



**Science and Technical Advisory Committee Meeting  
Jakes Branch County Park, Beachwood, NJ  
October 13, 2015, 9:00 am**

**Attending STAC Members:** Dr. Matthew Poach (Chair, NOAA), Jim Vasslides (BBP), Will Ruocco (Brick Utilities), Dr. Ron Baker (USGS), Charles Caruso (PPA), Matt Csik (OC Health Dept.), Tom Belton (NJDEP, Off. of Science), Scott Conklin (OCUA), Dr. Peter M. Rowe (NJSGC), Barbara Spinweber (USEPA, R2), Dorina Frizzera (NJDEP), Dr. Steve Yergeau (RCE).

**Guests:** Bob Schuster (NJDEP), Michele Kropilak (NJDEP Coastal Eng.), Sheri Shifren (NJDEP/WM&S/MWM), Ray Bukowski (NJDEP C&E), Elizabeth Drago (NJDEP C&E), Lindsey Sigmund (Watershed Ambassador), John Case (NJDOT), Britta Wenzel (SBB), John Zingis (BBP-CEC).

**Barnegat Bay Partnership Staff:** Mary Judge, Karen Walzer, Martha Maxwell-Doyle.

**Welcome and Introductions – M. Poach**

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 AM and introductions were made.

**Review of draft agenda and minutes of June 9<sup>th</sup> STAC Meeting and July 9<sup>th</sup> Conference Call – M. Poach**

The draft agenda and minutes were reviewed. A motion was made by Mr. Csik to approve the June 9<sup>th</sup> minutes. The motion was seconded by Dr. Yergeau. Scott Conklin abstained, and the motion was carried. A motion was made by Mr. Conklin to approve the minutes of the July 9<sup>th</sup> Conference Call. The motion was seconded by Mr. Csik and was passed unanimously.

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

*Objective: Update on submitted proposals*

Funds became available after Dr. Bricelj recused herself. Another RFP was distributed to address shellfish and water supply projects. One water supply and two shellfish proposals were received and all were asked to submit full proposals. The STAC vice-chair will handle the review of the proposal in which Mr. Vasslides is involved.

**Route 35 Project – R. Bukowski, NJDEP**

*Objective: Update partners on Route 35 construction activities*

Mr. Bukowski provided an update on the Route 35 construction. Michelle Kropilak, supervisor of the Toms River field office provided an update on local activities. Six NJDEP staff attended the meeting to address concerns. Ms. Kropilak is following up and monitoring the work of the

DOT, which includes sealing the manhole connections, video inspection, repairing the gaps in the bulkhead, full landscaping at the pump station outfalls, and a solution to the infiltration issues. Silt fences and turbidity curtains are being replaced and repaired as needed (post-storm). The DOT is coordinating with their land use permitting group and others and landscape plans are going to all towns for approval. SAV and sediment studies need to be done before scallop mattresses at the outfall locations can be approved. They're working on bids and gathering information from consultants. The sites are monitored weekly and they get updates from DOT as to their progress.

Hurricane Joaquin caused some erosion where landscaping had not been completed but no extra flooding was noted. No permanent generator is planned but they will be brought in when a storm is expected. Ms. Wenzel expressed concern that the toxic lubricant for the sealant used in Toms River will get released into the bay. A DOT representative arrived and was asked about the functioning of the pumping stations during Hurricane Joaquin. They're approaching completion in 0-4 and will start on 9-12. Ms. Wenzel inquired how the damage was being assessed (for mitigation purposes).

There are two issues related to mitigation: 1) what needs to be done by virtue of the entire project (addressing impacts to intertidal areas and SAV); and 2) address the sedimentation problems after the fact. The thought is to put in a minimal rip-rap mattress in the scour areas outside the pipe (dependent on the studies), and a proposal is being written to obtain a consultant to perform these studies. Ms. Wenzel expressed a concern that the mitigation will take place on the Route 72 bridge project and not in the area of damage. Mr. Bukowski will take note of her comment and the Army Corps and NMFS need to weigh in on this. Mr. Schuster addressed flocculation issues. Vast amounts of water are in the sediments in this area and the sediments are coming out much faster with the new system.

Mr. Bukowski indicated they will continue to monitor and respond to issues and invited people to either call him directly, or the NJDEP hotline. He doesn't want to send an abundance of resources to the site until it's needed and recommended that we let the DOT do their work and he will respond to the issues as they arise.

Mr. Caruso asked how much public outreach was being done. The NJDEP press officer is communicating with the DOT at all times and the DOT has met with all affected mayors at the pump stations. A request was made that the DOT hold a public forum to listen to the concerns people have and to address a certain level of frustration.

