



Coastal Advisory Council  
July 23, 2020  
Virtual meeting via Go To Webinar due to COVID 19  
Meeting Summary

**Welcome and Introductions:**

The meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Ashby Worley. Ms. Worley introduced the newest CAC members: Mayor Jason Weaver of the City of Screven, serving in the local government affiliation; Ebony Simpson from the Department of Community Affairs, serving in the State/regional government affiliation; and Michael Blakely from Chatham County, serving in the State/regional government affiliation. Lindy Betzhold, the Georgia CMP NOAA Liaison, was also in attendance.

**Old Business:**

Meeting Summary

There were no comments on the May 2020 meeting summary.

Committee Reports

**Communications Committee, *Stacia Hendricks***

Ms. Hendrix stated that the Communications Committee met with Jan Mackinnon in May and discussed an overview of the section 309 enhancement strategy. Every five years, the CMP partakes in the 309 evaluation, and this year the CAC was given the opportunity to participate via an online survey, of which the feedback was given to NOAA as part of the strategy document. The 309 enhancement strategy will be covered in more detail later in the meeting by Ms. Mackinnon. If new members or current members want to join the Communications Committee, please let Ms. Hendricks know.

**Legislative Committee, *Charles McMillan***

Charles McMillan provided the following updates on behalf of the Legislative Committee. Mr. McMillan presented several categories of legislation: directly related to the GCMP, related to the GCMP and “of interest” to the CAC.

The following legislation is *directly* related to the GCMP:

**HB 833: Anchorage Regulations**

Relating to waters of the state, ports, and watercraft, so as to prohibit overnight anchoring in anchorage restriction areas; to provide for definitions; to establish anchorage restriction areas; to establish short-term and long-term anchoring; to prohibit unlawful acts pertaining to live-aboard vessels within estuarine areas; to remove record-keeping requirements; to provide that the

commissioner may grant exemptions; to revise definitions; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws.

Status: Effective Date July 1, 2020; This is an update to the first version of the bill passed in 2019, and this updated bill moves the enforcement regulations out of CRD and into the Law Enforcement Division.

**HR 1369:** Recognizing the 50th Anniversary of the Coastal Marshland Protection Act

Status: House read and adopted 3/3/20, Recognized on March 27, 2020.

**HR 1122:** Recognizing and commending the Georgia Sentinel Landscape Partnership.

Status: House read and adopted 2/18/20

**SR 88:** Resolution to Oppose Offshore Oil & Gas Exploration; opposing seismic testing and oil and gas drilling activities in Georgia coastal waters.

Status: Did not move.

Legislation *related* to the GCMP:

**HB 901:** Georgia Environmental Finance Authority Amendment to the Official Code of Georgia to provide for the power to make loan commitments and loans to local governments and nongovernment agencies for projects that permanently protect land and water.

Status: Repair made to reinstate private funding of fund by E-NGOs for the conservation fund for large tracts.

**GOSP Funding for Budget:** First year of funding completed, budget funding reduced from \$20 million to \$3-4 million. All of the projects funded this year should expect to receive their funds.

**HB 906:** Conveyance of Heritage Preserve Properties Amendment to the Official Code of Georgia relating to the Heritage Trust Program, so as to condition the method utilized for conveyance of heritage preserve property on the property's amount of acreage.

Status: Did not move out of the house.

Legislation *of interest* to the CAC:

**SB 123:** Increase of Coal Ash Disposal Surcharge Proposed amendment relating to waste management, to eliminate the coal ash surcharge imposed by host local governments regarding municipal solid waste disposal facilities operated by private enterprise. Added on, restoration of the solid waste fund and new tire fees.

Status: Several bills were combined into SB 123, Charging the same amt for coal ash as it is for household municipal garbage. Restored the solid waste fund that was about to expire.

**HB 1015:** Carbon Sequestration Registry Proposed amendments to the Georgia Carbon Sequestration Registry, so as to provide for the inclusion of building products in construction on the registry; to revise definitions; to allow participants in the registry to voluntarily record the utilization of carbon sequestration; to provide for an advisory committee; to provide for certified third-party organizations to measure the amount of carbon sequestered from building materials

that sequester carbon dioxide; to require the State Forestry Commission to publish a list of certified organizations.

Status: Did not move out of the house.

**SB 384:** Prohibiting Landfills Near Certain Blackwater Rivers Relating to general provisions relative to solid waste management, so as to prohibit the location of any municipal solid waste disposal facility or any coal combustion residual landfill within a certain distance of a blackwater river wholly contained within the borders of this state and originating on the coastal plain, and which flows directly into the ocean; to amend Title 16 relating to criminal trespass and damage to property relative to waste control; to amend Title 48 relating to county special purpose local option sales tax, so as to provide for conforming cross-references

Status: Did not move.

**HB 926:** Increase Solid Waste & New Tire Fees Relating to waste management cost reimbursement fees and surcharges, so as to increase certain solid waste disposal surcharges; to amend code relating to waste management tire disposal restrictions and fees, so as to increase certain tire disposal fees

Status: Combined into SB 123, did not move.

