

MINUTES
ENVIRONMENT & NATUARAL ASSETS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ENA)
Wednesday, February 28, 2024
Conference Room, Admin. Bldg. – 1000

Present: Tim Peck (Chair), Brian Burgess, Patty Gamby, Anne O’Connell, John Maziuk, Patricia Garcia, Don Wolski, Pat Benner, Jeff Heavner (Board Liaison); Karen Detter excused. Carly Toulan speaking visitor from MCBP; Jared Parks speaking visitor from Lower Shore Land Trust (LSLT).

Call to Order: Tim Peck called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM

Chairman’s comments: Tim reminded the committee that the meeting is being recorded as part of normal Ocean Pines Association (OPA) business practice. He reminded the members that he always seeks consensus from the committee on issues addressed. Tim noted a new Bayside Gazette article that reviewed the South Gate pond shoreline project that ENA planned.

Public Comments:

Visting speaker Carly Toulan from Maryland Coastal Bays Program (MCBP) and Jared Parks from LSLT, gave a review of invasive species issues. They reviewed invasive plants in varieties of trees, vines, and herbaceous types. The most prevalent invasive species include callery pear (Bradford pear), English ivy, porcelain berry, multifloral rose, phragmites, Japanese knotweed, and Chinese Wisteria. Tree of heaven is pervasive and can grow in almost any ground condition. Invasive plants impact forests and agricultural crops, and are very difficult to eradicate. These plants tend to smother and kill off native plants and trees removing habitat for wildlife. Wildlife tends not to eat these plants. The spotted lantern fly is a problem on western shore as it spreads down from Pennsylvania. Bamboo spreads easily and should not be used for landscaping. They noted an available detailed report on invasive species published by the Lower Shore Land Trust, which is available on their website.

Healthy native plants recommended for residents: downy serviceberry, eastern redbud, American holly, flowering dogwood, eastern red cedar, river birch. Maryland does not at present have a regulated invasive species program, except noxious weeds on agricultural land. There is a QR code on the LSLT website to report observed invasive plant infestations. Nurseries are still required to tag their plants that are classified as invasive. Key descriptors to avoid when buying nursery plants: “naturalized,” “vigorous grower,” “erosion control,” “attract birds.” LSLT and Assateague Coastal Trust have arboretums for sources of native plants. “How Sweet It Is” is a nearby native plant nursery located in Fruitland, MD.

Native plants that are good to use for landscaping include azaleas for hedges, flowering cherries, and viburnums. A problem with purchasing native plants is that a typical commercial nursery does not widely stock these plants, but instead sell non-native and ornamental plants.

Approval of Agenda: Motion by *Brian Burgess*, seconded by *Patty Gamby* and approved unanimously.

Approval of Minutes: Motion by *Anne O’Connell*, seconded by *Don Wolski* and approved unanimously.

ONGOING PROJECTS (see status table below)

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- ENA submitted five charging documents in February to the BOD Liaison for OPA approval and action: Turtle sanctuaries, fish-line tubes, geese/duck sign additions, goose egg addling, White Horse Park trees. A few committee members are needed on locating new tree plantings in the park when this project is executed by OPA. Patricia Garcia offered to help. The time for completion of these actions depends on OPA operational logistics during the year.
- Ocean Pines Day Kickoff event 2024 (April 20 or 27, 2024): ongoing group effort to prepare for exhibit. Don Wolski presented drafts of the hand-out documents, with some review comments during the meeting, Don will finalize the documents. Don is arranging a give-away raffle item at the exhibit table. Patty Gamby showed drafts of the sign exhibit for the committee identification, with some review comments during the meeting, she will finalize the display. Brian Burgess is working on a multi-component video displaying ENA issues.

NEW BUSINESS

- Colonial Village ghost forest spreading due to flooding and not salt-water intrusion. ENA is communicating with a concerned resident in Colonial Village about getting native trees planted including native bald cypress trees, black gum and river birch, and working with the OPA to reduce the flooding. Tim Peck and Don met with the resident after the meeting. An ENA Statement of Interest reviewing this issue will be completed for submission to the BOD. ENA is recommending planting of nontidal wetland tolerant trees.
- Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Summit review: Don provided a review of his experience and presentations viewed at the Summit held 6-7 December 2023. An outline of this information is presented below.
- Sewage disposal originating from Glen Riddle is presently trucked and pumped into the OP treatment system via a pumping station on Beauchamp Road. The County has sent out a request for proposal to design a force main pipe that will lead from Glen Riddle over to the Ocean Pines sewage treatment plant.
- Pesticide spraying in OP for mosquito control. Other than trying to promote drainage of excess water and placing mosquito controls on ponds, OPA sprays insecticide during overnight hours in the summer, which is an established practice for mosquito control and tends not to injure active pollinators. Natural predators of mosquitos are purple martins and dragonflies. Native plants that repel mosquitos include lavender and lemon grass.
- Canal water quality: some residents expressed concern over water quality and prohibiting dumping of any yard waste into the water. The spring issue of the OPA newsletter will feature a Greenstreet article on water quality, problems with algae growth, and promoting high water quality. This will be an ongoing community education issue for ENA to work on. Anyone who witnesses dumping should report the case to OPA immediately. ENA may draft a recommendation for OPA to adopt on proper yard waste disposal.
- Urban trees grant program: Chesapeake Bay Trust: Tim viewed the online presentation on 16 February. This is a program in Maryland to promote the 5 Million trees initiative. Grants for tree planting programs must be within urban/underserved zones, which includes a central portion of Ocean Pines only (corridor between Rt. 90 and Ocean Parkway to the north, over to the east shoreline). As far as common OPA land, this includes the front 9 holes of the golf course and the area near the Swim and Raquet club swimming pool, which at present does not include areas that ENA is addressing (White Horse Park, Colonial Village). There are several levels of grants depending on the number of trees planned. For 2024, the submittal deadline for grant applications is 7 March; however, this program will continue into next year. Tim emailed info@oceanpines a review of this grant opportunity for Ocean Pines.

