



Delaware River Basin Commission

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Kristen Bowman Kavanagh, P.E.
Executive Director

Advisory Committee on Climate Change

Virtually via Zoom

DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY

Tuesday, February 17, 2026

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

MEETING ATTENDEES (55)

Members and Alternates (16):

Reserved:

Delaware – Ashley Norton, Ph.D.; Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control

New Jersey – Nicholas A. Procopio, Ph.D., GISP; New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

New York – Leo Matteo Bachinger; New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

United States Government – Amanda L. Babson, Ph.D.; National Park Service

United States Government – Arthur DeGaetano, Ph.D.; United States Government, NOAA Northeast Regional Climate Center, Cornell University

New York City – Alan Cohn, New York City Department of Environmental Protection

City of Philadelphia – Julia Rockwell, Philadelphia Water Department

Partnership for the Delaware Estuary – Martha Maxwell-Doyle

Pennsylvania – Duke Adams, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (alternate for James Horton)

Non-Reserved:

Christopher Linn, AICP; Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

Howard Neukrug, P.E.; The Water Center at Penn, University of Pennsylvania

Maggie Reilly; Aqua Pennsylvania

David Velinsky, Ph.D.; Academy of Natural Sciences, Drexel University

Marjoria Kaplan, Ph.D, Rutgers University

William Brady III, P.E, CCS Strategies, LLC

Robert Nicholas, Ph.D, Penn State University

Not present: Thomas Gilbert; Pennsylvania Environmental Council

DRBC Staff (14):

Avery Lentini	Fanghui Chen	Naomi Mendelsohn
Amanda Khalil	Li Zheng	Pam Bush
Amy Shallcross	Mike Heller	Sara Sayed
Chad Pindar	Kate Schmidt	Sarah Beganskas
Joey Fogarty	Kristen Bowman Kavanagh	

Other Attendees (25):

Alec Bernstein (ICF)	Jarius James (DRN)
Amy McHugh (USGS)	Loretta Kelly (Palmyra Green Team)
August Ebert (City of Philadelphia)	Melanie Knezich (City of Philadelphia)
B. Arrindell (DCS)	Michael Keller (StoryFlow)
Brandi Dringus (public)	Noah Palau (Philadelphia OEM)
Brenan Tarrier (NYSDEC)	Nancy Zhou (GHD)
Brent Gotsch (NYCDEP)	Sean Dennehy (NYSDEC)
Carly Lare (CRCWA)	Shealynn O'Toole (NJAW)
Caroline Barnhart (UPenn)	Stephanie Driscoll (UDC)
Clarissa Murray (USACE)	Tracy Carluccio (DRN)
Erick Lewis (TU)	Venkata Modungla (Resilutions, Inc.)
Heidi Yeh (Pinelands Alliance)	Natalia Teekah (MGKF)
Hoss Liaghat (PADEP)	

Reference acronyms:

Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel U. (ANSDU), Aqua America (Aqua), Chester County Water Resources Authority (CCWRA), Chester Ridley Crum Creeks Watershed Association (CRCWA), Damascus Citizens for Sustainability (DCS), Delaware Appalachian Edge Bioregion (DAEB), Delaware Riverkeeper Network (DRN), League of Women Voters of Delaware (LWVD), Manko, Gold, Katcher & Fox, LLC (MGKF), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Parks and Conservation Association (NPCA), New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), New York City Department of Environmental Conservation (NYCDEC), Partnership for the Delaware Estuary (PDE), Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP), Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PECPA), Pennsylvania State University (PSU), Philadelphia Office of Emergency Management (OEM), Philadelphia Water Department (PWD), Trout Unlimited (TU), University of Pennsylvania (UPenn), Upper Delaware Council (UDC), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Water Resources Association of the Delaware River Basin (WRA).

MEETING SUMMARY

Prior to the Call to Order, S. Beganskas read an opening statement on the purpose of advisory committees and the meeting format/housekeeping.

Call to Order:

Meeting was called to order at 10:02 am by A. Cohn and held virtually via Zoom webinar and its call-in capabilities.

Member Roll Call:

Attendance was taken by S. Beganskas. Sixteen (16) members present. All committee members (and members of the public) who attended did so virtually.

Approve Meeting Summary:

The 12/16/25 meeting summary was unanimously approved. No discussion. Motion to approve was made by M. Maxwell Doyle and seconded by N. Procopio. M. Kaplan abstained as she was not present at that meeting.

DRBC Announcements:

S. Beganskas made the following DRBC announcements:

1. DRBC's next business meeting will occur on March 4, 2026, at 10:30am on Zoom.
2. DRBC recently published a report on salinity and sea-level rise, available here: <https://www.nj.gov/drbc/programs/flow/SLR-impacts-report.html>
3. DRBC is currently hiring summer interns and encourages members and attendees to help get the word out. Most relevant to this committee, we are hiring a graduate-level intern to help with resilience planning. We are also hiring undergraduate-level interns for planning, database management, and water quality monitoring.
4. Non-reserved ACCC appointments will expire in August 2026. All non-reserved ACCC members who are interested in applying to serve for another two-year term need to send a resume to Sarah.
5. Is there interest in holding an in-person ACCC meeting in the coming year?

Presentations:

"The Impact of Sea Level Rise on Salinity Intrusion in the Delaware River Estuary" by Amy Shallcross, P.E. and Fanghui Chen, Ph.D. P.E. of the Delaware River Basin Commission

F. Chen provided a presentation describing the newly released DRBC technical report that focuses on how sea level rise is expected to impact salinity intrusion in the Delaware Estuary. He discussed the background of the Estuary, findings of the study and potential future work on the subject.

