

New Jersey Clean Water Council

September 8, 2015

Location:

NJEIT, 3131 Princeton Pike, Building 4, Suite 216, Lawrenceville, NJ

Members Present:	
George Bakun – NJ Business & Industry Jim Cosgrove – NJ Society of PEs Jessica Sanchez - DRBC Dan Van Abs – General Public Stan Cach – NJ Dept. Environmental of Protection James Requa – NJ Dept. of Community Affairs Mohammad Ali- NJ Dept. of Agriculture Robert Breslin- NJ AFL-CIO	Anthony Valente – NJ Dept. of Labor & Industry Russ Furnari – NJ Chamber of Commerce Anthony McCracken- General Public Amy Goldsmith – General Public Mary- Anna Holden - NJBPU G. Christian Andreasen – Water Supply Advisory Council Gina A. Berg – NJ Association of Counties
Others: Helen Heinrich – NJCWC Advisor	NJDEP Staff: Michele Putnam, Director, Div. of Water Quality Breana Whittaker, Division of Water Quality Maria Zazzera - NJBPU Patricia Gardner- Director, Div. Water Monitoring & Standards (DWM&S) Patricia Ingelido – DWM&S Lynette Lurig – DWM&S Thomas Belton – Office of Science, Research & Environmental Health

Meeting Called to Order: Chair Dan Van Abs at 10:10 AM.

The motion to approve the July 14, 2015 meeting highlights was made by James Cosgrove and seconded by Anthony Valente with the request to add the time the Commissioner entered and left the meeting. Mary-Anna Holden abstained .

New Business:

The Chair announced the new provisional appointment to the NJCWC is Gina Berg, Water Resources Coordinator, from Burlington County, representing the NJ Association of Counties, who will be included in the nomination packet.

Update: Governor’s Action Plan for Barnegat Bay (Plan 9: Comprehensive Research)

To provide a better understanding of what has been done in the Barnegat Bay and better inform the Council on a potential public hearing topic, Thomas Belton from the Division of Science, Research, and Environmental Health gave a presentation “Filling in the Gaps: Barnegat Bay Research Update (2012-2015)”. The presentation will be included on the NJCWC’s website. Mr. Belton discussed the process to determine the most detrimental human impacts to the watershed and the Commissioner’s ten point action plan to address those issues. The action plan includes:

1. Close Oyster Creek Nuclear Power Plant
2. Fund Stormwater Runoff Mitigation Projects
3. Reduce Nutrient Pollution from Fertilizer
4. Require Post-Construction Soil Restoration
5. Acquire Land in the Watershed
6. Special Area Management Planning
7. Adopt More Rigorous Water Quality Standards
8. Educate the Public
9. Fill in the Gaps on Research
10. Reduce Water Craft Impacts

To further understand points seven and nine (Adopt More Rigorous Water Quality Standards and Fill in the Gaps on Research), the first step was to reach out to other members in the department to determine what problems they encountered. After the existing problems were better understood, the Department developed ten (10) research projects that would span all of the issues. The ten research projects consist of:

1. Bethic Invertebrate Community Monitoring and Indicator Development for the Barnegat Bay- Little Egg Harbor Estuary
2. Barnegat Bay Diatom Nutrient Inference Model
3. Benthic Pelagic Coupling: Hard Clams as Indicators of Suspended Particulates in the Barnegat Bay
4. Assessment of Fishes and Crabs Responses to Human Alteration of Barnegat Bay.
5. Assessment of the Distribution and Abundance of Stinging Sea Nettle (Jellyfish) in Barnegat Bay
6. Baseline Characterization of Phytoplankton and Harmful Algal Blooms
7. Baseline Characterization of Zooplankton in Barnegat Bay
8. Multi-Trophic Level Modeling of Barnegat Bay
9. Tidal Freshwater and Salt Marsh Wetland Studies of Changing Ecological Function and Adaptation Strategies
10. Ecological Evaluation of Sedge Island Marine Conservation Area in Barnegat Bay

Following Mr. Belton's presentation, the Council further discussed the public/private partnership and volunteer work that was needed to assist in the intended project's outcome with Mr. Belton and Pat Gardner's staff. The Department worked with 7 labs and 13 private entities to ensure all the proper samples were collected and evaluated. As another example of volunteer work that supports environmental management objectives, Mr. Belton described the Jellyfish study (#5) which found that one possible explanation for the increase in stinging nettles in Barnegat Bay may have to do with an increase in hard surfaces where adult polyps attach (e.g., bulkheads and docks). In addition, this may have been exacerbated by much of the original arsenic treated wood bulkheads having been replaced with plastic which provides an ideal location for polyps to form. Subsequently, the Department asked members of the community to volunteer for a study to determine if lifting and cleaning the docks of polyps each winter would prove beneficial. The Department also looked at opportunities for establishing Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESA) similar to the Sedge Island Marine Conservation Zone (#10). DEP staff and volunteers, including marine and local police, were needed to identify specific locations where boaters were misusing the waterways. Volunteers and DEP staff were also used to educate the public by sharing maps and information.

It was noted that there will be a Barnegat Bay Research outreach stakeholder meeting on November 17th at Ocean County College jointly sponsored by NJDEP and the Barnegat Bay Partnership. The Council agreed the interested public will be receiving a lot of information on the Barnegat Bay Program from the November stakeholder meeting and the release of the Barnegat Bay Communication and Action Plan in the next coming months. This information can be used to inform the public prior to the Council's next hearing. The Council will consider delaying the hearing to a more appropriate date. In the meantime, while Mr. Belton's presentation proved technically informative, the Council would like to reach out to non-technical leaders in the Barnegat Bay Program, BBP. The Chair extended an invitation to the appropriate NJDEP representative that could discuss the BBP's partnerships and come to the next Council's meeting. The Council will continue to consider "What in the Barnegat Bay Process is transferrable to other areas in the State?"

While discussions followed focusing on the public hearing, the chair suggested continuing the discussions at the October meeting after hearing the Department's BBP's partnerships accomplishments.

The next meeting will be on October 13, 2015 at the Environmental Infrastructure Trust's offices.

Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned at 12:30 pm.