will not be having any face-to-face meetings through August 14th. The Co-op Extension Office is closed to the public, but 1 person will be in the office per day to answer phones, receive mail, etc. Rutgers asked that field work and monitoring be suspended for the foreseeable future.
- Dr. Lacey- Stockton has 6 projects to begin next month; they will only be moving forward with the ones that have already begun or projects that are part of a monitoring scheme. Dr. Lacey said they don't operate with a large staff and usually use students for a lot of work, but currently students are not permitted to participate in research. Dr. Lacey said that they asked for postponement for some projects until next growing season, however, she will be doing some work with just a boat captain. Dr. Lacey recommended that anyone working with students give them online tasks that they are able to work on from home.
- Ms. Baldwin- Brown- All monitoring and laboratory work at NJDEP is shut down. Ms. Baldwin- Brown said that there was an on-going discussion about solo-sampling or teams of 2 practicing social distancing.
- Dr. Yergeau recommended that groups share online databases to keep people aware of what's going on when they can't physically be outside.
- Ms. Muthukrishnan- Navesink monitoring is suspended. Ms. Muthukrishnan said she is hoping to be able to do their late May/June project with a citizen component. Beach Sweeps and STEM student events have been cancelled and the student summit is going virtual.
- Mr. Bushnell- RCTB is concerned because they have seed on order. Mr. Bushnell asked if anyone knows if the NJDEP is still processing permit applications. Ms. Baldwin- Brown stated that NJDEP staff has been going into the office to issue permits, but she doesn't know what decisions may be made down the line.
- Mr. Sakowicz- Most Rutgers/JCNERR staff are working remotely. Mr. Sakowicz and one other employee have been working at the field station but they were ordered to shut everything down by Friday 4/10. Mr. Sakowicz stated that he will be leaving the WQ sondes deployed because they will still give accurate temperature readings. He will be bringing home gear to possibly do some sonde swaps in the future. Dr. Lacey offered for Stockton to help because they have less restrictions.
- Ms. Pecchioli- Reviewed restrictions on recreational boating in Barnegat Bay. Most marinas/boat ramps are closed or have very limited use. Mr. Sakowicz stated that boating is generally allowed but there are limits of the number of people aboard vessels and that charters are not allowed. Ms. Pecchioli reviewed the executive order for multiple states. Discussion ensued about what direction NJ should move.
- Ms. Wieben- USGS is continuing to do fieldwork and analyzing samples. Ms. Wieben stated that their regular sampling is continuing.
- Dr. Rowe- Sea Grant staff is working remotely except animal husbandry. All school programs have been cancelled indefinitely. Ocean Fun Day was moved to October 10th at Island Beach State Park and October 11th on Sandy Hook.

- Mr. Shertenlieb- All Ocean County Utilities Authority treatment plants are fully functional and staffed. They are promoting social distancing and haven't needed to reduce sampling
- Ms. Raabe- The Soil Conservation District is fully operational. They are running on an alternate work schedule. Ms. Raabe stated that they are still doing construction surveys but with minimal contact.

Adjournment

Dr. Hales thanked everyone for joining the call and recommended that everyone be more communicative and stay in touch.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00am.

Upcoming Meetings & Events

May 12th – AC meeting

June 10th – STAC meeting