The presentation slides are available on the DRBC website [here](https://www.nj.gov/drbc/library/documents/ACCC/021726/SLR_Report_Update_chen.pdf):
https://www.nj.gov/drbc/library/documents/ACCC/021726/SLR_Report_Update_chen.pdf

“DRBC’s Water Resources Resilience Plan: Phase 1 Report Review” by Sarah Beganskas and Joseph Fogarty, DRBC

S. Beganskas shared a summary of input received from the ACCC members regarding the Phase 1 document, and there was discussion among the committee about each of the topics raised.

1. Clarification of the definition of water resource assets.

A. Cohn asked whether looking at specific assets as part of the definition of assets. How specific would we be. Ex. How will flooding impact the assets? S. Beganskas replied that because this analysis is on a basin-wide scale the analysis would be done on this scale. We might generate a map and see what is inundated but not look at things at an asset by asset scale.

C. Linn following up on A. Cohn’s question how will you prioritize assets if you’re looking at things on a Basin-wide scale? How do you differentiate the value of one thing from another. S. Beganskas replied that we want to look at how and where water resource assets are most vulnerable. I.e. How are these systems vulnerable?

2. Delineation between landscape and aquatic life. Where do we draw the line?

L. Kelly asked, does aquatic life include mammals and their impacts? S. Beganskas replied that yes the definition of aquatic life will include things that require water for life not just aquatic species.

M. Kaplan asked where human life is incorporated within the bounds of this project? S. Beganskas replied that right now human life is incorporated in recreation, flooding and water supply portions, but that it was a good question to consider.

3. Incorporating future land use data in phase 2

C. Linn noted that incorporating future land use data was good but getting future land use data on the Basin scale would be difficult. It makes sense conceptually but does not work practically. J. Fogarty replied that maybe the better question is there a method to estimate future land use?

A. Cohn in chat there are some suggestions of data sources for future land use data from New Jersey (NJ State redevelopment plan) and Delaware (2025 State Strategies Map).

M. Kaplan recommends looking at some work Rick Lathrop has conducted at Rutgers or maybe it’s easier to make a more qualitative assessment based on time constraints.

R. Nicholas suggested looking at plausible perturbations to land use change. We can maybe identify some larger trends that way.

J. Rockwell agrees this is a good method to stress the system to the changes and identify which assets might be most susceptible.

A. Babson suggested looking at land use and climate scenarios done through the north American landscape cooperative.

A. Cohn population growth and climate change are always intertwined especially when it comes to water resilience and water/wastewater as well as flow.

A. Norton noted they have a whole section related to land use in our climate action plan may be worth checking out

J. Rockwell suggested looking at climate change and whether population migration may be of concern.

4. Should we concerned with the cold spells/freezing rain occurrences as a driver of climate change and incorporate them?

J. Rockwell said that icing along their intakes caused major issues and highly recommended polar vortexes and other similar freezing events in our analysis.

A. DeGeatano followed up asking more about the ice impacts to PWD's intakes. Julia replied that it was a all-hands-on deck situation working on easing issues from the ice both on the distribution and supply sides.

R. Nicholas stated that cold snap events could have impacts to flooding and waterways. Generally, we are expecting to be more variability in climatic events with the onset of climate change.

A Cohn noted that flooding is the only type of episodic type of stressor that is named. He was wondering if there is more room to include other episodic events. It would be important to consider.

J. Fogarty replied that he makes and important and it would be something to look further into.

5. What time periods should our baseline period follow (1950 -2005?) take out 30 years?

N. Procopio suggested to use a 30 year period, maybe the 1950 to 2005. Is there enough separation in time to see the changes we would expect. S. Beganskas clarified that he implies that he is saying that we should lean more on the historical side which N. Procopio replied that is correct and recommended to use older climatic data if possible and available.

J. Rockwell stated that data used may depend on what asset we're looking at or what component specifically. Will depend on the parameter, and products/analyses you're looking to do.

The presentation slides are available on the DRBC website [here](https://www.nj.gov/drbc/library/documents/ACCC/021726/WRRP_Phase1_beganskas.pdf):

https://www.nj.gov/drbc/library/documents/ACCC/021726/WRRP_Phase1_beganskas.pdf

“DRBC’s Water Resources Resilience Plan: Phase 2 Progress Report” by Sarah Beganskas, DRBC

S. Beganskas shared an overview of DRBC staff’s efforts to plan for the transition from Phase 1 to Phase 2. DRBC will continue to seek public and partner input during Phase 2.

M. Kaplan noted that she is happy to help get the word out about phase 2.

The presentation slides are available on the DRBC website [here](#):

https://www.nj.gov/drbc/library/documents/ACCC/021726/WRRP_Phase2_beganskas.pdf

Member Roundtable Updates:

A. Norton stated that the 2025 Delaware Climate Action plan is now being published on their website.

N. Precoupio stated the NJDEP has released an update to NJ’s 2020 climate report

A. DeGaetano stated that NOAA will be launching a Mid-Atlantic early warning system for droughts. A launch meeting will be held on April 9th

M. Kaplan stated that Rutgers has a call for abstracts open for the Rutgers Climate Conference

Public Remarks:

J. James (Delaware Riverkeeper Network) – Comments were sent on behalf of the coalition for Phase 1 of the Water Resources Resilience Plan. S. Beganskas replied that the comments were received.

B. Arrindell noted that she was unable to copy links sent in the chat. S. Beganskas replied that she would send the links to her after the meeting.

Adjournment:

M. Kaplan made a motion to adjourn the meeting. C. Linn seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned by A. Cohn at approximately 11:57 am.

Approved 08/26/26