

**January 15, 2025 Meeting of the  
Coastal Zone Advisory Committee**

The regular meeting of the Coastal Zone Advisory Committee (CZAC) was called to order at 9:30 a.m. This meeting was held in hybrid format, provided both in-person at the RCSOB 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room and virtually via Microsoft Teams.

**The following committee representatives were in attendance:**

Stacey Box	Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Coastal Resources Management Program (CRMP)
Mark Sweppenhiser	Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC)
Bryon Ruhl	Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT)
Brad Holcomb	Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC)
Joy Fronzoli	PA Dept. of Community and Economic Development (DCED)
Michael Kane	Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA)
Cindy Dunlap	PA Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)

**The following agency representatives (non-CZAC members) were in attendance:**

Jason Minnich	DEP, CRMP
J. Samantha Burton	DEP, CRMP
Allison Hoff	DEP, CRMP
Randy Brown	DEP, CRMP
Matthew Walderon	DEP, CRMP
Shane Gutsie	DEP, CRMP
Duke Adams	DEP, CRMP
Emily Ashberry	DEP, CRMP
Austin Grace	DEP, Bureau of Regulatory Counsel
Shelby Clark	DEP, CRMP Northwest Regional Staff
Amy Verbofsky	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC)
Penny Ayers	PFBC
Ernest Szabo	Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA)
Diana Olinger	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
Sarah Whitney	Pennsylvania Sea Grant
Erik Leeds	PEMA
Thomas Hughes	PEMA
Brian Chalfant	DEP Policy Office
Jack Palumbo	DEP Policy Office

# COASTAL ZONE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

## **I. Introductions**

Stacey Box began the meeting at 9:34 a.m., welcomed attendees and led the introductions.

## **II. Review and Approval of Minutes**

Stacey Box asked for approval of the draft minutes from the June 2024 CZAC meeting. The minutes were approved as written.

## **III. Coastal Resources Management Grant Program, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Updates**

Shane Gutsie provided several updates:

- 2024 Coastal Zone Grants have been announced
  - Over \$690,000 distributed to seventeen projects in the Delaware Estuary Coastal Zone and the Lake Erie Coastal Zone.
  - Contracts are in process of being executed.
- FY 2025 grant round closed in October 2024.
  - Program is not sure of funding amount available as of this meeting
  - DECZ Advisory Committee held in December
  - LECZ Advisory Committee held in November
- The Department received 25 applications:
  - 16 from DECZ
  - 9 from LECZ
  - Applications are currently being reviewed and scored
- List of applicants and projects is attached to package to share with committee.
- Committee members are asked if they have interest in reviewing relevant applications to provide comments to program.

Stacey Box provided an update on the BIL/IRA awards. Agreements are in place with NOAA for most of the funding we received for the BIL. CRMP is anticipating hiring an employee in the upcoming months. CRMP is partnering with Penn State Behrend in Erie Pa. to use IRA funds for lidar and orthoimagery along Lake Erie to evaluate bluff recession and better plan for resiliency along the Great Lakes coastline.

## **IV. Section 309 Strategy Update**

Randy Brown provided the following updates:

Existing 309  
LECZ

## COASTAL ZONE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

- Task – Assess whether stormwater discharges cause accelerated bluff erosion. Pivoted to modifying existing vegetation manual to include stormwater recommendations, examples for property owners along the bluff crest.
- Partnered with Mercyhurst college to do the update. Met with them for kickoff meeting on 1/9/2025. Will be collaborative effort with CZM/NW folks (Shelby)

### DECZ

- Task – Assess multi-municipal stormwater collaboratives in the SE region. Partnered with DVRPC (Amy V.) for the work. DVRPC met with several municipalities and other groups to see what works / what doesn't.

### Future 309 (2026 – 2031)

- Engaged stakeholders for 309 enhancement area survey.
- Began writing the assessment portion of the 309. Phase 1 reviews are wrapping up. Phase 2 for Coastal Hazards is underway.
- Strategy kick-off meeting on 1/9/2025 (with NWRO). Discussed using new LiDAR data (being acquired from IRA money) and updating DEP's Bluff Recession and Setback Act and Chapter 85 regulations in order to update bluff recession hazard areas and potentially setbacks. The current "official" study is referenced by name in Chapter 85 and is officially 20 years old.
- Began outreach to get cost estimates and gauge interest with Penn State University

Set up "309 Support Group" to collaborate with other Great Lake States regarding 309.

