



## Science and Technical Advisory Committee Meeting

### Conference Call

February 10th, 2015, 9:00 am

**Attending STAC Members:** Jim Vasslides (BBP), Tim Dillingham (ALS), Alyce Hreha (Sovereign Consulting), Matt Csik (OCHD), Charles Caruso (PPA), Barbara Spinweber (USEPA-R2), Patrick Burritt (NJ Pinelands Comm.), Steven Yergeau (RCE), Tom Belton (NJDEP-OS), Alena Baldwin-Brown (NJDEP – DWM&S), Robert Karl (BTMUA), Pete Rowe (NJS GC), Louise Wootton (GCU), Vicki Pecchioli (OC Planning), Matthew Poach (NOAA).

**Guests:** Evan Sherer (NJDEP), Sheri Shifren (NJDEP), Pat Gardner (NJDEP – DWM&S)

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

#### **Welcome and introductions – L. Wootton**

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM and introductions were made.

#### **Review of draft agenda and minutes of December 16<sup>th</sup> Joint AC-STAC Meeting – L. Wootton**

Jim Vasslides asked that a “STAC membership update” be added to the end of the agenda. A motion to approve the minutes from the joint AC-STAC meeting of December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014 was made by Matt Csik. The motion was seconded by Charles Caruso and approved unanimously by all STAC members, with Louise Wootton abstaining.

#### **2015 BBP Grant Funding Opportunity – J. Vasslides**

Objective: Update on pre-proposals received and next steps.

Jim Vasslides informed the STAC that two pre-proposals were received in response to the GFO, and that both submitting groups were asked to provide full proposals. The full proposals are due back to the Program Office by March 6<sup>th</sup>, and the PIs will give presentations to the STAC at the April 14<sup>th</sup> meeting. Following the presentations that STAC will discuss the proposals and provide a recommendation to the AC. In response to a question from Mr. Caruso, Mr. Vasslides provided the Principal Investigators and general topics for the 2 proposals; Dr. Monica Bricelj and Gef Flimlin from Rutgers University submitted a proposal regarding hard clams, and Stockton University teamed with a local shellfish harvester/culturist and ALS to submit a proposal for oyster research/restoration. Each project requested close to the maximum budget amount, so it is unlikely that we will be able to fund both projects.

#### **Reich Farm Superfund Site Public Meeting – M. Csik**

Objective: Provide a summary of EPA sponsored public meeting regarding cleanup activities at Reich Farm site.

Mr. Csik attended a public hearing on the Reich Farm Superfund site located in Toms River. After providing a brief history of the site, Mr. Csik related the details of the public meeting. The meeting was held to discuss the findings of an EPA-led study on the effects of Styrene-Acrylonitrile (SAN) Trimer, a semi-volatile organic compound that was identified during groundwater and soil remediation of the site.

The EPA had set remediation standards for groundwater treatment (non-detect) and soil remediation, but the effects of SAN-Trimer were previously not well documented. The recent study's final report concluded that there was not enough evidence to suggest that SAN Trimer led to neuroblastoma in laboratory rats. This led to revised standards for the site cleanup; 60 parts per billion (PPB) in groundwater. The site will still have to meet the Residential Site Cleanup Criteria (RSCC) prior to any development.

Mr. Csik indicated that there were 3 main concerns from the public at the meeting:

1. The SAN trimer used in the EPA study were obtained from the responsible party and not a third party.
2. The studies were conducted with SAN Trimer only, and did not take into account how the compound may have interacted and changed due to contact with the native soil or other compounds released at the site.
3. The wording related to the effects of SAN Trimer were changed between the draft report and the final report, indicating that there is no link between the compound and childhood cancer.

### **Spring Science Symposium – C. Caruso**

Objective: Update on symposium planning

Mr. Caruso provided the STAC with an update on the symposium planning. After their first meeting on January 23<sup>rd</sup> the planning group is envisioning a one-day symposium to be held at OCC on May 27<sup>th</sup> or 28<sup>th</sup>. The morning session theme will focus on a changing environment and is expected to be of interest to a broad audience, including local and regional politicians, managers, and scientists. The afternoon session will focus on science and research conducted within Barnegat Bay over the last few years, with understanding resilience in the natural environment as one possible theme.

Mr. Dillingham recommended that the planning group try to include a discussion on what management activities are occurring, or are not occurring but should be, based on the information now available. Mr. Caruso agreed that would be an interesting topic, but there was concern that there may not be sufficient time to be able to devote to that in what is potentially a full schedule of talks.

### **BBP Science Prospectus Update – J. Vasslides**

Objective: Inform members of an upcoming update to the BBP Science Prospectus

Mr. Vasslides explained the history behind the 2010 BBP Science Prospectus and explained the Program Office's interest in updating the document given the amount of research undertaken by the DEP, BBP, and other partners. The Program Office will review the existing document and send a mark-up around to the STAC indicating which activities appear to have been completed. At that time members of the STAC will be invited to submit a list of research needs to the Program Office, where it will be compiled into a single document and redistributed for comment. No timeframe was set for the process, though Mr. Vasslides suggested it would start towards late spring/early summer to be completed during this calendar year.

