

**January 13, 2021 Meeting of the  
Coastal Zone Advisory Committee**

The regular meeting of the Coastal Zone Advisory Committee (CZAC) was called to order by Ms. Kristina Peacock-Jones at 9:31 a.m. This meeting was held virtually via Skype.

**The following committee representatives were present:**

Kristina Peacock-Jones	Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Coastal Resources Management Program (CRMP)
Ken Shaffer	Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC)
Casey Hansen	Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC)
Sean Gimbel	Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC)
Janet Flynn	Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT)
Jean Lynch	Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)
Darin Clark	Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC)

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

Stacey Box	DEP, CRMP
Randy Brown	DEP, CRMP Southeast Regional Staff
J. Samantha Burton	DEP, CRMP
Kevin Hess	DEP, CRMP
James Peifer	DEP, CRMP
Joe Sieber	DEP, CRMP
Matt Walderon	DEP, CRMP
Shelby Clark	DEP, CRMP Northwest Regional Staff
Joy Fronzoli	Erie County Department of Planning and Community Development (ECDPCD)
Amy Verbofsky	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC)
Ernie Szabo	Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA)
Anne Stauffer	Delaware County Planning Department (DCPD)
Brian Chalfant	DEP, Policy Office
Diana Olinger	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

**Introductions:** Kristina Peacock-Jones began the meeting at 9:31 a.m., thanking members and attendees and leading the introductions. She announced that she will be the new chair for the CZAC. The previous chair, Donald Benczkowski, retired in September 2020.

**Review and Approval of Minutes:** Kristina Peacock-Jones announced that a quorum was achieved for this meeting. Jean Lynch made a motion to accept the minutes for the January 15, 2020 CZAC meeting. Casey Hanson seconded the motion. The minutes for the January 15, 2020 CZAC meeting were approved with no changes.

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### **Delaware Estuary Coastal Zone Update:**

Amy Verbofsky (DVRPC) presented her update for DVRPC. Amy noted the many ways COVID-19 has impacted the projects. The City of Philadelphia closed Martin Luther King Drive to all vehicles since March 2020 and is anticipated to remain closed through spring 2021. As a result, the city has found a significant increase of pedestrian and bicycle traffic. She stated that many events went virtual this year. DVRPC has also tracked trail counts throughout the pandemic with four permanent counters on the Pennsylvania side of the river. Peak trail usage has been noticeable in the spring. There were a few trail openings in the beginning of 2020. The Delaware River Trail (Penn Treaty Park) portion was completed in February of 2020. It features an asphalt path into an esplanade and a seat wall. Frankford Creek Greenway's Adams Avenue Connector opened Feb 2020 and connects all the way down to the Delaware River from Torresdale Avenue. PennDOT has created a new road to bypass traffic and put in this trail.

Amy also gave an update on some additional waterfront developments. Philadelphia Energy Solutions (PES) Refinery Complex was purchased by Hilco Redevelopment Partners. The developers plan to turn it into a warehousing logistics site. There are several community engagement activities related to this, including a report to reimagine the site to engage and support the community.

Also, in July 2020, the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC) selected a company to develop 109 acres at the Navy Yard. PIDC recently released a Request for Proposals (RFP) looking for a firm to update the master plan. Also, PIDC is working on the Connected Community Plan to see how existing users are utilizing the Navy Yard.

The Delaware River Waterfront Corporation (DRWC) is moving along with the Central Delaware Penn's Landing project, which is the cap of Columbus Blvd between Lombard and Market Streets. In September 2020, DRWC announced its selection of Durst Organization for the project. The Riverfront Alliance of Delaware County (RADC) released the Chester Waterfront Master Plan in September of 2020. It includes almost 100 acres of the waterfront. RADC secured funding to start work on repaving and improvements using tax credits. The next step includes a plan to convene a task force for traffic improvements of Route 291.

Amy also gave an update that Miles Owen (DVRPC) is working on a public access plan for the Delaware River for DVRPC. Currently, this is under DVRPC's publication process. This is the third public access plan since 1997. This plan is on the Pennsylvania side of tidal portions and will look at historical trends and future conditions. This plan will also look at gaps, barriers, and recommendations to increase public access in a way that fits the plan's vision for the Delaware River.

DVRPC has revamped the Urban Waterfront Action Group (UWAG) meeting schedule. It now meets every month. On the odd numbered months, the meetings will address trainings and discussions of any relevant topics and project reviews. On the even number months, the meetings are specifically dedicated to project reviews. There is an updated UWAG factsheet on the DVRPC website with more materials available.

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The Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) formed an advisory committee on climate change. Chris Linn (DVRPC) presented their storymap at the DRBC meeting in December 2020. The committee is hosting a one-day climate change forum on March 2, 2021 as part of Partnership for the Delaware Estuary's (PDE) Science and Environmental Summit. The PDE Science Summit is being held March 1, 2021 through March 3, 2021.

