



**Science and Technical Advisory Committee  
Conference Call  
8:30 am  
April 8th, 2014  
Draft Minutes**

**STAC Members:** Louise Wootton (GCU Chair), Heather Saffert (Vice-Chair), Jim Vasslides (BBP), Rick Bushnell (RCB), Peter Rowe (NJSGC), Barbara Spinweber (USEPA-R2), Cara Muscio (COA), Jim Vasslides (BBP), Bob Nicholson (USGS), Matthew Poach (National Marine Fisheries Service), Jim Nickels (Monmouth University), Rick Bushnell (ReClam the Bay), Rod Richie (AKRF, Inc.), Pete Rowe (NJ Sea Grant Consortium), Victoria Pecchioli (OC Dept. of Planning), Jeff Reading (NJDEP), Barbara Spinweber (USEPA), Dr. Matt Csik (OC Health Dept), Jason Kelsey (SBB – on the phone), Rob Karl (Brick MUA).

**Barnegat Bay Partnership Staff:** Martha Maxwell-Doyle, Stan Hales, Mary Judge

**Guests:** Dr. Alyce Hreha (Citizen), Paul Jivoff (Rider University), Christine Bell (OC Planning Dept.), John Wnek (OC Vo-Tech MATES – on the phone), Rob Tunstead (NRCS)

**Welcome and introductions – J. Vasslides**

The meeting was called to order and introductions were made.

**Review of draft agenda – L. Wootton**

The draft agenda was reviewed and a new item regarding a letter to NMFS requesting an extension of a comment period was added at the request of Dr. Saffert.

**Pathogen Working Group Update – H. Saffert, S. Shifren, S. Hales**

Objective: Update members on the activities of the pathogen working group

Dr. Saffert organized a summary based on previous minutes and a list of existing data has been compiled. The document will be completed in the next week or two and Dr. Hales would like to append it to the BBP Work Plan. EIT received a proposal jointly from Ocean County and Beachwood to address some of the issues in Beachwood. The Beach Act provides funding for the state to monitor all beaches. This program is proposed to be cut from the FY15 budget and attempts to reauthorize are currently with Congress.

Dr. Csik agreed to be co-chair for the Pathogen work group; Ms. Muscio is also interested in participating in the group. The next meeting is scheduled and Ms. Shifren has been sending out the minutes and meeting notices.

**Required Action:** Dr. Hales will email the date of the next meeting to the committee.

**Shellfish restoration working group – J. Vasslides**

Objective: Update members on activities of shellfish restoration working group

Mr. Vasslides provided an update on the status of the shellfish restoration working group. At this time the membership of the working group has been mostly finalized; he is still working on getting industry representation. The plan is to have an introductory conference call prior to the next STAC meeting to get all of the members acquainted and lay out the charge to the group and gather some initial feedback. The White Paper will be sent out by the end of this week for review and organization of the recommendations contained therein into short- medium- and long-term goals. The concurrent NJDEP-led shellfish restoration group will have a slightly different focus and will be concerned with the best ways for them to spend restoration dollars (i.e., on-the-ground restoration activities); whereas the BBP group will be reviewing science and policy.

**Required Action:** Distribute White Paper to the committee.

**STAC membership and leadership review – L. Wootton, J. Vasslides**

Objective: Review size and composition of STAC, determine number of “elected seats” available. Discuss upcoming change in leadership.

Mr. Vasslides informed the members that per the STAC charter, the two-year terms of the “elected seat” members would be expiring with the June meeting, and that nominations and elections for the available seats would be happening over the next two months. The charter sets the maximum number of members to the STAC, both standing and elected, at 30. As it currently exists there are 30 standing organizations (3 of whom have vacated their seats) and 3 elected members. At the current time the Program Office is aware of one organization that will vacate their seat, but is not sure if those other organizations who have vacated their seats will continue to do so. It is likely that they will, and one more organization is likely to do so as well. Mr. Vasslides asked if the membership wished to amend the charter to increase the maximum number of members allowed, and after a brief discussion the members decided against that course of action, citing the current difficulty in achieving a quorum at meetings and the general logistics of managing very large groups in a consensus environment. Mr. Vasslides then described the timeline for the upcoming elections. Nominations for the “elected seats” are due May 1, and he will distribute a packet with the pertinent information and voting instructions to the STAC voting members no later than May 9<sup>th</sup>. The STAC will then have until May 30<sup>th</sup> to cast their ballots.

