

**Delaware Estuary Levee Organization (DELO)
Minutes
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Welcome and Introductions

Meeting began at 10:00 a.m. Ken Taaffe, Coordinator, South Jersey RC&D Council, welcomed attendees and asked each of them to introduce themselves and their affiliation. Ken noted that he wanted to implement some ground rules for this meeting so that we can advance through the agenda.

Vision, Mission and Objectives Statement for the Delaware Estuary Levee Organization (DELO)

Ken distributed a previously provided draft statement. The group had considerable discussion regarding the draft statement. The following is the agreed-to Vision, Mission and Objectives Statement:

Vision Statement – The vision of the Delaware Estuary Levee Organization (DELO) is to protect residents and property from flooding, salt water intrusion, and mosquitoes, while maintaining and enhancing the wetland and wildlife resources.

Mission Statement – The DELO mission is to promote the proper and timely operation, maintenance and rehabilitation of existing levee systems.

The Delaware Estuary Levee Organization is comprised of owners, operators and stakeholders of these levee systems. Representatives include the four counties (Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem Counties), numerous municipalities, meadow bank companies, soil conservation districts and other organizations concerned with the operation, maintenance and rehabilitation of existing levees. DELO supports existing levee systems where these systems provide:

- Public safety (i.e. flood protection)
- Agricultural irrigation and potable water supply protection
- Mosquito control
- Fish and wildlife benefits
- Property and infrastructure protection

Objectives

- Advocates dealing with natural resource problems and issues using watersheds at the planning and implementation unit level
- Requests and oversees an inventory of levees including identification of levees and hazard vulnerability of levees
- Shares information on the management and maintenance of levees
- Advocates for up-to-date emergency action plans, rehearsed with the affected public, where levees protect lives and property
- Advocates for legislative changes to improve funding and technical assistance as well as clarification of sponsor liability and responsibility in the operation, maintenance and rehabilitation of levees
- Advocates for funding and technical assistance from all sources, including Federal and state, for the operation, maintenance and rehabilitation of levees
- Represents the concerns and needs of PL83-566 project sponsors from the South Jersey region at the State and National level
- Advocates using total resource management principles in planning, and believes the USDA-assisted small watershed programs are among the best planning and implementation vehicles available for wise water and land management
- Is affiliated with the National Watershed Coalition

Len Clark expressed his thoughts that the objectives of this group seem to be three, namely, levee inventory, legislation and emergency management planning as follows:

<u>Inventory</u>	<u>Legislation</u>	<u>Emergency Management Planning</u>
-Identification of Levees	-Orphaned Levees -PL83-566 Rehabilitation	-Flood Evacuation Routes

Bob Brewer noted that Jim Manski, Cumberland County OEM Coordinator, is having a press conference at Fortescue regarding the planned FEMA Map Modernization Program.

Bylaws

Ken next asked the group to consider whether they want bylaws. Bob Brewer noted that the South Jersey RC&D Council already has bylaws. Ken DiMuzio asked whether DELO could be a subcommittee of the RC&D Council. KP asked whether this group's vision included being a separate, 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization/entity. Ken DiMuzio responded that he would favor being under South Jersey RC&D Council. He noted that the only problem with this might be to get funds for this purpose. There was consensus that the DELO would become a subcommittee of the South Jersey RC&D Council, pending a decision by the RC&D Council. Ken DiMuzio asked for some type of action by the South Jersey RC&D Council by the next meeting of this group so that we will have some legitimacy when contacts are made with State Senator Sweeney and Kathy Stuart.

Funding for Levee Inventory

There was considerable discussion regarding this issue. Greg Westfall noted that, depending on the availability of funding, the levee inventory could be performed under Planning and Surveys section of the NRCS PL83-566 Program. He noted that the Program has previously provided funding for similar regional and state-wide inventories including the State-wide Agricultural Irrigation Water Needs inventory and a State Erosion, Sediment and Animal Waste (SESAW) Inventory. Rick Westergaard stated that Federal legislation, due to the Athos I oil spill, may be available for this purpose. He suggested that Senator Menendez and Lautenberg's aides be invited to the next meeting.

Levee Inventory

Ken asked the group what the status of the county activities were on the identification of levees.

Bob Brewer noted that Cumberland County used geographic information system (GIS) technology and had looked over the aerial photo layer and found that levees have a unique signature and that this layer was matched with the tax parcel layer for identification of ownership.

Rick Westergaard noted that LIDAR for Gloucester County would cost approximately \$1 million. LIDAR stands for Light Detection and Ranging which uses lasers to measure distances to reflective surfaces. LIDAR provides a ground elevation point every 15 feet that is accurate to +/- 6 inches. More detailed information about LIDAR can be found at <http://www.usgs.gov/science/science> He suggested that a schedule be obtained from Ruth Ehringer on LIDAR. He noted that \$696,000 is needed to do the FEMA Map Modernization in Gloucester County. He also noted that he is setting up a meeting between USGS and NOAA to look at installation of an automatic flood warning system. He suggested that the group needs to come up with a scope of services and an estimate of the amount of funding required. He suggested that we take what has been done in California and use that as a template for this purpose here. He noted that Joe Gavin of the US Army Corps has been doing storm surge modeling. He proposed

that there be a scope of services meeting with the following people/organizations represented:

Joe Gavin – US Army Corps of Engineers
County Engineers (Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem)
Pat Griggs – FEMA
Paul Miller/Marianna Leckner – NJOEM

Ken Taaffe asked Rick Westergaard to make a list of the people to invite. Ken DiMuzio suggested that these people (the Feds) be asked what information that the Counties should be providing.

Next Meeting

Ken Taaffe stated that the next meeting date will be subject to Rick Westergaard determining the availability of the above and other key people for a scope of services meeting for the levee inventory.