

THE DELAWARE CENTER FOR THE INLAND BAYS
STRATEGIC PLAN
FISCAL YEARS 2023 - 2025

CURRENT STATE

Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Center made considerable progress in achieving the goals of its previous strategic plan (2019-2022) and Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP). Staff, board, and volunteers continued to implement science and restoration projects, conduct outreach and education programming, develop private fundraising efforts, and engage new partners in the protection and restoration of Delaware's Inland Bays.

Though the Center faced some challenges, such as the Mountaire pollution issue and its resolution, and the introduction of the buffer ordinance by Sussex County Council, there have also been exciting successes and new opportunities.

The CCMP was revised and updated for 2021 with six focus areas. Some of the major accomplishments included:

- ❖ Achieving goals for point sources and atmospheric deposition of nitrogen
- ❖ Conversion of nearly 53,000 septic systems to central sewer
- ❖ Completion of Phase One enhancements to the James Farm Ecological Preserve
- ❖ Return of shellfish farming to the Bays
- ❖ Expanded citizen monitoring
- ❖ Completion of the Anchorage Canal Drainage Area Retrofit Project
- ❖ Improved water quality monitoring, including the establishment of a high-frequency network
- ❖ Construction of six living shoreline demonstration projects
- ❖ Construction of three pilot oyster reefs, the first in the Bays
- ❖ Completion the State of the Bays report

The 2020 Presidential election resulted in a marked change in environmental policy and the passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill, which will result in a significant increase in funding for the Center for the next five years. New funding from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is also projected. The Center's private fundraising is another point of pride, with a successful 25th Anniversary Gala in

2019 and the Lessons in Nature at James Farm Ecological Preserve capital campaign, which will wrap up in 2022.

Efforts to engage the public in the Center's work continue to broaden. A comprehensive marketing plan and annual outreach action plans with measurable goals have been implemented. Volunteerism in the Center's programs grew with more structured volunteer training events and participation in the Diamondback Terrapin Project and Osprey Survey.

The James Farm Ecological Preserve (Preserve) is a stellar example of hands-on environmental education and engagement of volunteers. The youth education curriculum was overhauled and efforts to expand our reach and engage new groups were successful, despite COVID-19. A greater number of people were also reached with intergenerational programming. Phase 2 of construction for the Preserve's Master Plan will soon be underway, with design, engineering, and permitting for the improvements nearly complete. Management of the Preserve continues to be supported by a dedicated corps of volunteers.

The Science & Restoration and Conservation & Watershed Planning programs continued to focus on fish and shellfish enhancement objectives of the CCMP, provided technical assistance and advocacy for the Sussex buffer ordinance, continued implementation of the Environmental Monitoring Plan, and completed the demonstration phase of the Living Shoreline initiative. These programs have also ramped up land conservation and restoration efforts as rapid development continues in Sussex County.

Staff have been recognized for their leadership by peer organizations with three staff members garnering three separate awards of distinction. Professional development has been integrated into annual work planning, budgeting, and performance. The Board of Directors developed a succession plan, a strategy to increase participation of researchers on the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC), and received fundraising training.

The Center engaged an outside consultant to conduct a comprehensive 360 Degree Organizational Assessment, facilitate Strategic Planning, and develop a Growth Management strategy from October 2021 through March 2022. The findings of this work are reflected throughout this strategic planning document.

GOALS/OBJECTIVES NOT MET AND IDENTIFIED NEEDS

In order to accommodate the organizational growth needed to continue fulfilling its mission, the Center must continue efforts to increase State of Delaware appropriations and unrestricted funds received through private fundraising efforts. The Center also needs to continue increasing the number of volunteers engaged in its programs.

With respect to science programming, the science team should complete the estuarine hydrodynamic and water quality model, and implement the Wolfe Neck Wastewater Treatment Reforestation Project and other sites recently identified through the Rapid Assessment Project Plan. The James Farm Ecological Preserve Master Plan must also be completed.