### **Coastal Resources Management Program Update:**

Stacey Box gave the group a Coastal Zone Grant update. The FY2020 grant award announcement was made in mid-December 2020. The Delaware Estuary Coastal Zone (DECZ) received approximately \$600,000 in grants and the Lake Erie Coastal Zone (LECZ) received approximately \$250,000 in grants during the grant application round. Stacey said she would share the DEP press releases with information on the awards and will e-mail out to committee after the meeting. The FY2021 grant round closed in October 2020. CRMP received 28 applications, 21 from the DECZ and seven from the LECZ. A list of applicants and projects is attached to the package to share with committee. Stacey will ask committee members if they have interest in reviewing relevant applications to provide comments to program. After CRMP reviews the 2021 applications, those selected for funding will be sent to NOAA for review.

### **Section 312 NOAA Evaluation Update:**

Stacey Box also gave an update on the findings of the NOAA Section 312 program evaluation conducted in October of 2019. After the January 2019 CZAC meeting, CRMP received a letter and a 20-page report from NOAA with final evaluation findings. CRMP was pleased with the list of accomplishments that were noted in the report. Stacey informed the group that there were a series of recommendations to improve program, but no required actions were included in the report. Diana Olinger (NOAA) commented that NOAA was also pleased with the evaluation and enjoyed visiting the many projects on the ground. There were many successes and CRMP staff worked hard to show off the program.

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

Joy Fronzoli (ECDPCD) shared with the group the LECZ update using a PowerPoint presentation. Joy's presentation covered lake erosion and some trends related to the coastal zone bayfront activity and local planning. In the past year, there has been an increase in storm activity, seiche events and flooding due to high winds. Joy went on to explain there have been increased site visits to bluff landowners due to weather and public outreach.

Joy then gave updates in the realm of Erie bayfront developments. At Harbor Place, Scott Enterprises is developing a mixed use 12-acre development on the bayfront. Initial phases include a high-rise Hampton Inn & Suites, office building, and parking garage. Phase one of the Hampton Inn and Suites was completed and open in mid-August 2020 at a cost of \$20,000,000. Site preparation began in May of 2018 with hotel construction taking two years and four months to complete. Scott Enterprises received a Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) award of \$5,000,000 for phase one of the project.

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At the Bayfront Place (located on the former General Aniline & Film (GAF) site), the renderings from the slide reflect design standards only. There are currently no approved plans for development. The Erie County Convention Center Authority is developing the former GAF site. The renderings for potential further development can be found at <http://www.kidderwachter.com/projects/planning/bayfront-place-development-plan>.

At the Courtyard by Marriott hotel, a 283-space parking garage, and 8,600 square feet of leasable commercial space were completed and opened in June of 2016. Joy also provided an update on the Erie Western Pennsylvania Port Authority (EWPPA) Master Plan. Ashley Porter Engineering has been working on the EWPPA Master Plan, with a focus on two primary projects: 1) Seawall repair at Liberty Pier – currently under construction for spring 2021 completion and 2) East Dobbins Landing Dock wall – construction completed in December 2020. The replacement of the north side of East Dobbins Landing will provide enhanced public fishing access.

The Holland Street Pier project in partnership with the S.O.N.S. of Lake Erie was funded through a grant from the PFBC. This project creates new and safe public access in a popular fishing spot for local anglers. Longer term possible projects of priority include the installation of a lift well at Liberty Pier and an additional boat access closer to Lampe Marina.

Joy also discussed some local planning successes since the last meeting. The Erie Western Pennsylvania Port Authority: Master Site Plan was completed in April 2018. The Erie County Parks, Trails, and Recreation Plan public meeting was held in February 2020. A final draft was completed in April 2020 followed by the plan's adoption by County Council in July of 2020. Through the Municipal Stormwater Assistance Program, Erie County assisted municipalities with infrastructure mapping.

Joy also mentioned that the Community Resilience Action Network of Erie (CRANE) is working on climate resilience in the Erie area and is composed of multiple organizations. They are working to look at climate studies in response to hazards and events happening recently. The stated mission of CRANE and its goals are to engage public and stakeholders, provide web-based access to information, and connect scientific info and data to the community.

Joy stated that the Lake Erie NOAA National Marine Sanctuary 2015 nomination has now come under a five-year review process to remain in NOAA's inventory. Local updates were submitted to NOAA in October 2020 with Federal Register Notice for public comments released on January 12, 2021. Next steps toward designation include scoping, sanctuary proposal, public review, and sanctuary designation by NOAA.

Joy lastly had a quick update of recently completed and continued CRMP Grant Projects. The Regional Science Consortium (RSC) 2016 project for investigating and researching harmful algal blooms (HABs) is now completed. RSC is working with the Erie County Health Department on daily water quality monitoring and signage. RSC has CRMP research projects for the impact of HABs on wild and domestic animal populations and the evaluation of geographical sources of E. Coli contamination which are still ongoing. RSC was also awarded FY2020 funds for a similar HABs research project.

