

# Barnegat Bay Islands Working Group

## Partner Charter

8/21/2020

### **Purpose and Goal**

The Barnegat Bay Islands Working Group (BBIWG) is an affiliation of collaborating organizations and individuals that view island restoration as key to ensuring resilience of the communities and natural habitats of the Bay. If successful, the group will create a synergy among biological, municipal, and coastal engineering objectives that benefit all parties. The geographic area of interest ranges from the northern end of the Bay at the Metedeconk River in Ocean County south to Absecon Inlet in Atlantic County.

To increase resilience of the ecosystem, which includes wildlife habitat and the developed community, the group will develop a decision support tool(s) that allows for prioritization of island restoration projects. The tool, which is intended for use by working group members, will have the ability to weigh parameters to align funding opportunities with restoration projects (e.g., improving community stabilization vs. increasing migratory bird habitat). It will also provide the opportunity to strengthen projects across partners (e.g., using sediment from channel maintenance to optimize available funding).

The long-term goal of the BBIWG is to manage bay islands as a system where a variety of habitat enhancement and restoration projects are pursued that simultaneously address multiple needs of member organizations.

**Objectives:** To meet the goal, the BBIWG will seek to:

- Take a regional and coordinated approach to island restoration.
- Communicate openly and honestly with members.
- Provide leadership in establishing and maintaining the shared goal.
- Share data with the appropriate parties. (Proprietary data will be handled sensitively.)
- Develop tool(s) to prioritize and support island restoration projects.
- Develop a report that accompanies development of the tool.
- Collect data, as needed, that meets agreed upon QA/QC standards.
- Identify and seek funds to support project planning, implementation and monitoring.
- Meet working group member's needs by regularly reviewing short- and long-term goals of the BBIWG.

**Organization:** Organizations and individuals who have a vested interest in long-term management and restoration of the islands in the geographic area of interest may join the BBIWG at any time. All member organizations shall have a person serving on the Steering Committee and all Steering Committee members must be a representative of an organization. The Steering Committee selects a Chairperson for a 2-year term. The Chairperson must be an active member of the Steering Committee. Meetings are informal and consensus-driven. Should

a matter not be resolved based on consensus, a vote may be pursued. Each organization will get one vote and majority rules.

The Steering Committee forms sub-committees to focus on specific technical or programmatic areas. These sub-committees provide a mechanism for more detailed and intensive participation and discussion. Each sub-committee selects a chair who serves as a liaison and reports to the Steering Committee. Individuals/organizations with relevant expertise may serve on the sub-committees, regardless of Steering Committee membership.

**Meetings and Communication:** The Steering Committee Chairperson schedules and coordinates meetings to the minimum number necessary to complete assigned business. Meetings may be in-person, as needed, but generally in the form of video calls. Each member's organization pays all travel and administrative costs for its participating staff unless there is funding or support for activities by other means. The Chairperson takes notes, or designates a note taker, and ensure notes and agendas are posted to the BBIWG OneDrive sharing platform.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Steering Committee members shall:

- Provide specific expertise.
- Participate and review BBIWG materials and provide timely input.
- Share data, as agreed.
- Provide QA/QC data, as agreed.
- Work together to identify data gaps and needs, and to develop specific scientific questions to address those needs.
- Develop documents in support of the BBIWG charter and mission.
- Participate in as many meetings as possible and prepare appropriately.
- Establish, maintain or disband sub-committees, as appropriate.
- Collaborate on the development of a decision support tool to prioritize restoration.
- Develop plans and projects to restore islands in the Barnegat Bay.

Sub-committees shall:

- Be formed for a specific purpose as delineated by the Steering Committee.
- Develop a clear set of goals, tasks and anticipated outcomes at its first meeting.
- Meet deadlines agreed to with the Steering Committee for product development or outcomes.
- Report to the Steering Committee in a timely manner.
- Record and post notes of meetings to the OneDrive platform.

## **Founding Charter Membership Organizations**

Barnegat Bay Partnership

Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve

Long Beach Township

Monmouth University Urban Coast Institute

The Mordecai Land Trust

National Marine Fisheries Service

The Nature Conservancy

NJ Department of Environmental Protection

NJ Department of Transportation – Maritime Resources

Ocean County

Stockton Coastal Research Center

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Philadelphia District

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – NJ Field Office

Parties to this Charter are responsible for their own costs associated with carrying out activities under this Charter. Nothing in the Charter shall be construed as obligating any Parties, their officers, agents, or employees, to expend funds in excess of appropriations authorized by law.

Nothing in this Charter affects or limits the authority or ability of the Parties to undertake any action authorized by law. The Parties retain all rights and authorities that they have, including but not limited to legal, equitable, or administrative rights, and specifically including the authority to conduct, direct, oversee, and require environmental restoration appertaining to trust resources under their individual jurisdiction, custody, or control. Nothing contained herein is intended or shall be construed to limit any Party authorities. The Parties agree that the goal of this Charter is to work cooperatively to facilitate the restoration of degraded natural resources.