

# SCIENTIFIC & TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## NOTES



**DATE & TIME:** February 9, 2024 -- 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

**LOCATION:** Virtual only

Zoom: <https://udel.zoom.us/j/94562636341>; Passcode = science

Phone: 1-646-876-9923; Meeting ID: 94562636341

### Notes

Call to order, Welcome, Introductions - *Jenn Volk, Chair*

#### *Announcements*

*Meghan Noe Fellows, Center*

Center Staffing Updates

Welcome to Morgan Krell newly hired Science Technician; the Center is recruiting for Data Scientist.

*Doug Janiac, Sovereign Consulting*

Sovereign Consulting is looking for an assistant for Doug. [Sovereign hiring link](#)

#### *Old Business*

**Environmental Monitoring Plan Update**, Meghan Noe Fellows, Delaware Center for the Inland Bays

Approved by CIB board and sent to EPA and in final approval process

**RFP for Hydrodynamic Model Development**, Meghan Noe Fellows, Center

90% RFP no real updates; will be looking at this during this quarter; on schedule

**Update from the Offshore Wind Subcommittee**, Christophe Tolou

Incorporated recommendations into comments from CIB and have been circulated.

BOEM has gotten several comments; of interest was the sending cable through the Indian River Bay. US Wind has not done enough homework using current modeling and data. The Center's comments suggest they do a better job or use a land route. Coastal communities given a benefit package generally rejected or deferred by these communities. Some questionable information and CIB will do their best to provide good, scientifically based information.

Jenn: Thanks to the chair, committee, and the Center for addressing this issue. Committee is paused for the moment.

**Update on Habitat Plan** - Bryanna Lisiewski, Center

In the beginning of December, 2023 had second stakeholder work session. Looked at drafted goals and objectives in addition to few maps and deliverables. Since December, met with EPA to make sure on track and took a high-level look at goals and objectives for alignment. Species data gathering progressing; thanks to DNREC. Next meeting will be in May, look for an invite.

**Joint PDE/MDCB Sessions in 2024** - Jenn Volk, Chair

Benefits: chairs/coordinators get together on an annual basis.

Doug: technical transfer of information to prevent redundancy and be more efficient. We don't talk enough to help each other – do better cumulatively.

Kelly: some benefit each STAC has different responsibility CIB – monitoring: DE – science summit; MD – climate resilient. In common the State of Bays/Estuary, so opportunity to optimize information, feedback, etc.

Christophe: how much a common interest in climate resiliency and climate in general; knowledge and technical sharing. Collaborating on the behavioral science side – real challenge is helping communities to understand and how they could be part of the solution. Perhaps pick a theme.

Kelly – community based social marketing – how to get changes in public behaviors. Perhaps trainings on behavioral science would help so we could train the trainers. Angela and Kelly could look around.

Kelly Somers to Everyone 9:31 AM

<https://cbsm.com/> (community based social marketing)

Jenn - Center for Behavioral and Economics at Udel is a resource we could look at contacting.

Doug – STAC support associated estuary programs and acutely aware of turnover and new staff and don't know each other. STACs could create expert list by discipline for new generation of scientists

Andrew Homsey supports this suggestion and looking at bays as one system between Maryland and Delaware. Meghan agrees about working together – and looking for a common project.

#### **Update on Inland Bays Dredging** - Doug Janeic, Vice-Chair

Does a lot of work with US Fish and Wildlife – looking at big picture of marshes and wildlife. Impromptu committee meeting monthly looking at all the dredging projects in the next 0-5 years. Looking at beneficial reuse for every dredging project; reaching out to other groups. Just beginning and talking among agencies. Sediment is a commodity and also spoils; tip of iceberg – common needs, uses and desires. Anyway to reuse and restore habitat are topics for discussion. Christophe – can we look at materials for restoration also. Important area and same players discussing a wide variety of topics. Doug is a technical resource in this committee. Grant process is widespread sourcing – whatever is out there and there is a lot out there from Maryland to New York. Kelly -Maryland Coastal Bays also having similar conversations.

#### **New Business**

**Inland Bays Shoreline**, Lydia Franks, Graduate Student (second year Masters student - University of Delaware) and Andrew Homsey, DNREC

Shoreline Condition & Changes in DE Inland Bays 2012-2022. UD Water Resources Center Not replicating VIMS (inventoried structures) wanted to look at the functions of the shorelines. How the shoreline characteristics are changing. Created new categories and 30m was the distance inland.

Discussion/Future Directions

Doug: great baseline data to help start planning and resiliency efforts. Related to FEMA work on sea-level rise.

Jenn: quality of land, especially ag and changes of salinity; other groups studying this

Andrew – a fit might be living shorelines; ties into behavioral changes.

Christophe – analysis for what and who are vulnerable and what do we do. Where best to best restore, or let go. Implementations for habitat. Where is watershed evolving to and what happens when artificial shorelines aren't there – 10 and years down the road need to have these conversations.

Jenn - Inform marsh migration and habitat work. What are final work efforts? Will release data to the CIB; great conversation starter based on this data. New CIB website will be able to share this information.

