

**Minutes: OPA Environment & Natural Assets Advisory Committee Meeting
June 25, 2025**

Members Present: Pat Ryan Garcia (Chair), Jennifer Compston, John Maziuk, Anne O’Connell, Don Wolski, Jeff Heavner (OPA Board Liaison).

Members Excused: Pat Benner, Brian Burgess, Patty Gamby

Call to Order: Pat Garcia called the meeting to order at 11:01 a.m.

Approval of Agenda

Anne O’Connell made a motion to approve the Agenda. Jennifer Compston seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Approval of April Minutes Don Wolski made a motion to approve the minutes which was seconded by Anne O’Connell and approved unanimously.

CHAIRPERSON’S COMMENTS

- Patty Gamby’s immediate resignation from the committee and her reasons for doing so that were detailed in a series of emails, were briefly discussed. The chair offered to consolidate Patty’s points and the Board Liaison’s responses and share them for discussion at the July meeting.
- The chair apologized for the cancellation of the May meeting due to her travel.
- New member Jennifer Compston was introduced and the other committee members present introduced themselves and noted their reasons for joining the committee.
- The chair noted that she and Patty Gamby collaborated on the Green Street article for the Summer 2025 Ocean Pines Report on the topic of composting.

OLD BUSINESS

OPA 2025 Season Kickoff After Action Discussion

- The Committee’s exhibit on the theme of “Reduce-Reuse-Recycle” featured examples of various ways to reduce consumption, reuse materials, and recycle responsibly. The chair handed out copies of Republic Services’ “Recycle Responsibly” list that were printed on card stock and distributed at the exhibit.
- The chair reported that committee members Brian Burgess, Don Wolski and Anne O’Connell joined her at the ENA exhibit along with Board Liaison Jeff Heavner and Brian’s wife Linda.
- Anne O’Connell said that a map of the exhibits would have been helpful and noted that the grass was a bit long and difficult to walk through. She also thought the attendance was light.
- Don Wolski thought the exhibits were too far apart and recommended that they be centered around the gazebo in the future.

- Jennifer Compston noted that she is a member of a club that participated in both the 2024 and 2025 Kickoff events and thought that Veterans' Memorial Park was a better location for her group.
- The committee did not make a commitment to participate in the event in 2026 but decided to discuss it when a date and location is announced.

Committee Oyster Gardening Project

- The chair reported that the Maryland Coastal Bays Program's sign that had been in the Swim & Racquet Park gazebo where the committee's oyster cage is located had been removed. She asked if the committee would like to pursue help from OPA on obtaining a replacement sign. Don Wolski reported that the Marine Activities Committee (MAC) has a nice sign marking the location of their oyster cage at the Yacht Club Marina that could easily be duplicated. The chair said she would contact the MAC to find out how they obtained their sign.

South Gate Pond Shoreline Project

- The committee discussed a recent report in the *Bayside Gazette* on the status of the project to address shoreline erosion and goose nesting at the OPA Southgate Pond. The report noted that while final concept drawings for the project funded by Maryland Coastal Bays were completed in November 2024, grants for implementation are on hold. This is a project that was initiated by the ENA committee. It was noted that the plan will include a turtle habitat that the ENA committee had requested.

Horn Point Field Trip

- It was suggested that the committee plan to visit Horn Point Laboratory's Oyster Hatchery in September 2025, perhaps on our scheduled meeting date.

NEW BUSINESS

Art Hansen Memorial Youth Fishing Contest

The chair reported that the Ocean Pines Anglers Club invited the ENA committee to exhibit at their youth fishing contest on Saturday, July 19, at the South Gate Pond. She noted that ENA participation in previous such events had not attracted much interest. The committee discussed perhaps teaming up with the Marine Activities Committee on an exhibit at the youth fishing events in 2026.

Earth Day 2026 Planning

The committee discussed sponsoring a community-wide cleanup event on Earth Day 2026 (Wednesday, April 22, 2026) perhaps in collaboration with Beach Heroes-OC and focusing on the South Gate Pond area.

Comprehensive Conservation & Management Plan for Maryland's Coastal Bays

Board Liaison Jeff Heavner reported that he attended the signing ceremony for Maryland Coastal Bays Program's new 10-Year Plan for 2025-2035. Officials from across the state including Governor Wes Moore participated in the event. He mentioned that State Senator Mary Beth Carozza had arranged for Maryland's Chesapeake Bay license plates to now include the words "Protect the Chesapeake and Coastal Bays" and will now also benefit the Maryland Coastal Bays Program.

ADJOURNMENT

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