### Other Business:

- Great Lakes Dredge Team Meeting – hosted by PA this past year. Two main topics – dredge disposal sites Confined Disposal Facilities (CDF), open lake disposal, more specifically on beneficial reuse and Per and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS). Identified a need for PA to create a dredge management area/CDF for dredge disposal similar to Conneaut, Ohio.
- Partnership for the Delaware Estuary (PDE) is creating Philadelphia Shoreline Resilience Committee focusing on living shorelines, which we are a member of. Inaugural meeting tentatively scheduled for March 5, 2025
- STAC – Upcoming PDE Science Summit at Wilmington, DE. February 10-12.

## V. Local Coastal Zone Updates

## COASTAL ZONE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

### Delaware Estuary Coastal Zone Update:

Amy Verbofsky, (DVRPC) presented on trail updates, new funding, waterfront development and updates regarding multiple Eastwick projects.

#### Trail Updates:

- Christian to Crescent Trail Status – On track to be completed by mid-2025 - \$45M project that connects Christian Street to Greys Ferry Crescent segment of trail – steel cable trail that is over the Schuylkill River
- Pennypack Path Connector Trail – Ribbon cutting held October 2024 – helps to create a seamless 10 mile connection from the Delaware River to Bristol Road in Bucks County – creates a safe crossing for pedestrian and cyclists
- Delaware River Trail – celebrated it's one millionth trail

#### New Funding

#### DECZ Update:

- FHWA Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program – City of Philadelphia – Connecting Philadelphia's Schuylkill River Trail from Manayunk to Passyunk - \$13.6M
- DVRPC Regional Trails Program – Bristol Township – East Coast Greenway – River Road Trail (design)) - \$200,000
- US DOT Reconnecting Communities – City of Philadelphia – Bridging the Gap: Ensuring Equity and Access for All in Fairhill and Kensington - \$2M and Center City District – Redeveloping the Reading Viaduct in Lower North Philadelphia - \$2M
- Richmond Industrial Trail – Rail Park Viaduct Greenway concept

#### FY25 TIP for DVRPC's Pa. Counties:

- North Delaware Riverfront Greenway – the Tacony Homesburg Trail, Section 3, is approximately two miles long and begins at Princeton Avenue and runs north along the river's edge into the existing Pennypack Park trail - \$2.7M
- Spring Garden Connector – to develop a complete street design for Spring Garden Street and complete the Center City section of the ECG - \$53M for final design and construction
- PA 291 Complete Streets, Irving to Ridley Creek – To increase safety for all roadway users, including motorists, pedestrians, cyclists and transit riders by reconstructing the

## COASTAL ZONE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

roadway into a more appropriate facility for Chester City while constructing a multi-use side path that will be designated as part of the East Coast Greenway - \$36M

### PA DCNR C2P2 Grants:

- Heritage Conservancy – installation of approximately six acres of meadows in the Central Delaware River Watershed, Bucks County - \$62K
- Pa. Environmental Council – installation of approximately 10 acres of meadows in the Central and Lower Delaware River watersheds in Bucks, Montgomery, Philadelphia and Delaware counties - \$50K
- North American Land Trust – installation of approximately 20 acres of meadows and post-planting establishment on 26 acres of meadows in the Lower Delaware River Watershed, Delaware and Chester counties - \$276K
- Ridley Township – further development of Blackrock Park. Work to include construction of pedestrian walkways and parking area, installation of lighting, stormwater management measures, ADA access, landscaping and project signs - \$304K
- Upper Chichester – prepare a trail study for the development of a trail system in Upper Chichester Township - \$32.6K
- Pa. Horticultural Society – coordinate urban and community forestry in the city of Philadelphia and southeastern Pa., engage communities in planting trees and build local tree stewardship capacity in Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties - \$1M
- Philly Parks and Rec – installation of approximately five acres of riparian forest buffers along Cobbs Creek - \$150K
  - Restoration of 180 feet of the Schuylkill River along the Schuylkill River Trail in the vicinity of the South Street bridge in the city of Philadelphia. Work to include streambank stabilization, installation of stormwater management

## COASTAL ZONE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

- measures, landscaping, project sign and other related site improvements - \$500K
- SRT improvements – work to include lighting upgrades on approximately 0.28 miles of trail, ADA access, landscaping, project sign and other related site improvements - \$86K

### Waterfront Development Updates:

- Park at Penn’s Landing – replace cap, install park and add pedestrian bridge – project is underway and progressing - \$329M
- FloatLab – located on the Schuylkill river in Bartram’s Garden – construction has started – the steel structure is being constructed in North Carolina then will be brought to Philadelphia
- Robert A. Borski Park – park is nearing completion of phase 1 – 10 acre park on Philadelphia street – walking paths were installed, overgrowth is being cut and developing a play area. Phase 2 will begin when funds are raised

### Eastwick Update:

- USACE Levee Study -
- OEM Eastwick Alerts – these alerts are tailed to the community for events such as flooding. Eastwick is installing tie gauges in the Darby Falls and measure creek water levels. Tom Hughes says PEMA has been very engaged with this project – please see attached email from Tom Hughes as visibility for the committee for PEMA’s open grants.