**HB 1045:** Relating to the funding of services... so as to include flood risk reduction in the enumerated list of county purposes for which certain proceeds from county taxes shall be used; to provide that funding for flood risk reduction shall be derived specifically from premium taxes; to provide for a definition; to provide for an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

Status: did not move.

The Legislative committee needs more members, particularly from academia and local government. Please reach out to Mr. McMillan if you are interested.

**Executive Committee, Ashby Worley**

Ms. Worley stated that the committee met between the spring and summer CAC meetings. The members each represent one of the five affiliations. They elevated the list of CAC member nominees to the Commissioner for approval. The slate was sent along with their respective applications. Appointments included Mayor Jason Weaver of the City of Screven, serving in the local government affiliation; Ebony Simpson from the Department of Community Affairs, serving in the State/regional government affiliation; and Michael Blakely from Chatham County, serving in the State/regional government affiliation.

Ms. Worley also announced that from here forth the CAC will only advertise open council positions in the spring and fall to be uniform with other DNR councils.

Ms. Worley also requested a presentation on the Coastal Marshlands Protection Act at the fall meeting to allow Council members to gain a public understanding of the permitting process related to the CMPA and spark an open discussion within the Council and the CRD staff.

### **Officer Nominating Committee, Jan Mackinnon**

Ms. Mackinnon stated that Ms. Worley called for interest in leadership positions at the CAC spring meeting in May. The CAC Chair and Vice Chair terms are expiring. The Officer Nominating Committee met on June 18<sup>th</sup>. The requirements for the Chair and Vice Chair positions as established in the by-laws are that each position be filled by representatives that had been on the CAC for one year and represented different counties. The Officer Nominating Committee consists of the Doug Haymans, the CRD Director, Ashby Worley, the current Council Chair, and the former Council Chair, Joey Slaughter. Mark McClellan was nominated for Chair and Chester Jackson for Vice Chair. The Officer Nominating Committee unanimously approved both to serve as officers for this upcoming year.

Chairwoman Worley opened the floor to additional nominations. No nominations were made. Charles McMillan made a motion to close the floor to nominations. Mayor Weaver seconded the motion. The vote passed unanimously to close nominations for officer positions. Clay Montague motioned to vote on the nominations of Mark McClellan for Chair and Chester Jackson for Vice Chair. Stephen Vives seconded the motion. The Council unanimously approved Mark McClellan for Chair and Chester Jackson for Vice Chair.

### **New Business**

#### Coastal Incentive Grants Cycle 24

Beth Tasciotti provided an update to the Council on the Cycle 23 funded CIG projects: 10 projects were funded in total and will begin on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020. Contracts are currently being prepared for these projects. There were four Oceans and Wetlands themed projects, zero Public Access and Land Conservation themed projects, three Sustainable Communities themed projects, two Disaster Resiliency and Coastal Hazards themed projects, and one Non-point source pollution project.

Ms. Tasciotti provided an overview of the Cycle 24 Coastal Incentive Grant themes, criteria, 306A (construction) guideline updates, terms and funding and timeline. See below for details.

#### **Themes**

The themes for Cycle 24 Coastal Incentive Grants have not changed and are the following: Oceans and Wetlands, Public Access and Land Conservation, Sustainable Communities, Disaster Resiliency and Coastal Hazards, and Non-point source pollution.

#### **Criteria**

No revisions are suggested to the Research and Non-research ranking criteria this year from the former year. Ms. Mackinnon stated that the last ranking revisions were made in Summer 2017. Dr. Montague motioned to approve the Cycle 24 research themes and criteria. Ms. Hendricks seconded the motion.

Ms. Worley called for a vote on research themes and criteria. During roll call, Dr. Montague asked if sub-themes had been recently edited. Ms. Mackinnon confirmed that sub-themes had not changed this year, and that evaluating the themes needed to take place during this summer meeting to keep with the timeline for advertising the CIGs.

Dr. Montague suggested that themes for Cycle 25 be introduced for discussion in the spring 2021 meeting, so the Council could form an opinion and be better prepared to vote on them in the summer meeting. Ms. Worley supported this idea and proposed having a presentation of former projects and themes at the spring meeting. This idea was supported by CRD staff.

Shawn Jordan asked if a boating access project had been funded in Cycle 23, and whether there was still a cap on construction projects. Ms. Mackinnon confirmed that there were no boating access projects funded in Cycle 23 and none were submitted. The cap on all projects is \$80,000. Mr. Jordan asked if the project cap could be changed. Ms. Mackinnon explained that the reason for the cap was to distribute available funding amongst a variety of projects.

Ms. Mackinnon also explained that DNR CRD research needs were identified annually internally with CRD staff. She clarified that project topics not included in the research needs list provided by DNR CRD were still eligible to apply for CIG funding.

Ms. Worley then resumed roll call for voting on research themes and criteria. The Council unanimously approved the research themes and criteria for Cycle 24.