**Section 309 Update:**

Kevin Hess provided an update on the development of the new Section 309 Assessment and Strategy – Building Capacity to Facilitate Climate Adaptation Planning and Community Resiliency. The lessons learned from the last Section 309 report are to integrate the strategy across multiple program priorities and that municipalities do need support. The 2016 Section 309 report informed the 2021 Section 309 Assessment and Strategy currently being developed.

Kevin mentioned that the 2021 draft strategies and assessment also focused on coastal hazards: A DECZ boundary expansion analysis will be done. This does not mean we will definitely expand but will analyze with the goal of expanding. It will be focused on sea level rise combined with storm surge (per the 312 recommendation), but it will also consider other program priority areas. It will include safe and green linkages from urban neighborhoods to growing coastal trails and access areas. Natural and cultural resource linkages to the coastal zone and stormwater management will also be integrated in the strategy.

The next phase of the strategy will be building capacity to facilitate climate adaptation planning and community resiliency. CRMP will continue work with DVRPC to build on the storymap as focus for outreach and provide technical assistance to municipalities including grant application support. If there is interest, the strategy will promote and support multi-municipal stormwater planning/implementation and identify and mitigate the impacts of stormwater on Lake Erie bluff erosion and recession. The current Lake Erie levels are a high priority in the LECZ. We will need to identify/quantify the issues and then develop potential solutions.

**Freshwater Mussels Study Update, Lower Delaware River:**

Matt Walderon shared his PowerPoint presentation on exploring the utility of side scan sonar imaging for freshwater mussel mapping in the tidal Delaware River with the group. This project began several years ago. Matt talked about the final methods and wanted to share the results of the survey, which has now been published; the spatial data is available upon request. In 2014, CRMP started using side scan sonar to document shipwrecks in Lake Erie. CRMP started noticing patches of bright echoes surrounding some of the wrecks. As they moved along the wreck, they could see that the bottom of this area was completely covered with zebra mussels. With the rediscovery of freshwater mussels in the Delaware Estuary and the lack of associated mapping data, CRMP wondered if they could likewise use the side scan sonar to map the mussels in the estuary. After they ran a few test areas, it looked promising. Consequently, they set out to map the spatial distribution of freshwater mussels in the estuary.

CRMP collected acoustic data with a TriTech Starfish 450F towed side scan, processed the data using an off-the-shelf acoustic data program called SonarTRX, and mosaicked the images in ESRI GIS software. The area of the final survey included the mainstem of the Delaware River from just downriver of Trenton NJ, to the downriver end of Little Tinicum Island. They intended to complete all the way to the state line with Delaware and part of the Schuylkill River, but equipment issues in the latter portion of the study prevented additional data collection.

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To aid in the development of the GIS polygons, they also collected underwater video from 223 sites using a Deltavision Splashcam Industrial HD drop camera. CRMP collected about two to five minutes of video at each site, depending on local visibility and current. Video locations were selected based on initial review of the mosaicked acoustic imagery and were chosen to confirm suspected mussel presence, bracket observed changes in substrate, or confirm substrate and mussel population continuity. They timed the video collection around the slack tides to try to get the best possible quality. In the office, each video was reviewed by at least two staff members and assigned substrate and mussel density categories.

In the next step, the substrate and mussel density categories were assigned based on these guidelines; however, they were subjective estimations since 1) they did not do mussel counts per unit area because the videos provide no scale to do so, and 2) they did not collect sediment for grain size analysis. Categorical assignments were made by subjective consensus of the reviewers.

Finally, once all the videos were categorized, CRMP displayed their locations as point data and, combining the information on mussels and substrates from the videos and using acoustic imagery to fill the gaps between video location, they developed mussel population polygons for display in GIS. In the development of the polygons, they combined the “Common” and “Bed” mussel population categories into contiguous features because these population densities, they found, could not be reliably differentiated acoustically. Areas were then delineated and mapped as “None”, “Sporadic”, and “Common/Bed”.

Approximately 25% of survey area was mapped as having mussel presence with 10% of the total surveyed area characterized as Common/Bed.

