

Delaware Estuary Levee Advisory Group
 Gloucester County Planning Division
 1200 Delsea Drive North, Clayton, NJ
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Welcome and Introductions

Ken Taaffe, Coordinator, South Jersey Resource Conservation and Development Council, welcomed the group.

Levee Inventory Approach

There was considerable discussion regarding the approach to be taken on the levee inventory. There was concern expressed by Kathy Stuart that the information gathered in the inventory in terms of economic impacts, particularly to the private sector, could be used to assess those sectors which are most benefiting from the existing flood protection infrastructure. The failure of either interstate highway or railroad infrastructure impacting distant industry (eg. Mannington Mills in Salem County along the 25 mile long rail line that runs through flood vulnerable areas of Gloucester County) was seen as a concern for future assessments of the affected industry.

Chuck Romick noted that there is already a lot of residential areas, and more on-line to be developed, that are vulnerable to flooding in the event of failure of this infrastructure. He noted that private sector industries like DuPont have been good about doing maintenance on their properties but that the problem is with those who do not maintain the levees.

Ken Taaffe asked who maintains the railroads and how we get private interests to be a part of this effort. It was agreed that, at least in project work, railroads are very difficult to work with. Brian Mulvanna asked whether PSEG should be invited to these meetings. Sam Reynolds noted that the State of New Jersey had mandated that there be mitigation for the approximately 30 million fish expected to be entrained in the Salem Nuclear Plant cooling system. Mitigation was performed for opening up existing levees or "banks" so that previously blocked nursery and breeding areas would be accessible to the fishery resource. Sam noted that the opening up of the berms has nothing to do with flood protection unless protective measures are put in place to protect existing properties dependent on this infrastructure. Greg noted that PSEG is on the e-mail list for meeting notices. There was a consensus that it would be useful to formally invite a PSEG representative to discuss the nature and extent of their earlier inventory of the levees in the area of concern for the Estuary Enhancement Program.

Kathy noted that the State Legislature would need to have these needs identified in order to justify the expenditure of public funds for future operation, maintenance and rehabilitation of the existing infrastructure. There was unanimous consensus that the purpose of the inventory, when funding becomes available to complete it, would be to identify the maintenance and operation needs and potential impacts, in the event of failure of one or more of the levee systems.

Naming of the Group

There was considerable discussion about the name of the group and the scope of its mission both geographically and otherwise. It was agreed to name that, for the time being, the group will be named Delaware Estuary Levee Advisory Group.

Mission of the Group

There was discussion regarding the mission of the group. It was suggested that the group should act as a knowledge base with each agency and organization sharing its information. Kathy Stuart felt that this would permit efficient access to relevant information for a particular applicant's project. Rick Westergaard asked whether we had a map of where the levees are located in the four counties. Greg responded that NRCS and PSEG have put together a map but it is not believed to be all-inclusive in terms of all the existing levee systems, both public and private. Ken DiMuzio asked that there be a common format for all the information to be presented so that all can use the information. Kathy Stuart cited that the Office of Legislative Services formally used Word Perfect which was not openable by others but now uses the more commonly available Word.

Kathy Stuart stated that we need to identify funding sources such as a catalog of available programs. The group reviewed a rough draft of some funding sources that Greg Westfall had contacted looking for funding for the levee inventory. Rick Westergaard noted that he has an extensive list of current and on-going studies by others including Federal and state agencies. He cited a flood mitigation project that was completed by the Economic Development Administration of the US Department of Commerce near Philadelphia shortly after the 1999 Hurricane Floyd event.

Sam Reynolds suggested that the group needs to chart out what or not legislation regarding the meadow companies, as proposed by Ken DiMuzio, is approved. He asked how we would define whether a meadow bank company is working or not. Kathy noted that there are several definitions for the existing sponsors including private, private-public and public as well as those that are functioning and those that are not. This means that there are at least six different situations out there. Ken DiMuzio stated that he didn't think that this group has to be in support of the proposed legislation to change meadow bank companies. Ken also mentioned that the re-development process could be affected by the lack/failure of flood infrastructure. Private component needs to be encouraged to participate but an applicant would need to be careful not to disqualify themselves for funding. Kathy felt there is a need to flesh out the number of meadow companies. Ken DiMuzio noted that about 10 years ago Gary Stuhlsrager and Jack Collins (then Speaker) attempted to repeal the meadow company but failed. Kathy noted that legislation is moved by knowing economic impacts to people and businesses.

Sam Reynolds noted that we are looking at two problem statements, namely, grants/sources of funding and an assessment/inventory. Rick Westergaard noted that the Atlantic City Press recently reported on a NOAA National Weather Service study on the projected flooding due to a hurricane storm surge in the region.

Ken Taaffe noted that there is a need for a knowledge base. He asked that each agency put together a half page of information with contact information for a person as well as a link.

Ken DiMuzio asked what the nature of this organization will be. He wondered whether we would be a 501 (c) 3 organization. Ken noted that the group, for the time being, could work through the South Jersey RC&D Council which is a 501 (c) 3 organization.

March 8th Meeting Agenda

The March 8th meeting for the entire group will take place at the Cumberland County Cooperative Extension location. Meeting will begin at 10 a.m.

There was discussion regarding having Don Wilkinson speak at this meeting but he has monthly conflicts with the Tidelands Council meetings on the second Wednesday. There was discussion regarding moving meeting dates but it was thought that it would be better to meet with the whole group on March 8th. The following was a tentative agenda:

Grants Discussion

FEMA Funding for Inventory – Bruce Swiren, FEMA – Len Clark will contact

FEMA Flood Map – Pat Griggs, FEMA – Joe Ruggeri will contact her
Map Modernization

Criteria for Corps of Engineers – Brian Mulvanna, USACE
Rehabilitation and Inspection

Existing PSEG Inventory – Brenda Evans, PSEG – Greg will contact

Meeting adjourned at 12 noon.