- **MCBP:** Bay Day, 19 May 2024, 1000-1400. ENA will plan to attend. Fortunately, all of the exhibits created for the OPA day kick-off can be used at this event. MCBP will need ENA volunteers to help during this event. If ENA is interested, to contact Liz Wist at MCBP.
- At March meeting, Assateague Coast Trust will present opportunities on water quality testing.

DICUSSION

- There was a question of which ponds are part of Ocean Pines as far as where environmental videos would be appropriate. Essentially all ponds near the gate entrances, near the golf course and near the library are within Ocean Pines boundaries.
- It was noted that floating wetland structures are good habitats to add to ponds as far as improving water quality. This issue may be a future ENA action. MCBP can provide information on structures.
- Upcoming MCBP events in 2024:
 - 9 March, 1000-1200: Explore the Estuary, yard waste management at Berlin library.
 - 12 March, 1600-1800: Discover your Watershed, at Showell property.
 - 23 March, 1000-1200: Explore the Estuary, community and backyard rain gardens, at Berlin library.
 - 15 April, 0930-1100: Discover your Watershed at Lizard Hill.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO BOD (via BOD Liaison)

- None at this time.

ACTION ITEMS

- Continue filming of video clips for Kickoff Day showing ENA interests: Brian Burgess, Patricia Garcia.
- Finalize ENA exhibits for Kickoff Day: Don Wolski, Tim Peck

Date of next meeting – March 27, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. in the Administration Bldg. Conference Room. Meetings will continue to follow a 4th Wednesday schedule each month for the year.

ONGOING PROJECTS – OUTSTANDING ISSUES

PROJECT - ISSUE	INITIATION	STATUS
South Pond shoreline habitat modification	Dec.2022	MCBP grant approval, wait on EPA fund. Possible start May 2024.
South Pond shoreline repair	Dec.2022	Closed. Future project.
Installation of fish-line tubes	June 2023	Charging document submitted
White Horse Park, new trees	Aug.2023	Charging document submitted
Goose egg addling	Sept.2023	Charging document submitted
Rt 90 Pond nature signs	Jan. 2024	Future project
Colonial Village cypress trees	Feb. 2024	initiated

Adjourn: Motion by *Brian Burgess* and seconded by *Patty Gamby*. Meeting adjourned at 1205.

Summary of Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Summit review:

- Goal – To bring together regional entities (NPO, volunteers, academia, state (VA, MD, DE, NJ, NY and federal groups) working on marine debris
- Objectives
 - Encourage communication, coordination and partnerships
 - Identify barriers and opportunities for improvement
 - Share current research, emerging trends, and best practices

Summary of Presentations:

- Kristen Fidler, Assistant Secretary for Aquatic MDNR
 - “No action is too small to make a difference”
- Yogonda Sample-Jones - DEI
 - Broken Window Theory
- Micro (1um to 5 mm) and Nano-Plastics
 - Dr. Christine Knauer, University of MD Eastern Shore (Horn Point)
 - Oyster larvae can ingest 100 particles per day
 - Will flush from the system, Europe requires 24-hour hold time on oysters before consumption
 - Britta Baechler, Ocean Conservancy
 - We are consuming micro-plastics, highly processed products contain more than minimally process products
 - Hayden Boettcher, Doctoral Candidate, U of Delaware
 - Micro-plastics in crab Z1 Larvae, develop over 1 month to Z2 stage
 - Hypothesis is that ingestion could stunt growth since non-digestible plastics are consumed instead of plankton
- Beach Stability – Kathleen Bergen DNREC
 - Crane at the Indian River Bridge
 - Moves sand from the south side to the north through a slurry pipe
 - Bridge replaced 4X
- Community Engagement – Laura Jean Checki
 - Get people involved through education and public outreach, eg. OC Beach Heroes, Restore the Shore
 - “Draw them in” example of “water on the moon”. If there is water on the moon, then there could have been life....
- VA Abandoned and Derelict Vessels (ADV) – Karen Wilson Forget
 - Bigger issue in VA than in Assawoman Bay
 - Hurricane Result, environmental issues need to be addressed
- Derelict Crab Pots
 - Oyster Recovery Partnership, Sea Grant, Stockton University
 - Derelict crab pots affects tortoise, crabs and other species
 - 1.6 pots per acre estimated in the bays
 - Can continue to collect water species for 1 to 2 years
 - Negative affect on the fishery as it depletes fish and other small animals
 - Side Scan Sonar to find abandoned pots
 - Watermen program for the off-season
 - Marine Plunder hosted by MD Coastal Bays
- Ocean Friendly Restaurants -Food Waste recycled, Bishopville location