

**Minutes of the
January 14, 2015 Meeting of the
Coastal Zone Advisory Committee (CZAC)**

The regular meeting of CZAC was called to order at 9:35 a.m. by Mr. Don Benczkowski on January 14, 2015, in the 10th 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), Interstate Waters Office (IWO)
Shayne Hoachlander	PA Game Commission (PGC)
Gary Camus	PGC
Julia Donahue (phone)	Erie County Department of Planning (ECDP)
Mike Piaskowski	PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)
Chris Linn	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC)
Mark Shaffer	Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC)
John Van Zant	PA Public Utilities Commission (PUC)
Larry Belmont	PA Department of Economic and Community Development (DCED)

The following DEP staff members were present:

Stacey Box	PA DEP, IWO
Randall Brown	PA DEP, Southeast Regional Staff
J. Samantha Burton	PA DEP, IWO
Ben Eppley	PA DEP, IWO
Laura Henry	PA DEP, Policy Office
Kevin Hess	PA DEP, IWO
Dave Jostenski	PA DEP, IWO
Lori Mohr	PA DEP, IWO
Jacob Moore (phone)	PA DEP, Northwest Regional Staff
Jim Peifer	PA DEP, IWO
Leslie Sarvis	PA DEP, IWO
Joseph Sieber	PA DEP, IWO

Also in attendance were the following:

Ernest Szabo	PA Emergency Management Agency (PEMA)
Diana Olinger	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

Mr. Benczkowski welcomed everyone and introductions were made.

Previous meeting minutes were discussed and approved with minor modifications.

Public Comments: No members of the public were in attendance.

Coastal Zone Grants Update by Stacey Box: Twenty-nine Coastal Zone grant applications were evaluated and ranked. An application will be submitted to the National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2015 funding. CRM expects to make a funding announcement in August or September 2015. The FFY 2016 Coastal Zone grant round will open in mid-August and close in October 2015.

Ms. Box added that since the previous meeting, the Program awarded FY 2014 grants. Twenty five projects were funded in Bucks, Delaware, Erie and Philadelphia counties.

As funds are ever-shrinking, the Program may need to lean on networked program partners to assist with match for the FY 2015 application for NOAA funding.

The Program is considering pre-application meetings with applicants. Ms. Box asked Committee members for any feedback or suggestions.

The Program is also looking for ways to better market our grants opportunities. Ms. Box asked Committee members for suggestions.

Finally, the application process for submitting Coastal Zone grants may differ this year. A decision will be made by the next meeting regarding submittal by email if eGrants is not available.

Section 309 Strategy Update by Kevin Hess: Mr. Hess provided a presentation on the state of CRM's next Section 309 Strategy. Section 309 refers to a section of the federal Coastal Zone Management Act that offers funding for coastal states to enhance their programs in nine predetermined enhancement areas. This process operates on a five year cycle, including an assessment of the past five years and a new strategy for the next five years. CRM is beginning to draft the 309 Assessment and Strategy for 2016-2021. A draft document will be due to NOAA in Spring 2015.

The current 309 Strategy (2011-2015) includes analysis of Lake Erie Coastal Zone boundary expansion, aquatic invasive species rapid response planning and monitoring contracted through Pennsylvania Sea Grant (PSG), and data gathering for support of the Lake Erie Marine Spatial Plan.

The 309 process must result in a definite program change, which could include a change to coastal zone boundaries, new authorities, revised coastal programs, new Special Area Management Plans, etc. Prior 309 documents are available on the CRM website.

Mr. Hess discussed the results of a survey distributed to CZAC representatives and other key stakeholders last year. The three categories that received "high priority" status in the survey are wetlands, coastal hazards and public access. Wetlands received stronger support in the Delaware Estuary; hazards received strong support in both coastal zones; public access is a priority for all.

Mr. Hess is currently writing the 309 Strategy which is due to NOAA in May 2015. He stated that he still welcomes input from CZAC members.

Mr. Piaskowski asked how the 309 feeds into Program strategy. Mr. Hess responded that 309 strategy must result in a Program change, but it also influences the broader program priorities.

Mr. Benczkowski thanked the Committee for their responses to the survey distributed at the previous meeting.

Ms. Olinger noted that 309 doesn't require match funds.

Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) Update by Matt Walderon: Part of the current 309 Strategy is Marine Spatial Planning in Lake Erie. Mr. Walderon stated that CRM had completed a third full season of collecting field data, filling data gaps regarding substrate sites and shipwrecks. Last year staff visited five shipwreck sites performing sidescan sonar at each site and 42 substrate locations performing ponar grab samples and taking underwater video. To date, CRM has identified 15 shipwrecks and 94 substrate sites.

CRM is working to take these data and enter them into GIS with video connection to the site. Next, CRM will do the same with the shipwreck data. Mr. Shaffer suggested coordinating with PHMC so sensitive data are kept private.

There is one more season of intensive fieldwork in 2015. Upon completion of data collection, the Program plans to produce a resource guide for stakeholders. This guide would be for internal decision-making processes.

Mr. Benczkowski asked about wreck positional issues. Mr. Walderon said we need more precise locations and we are documenting our findings. The Program will produce online maps once website migration occurs.

Mr. Benczkowski provided some background on the program including proposals for wind turbines, transmission lines, gas lines, and sand and gravel mining. Permittees conducting work in the lake are now required to notify the Program if they encounter a shipwreck in a permitted location. No known wrecks are inside of currently permitted work locations.

Lake Erie Boundary Expansion Status by Don Benczkowski: The Lake Erie Coastal Zone Advisory Committee has voted three times since 2009 to explore expansion of the Coastal Zone Boundary to the watershed. CRM has been exploring expansion of the Lake Erie Coastal Zone boundary in response to their request. Since Summer 2013, CRM conducted several public meetings in the region to measure public support of the project.

Mr. Sieber is currently writing a document to present to the new administration regarding Boundary Expansion options.

Support letters are still coming in to the Program, including one from the PA Game Commission. To date, the program has received 18 letters in favor of Boundary Expansion and five not in support of it. Mr. Sieber added that there are many other groups that support the Expansion that have not provided a letter.

Mr. Belmont asked if there is a downside to the Expansion. Mr. Benczkowski said the only downside is that with reduced funding available for grants, there would be more eligible projects than in the current Coastal Zone Boundary and less monies available to provide grants. There are also those who confuse “Coastal Zone” with “Zoning” which causes some confusion.

Mr. Benczkowski stated that CZAC representatives can contact him or Mr. Sieber with questions or comments on boundary expansion.

Lake Erie Coastal Zone Update: Ms. Donahue provided an update on the status of 2012-2014 Lake Erie Coastal Zone Grants:

2012 Projects:

- The County-Wide Stream Study by Erie County Conservation District provides education to teachers and students on the concept of watersheds, point, and non-point source pollution. The grantee received a six-month extension to finish out the school year.
- The Lampe Marina Courtesy and Fuel Dock Replacement by Erie Western Pennsylvania Port Authority is currently on hold until matching funds are in place. The Port Authority received a six-month extension to generate matching funds.

2013 Projects:

- The Lakeside Trail Project by Lawrence Park Township will construct an accessible asphalt trail from Lake Cliff Park to Lakeside Boat Launch. The required phase I archeological survey is complete and has been reviewed by PHMC. The project was given clearance to proceed.
- The Creating Lake Erie Coastal Zone Stewards project by Erie Times-News in Education provides environmental education outreach in the Erie-Times News newspapers.
- The City of Erie’s Comprehensive Plan will complete the second phase of its plan development. They have asked for a 6-month extension.
- The Headwaters Park Master Site Plan by Erie County Conservation District will guide future development at the headwaters of Mill Creek. Currently, the district has held stakeholder and public meetings. They have also received a \$25,000 grant from the Erie County Greenways Program for additional planning efforts.
- The McKean Area Comprehensive Plan involves McKean Township and McKean Borough and will include Elk Creek, Walnut Creek, and Lamson Run.

2014 Projects are just getting underway.

Ms. Donahue stated that Bluff permit reports are being prepared and are due to the Program by February 5, 2015. She also provided some information regarding Erie County Greenways Program as well as the former GAF Roofing Manufacturing site development.

Ms. Donahue provided an update on the National Marine Sanctuary nomination being developed by Erie County. She stated that the County is in the very early stages of the process. They are holding public meetings and engaging the public for support. There was much discussion on the effort; however, the process is a long-term effort with no nomination documents being drawn up

for at least six months to a year. If approved, this nomination would be added to a pool of other nominations and may or may not ever be selected.

After much discussion, the group asked for Ellen Brody of NOAA's National Marine Sanctuary Program to present more detailed information and to take questions at the next CZAC meeting.