With respect to Conservation and Watershed Planning, the agricultural actions of the Pollution Control Strategy (PCS) should be reviewed and targets updated, if necessary, to promote implementation. The CCMP Implementation Committee should devise a plan for implementing the remaining projects through partner coordination and/or plan development.

Critical issues related to the CCMP are land protection, partnership enhancement, green infrastructure and pollution control, diverse audience engagement, and wastewater disposal. The CCMP needs a formidable team to help with agriculture impact planning, promote education to diverse audiences, and implement the shellfish enhancement plan with partners. Wastewater group planning and increasing land protection and restoration need to remain an area of focus. There is growing interest from the coastal towns to help with sea level impact planning, which should be explored further.

A major finding of the 360 Degree Organizational Assessment is dissatisfaction with the organizational culture, which staff have identified as overly demanding and leading to burnout. Additionally, staffing and organizational structure and processes have not kept pace with the growth at the Center. These issues are identified as critical issues and in the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis, which are summarized in the next section. Addressing these matters is a priority of this strategic plan.

CRITICAL ISSUES (INTERNAL/EXTERNAL)

Critical issues affecting the Center, both internal and external, were identified through a 360 Degree Organizational Assessment that involved one-on-one interviews with the staff, Board of Directors, and certain other stakeholders. The internal issues identified are primarily related to capacity and organizational processes. Additional staffing is needed to both implement individual projects and focus on big picture priorities, like land protection and acquisition. The lack of fully developed human resources functions, such as a formalized onboarding process and succession planning, was identified as an area for improvement. Finally, diversity and inclusion should be a greater priority internally and externally.

External issues are primarily related to increasing threats to the Inland Bays and their watershed, such as climate change and sea-level rise, and the Center's role in communicating about these issues with the public. In particular, the Center must formally define its role in advocating for legislation that will help protect the Bays. The need to leverage partnerships and support from funders to address external issues was also identified.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS (SWOT) ANALYSIS

The SWOT analysis is a framework used to evaluate organizations and guide strategic planning. It assesses internal and external factors, as well as current and future potential. The Center's SWOT analysis was developed through one-on-one interviews with the staff, Board of Directors, and certain other stakeholders.

STRENGTHS

Strengths of the Center include: a well-defined mission and reputation as a trusted scientific authority on the health of the Inland Bays; the ability to build strong partnerships with other stakeholders in the watershed; effective engagement of volunteers; communication of key messaging to the public via various platforms; a cohesive and dedicated Board of Directors; passionate staff that are well-respected and viewed highly by supporters and the community at large.

WEAKNESSES

Weaknesses of the Center include: lack of clarity and parameters on the Center's advocacy role and how to balance this with other activities of the organization; transparency, ethics, and conflicts of interest policies for the Board of Directors;

lack of a diversity, equity, and inclusion plan to aid in staff and board member recruitment and reach broader audience, particularly in western Sussex County; staff capacity and workplace culture.

OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities for the Center include: continued expansion of outreach and educational programs; development of new partnerships with government, industry, education, and organizations serving diverse populations; improved marketing and communications to reach broader, more diverse audiences; increased impact of science and restoration efforts to address pollution and climate change; clarified advocacy position and increased advocacy efforts; better talent management through improved human resources function; DEIJ training for staff and Board of Directors; leveraging the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to engage new audiences, including HOAs.

THREATS

Threats to the Center include: divisive political climate that could impact federal or state funding; relationship improvement needed with certain partners, namely the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) and EPA; maintaining clear balance between the Center's role as a scientifically-driven organization and an advocate; economy volatility and inflation; unchecked development in Sussex County; climate change; unexpected turnover in key staff members; stagnation.

PRIORITIES AND FUTURE FOCUS

The priorities and future focus of the Center are to promote, protect, and preserve the Inland Bays and their watershed. This includes, but is not limited to, improving water quality in the Inland Bays, preserving open space for habitat preservation and outdoor recreation, and ensuring the overall health of the watershed. To accomplish this, the Center must enhance its efforts on science-based outreach and education and engage more diverse audiences to increase awareness on the importance of the Bays. Greater effort will be made to increase the diversity of the board and staff, and to develop skills to engage with diverse audiences.