### **Agency Updates:**

- Jean Lynch (DCNR) – Jean began her update by stating DCNR awarded Round 26 of their grants in November 2020. Over 400 applications come in with over \$105,000,000 in requested funds. DCNR awarded 263 applications with over \$55,000,000 on those awards statewide. The next round of grants will be open on January 19, 2021. Within the DECZ, DCNR awarded funding for the fishing pier at Bartram’s Garden and design of the trail project at Chester City East Coast Greenway segment. These are the two overlapping projects with CRMP that have been identified.
- Janet Flynn (PennDOT) - Janet informed the group that PennDOT will be giving a resiliency update reporting next week at board meeting. PennDOT has completed a Federal Highway Administration pilot study that focused on hydraulic analysis based on highway and bridge design. The study looked at precipitation forecasts and future precipitation estimates on the infrastructure design and put them into a design checklist. The report will be out next week. The Public Private Partnership (P3) program made a goal of building 558 bridges with Granite Walsh. All the bridges have been built and are open to traffic. This company will be responsible for the warranty and maintenance of these bridges for 25 years, then they get turned back to state for maintenance. For year 2020, \$1.55 billion was received for this project. In 2021, they will be receiving \$2.2 billion. As far as grants are related, Jean stated the Multimodal Transportation Fund

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accepted applications until November 2020. PennDOT will be announcing the recipients in next few months. Then they will start again with next round. More information is available on the PennDOT website.

- Ernie Szabo (PEMA) – No update was provided.
- Sean Gimbel (PFBC) – Sean stated that the new PFBC strategic plan was completed in July 2020. The timeframe for this goes out to June 30, 2023. It is a large, detailed plan and is available on the PFBC webpage. In 2021, PFBC will be working with partners to update the boating and fishing access document, which was last revised in 2010. It will take one and a half years to finish and should be completed by June 2022. The document will have information and a strategy to address needs of boaters and anglers. This will highlight an increased interest in nonpowered boating, equity and inclusion, and shoreline access for fishing. PFBC will be working with stakeholders and be using public surveys. Contact Sean if you are interested in being involved in this strategy development. PFBC opened a second round of boating facilities grants, which had been closed for some time. This second round was opened in September 2020 and closed in December 2020. There was \$1,000,000 of money available, plus \$200,000 received from the National Fish and Wildlife Federation for the Delaware Basin. Sean went on to explain that there is now an expanded Erie Access Improvement grant program thanks to Act 56 being passed, allowing the PFBC to set license fees and an expanded list of activities for use with the Lake Erie stamp. This program will allow for projects beyond easement purchases, and will include activities like access road improvements, ADA facilities, parking, fish cleaning stations, etc. The deadline closed at the end of December 2020. There is also a brand-new grant program – the federal government passed a COVID-19 relief package that directed the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission to provide relief to the marine fisheries industry. NOAA is developing this project and there is \$3,300,000 for qualifying businesses. Pennsylvania seafood processors, wholesalers, bait tackle, marine recreation guide services, and commercial fisheries are eligible. Sean also noted that PFBC changed regulations in the Delaware Estuary for striped bass to address recent rapid decline in the population along the Atlantic coast. This change will include limits for keeping striped bass in tidal zones and mandatory inline circle hooks to the reduce hooking mortality.
- Casey Hanson (PHMC) – Casey informed the group that PHMC is updating their system to submit reviews and materials to their office. The name of the system will be called PA Share. PHMC will be coming out with more information in next month. After this time there will be a new process for submitting projects requiring review. The new system will most likely require everyone to have a Keystone Login and subscription. Mark Shaffer is now retired, and Casey Hanson is taking his place. Stacey Box asked Casey if the system includes State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) reviews for applicants. He said yes, it's for all project reviews. It is an interactive dashboard rather than a PDF. Applicants should receive a quicker response with this more transparent method. PHMC may be asking agency partners to help with the testing. PHMC will be sending out e-mails related to this and will provide some training.

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- Ken Shaffer (PUC) – Ken began by saying that the PUC continues to telework, and they are available to assist any agencies with any questions or concerns. The PUC continues to work with the BlackSky company on planning with the possibility that communications and electricity could be down during an emergency. There is continued participation in this process, in addition to updating Continuity of Operations Plans. He stressed the importance of this planning and how COVID-19 has forced this type of planning to be updated.

### **Public Comment:**

- As required by the Pennsylvania Sunshine Act, Kristina Peacock-Jones asked if there were any comments from the public. There were no public comments.

### **Other Business:**

- Kristina Peacock-Jones stated we need a vice-chair from an organization not in DEP. She said it would not be a significant amount of work. DEP leads the meeting running and organization. Sean Gimbel (PFBC) said he is willing, unless others feel more strongly. Kristina asked for a move to nominate Sean Gimbel as vice-chair and Jean Lynch (DCNR) moved to approve the nomination. Ken Shaffer (PUC) seconded the motion. All were in favor with none opposed.
- Kristina Peacock-Jones thanked everyone for attending virtually.
- Kristina Peacock-Jones announced that the date of the summer CZAC meeting will be June 16, 2021 and will be held virtually.
- Kristina Peacock-Jones asked to move to adjourn the meeting. Casey Hanson (PHMC) made the motion, and none were opposed.

**Adjournment** - The meeting adjourned at 11:42 p.m.