### **Lake Erie Coastal Zone Update:**

Shelby Clark provided an update for the Northwest region:

- The Army Corps of Engineers Buffalo District is updating its Dredge Materials Management Plan for the Federal portion of the Lake Erie Harbor. A February 5 meeting is planned at the Tom Ridge Environmental Center for invited stakeholders to discuss potential beneficial re-use sites for the dredged material. Currently, dredged materials are eligible for open lake disposal. The Corps has an overall goal of moving to 70% re-use by 2030.
- National Park Service Waterfront Trail project—The Midwest Council of Governments received a non-monetary Technical Services grant from the National Park Service to develop a waterfront trail that runs throughout the Great Lakes states. It is intended to mirror a similar trail in the Canadian provinces. In Pennsylvania, the project will focus on the public access points in the coastal municipalities. Members from the Coastal Program, DCNR, and the Erie County Department of Planning and Community Development sit on the Committee.

## COASTAL ZONE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

- Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities initiative—The focus on this initiative is on siting a potential nature-based restoration project in Pennsylvania’s coastal zone. A representative from the Initiative will reach out to those municipalities that have been identified as having a potential restoration site to further discuss potential projects.

### **VI. Bryon Ruhl: PennDOT Wildlife Crossings Program - Presentation**

Bryon Ruhl is an Environmental Planner II in the Bureau of Project Delivery of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation for the last 14 years. Bryon is also the Wildlife Crossing Program coordinator.

Bryon’s presentation covered a wide variety of topics such as how roads and humans are affecting wildlife movement, why wildlife move, impacts to wildlife movement including aquatic and amphibian, ecological connectivity, types of crossings, and the positive changes being made by PennDOT and the Pa. House.

Looking to the future, Bryon and his team hope to implement the model of Consensus building mirroring the State of Virginia’s current program. This is a collaborative network of resource agencies, colleges/universities, grant organization and insurance groups that provide research, education, outreach, funding and legislation.

PennDOT was awarded a grant in the amount of \$840,000 in the spring of 2024 to develop a statewide wildlife crossing plan, develop data collection methods, utilize GIS mapping tools and to provide public outreach and education. Work is to begin January 2025.

Bryon’s can be reached at 717-787-0457 or email: [bruhl@pa.gov](mailto:bruhl@pa.gov)

Here is a link to the PennDOT wildlife crossings website:

<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/penndot/programs-and-doing-business/environment/wildlife-crossings.html>

### **VI. Agency Updates**

Cindy Dunlap (DCNR)

- New regional advisor in the Northwest region. She has been working with Shelby Clark.
- Record number of applications for grants in 2024. They have awarded over \$79M
- Partnering with Bureau of Forestry – creating a new lane for a new grant program
- Grant round 31 is opening January 21, 2025 and closes April 2, 2025
- Looking to overhaul their current grant program. Criteria will be developed with DCNR priorities, recreation access for all, climate mapping, trail maps, etc. Open to feedback and comments from the public. This new overhaul will be launched for grant round 32

## COASTAL ZONE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Joy Fronzoli (DCED)

- Housing is top priority – DCED is hosting housing roundtables – Erie’s was held Monday and received great discussion and feedback. Housing action plan survey is on website. Conducting land use survey – county and municipality levels. Survey is closing March 12, 2025.

Brad Holcomb (PGC)

- Working on controlling invasive species along Lake Erie. Want more native species
- Treated 158 acres in 2024. Across the Northwest region, they treated over 5,000 acres for species of greatest conservation need, focusing on habitat
- Updating comprehensive game lands plan

Mark Sweppenhiser (PFBC)

- Working with Duquesne University to develop a sustainable business model for abandoned boats. Looking to implement the business model next fall.
- Infrastructure grants were received and will award March 2025
- Implementing a UV trail for mud snails
- American Shad Association has had success with their young shad program. Information is on department’s website

### **VIII. Public Comment:**

Sarah Whitney:

- RFP is now open – have RFP every two years. Webinar is today at noon. Funding is up to \$75k for two years of direct cost.
- Gathering input and project ideas for statewide air management plan funding and great lakes restoration initiative funding

### **IX. Other Business:**

No other business was brought to the committee

### **Adjournment:**

The meeting adjourned at 11:17 a.m.