Maryland Coastal Bays Program
Citizens Advisory Committee

Waterman's Seafood Company
12505 Ocean Gateway
Ocean City, MD 21842

November 17, 2015

5:30 – 6:30 p.m.

Attendees:

- Steve Parker, Chair
- Maggie Cummings
- Carolyn Cummins
- Josh Esworthy
- Dennis Faber
- Jean Fry
- Larry Fry
- James Henderson
- Bill Killinger
- Joleen Killinger
- Joe Lieb
- Jess Molnar
- Sharyn O'Hare
- Suzy Taylor
- Steve Taylor
- Larry Walton
- Ray Jackson
- Gael Carlson
- Vanoka Morris-Smith
- Patricia Stepherr
- Katherine Phillips
- Jennifer Rafter
- Roman Jesien
- Amanda Poskaitis
- Emma Rice

The quarterly meeting of the Maryland Coastal Bays Program (MCBP) Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) was held on Tuesday, November 17th, 2015, at 5:30 P.M., at the Waterman's Seafood Restaurant. Introductions were made.

Sandi Smith presented MCBP's Sustainable Business Guide initiative and asked CAC members to spread the word that we are looking for local sustainable businesses. This guide will aid Ocean City Green Team and shoppers in making environmentally friendly purchases while supporting local businesses in the Coastal Bays' watershed this holiday season. Contact Sandi at sandis@mdcoastalbays.org or 410-213-2297 ext. 106 if you have any questions.

Jessica Flores, UME Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator, presented on BMP's used by Agriculture Producers in Maryland and specifically Worcester County. The Worcester county landscape is dominated by agriculturally zoned land, making up 71.9% of the area. To give some perspective, only 9% of the land is developed. The average farm in Maryland is 210 acres while the national average is 266 acres. Maryland participates in every type of production, and is number two in the nation for broiler poultry, number four in agriculture, and number five in corn production. BMP's, or Best Management Practices, are implemented in various ways in the farming community. Jessica highlighted a few BMP actions that are commonly used in Worcester county, they include cover crops, precision agriculture, nutrient management, no till practices, buffer strips, high use pads at poultry farms, fencing to rotate grazing fields, and manure storage.

In Worcester county 81% of farmland was enrolled in the Maryland cover crop program last year. Crop cover holds soil in place and acts as a risk management tool. After planting crops such as corn or soybeans, planting of a crop cover in the beginning of November consisting of plants such as barley or canola. Another technique is winterkill cover crops. Radishes are the popular choice to plant because they are killed off easily by frost and has a long taproot that loosens compacted soil. This practice replenishes soil nutrients, brings in microorganisms, doe not involve herbicides, and allows easier replanting in the spring. There are some negatives associated with this practice in our area, where temperatures are a bit warmer and the radishes may not be killed off by light frost, the radishes will then compete with the next crop plant. A great option is integrated a combination of wheat and forage radish.

Precision agriculture improves agronomic, environmental, and economical management through advanced equipment that takes readings that allow the farmer to make smart nutrient and water distribution decisions. This practice both reduces over use of nutrients and water, but also saves money for the farmer. Mid Atlantic precision agriculture day focus on precision agriculture and allows farmers to test the equipment and new technologies.

Unmanned areal vehicle (UAV) and drones allow farmers to survey their fields to monitor changes due to weather damage in fields. Although these tools are cheaper than a plane to survey fields. They still require flight regulations due to restricted air laws and require pilots to be licensed. Measures are being taken to soften these regulations for agricultural producers.

Buffer strips are areas of grass measuring 30 feet in width where nutrients are not applied separating crops from waterways. Although farmers aim only to use the amount of fertilizer need, due to the expensive and time intensive nature of the application, buffers will mitigate runoff of nutrients from waterways if there is a weather event or the plants are unable to take up all the nutrients distributed.

Research is being conducted in Maryland and Delaware involving quick growing switch grass in coastal acidic soils. Poultry farms do not have very much land, but this project allows farmers to grow and process their own bedding for chicken houses. High use pads are also being installed at the end of chicken houses to high use pads to prevent divots in the soil due to high equipment passage and reduce the amount of manure being lost in soil from equipment tires.

The meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.