Advocacy efforts will be increased with a focus on science. Enhancing existing partnerships and developing new partnerships are essential for achieving the strategic goals and objectives set forth in this plan. Land protection and preservation is a new and important strategy which will address many of the issues

raised concerning the rapid and unmitigated development of housing in Sussex County and the impact on the environment.

The Center must grow responsibly by managing capacity, balancing projects, and developing funding to ensure sustainability and growth. The Center will create a work culture that focuses on quality, fosters talent, and provides opportunities for professional growth. Transforming the culture in this way will retain and attract high quality and motivated employees. Finally, in all its work, the Center will act boldly, actively listening to the community it serves, and remaining relevant to the changing needs of the community.

MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

As part of the work on this strategic plan, the Center revisited its mission and supportive statement to ensure that it remains relevant and adequately characterizes the Center's work. The supportive statement was modified slightly. The Center also developed a vision statement and core values for the organization.

MISSION AND SUPPORTIVE STATEMENT

To preserve, protect, and restore Delaware's Inland Bays and their watershed. *The Center achieves this through science-based: research, restoration, education, outreach, public policy, and advocacy.*

VISION STATEMENT

A healthy and resilient watershed, where diverse wildlife and habitats thrive, and all who live, work, and visit contribute to its betterment as informed stewards.

CORE VALUES

- ❖ Integrity. We operate, communicate, and advocate with scientific, organizational, and individual integrity.
- ❖ Collaboration. We are successful when we work together.
- ❖ Inclusivity. We embrace the potential unleashed when all are represented.
- ❖ Respect. We act with respect for the environment and the perspectives, knowledge, and contributions of others.
- ❖ Empowerment. We empower the community to be responsible stewards of the Bays through our educational and scientific efforts. We are empowered by a positive work culture that fosters innovation, fun, and doing good.



STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

This strategic plan contains six strategic goals. These goals are not arranged within a hierarchy as they are all equally important.

The strategic goals are:

- Growth Management and Operations
- Fund Development and Sustainability
- Outreach and Education
- Science and Watershed Restoration and Coordination
- Land Protection and Restoration
- Advocacy



The Strategic Goals, Major Objectives, and Key Performance Indicators (KPI) follow.



1. Goal - Growth Management and Operations

Achieve a high-quality work culture that attracts and retains talent, supports work-life balance, and ensures responsible growth management.

Objectives

1. Establish a Human Resources function.

Responsibility: Administration

KPI - HR function in place (FY23).

KPI - Improved onboarding and professional development planning processes in place (FY24).

KPI - Staff retention rate improved through improved HR processes (FY25).

Notes: HR function is responsible for staffing, onboarding, retention, professional development, talent management, compensation and benefits, succession planning, conflicts of interest, and DEI oversight. Consider opportunities for coaching/training and mentoring for staff. DEI work will be supported by the creation of an implementation team of board and staff.

2. Create a work culture that is positive, fun, supportive, humble, focuses on quality of our deliverables, and provides time to be creative.

Responsibility: Administration and full staff.

KPI - Facilitated discussions on operationalizing cultural values completed (FY23).

KPI - Annual workplace climate surveys indicate achievement of cultural value targets (FY25).

3. Develop and maintain effective systems, processes, and plans to control and manage growth.

Responsibility: Administration and full staff.

KPI - Consider system and process recommendations, conduct further research, and develop plan to implement improvements (FY23).

KPI - 50% implementation of system and process improvement plan (FY24).

KPI - Annual systems and process reviews conducted to identify refinements and/or training needs (FY25).