Delaware Estuary Coastal Zone Update by Chris Linn: Mr. Linn presented information regarding a variety of projects on the North Delaware Riverfront Greenway. Many of these projects align with the I-95 reconstruction project. Some highlights of the Greenway include: Pennypack Park, Tacony-Holmesburg Gap, the K&T Trail, Lardner's Point Park, the Port Richmond Trail, Bridesburg Trail, Penn Street Trail, the Spring Garden Street Connector, Pier 53 and Pier 68.

Mr. Linn also highlighted projects occurring on the Schuylkill River. These projects include the Schuylkill Banks Boardwalk, South Street to Christian Street segment, the Gray's Ferry Crossing and the Bartram's Mile North and South trails.

Mr. Linn mentioned the Delaware River Waterfront Corporation's Winterfest pop-up park. This park operated from the Holidays through March.

Lastly, Mr. Linn added that many of the aforementioned projects have been funded in part by Coastal Zone funds and several of them were submitted this year for funding consideration.

Regarding this Coastal Zone and the 309 outreach, Mr. Hess added that he received many comments about public access challenges on the urban waterfront. He noted that while Philadelphia is making great strides, Delaware County has not received the same attention. Mr. Linn agreed and told the group that DVRPC has been working with and in Delaware County on these types of efforts. Ms. Burton added that while Philadelphia has a variety of organizations working on these efforts, there isn't a designated contractor working on these types of projects in Delaware County and that individual municipalities may have to bear the burden of the work there.

Agency Updates:

Mr. Van Zant from Pennsylvania Utility Commission stated that they have been busy at PUC. CZAC committee members are welcome to forward utility issues or questions to Mr. Van Zant.

Mr. Shaffer from PHMC noted that he has been involved in many of the trail project reviews mentioned in Mr. Linn's update. Archaeological work shows there are significant cultural buried resources in the southeast region that will likely not impact trail work. Sugarhouse Casino, which is in the Coastal Zone, but not a CZ grantee, did find mid-18th Century Native American artifacts on their site and nearby. He added that we should keep in mind that just because this area is industrial doesn't mean artifacts won't be found there.

Mr. Shaffer added that since Ms. Safely retired, PHMC will have a new CZAC representative. Ms. Barbara Frederick, who reviews historic structures for Western PA, will join Mr. Shaffer as a PHMC CZAC representative.

Mr. Hoachlander noted that Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) supports Boundary Expansion in the Lake Erie Coastal Zone. He added that he has been working with the Lake Erie Watershed Weed Management Coop on managing invasive weeds including European Alder and Phragmites. They have found hybridized native and exotic Alder. PGC plans to conduct prescribed burns this Spring and Fall. They have recently completed a bald eagle survey and banding black ducks. Mr. Benczkowski also noted that CRM recently contributed to the purchase of the Whipple Property bordering State Game Lands 314 in Erie County.

Mr. Belmont with DCED works with disaster recovery with Federally declared disasters. He is currently working with Chester City. They aren't doing any work in the Lake Erie Coastal Zone.

Mr. Szabo with PEMA noted that Hazard Mitigation Plans for Coastal Zone counties are currently being updated.

Other Business:

Ms. Burton provided an update on the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) grant round. She stated that the round is open until mid-March and noted that only Great Lakes States are eligible this round. She added that any group interested in submitting a project should contact her directly.

Ms. Box shared with the group that the CRM Program is looking for other marketing avenues for informing potential applicants about Coastal Zone grants. Mr. Shaffer said it could possibly be mentioned in a PHMC blog.

Mr. Benczkowski discussed the Executive Order and By-laws of the Coastal Zone Advisory Committee. He added that PEMA was not included on the original Executive Order because they did not exist at the time. Since PEMA plays an active role in our Coastal Zones, they could be included in CZAC. To that end, Mr. Benczkowski is researching what must be done to amend the Executive Order to include PEMA pending CZAC approval. Other corrections would be made if the Executive Order is amended. There was also a discussion about updating the MOUs with each CZAC partner agency. Research is being done on that as well and will be presented to the group.

Mr. Linn shared with the group that Ms. Miller is no longer with DVRPC. They have hired a new person who will be working with Coastal Zone grants and the Program. Amy Verbofsky will be in attendance at the next CZAC meeting.

Mr. Benczkowski announced the next meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 3, 2015 at 9:30 a.m. in RCSOB, 10th floor conference room. The committee will be notified prior to the next meeting.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m..