**Required Action:** Mr. Vasslides will send an email out to the STAC, AC, and Interested parties mailing list announcing that there will be at least 1 “elected seat” available and request nominations.

**Required Action:** The Program Office will verify the number of vacated seats prior to the distribution of the election packets.

**Required Action:** Mr. Vasslides will contact Larry Young, Chairman of Reclam the Bay’s Science Committee (and a marine biologist and professor) to verify that ReClam would like to give up its seat on the committee.

Dr. Saffert then announced that she will be stepping down from the STAC due to work and personal time constraints at the end of her term at the June meeting. Because Dr. Saffert, as the current Vice-Chair, was to assume the Chair of the STAC after the June meeting, a discussion ensued regarding how the STAC would like to transition to a new Chair. Dr. Wootton offered to remain as Chair for a limited time, subsequent to the election of a new Vice-Chair in June, to allow that individual an opportunity to transition into the leadership role. All agreed that was the most suitable plan of action, with Dr. Wootton requesting that the transition period not exceed one year. Committee members agreed that the transition period should be one year, but the Chair and Vice-Chair can decide at a later date as to how long the process should be. At that point that Vice-Chair would step up for a two-year term as Chair and a new Vice-Chair would be elected. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Wootton, Mr. Vasslides or Mr. Nicholson (as former STAC chair).

**Required Action:** Please have nominations ready for the June STAC meeting.

**Partner request for the STAC to sign on to a petition letter – H. Saffert, C. Muscio**

Objective: Discussion of a partner request for the STAC to sign on to a petition letter.

Ms. Muscio asked the STAC to sign on to a letter petitioning the National Marine Fisheries Service to extend the public comment period on “**Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Marine Geophysical Survey in the Northwest Atlantic Ocean Offshore New Jersey, May to August 2014 (RIN 0648-XD141).**” Ms. Muscio explained that Clean Ocean Action and a number of other NGOs are requesting that the NMFS extend the public comment period and hold a public hearing on the proposed activity as there is a concern that the seismic survey would have an adverse impact on marine mammals. The STAC discussed the merits of the request as well as the appropriateness of the STAC commenting on an activity that is proposed outside the boundaries of the study area. In the end the members did not feel it was appropriate for the STAC to sign on to the letter given the distance of the activity from our study area (greater than 15 miles) and the fuzzy connection between impacts to marine mammals offshore and the effects it would have within the estuary. However, the STAC encouraged its members to individually review the letter and determine if action from their organization was appropriate.

**Partner Updates**

New wetlands rules have been put out by the Corps and the USEPA, which potentially affects the STAC. If the STAC feels they should release a comment letter, this is an opportunity. Ms. Spinweber requested that the BBP and Mr. Vasslides make a recommendation as to whether or not the BBP would comment.

**Required Action:** The BBP will circulate a webcast explaining the new wetlands rules and will distribute the BBP’s take on the summary, including other EPA contacts.

Mr. Reading announced the next Barnegat Bay Blitz on April 25<sup>th</sup> and encouraged everyone to get the word out. ReClam the Bay will be very active on that day.

Dr. Rowe said the New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium is still working on repopulating its website, which may be up on Friday. Ocean Fun Days is May 17-18 at IBSP and Sandy Hook.

Mr. Nicholson spoke with Neil Gangu, who will be doing some post-Sandy work on sediment fluxes to coastal wetlands at Reedy Creek and Horsefoot Cove.

Dr. Hales made a correction to agenda – the next Advisory Committee meeting is April 22<sup>nd</sup> and will be a conference call. There is no Policy Committee meeting date as yet.

The next meeting is June 10<sup>th</sup>. Members are encouraged to attend the Barnegat Bay Festival.

**The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 AM.**

**Upcoming Meetings and Events**

April 15	Tentative Policy Committee meeting (Work Plan approval)
May 1	STAC “elected seats” nominations due
May 9	STAC election packets to be distributed
June 1	Barnegat Bay Festival
June 10	STAC meeting