### **BB Wetlands Monitoring and Assessment Update – M. Maxwell-Doyle**

Objective: Inform members of ongoing MACWA activities

Ms. Maxwell-Doyle reported on BBP's ongoing wetlands monitoring and assessment work as part of the Mid Atlantic Coastal Wetlands Assessment (MACWA). 2015 will mark the 5<sup>th</sup> year of wetland monitoring activities for BBP as we continue our Site Specific Intensive Monitoring at our locations at West Creek, Island Beach State Park and Reedy Creek; refinement of the Mid-TRAM and Marsh Futures assessment activities. Currently, BBP has funding to support work in 2015 and is seeking funding support for 2016 and the future.

Ms. Maxwell-Doyle also reported that BBP was in the development of a “Citizen Science” shoreline assessment program called **Paddle for the Edge**. BBP will recruit a team of volunteer paddlers (kayaks, canoes, paddle boarders, etc.) who will utilize an interactive online survey that will guide them thru a series of observations regarding processes effecting the shoreline e.g. water quality, erosion and accretion, built structures, plant and animal composition and recreational use. The survey can be completed on a smart phone through the use of the Collector app developed by ESRI. (Paper version will also be available but we are encouraging participants to use their smart phones and will be providing them with smart phone dry bags.) Also by using the ESRI’s Collector app lat/long is immediately captured and photos can be directly uploaded for the survey site. The ESRI Collector is a GIS subscription based password protected service which BBP has purchased. The data collected will be QA/QC’d and analyzed by BBP with an eye towards being able to use this assessment to better inform future resource management decisions. Participants will be required to sign-up with BBP and will also need to attend one of two training sessions we will be hosting. Once we have established our trained volunteer group and based on their geographic location and preference, we will assign them a section of shoreline to survey. The Paddle for the Edge event will take place from June 20<sup>th</sup> – June 27<sup>th</sup>.

### **CCMP Vulnerability Assessment: S Hales**

Objective: Make partners aware of EPA guidance regarding required CCMP updates.

In accordance with new guidance from EPA HQ, the BBP and all other NEPs are required to update their CCMP/SP. As perspective, everyone should be aware that some NEPs have never updated these documents, whereas the BBP has already generated two updates to our CCMP in the form of 5-year Strategic Plans (2008-2012 and 2012-2016). The goal of this is to make certain the BBP’s priority goals, objectives, and activities are considered with regard to our changing world, specifically climate change and sea level rise.

EPA is giving us a lot of latitude in this effort, but does require that we develop a schedule for revising our planning document by fall, 2015. In addition, EPA requires that we do a vulnerability assessment of all BBP priority activities identified in our current planning document. EPA CMB HQ has developed a workbook to assist with this process, and will be providing some training regarding the use of the workbook at the upcoming NEP annual meeting in Washington DC.

### **STAC Membership Updates – J. Vasslides**

Objective: Inform STAC of changes to membership and leadership

Mr. Vasslides took this opportunity to let the STAC know that Mr. Jeff Reading, the NJDEP alternate representative to the STAC, retired from the Department at the end of 2014, and that Ms. Alena Baldwin-Brown was now serving as the DEP alternate representative. He also announce that Dr. Mike Kennish, the JCNERR alternate representative, stepped down from the STAC effective at the end of 2014. Mr. Vasslides then provided a brief background of Mr. Kennish’s work with STAC that began with the Barnegat Bay Plan in 1988 and included editorship of the *Proceedings of the Barnegat Bay Ecosystem Workshop* in 1997 and the 2001 *Characterization Report* that was subsequently published as special issue of the Journal of Coastal Research. Mr. Vasslides thanked Dr. Kennish for his many years of service.

Mr. Vasslides also announced that Dr. Matt Poach, the STAC Vice-Chair, would assume the Chair of the STAC at the end of this meeting in accordance with the plan agreed to at the June 2014 meeting. The STAC thanked Dr. Louise Wootton for two and a half years of excellent leadership as STAC Chair. Mr. Vasslides then asked the members to begin thinking about potential candidates for the now vacant Vice-

Chair position. The official call for nominations will be held at the April STAC meeting, with a vote to be held at or before the June meeting.

**Partner Updates**

Mr. Dillingham informed the STAC that a group of NGOs and the DEP are working together to update the MS-4 (stormwater) rules and policies. He requested that the STAC provide a letter highlighting the current state of the science regarding the impacts of stormwater on coastal waters in general and Barnegat Bay in particular. The STAC agreed to provide a letter, with Dr. Poach acting as the lead for the STAC.

Dr. Rowe announced that NJS GC had received 25 pre-proposals in response to their biennial RFP, and that a number of proposals had ties to Barnegat Bay. The NJS GC will undergo their quadrennial program review this spring, and some members of the STAC may be asked to participate. Dr. Rowe also reminded members that NJS GC's Ocean Fun Days will be held on May 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, with the event on the 16<sup>th</sup> to be held at IBSP.

Tom Belton provided an update on the NJDEP Office of Science sponsored Barnegat Bay research projects. The projects are in their 3<sup>rd</sup>, and final year, with draft final reports expected in June. The DEP anticipates holding a science summit in the fall to discuss the results of the projects within a management context.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 AM.

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