### **306A Updates**

Ms. Tasciotti stated that there have been no changes in guidance from NOAA for 306A projects in the CIG application process. 306A guidelines apply to construction projects funded by Coastal Management Program dollars. NOAA updated their guidance on this portion of the Act in past years but nothing has changed this year.

### **Terms and Funding Updates**

Ms. Tasciotti stated that the maximum CIG award amount is \$80,000 per year for all proposals. The maximum term is two years. Approximately \$500,000 is available for funding in addition to \$205,256 from Cycle 23 Year Two carry over projects, of which there are five. This allows for a total of \$705,256 available to award in this upcoming year.

### **Timeline**

Ms. Tasciotti stated that the request for proposals would be advertised starting in September 2020. The pre-proposals for the Cycle 24 will be due in December 2020. Full applications are due in February 2021. The review and selection of applications would occur in February and March 2021. The submission of the Georgia CZM grant to NOAA occurs in May 2021, and then a tentative notification to applicants is sent out the same month. NOAA CZM grant final approval and CIG contracts are issued in August and September 2021, and then contracts begin October 1, 2021.

### **Announcements**

#### **309 Enhancement Strategy** *Jan Mackinnon*

NOAA gives the all CMP's the opportunity for strategic planning in five-year increments, called the 309 Program Enhancement. CRD staff assess the needs for the GCMP and also utilize the CAC as an engaged stakeholder group to provide feedback. We are currently planning the 2021-2025 strategy. There are nine programmatic areas: Wetlands, Coastal Hazards, Public Access, Marine Debris, Cumulative and Secondary Impacts, Special Area Management Planning, Ocean Resources, Energy and Government Facility Siting, and Aquaculture.

The predetermined questions asked by NOAA are coupled with knowledge to date of programmatic needs in addition to stakeholder input. Council members received a survey in late spring that was used as stakeholder input on each programmatic area. CRD staff used all of these to create a cohesive strategy. The draft strategy was released in May, public comment closed on July 10<sup>th</sup>. Public comments received are being integrated into the final draft of the plan, which is due September 1, 2020 to NOAA. The strategy is called “Building Resiliency with Nature-based Infrastructure”. The strategy includes working with Tybee Island regarding their nature-based infrastructure development, specifically on beaches and dunes. In addition, the strategy addresses living shorelines through evaluating the past, current, and future status of living shorelines. It is also addressing research needs and the regulatory framework of living shorelines. The strategy will also develop a Resiliency Reference Guide to tailor topic areas to local government needs. CRD will also be working with academic partners to update the coastal Hazard Vulnerability Assessment. The strategy is available for Council members to review. The link will be sent directly to Council members. Ms. Mackinnon will ask for a two-week turnaround on comments once she sends the email link.

#### **Beach Week Update** *Jan Mackinnon*

Beach Week was virtual this year because of CoVid and social distancing concerns. As an alternative to in person outreach, CRD staff created a webpage to direct people to additional information. Informational coasters were given to local restaurants; however, the advertising strategy was devised before CoVid, and was not an effective outreach tool due to restaurant closures. Sandwich boards were put out at Tybee Island, Jekyll, and St Simons Island in popular locations to advertise the webpage. Partners were highlighted on the website as well.

#### **Climate Conference** *Jan Mackinnon*

The 2020 Georgia Climate Conference was originally schedule for November. The decision was made to postpone the conference until April 28-29, 2021. It will still be at the Jekyll Convention Center. The planning committee continues to meet monthly to develop the event.

#### **Council Discussion**

Dr. Montague stated that he supported the discussion and presentation of the CMPA at the next meeting.

Ms. Hendricks asked how the coastal management research needs were compiled. Ms. Mackinnon responded that it was compiled from the department to direct researchers to CRD research interests. It is a living document that is circulated and commented on every year internally. It is then provided to CIG applicants. Dr. Montague asked for clarification on whether the list of research needs was for the Council to give comment on. Ms. Mackinnon clarified that the list was an internally compiled document, not something that the Council was being asked to provide comment on. It will be shared publicly on the CIG application webpage.

Ben Carswell suggested that the development of a regional sediment transport model would be very valuable for a lot of local projects. The Golden Ray has affected sediment transport out of St. Simons Sound, and suggested that CRD may be able to use leverage on the Golden Ray

incident to secure funding for the development of a model. Dr. Montague commented on Mr. Carswell's proposal regarding the unreliable predictive ability of sediment transport models, especially regarding the inability to reliably predict fine particles response, electrically and chemically, to the environment. Dr. Jackson responded that he would be willing to discuss this topic given his expertise in sediment transport and modelling.

Ms. Hendricks asked if there has been any inclusion of the Georgia oyster aquaculture initiative and oyster management plan and stock assessments in the CRD research needs list. Ms. Mackinnon responded that oyster aquaculture has not been included in the document specifically. The CMP tries to identify other means of funding for imminent research and management needs. This topic may be something to add in the future based on a need that cannot be supported elsewhere.

Ms. Worley announced a seminar by the Georgia Coastal Ecosystem LTER that is occurring in overlap this meeting and she will forward the invitation to the full Council.

***Ms. Worley adjourned the meeting.***