Notes: Systems and processes recommendations include a) Google Drive: Improve efficiency and effectiveness of the Google Drive, b) Workplan: continue to streamline the process and add structure to changes. Use the project management tool and take all non-EPA projects out of the workplan. Implement quarterly project update meetings and have special meetings for project changes. c) Timesheets: Drop optional requirements of the General Program and add a category on professional development, d) Project Management Software: Pilot test Monday.com with the science team, e) Budgeting: Migrate Financial records and budget processes from Abila to QuickBooks, f) Holistic Software Approach: Analyze the interactivity of Project Management software (Monday.com), QuickBooks, Bloomerang, and volunteer management software. Coordinate demos and training with experts, g) Volunteer Database: Strengthen volunteer management through database system improvement and explore the development of phone apps for volunteer record keeping.

2. Goal - Fund Development and Sustainability

Strengthen relationships with current financial supporters and develop new financial resources through diverse partnerships to accelerate the growth of the Center and projects.

Objectives

1. Develop and implement a process for an integrated, board-approved fund development plan with donor targets.

Responsibility - Development; Supported by other programs and Development Committee



KPI - Development plan process established (FY23).

KPI - Increased growth in non-EPA funds realized (FY24).

2. Generate new unrestricted funding for operational capacity building by leveraging partnerships with academic, government, corporate and foundation funding.

Responsibility - Development; Supported by other programs and Development Committee

KPI - 5 new funding partners cultivated (FY25).

KPI - \$400,000 in annual unrestricted revenue achieved (FY25).

3. Increase dedicated funds from the State of Delaware (Legislature and DNREC) and EPA.

Responsibility - Administration; Board of Directors

KPI - Increase operating funds from the State of Delaware to \$300,000 by FY23 and to \$400,000 by FY25.

KPI - Explore development of annual Inland Bays ecosystem restoration line in Bond Bill (FY24).

KPI - Continue lobbying measures in partnership with the Association of National Estuary Programs (ANEP) to increase annual congressional appropriation to \$1 million per national estuary program in line with authorizations (Ongoing).

Notes: State of Delaware operating funds may be a combination of DNREC pass-through grant and Grant-In-Aid allocations. Annual Bond Bill line to support ecosystem restoration may be modeled off of the Delaware Bayshore line and utilized to leverage Bipartisan Infrastructure Funding.

3. Goal - Outreach and Education



Raise awareness of the Center and the Bays through enhanced outreach, education, and marketing to current and new diverse stakeholders.

Objectives

1. Develop a diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice (DEIJ) plan

Responsibility - Outreach & Education; Administration; Supported by full staff and Board of Directors

KPI - DEIJ plan developed (FY24).

KPI - 50% plan implementation (FY25).

Notes: Engage outside resources to provide training to improve staff skills and abilities in collaborating with diverse audiences. This objective is supported by the DEIJ implementation team of the board and staff. Plan includes targets for both community outreach and representation on staff, board, volunteers, and committees by identified groups.

2. Increase the number of constituents reached across the watershed, with an emphasis on new and diverse populations, through various mediums.

Responsibility: Outreach & Education

KPI - Reach 45,000 people through a combination of speaking engagements, events, online platforms (social media, website, YouTube), and publications on an annual basis (FY25).

Notes: Engage outside resources to provide training to improve staff skills and abilities in collaborating with diverse audiences. Diverse groups may include but are not limited to those with different attributes of race, ethnicity, economic status, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, and disability. In addition to these groups, special emphasis will be placed on engaging hunting, fishing, and powerboating stakeholders. Ensuring face-to-face presentations and events are a centerpiece of engagement and education efforts.



3. Complete implementation of James Farm Ecological Preserve Master Plan and utilize Preserve to enhance education and engagement with diverse audiences.

Responsibility - Administration; Science & Restoration; Outreach & Education

KPI - Master Plan implementation complete (FY23).

KPI - Demonstrated increase in diversity of visitors (FY24).

KPI - 2,000 students receive education annually (FY25).

KPI - 1,500 intergenerational audience members participate in programs annually (FY25).

4. Update Marketing Plan with a focus on reputation, scientific expertise, and organizational values.

Responsibility - Outreach & Education; Development

KPI - Marketing plan updated (FY25).

