

# COASTAL ZONE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

## Minutes of the January 13, 2016 Meeting of the Coastal Zone Advisory Committee (CZAC)

The regular meeting of CZAC was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Mr. Don Benczkowski on January 13, 2016, in the 10<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room of the Rachel Carson State Office Building, Harrisburg, PA.

### **The following committee representatives were present:**

Don Benczkowski	PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)
Dan Fitzpatrick	PA Department of Economic and Community Development (DCED)
Tom Ford	PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)
Shayne Hoachlander	PA Game Commission (PGC)
Jackie Koons-Felion	PA Department of Transportation (PennDOT)
Jeremy Young	Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC)
John Van Zant	PA Public Utility Commission (PUC)
Jordan Van Order	PA Public Utility Commission (PUC)
Scott Bollinger	PA Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC)
Diana Day	PA Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC)
Amy Verbofsky	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC)
Amy Murdock (phone)	Erie County Department of Planning (ECDP)
Thomas Hughes	PA Emergency Management Agency (PEMA)
Diana Olinger	NOAA
Stacey Box	PA DEP
Joe Sieber	PA DEP
Kevin Hess	PA DEP
Matt Walderon	PA DEP
Samantha Burton	PA DEP
Lori Mohr	PA DEP
Sean Gimbel	PA DEP, Water Resources Planning
Kelly Heffner	PA DEP, Special Deputy Secretary, Water Resources Planning
Randy Brown (phone)	PA DEP, Southeast Regional Staff
Jacob Moore (phone)	PA DEP, Northwest Regional Staff

**Introductions:** Don Benczkowski began the meeting at 9:35 a.m., leading introductions and noting with great sadness the passing of our director, Andy Zemba. While shocked and stunned with losing Andy, the Coastal Program will find a way to carry on to the best of our collective abilities.

**Minutes:** Minutes of the June 3, 2015 CZAC meeting were approved as written.

**Public Comments:** Mr. Benczkowski asked if there were any comments. Upon hearing none, the meeting moved into the heart of the agenda.

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**FFY 2016 Coastal Zone Grants Update:** Stacey Box stated that the FY 2016 grant round closed last October. Due to the fact that the state budget has not been passed, the Department has been unable to announce the approved applications. Ms. Box noted that the program received a total of 43 applications, including 13 from the Erie Coastal Zone and 30 from the Delaware Coastal Zone. The CRM program was still accepting comments from CZAC agency members through January 31, 2016.

- Since last October, both local committees met to hear applicant presentations and rank the projects. In turn, DEP staff will complete internal review, project scoring and ranking by the end of February and submit the completed CMP package to NOAA in April 2016.
- Don noted that the normal grant round opens in mid-August and closes in mid-October. Unfortunately, the 2015 grant round has been disrupted due to the Commonwealth's incomplete state budget.

**PA State Wildlife Action Plan:** In the continuing spirit of interagency cooperation and information-sharing, Diana Day of the PA Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) provided a detailed presentation of the recently updated PFBC/Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP). Ms. Day noted that the commissions receive over \$20 Million from the USFWS as part of the cooperative effort of revising state SWAPs. This ten-year plan serves to identify the PFBC/PGC's conservation plan for the next ten years. Primarily, the plan focuses on species habitat, threats and conditions in effort to preserve various species and habitat proactively, well before they become threatened, endangered or forever lost.

- New to this draft plan is an updated regional analyses of species/habitat considering potential climate change impacts to habitat. Kevin Hess asked if the PFBC has accounted for aquatic species in the Delaware, and Ms. Day responded no, there are no dedicated marine species in the plan.
- The presentation was well-received by CZAC members. This draft plan has been submitted for review to the USFWS and will remain under review for much of 2016.

**Section 309 Update:** Kevin Hess provided an update of the CRM Program's Section 309 Strategy. With a special thank-you to Diana Olinger, Mr. Hess reported that NOAA has approved the Strategy document, noting that new work under this approval will start in October 2016.

- **Delaware Estuary Coastal Zone Boundary Expansion Proposal:** Kevin Hess discussed the idea of exploring a Delaware Estuary Coastal Zone Boundary Expansion. As conceptualized, this would be a relatively smaller scale and more straightforward expansion than the recent expansion proposed for the Lake Erie Watershed. For example, the Delaware approach may or may not include the addition of any new municipalities. Although the potential delineations for the boundary are still being developed, DEP has received local support for the idea. Accordingly, staff will seek volunteers and support from Delaware and Bucks Counties as well as Philadelphia and the DVRPC. Kevin added that it is hoped that the local advisory committee takes the lead in expanding the boundary, and that NOAA would approve it via Routine Program Change.
- **Building Capacity to Facilitate Climate Adaptation Planning and Community Resiliency:** Kevin noted that the Department has prioritized climate change and resiliency planning and as such, will review its technical guidance and policies in an effort to include

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additional resiliency-building measures. It is anticipated that the CRM Program will partner with locally-driven climate change/resiliency projects, particularly with the DVRPC. Finally, Kevin asked that in anticipation of the next CZAC meeting that each agency report on its respective climate change plans completed to date.