**Marsh and Waterbird Monitoring Efforts in the Inland Bays**, Erin Rogers Marsh Bird Biologist and Kat Christie, Coastal Bird Biologist; Species Conservation & Research Program, Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife

Marsh Birds (Erin) Saltmarsh water degradation; die-off of vegetation and invasive species; and human

impacts adversely affecting bird habitat. Understanding the trends and changes is important for many reasons beyond the birds. Methods for monitoring marsh birds atypical to point counts. Run in grasses and fly low; hear rather than see. North American Marsh Bird Monitoring Protocol is used with has multiple visits to the sites during peak breeding times. Listen and then broadcast calls. Sunrise to mid-morning monitoring time. DNREC took over from Saltmarsh Habitat and Avian Research Program (SHARP). Many focal species; both natural marshes and impoundments important. Shorter species list in Indian River Bay than Rehoboth, but only 1 year of data. Assawoman Bay is comparable to Rehoboth with natural and impoundments (2-3 years of data and more important than natural) also important. James Farm Ecological Preserve – overall quiet marshes; no focal species here. Drone monitoring of Marsh birds is in its infancy. Collect data at any tide stage and stick to morning time as standard. Certain birds do vocalize more at night and protocols coming out on this. Inland Bays are home to many marsh birds and important to maintain marsh bird biodiversity. Estimated 2023 abundance of four focal marsh birds varied by species and by bay. Monitoring is in its infancy; important to perform counts statewide for management and conservation.

Colonial Waterbirds (Kat) – birds like herons, egrets, ibis, gulls, terns, American oystercatcher; they are sensitive to predators, flooding/weather, habitat erosion or suitability and disturbance. They are a boom-bust breeding dynamic. Purposes: establish baseline (patchy monitoring so hard to compare year-over-year). Interested in identifying habitat use and examine productivity (nest success, breeding and timing observations). Set protocols in 2023. Motorboats better than kayak surveying due to eye level. Monthly surveys; 2-3 people focusing each on 1 species each. Separate by age class and nest counts and expand to Little Assawoman Bay. Heron/egret/ibis breeding colony on Big Reedy. Tern nests failures at Middle and Marsh Inlands; increased overall detection (likely due to change in survey protocols, but need more years of data). Survey expansion and colony identification and Middle Island tern nest monitoring set-up with things like cameras. Project is in its infancy, so building protocols and observations. Thermal cameras are somewhat useful but regular cameras work well.

**James Farm Education Center**, Bob Collins and Anna Fagan, Delaware Center for the Inland Bays

What's New at the James Farm Ecological Preserve – A Cooperative Partnership between Sussex County and the Delaware Center for the Inland Bays

Bob Collins – Facilities Manager of CIB and Property Manager at the James Farm.

Gave description and brief history of the James Farm, serving all five pillars of the CIB mission. James Farm provides education and outreach programming, recreation access, science and restoration, participatory science; volunteer opportunities. Donated to Sussex County and CIB has managed since 1998. Free admission, open year along; 30,000 visits. Variety of natural habitats.

Anna Fagan – incredible resource for the organization and the public. Need for a Master Plan in 2014 to improve access and facilities. Phase 1 was parking and access; Phase 2 is campus creation/improvements and realigning the trail system. Need for additional funding to complete Phase 2 – consider a donation, spread the word and participate in activities.

**2026 State of the Bays Planning**, Meghan Noe Fellows, Delaware Center for the Inland Bays

Brainstorming how to prepare for 2026 State of the Bays. Jamboarding for ideas. Who is our audience and who do we want audience to be for 2026? What do we care about? Oysters, osprey, fish is what is heard most often from residents. What significant changes have happened from 2021 (data collection ended at that time). Good news about osprey and not so good news about water quality (D+ range). What metrics changed. Who writes the SOB (Marianne and Andrew lead editorship, but perhaps STAC individual members could fill in template in two pages or less. Will send out link to the STAC, so can keep adding. Where does the data come from? Was there a call for data? Some cases difficult to get data which limits amount of data that can be collective. Format ideas? Modern document – any ideas or methods to disseminate. Also can email Meghan with ideas.

*Adjourn*

**Next Meetings:** April 26, 2024 9:00am to 12:00pm, Hybrid in Lewes and Virtual

August 09, 2024 9:00am to 12:00pm in Hybrid in Dover and Virtual

Attendance *February 09, 2024 -- 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.*

**STAC Committee Members (21)**

Andres, Scott  
Baggett, Leslie  
Coveleski, Kristen  
Gano, Robert  
Hale, Ed  
Hauser, Chris  
Hense, Zina  
Homsey, Andrew  
Jaisi, Deb  
Janiec, Douglas  
Main, Christopher  
Nardi, Mark  
Norton, Ashley  
Paudel, Bhanu  
Simmers, Claire  
Somers, Kelly  
Tabibian, Ashley  
Volk, Jennifer  
Watson, Richard  
Wozniak, Andrew  
Yacono, Mollie

STAC not in attendance

Bott, Michael  
Brosch, Chris  
Clark, John  
Denver, Judy  
Dimmick, Rich  
Givens, Aaron  
Huerta, Sergio  
Li, Miling  
Luther, George  
McKenna, Tom  
Michael, Holly  
Mohan, Ram  
Shah Walter, Sunita  
Shepherd, Roger  
Tyler, Robin  
Waidner, Lisa  
Whereat, Edward

**CIB (9)**

Collins, Bob  
Fagan, Anna  
Hartnett, Mary  
Hoffman, Taylor  
Lisiewski, Bryanna  
Fellows, Meghan Noe  
Morgan Krell  
Perez-Perez, Nivette  
Tulou, Christophe

**Guests (11)**

Casey, Mark Delaware Cultured Seafood  
Lori Mae Brown, DNREC  
Kat Christie Coastal Waterbird Biologist with DNREC DFW  
Lydia Franks Graduate Research Assistant, M.S. student, University of Delaware Water Resources Center  
Megan Mackey EPA  
Angela Padeletti EPA R3  
A.G. Robbins Citizen's Monitoring Programs  
Erin Rogers Marsh Bird Biologist - DNREC's DFW  
Catie Soriano, DNREC  
Holly Walker, DNREC Conservation Programs Section - Chesapeake Implementation Program DE  
Stephen Williams DNREC Division of Watershed Stewardship, Watershed Assessment & Management