4. Goal - Science, Restoration, and Watershed Coordination

Use modeling and monitoring to inform a clear and accelerated path to meet water quality and habitat restoration goals through committed and integrated partnerships.

1. Set quantitative goals for prioritized pollution control actions that will achieve the total maximum daily loads for nutrients within a specified time frame.

Responsibility: Conservation & Watershed Planning; CCMP Implementation Committee

KPI: Delaware Targeting and Planning Tool functional for use (FY23).



KPI: Assess current PCS and identify updated goals to inform implementation plan (FY24).

KPI: First implementation plan developed (FY25).

Notes: The Delaware Targeting and Planning Tool (DTAP) will be utilized to optimize the selection of a suite of actions to meet the Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for nutrients by watershed. The actions and goals will be prioritized by cost-effectiveness and ecological co-benefits including wildlife habitat and carbon sequestration. DNREC is responsible for developing the DTAP. Conservation and Watershed Planning staff will need to pursue professional development activities to effectively use the DTAP to lead the development of quantitative goals and implementation plans. The CCMP Implementation Committee as supplemented by technical experts as needed will participate in the development of goals and implementation plans which will be reviewed and approved by the board. Biannual progress reports authored by the Conservation and Watershed Planning program with the support of the CCMP Implementation Committee will be prepared for partners and the general public. Explicit funding needs to meet goals will be integrated into fund development and advocacy approaches of the Center.

2. Accelerate pollution control by focusing on the agricultural actions of the Inland Bays Pollution Control Strategy.

Responsibility: Science & Restoration; Conservation and Watershed Planning; Development; CCMP Implementation Committee; Board of Directors

KPI: Over the baseline period of 2020-2022, increase cover crop implementation by a minimum 20% (FY24).

KPI: Over the baseline period of 2020-2022, increase reforestation acreage; by a minimum 500 acres (FY25).

KPI: Increase vegetative buffer acreage on agricultural lands by a minimum of (TBD) (FY25).

Notes: Accelerated implementation of reforestation and wetland creation/restoration will be dependent upon continued production of

site/project identification plans by the Center and property acquisition by the Center and its public partners. Increased funding for restoration will be developed from the Clean Water Trust, foundations, infrastructure funds, and other federal grants. Cover crop funding will be developed from the Delaware General Assembly and other sources potentially including the Clean Water Trust. Continued collaboration with Delaware Nature Society on the Clean Water for Delaware Campaign by the Outreach & Education Program will support needed Clean Water Trust funding.

3. Realize policies that increase protection of forests and wetlands.

Responsibility: Conservation & Watershed Planning; Outreach & Education; Advocacy Committee of the Board of Directors; CCMP Implementation Committee; Delaware Land Protection Coalition

KPI - State of Delaware and Sussex County increase and maintain open space funding (FY23).

KPI - Sussex County adopts tree protection ordinance (FY24).

KPI - State updates Land Protection Act and increases base funding to Trust (FY24).

KPI - State of Delaware introduces legislation to protect freshwater wetlands (FY25).

Notes: Feasibility of County ordinances will be dependent upon the makeup of County Council. County buffer ordinance may need to be revisited to align with CCMP if forest protection is not included. Statewide tree protection legislation may need to be considered if the County does not pass an adequate ordinance. The Delaware Land Protection Coalition continues to be supported by the Center to re-envision and update the Delaware Land Protection Act.

4. Complete 50% of a hydrodynamic and water quality model for the Inland Bays.

Responsibility: Science & Restoration; STAC

KPI - Model for the entire system will be 50% completed (FY25) or,



KPI - A portion of the system completely modeled (FY25).

5. Wastewater Planning Subcommittee develops wastewater nutrient loading budget and initiates priority recommendations of white paper.

Responsibility: Conservation & Watershed Planning; Wastewater Planning Subcommittee of STAC

KPI - Wastewater nutrient loading budget and white paper completed (FY23).

KPI - Priority recommendation of white paper initiated (FY24).

6. Enhance partnerships to advance estuarine ecosystem restoration

Responsibility: Science & Restoration; CCMP Implementation Committee; Board of Directors

KPI - Complete shellfish enhancement plan (FY23).