- **Coastal Marine Spatial Planning Update:** Matt Walderon provided an update of the Marine Spatial Planning effort, which will provide a spatial map of vital Lake Erie resources and reference points in support of a permit decision tool. To date, three years of lake bottom substrate sampling has been completed yet much more work remains to be completed. The recent state budget impasse has limited the CRM program's ability to complete work, yet progress was achieved. Matt showed underwater video footage of the lake bottom of various sites in Lake Erie. Many of these videos will be posted on the DEP YouTube link for public viewing. In addition, Matt provided actual video of shipwrecks as well as initial efforts at identifying critical fish reproduction habitat. Matt added that he has completed 150 sidescan runs in Lake Erie and staff continues work on post processing and acoustic analysis. The program cited the need to gather more data at dredge disposal sites and around stream mouths in Lake Erie in the future.
- **Erie County Boundary Expansion Update:** Don Benczkowski noted that there has been little progress in this arena except that, currently, an internal decision within NOAA is pending. This decision will determine the level of documentation necessary for approval of a boundary expansion.

### **Coastal Zone Updates – Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission:**

- Amy Verbofsky (DVRPC) provided a number of project updates in the Southeast region. The project presentation included updates on the Chester City stormwater infrastructure study, Pier 68 in Philadelphia, the Delaware Avenue Extension Trail, Baxter Trail, East Park Reservoir, Philadelphia Climate Study, and a joint Resiliency Planning effort with the state of New Jersey. Amy noted that the Delaware County Task Force meeting would be held on January 27 in Chester.
- Amy Murdock (Erie County Planning Department) revealed a list of projects that included work on a new City of Erie Comprehensive Plan, projects planned near the Bayfront Hotel and additional project work at the Erie Port Authority site, new work to be completed at McCallister Place, Lampe Marina, and an updated flood map for Lake Erie coastal communities. Ms. Murdock noted the big plans for the Army Corps of Engineers proposed dredging work at the entrance of Presque Isle Bay, a project that will receive much local attention. As discussed previously at CZAC, the nomination application to make the "Lake Erie Quadrangle" into a National Marine Sanctuary has now been submitted to NOAA.

### **Agency Updates:**

- John Van Zant (PUC) noted that Mr. Andrew Place has been named as a new PUC Commissioner, and that he will be leaving as PUC representative to CZAC, replaced with his colleague Jordan Van Order.

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- Tom Hughes (PEMA) stated that in 2016, there is a national competition for FEMA pre-disaster mitigation grants. These grants offer a 75% federal to 25% local cost share basis, with a nationwide total \$100 Million to be awarded in 2016. In addition, there is a separate grant available in 2016, known as the Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant, which provided a total of \$125 Million in 2015. It is not clear if the 2016 grants will offer a similar level of awards. The state grant round is open from April to August 5, and the deadline for all applications is set for the end of the first week in August 2016. In turn, the state team will begin review of grants in the third week of August and submit its findings and recommendations to FEMA by the end of August, 2016.
- Tom Ford (DCNR) made a brief comment regarding his similar experience to those cited by DEP and other agencies, in that the current unknown status of the state budget has adverse effects on DCNR's Conservation/Recreation Grants during the present grant cycle.
- Shane Hoachlander (PGC) discussed current land management issues on the Erie County Gamelands including the ongoing battle against invasive species and the recent trials of conducting a controlled burn with limited success.
- Scott Bollinger (PFBC), new to CZAC, introduced himself and noted that he works to improve fishing opportunities in Erie County within the Erie Access Improvement Program. Also, he currently is working to complete a project to gain public access in Bucks County on transient boat docks. Scott has had successes in securing easements and in numerous acquisition projects, gaining 30 easements and ten acquisitions to date.
- Jackie Koons-Felion (DOT) discussed the new federal transportation funding act called Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST), which provides five years of funding for transportation projects. Currently, Jackie reports that of the 128 project applications submitted as part of the transportation alternative program, that CZAC may be interested in those that may be approved in either coastal zone. Of particular interest to several agencies is the new extreme weather program study, led by Doug Zimmerman. This project is in the early stages of development with a focus on examining the relationship and potential adverse effects of climate change and resiliency as they pertain to flooding and stormwater changes upon the transportation network.
- Jeremy Young (PHMC) provided an update on a disaster planning effort for historic properties in Philadelphia. In the first phase of this effort, PHMC is working closely with federal and local agencies to enhance emergency preparation and hazard mitigation plans with a focus on historic structures and communities. Phase II will see more detailed vulnerability assessments completed in conjunction with the USACOE with the intention of developing appropriate historic hazard mitigation plans.
- Jake Moore (DEP) noted that the chief of the Office of the Great Lakes (Tim Bruno) has recently acquired a buoy to place in Presque Isle Bay to monitor algae levels. The monitoring work is part of a shared effort to understand harmful algae blooms and work in conjunction with the Research Science Consortium in preventing environmental and health problems along Lake Erie.

**Other Business:** The next CZAC meeting is scheduled for 9:30 a.m. on June 8, 2016

The meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.