**Action:** Mr. Bukowski asked the DOT to make inquiries relative to Ms. Wenzel's concern about toxic sealing lubricant.

### **STAC Vice-Chair nominations – M. Poach**

*Objective: Election for the open Vice-Chair position*

Nominations were opened for this two-year position, at the end of which, the Vice-Chair becomes the Chair. Mr. Belton nominated Dr. Baker, but he declined. Nominations can still be submitted by email until the end of the month and an email vote can be taken.

Membership attendance as it relates to quorum issues were discussed. The size and composition of the STAC viz a vis appropriate skill sets are reviewed periodically. The next nomination period for “at-large” STAC seats is in June so let Mr. Vasslides know if you believe a skill set is missing. Another option is to invite people to attend to provide specific input without being a STAC member.

### **State of the Bay Report – J. Vasslides**

*Objective: Update on SOTB progress and schedule*

Every five years a State of the Bay report is written and the working group started meeting in September of this year. The report will have the same format as last year and will try to replicate the original 19 indicators. Of the 19, there is one indicator which has not generated more recent data and will not be included. Mr. Vasslides is hoping to have a draft to the STAC to review in early winter, which will serve as the review team for the report to ensure methodology used to generate the indicators is appropriate. A State of the Bay conference will be held in the spring. The CEC will chair a working group to set up the conference and would like AC and STAC representation. This group will set the conference agenda as the BBP would like the conference to be less technical and more public-friendly.

**Action:** Mr. Vasslides will send an email asking for volunteers to serve on the CEC State of the Bay working group.

### **CCMP revision – J. Vasslides**

*Objective: Overview of CCMP timeline*

An email was distributed asking for a review of the two-year timeline/agenda and comments were received. The timetable will be sent to EPA for approval and outside help will be used for collation of the information. One comment asked that public comment and outreach be moved up in importance and that will be incorporated. Ms. Spinweber clarified that this is a “revision” not an “update.” NEPs which have already revised a CCMP can update, but this is the first revision for the BBP. The Long Island Sound NEP has finished their revision and the Harbor Estuary Program will be on the same schedule as the BBP.

A number of items in the original CCMP have been addressed so there will be a “success” section, and some new items will be added. Objectives will be re-written and a risk assessment will be a concurrent process.

### **Partner Updates**

Dr. Rowe reported that Sea Grant has approved eight proposals beginning February 2016, which run the gamut from aquaculture to coastal processes. There is not a large Barnegat Bay component to the proposals in this round. They will be beginning their strategic plan process and will be looking for partners to help provide input.

Presentations from the ocean acidification meeting in August will be posted shortly. Findings are that overall CO<sub>2</sub> acidification is increasing globally and there are specific concerns in the

Atlantic due to estuarine input. Dune manual workshops are continuing. They're very concerned about threatened and endangered species during dune grass plantings. Plantings must be done at the proper time and they will coordinate with the NJDEP on that.

The NJDEP Office of Science received a wetlands program development grant (total with match = \$500,000) beginning last October to look at developing or expanding the riparian restoration interactive website. They will work closely with BBP and the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary to include the MACWA site-specific monitoring stations and rapid assessment sites into the interactive website for a more robust set of reference conditions for future restoration sites in New Jersey.

Mr. Poach and Rutgers professors submitted a grant to quantify the magnitude and drivers of changes that are occurring due to ocean acidification. The application was not accepted but got high marks for technical merit and was resubmitted as an NSF project.

The NJDEP Office of Science is also looking at ocean acidification and position paper recommendations will be out in the next couple of months.

An update was given on the Governor's initiative for Barnegat Bay, looking at water-quality standards and more comprehensive research. Monitoring data is being gathered to support development of a model, which will not be completed until next year. These projects were developed in order to answer management questions. The commissioner will be briefed on the results of each research project and will make a decision on next steps. Some of the recommendations will be for monitoring to continue. Mr. Belton discussed the other results and possible presentation on the NJDEP research projects and how it informs the modeling. The Commissioner requested public forums to get the science out and a conference will be held on November 17<sup>th</sup> at OCC. They've discussed smaller forums and Rutgers University will host an October 22<sup>nd</sup> mini-symposia at Cook College to highlight the work of the Rutgers people they've funded (Ken Able, Rick Lathrop, etc.). They've approached Monmouth University for a plankton seminar in October or November. A final forum will be with the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia and town hall meetings which highlight topical areas will be held in January of next year. All data collected as part of this process will be published in STORET for public access. The November 17<sup>th</sup> agenda was discussed.

Dr. Poach provided a reminder of upcoming meetings.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:35.