KPI - Complete two partnership-based restoration projects for each ecosystem: baygrass meadows, wetlands or shoreline, oyster reef (FY25).

KPI - University of Delaware (UD)-Delaware State University (DSU) Shellfish Hatchery supplies materials for shellfish restoration in the Inland Bays (FY24).

Notes: By focusing efforts to build the capacity and involvement of partner organizations, the Center hopes to accelerate estuarine ecosystem restoration. These partners include the DNREC as well as potential new partners in estuarine ecosystem restoration such as The Nature Conservancy, The Sussex Conservation District, the Army Corps of Engineers, and oyster farmers. Key to oyster restoration will be the completion of the shellfish enhancement plan. The Center will continue to support the collaboration between the UD and DSU to construct and operate a small shellfish hatchery in Lewes to supply both the shellfish farming industry and restoration of wild populations of shellfish. In addition, the Center will help to advance the concept of a much larger Shellfish and Aquaculture Innovation Center in Lewes.



7. Assist in developing leadership and capacity within Sussex County and local communities to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Responsibility: Conservation & Watershed Planning; CCMP Implementation Committee; SCAT; Sussex County

KPI - Initiate one shared climate vulnerability plan (FY25).

KPI - Explore dedicated external or Center-internal staff position (FY24).

Notes: County and municipal governments and homeowner associations are highly vulnerable to the increasing risks of sea-level rise, coastal flooding, and increased heat. In turn, pollution contributions and habitat stressors of these built environments increase as inland estuary migration accelerates and natural buffers disappear. Assistance and education is needed within local government on how to understand, adapt to, and mitigate the effects of climate change on the Inland Bays and infrastructure. Needs include plan development, coordination, expert education and consultation, grant procurement and administration, and project management. Dedicated staff at the County level and circuit riders employed by state agencies or non-profits are options for assistance. Because climate stressors will only increase, these positions will need to be permanent with a dedicated source of funding. Leadership development within the local governments will also be a function of ongoing relationship building and management from the leadership of the Center and its partners.

Goal - Land Protection and Restoration

Develop the Center as a significant land protection organization that coordinates with partners to acquire land for habitat protection and restoration, pollution control, climate mitigation and public recreation.

Objectives

1. Maintain the Sussex Conservation Partnership (SCP) to accelerate land protection and scale Center-led pollution control/ecosystem restoration projects.

Responsibility - Conservation & Watershed Planning; Science & Restoration



KPI - Increase in acreage of protected lands per SCP goals.

KPI - Increase in acreage of restoration projects on protected lands.

Notes: The Center will continue to serve as the backbone organization of the Sussex Conservation Partnership, which has as its goal to increase the amount of natural lands, including cultural, historical, and recreational resources, protected through acquisition or conservation easement in Sussex County. Lands will continue to be acquired by partners and, where appropriate, owned and managed by the Center. Restoration project potential will continue to be a criteria for acquisition and the Center will coordinate and implement restoration projects on partner and Center-acquired parcels.

2. Create an exploratory workgroup to determine feasibility and approach to the Center becoming a significant land holder and manager.

Responsibility - Conservation & Watershed Planning; Board of Directors

KPI - Workgroup operating (FY23).

KPI - Best practices or operating procedures for Center acquisition projects developed for board consideration (FY23).

Notes: Workgroup to include members of the staff and board as well as experts associated with partner organizations. Topics for workgroup discussion include 1) best practices for property acquisition, maintenance, and public access for Center owned lands, 2) assessment of costs and funding sources to manage acquired lands and easements, 3) potential for Center to serve as a land management contractor for County-owned preserves outside of the James Farm including legal, financial and political considerations, 4) staff development needs and staffing structures to support goal, 5) creation of subsidiary organization to allow eligibility of federal cost share for protection, restoration, and conservation cost share.

