

# SCIENTIFIC & TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## Meeting Minutes



**DATE & TIME:** August 1, 2025 -- 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

**LOCATION:** Virtual and 39375 Inlet Road, Rehoboth Beach

Virtual is preferred as there is limited seating. Please RSVP to [mnoefellows@inlandbays.org](mailto:mnoefellows@inlandbays.org) if planning to attend in person.

### AGENDA ITEMS

Call to order, Welcome, Introductions - Andrew Wozniak, Chair

#### *Announcements* - Christophe Tulou, Center

Christophe announced that Brian Ochs has joined as the new Deputy Director and is handling development efforts.

He reported positive news on funding, noting that the National Estuary Program received level funding in the proposed budgets.

The Center is preparing to apply for the final installment of Infrastructure Law funding.

Additional updates on, including Michelle Koenig's departure as Watershed Coordinator, and mentioned that a new communications coordinator position is being hired.

#### *Old Business*

##### Update on James Farm - Meghan Noe Fellows, Center

The James Farm preserve has completed construction of a new education campus, and he invited the group to consider holding the October 2025 STAC meeting there. The Education Building has a seating capacity of 75 and an occupancy of 150.

##### Coast Forward Findings - Meghan Noe Fellows

Results are incorporated in the webpage

[https://inlandbays.org/projects\\_issues/southern-delaware-coastal-resilience-plan/](https://inlandbays.org/projects_issues/southern-delaware-coastal-resilience-plan/)

The Coast Forward Summit, co-hosted by STAC in May, concluded that there is a need for increased education about coastal resilience issues in the Inland Bays, and plans are underway to conduct listening sessions with an education component.

## Required Update ByLaws - Christophe Tulou

Legal obligations require the Center to publish meeting notices and agendas seven days prior to the meeting. Emergency meetings can be called with 24 hours notice.

All meetings will have a public comment section.

Meeting minutes must be published within 20 business days, ok if they are in draft form. There was a discussion regarding the reasonableness of this request, but it was explained it is a requirement.

There is an exemption for executive sessions, if sensitive information is to be discussed, however, this must be noted on the minutes.

After discussion, the STAC made a recommendation to the Executive Board to amend the STAC guidance document

(<https://inlandbays.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/STAC-guidelines-web-version.pdf>):

*“Public comments will be limited to one 5 minute slot per person; total maximum discussion of 30 minutes per topic, at the discretion of the Presiding Officer. Written comments can be submitted to the Center at any time.”*

## *New Business*

### **Outline so far, Meghan Noe Fellows, Center**

Meghan presented an update on the State of the Bays report, highlighting its focus on three main themes: working estuary, coastal resilience, and living resources. The report is expected to be streamlined over the 2012 report by focusing mostly on local and dynamic metrics with new data, rather than including all 42 environmental monitoring plan metrics. The report will have a public-facing component with brief, graphic-heavy summaries and a technical report with detailed data as references. Andrew Bell from DNREC will present a case study on shellfish metrics for the report.

### **Case Study of SOB Contribution: Prohibited Shellfish Areas, Andrew Bell, DNREC**

Andrew Bell, DNREC, presented a case study for the SOB on shellfish harvest classifications in Delaware, explaining how waters are classified as approved, prohibited, or seasonally approved based on pollution risk and public health concerns, these are federal requirements. He highlighted that while shellfish classifications are intended to protect public health, they often result in larger prohibited zones due to considerations like enforcement, potential pollution sources, and historical practices. Andrew suggested moving this metric from the Human Health Risk Section to the Living Resources Section of the State of the Bays Report, as it better aligns with measures like recreational fishing opportunities and shellfish farming metrics.

Andrew explained how DNREC compiled data on classification changes from the mid-1990s onwards and encountered challenges in comparing historical data with current methods, the break point of current methodology is around 1996. He discussed questions about how far back historical data should be considered and raised concerns about incorporating SADA, seagrass and oyster reef restoration areas into the metric. There is no current priority to reopen areas. The discussion concluded with questions from Andrew Homsey about actual testing of shellfish for contamination, which Mark Casey addressed by noting existing water testing and aquaculture testing programs.

### **State of the Bays 2026, How and what impact does STAC want? A facilitated discussion with Chris Petrone, Delaware Sea Grant and Andrew Wozniak, University of Delaware**

Meghan and Andrew discussed the need for STAC input on the SOB, with a survey being distributed to STAC Members to gather feedback << Andrew please add a link>>. They emphasized the importance of including both scientific data and holistic approaches in the report. The form should be filled out before August 15th, if possible, Andrew will send a reminder. There was a public comment from Chris Vanuga about the need for better communication to and education for the public particularly during the development of the SOB.

### **Did not discuss: Inland Bays STAC Summit 2026, Andrew Wozniak**

#### **Future Meeting Themes Discussion**

The group discussed potential future meeting themes, including updates from the Center for the Inland Bays, participatory science, and marsh restoration prioritization. CIB staff could provide updates on ongoing data collection and programs at future STAC meetings. Carly offered to coordinate with the Audubon Mid-Atlantic and partners to discuss the marsh restoration prioritization mapping project in MD Coastal Bays. PDE likely has marsh prioritization information to share as well. STAC should focus on advisory role, as a service to the Center.

#### **Announcements:**

Delaware Wetlands Conference, January 27 & 28.

Sneaker test is being organized at Tower Road Bay side, on or around September 14th, January 14th, and March 14<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Public Comment**

SOB should be able to include no data-driven evidence as well as traditional science.

Chris Vanuga- An overall quality metric will draw public attention and greater understanding.

### *Adjourn*

The meeting was adjourned at 11:26 AM.

### **Next Meeting:**

October 24, 2025, 9:00 - 12:00 noon, likely at James Farm, to include a tour.

### **Attendance:**

Hense	Zina	Present
McKenna	Tom	Present
Tulou	Christophe	Present
Wozniak	Andrew	Present
Wells	Brooke	Present
Norton	Ashley	Present
Watson	Richard	Present
Bell	Andrew	Present
Homsey	Andrew	Present
Janiec	Douglas	Present
Yacano	Mollie	Present
Givens	Aaron	Present
Michael	Holly	Present
Whereat	Edward	Present
Winston	Cheryl	Present
Robbins	AG	Present
Coverdale	Ben	Present
Casey	Mark	Present
Toulan	Carly	Present
Wieland	Billy	Present
Poisa	Kelsey	Present
Vanuga	Chris	Present
Staff		
Noe Fellows	Meghan	Present
Perez Perez	Nivette	Present
Hoffman	Taylor	Present
Krell	Morgan	Present
Ochs	Bryan	Present