3. Explore potential to demonstrate and promote regenerative agriculture practices on Center acquired lands.

Responsibility - Conservation & Watershed Planning; Science & Restoration

KPI - Potential for regenerative agriculture demonstration considered for each acquisition of the Center and its Sussex Conservation Partners.

Notes: By demonstrating regenerative agricultural practices, the Center can maintain productive agricultural lands, realize pollution control and wildlife habitat benefits, and potentially realize a profit to support operations. Potential partners include the Sussex Conservation District, Delaware Department of Agriculture, Sussex County, and University of Delaware Cooperative Extension. Demonstrations could be managed by the Center on Center-owned or Center-managed properties or those of partners.

Goal – Advocacy

Proactively shape and affect implementation of environmental policy to improve the quality of the watershed by increasing the capacity of the Center as a science-based advocate.

Objectives

1. Define and communicate the Center’s advocacy role.

Responsibility: Board of Directors; Outreach & Education; Conservation & Watershed Planning

KPI: Policy on Center advocacy completed and in effect (FY24).

Notes: A policy document defining the Center’s advocacy role and actions will be developed by board and staff through one or more workshops and approved by the board. The policy will specify and justify what advocacy actions the Center does and does not undertake. The document will serve both internal and external audiences. Elements of advocacy addressed will include monitoring legislation and regulation, proactive development of legislation, and analysis and request of effective enforcement. The latter element will deserve special attention in the policy.

2. Evaluate organizational crisis communication and management strategy.

Responsibility: Executive Committee; Supported by Outreach & Education

KPI: Evaluate strategy based on the Center’s advocacy role as defined through previous objective (FY24).

Notes: A strategy for communication and management of issues of immediate importance to the Bays will be developed and approved by the board. The strategy will include expectations for notification and communication among board members and staff when crises arise. Procedures for how issues will be communicated to the general public by the Center will be developed. Methods to improve communication about critical issues to the public through increased information sharing among board and staff will be developed. Examples of crises include oil spills, flooding, fish kills, and severe permit violations resulting in pollution.

3. Increase internal and external capacity for advocacy.

Responsibility: Conservation & Watershed Planning; Outreach & Education; Science & Restoration; Board of Directors

KPI: Policy Committee of the board formed (FY24).

KPI: Addition of contractual or staff support (full or part-time) (FY25).

KPI: Relationships among advocacy partners maintained and increased as measured by the number of groups utilizing Center policy positions or related science in a given year after the FY23 baseline.

KPI: Requirement for bona fide environmental advocate organization representation on board via board-elected or certain appointed seats explored during succession planning (FY24).

Notes: Additional support at the staff level (contractual or employee) to research, develop and communicate policy positions is an essential part of this objective’s contribution to the strategic goal. Support competencies will include broad technical capacity in regards to water pollution, conservation, and fish and wildlife management as well as public facing communication. Tasks will include review of permit applications and provision of technical comments, research and development of comments on proposed legislation, assessment of the effectiveness of enforcement to achieve policy goals, and occasional development of new legislation. The Center will continue to work to provide advocacy partners and the general public with

science based policy positions through additional support roles. Other commensurate organizations have requirements for environmental groups or advocates to be represented at the Board level (other NEPs, Nutrient Management Commission, Water Infrastructure Advisory Council); this will be explored for its effectiveness to meet the Center's strategic goal.

4. Leverage SCAT and HOAs to advocate for policies and permits that implement the CCMP.

Responsibility: SCAT; CAC; Administration; Outreach & Education; Conservation & Watershed Planning

KPI: Comments on relevant policies and permits provided by at least five municipalities and communities per year.

Notes: As a result of Center outreach and requests within the past year , municipalities, and to some extent property owners associations and HOAs, have increased engagement on certain policies related to the CCMP. The Center will leverage this momentum through its relationships with SCAT, ACT, CAC and staff to increase involvement of these groups in policy decisions that affect them. Development of board position expectations for SCAT will help with this action.



SUPPORTIVE DOCUMENTS

- Center Work Plan
- Staffing Plan
- Fund Development Plan
- DEIJ Plan
- CCMP
- Implementation Plans