



OVERVIEW

Improving the health of the tidal Delaware River and Bay is paramount to the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary (PDE). This Strategic Plan outlines ambitious steps designed to elevate and accelerate improvements to water quality, healthy habitat, and community resilience. Science-based strategies build on the strong credibility that PDE has earned in its field by zeroing in on the emerging and priority issues that it can affect through hands-on projects and partnerships. Strategies for education and outreach utilize PDE's skills at sharing information in accessible ways to engage people and communities in taking action to improve the Estuary. Capacity-building strategies enable PDE to increase its work in policy and planning, elevating PDE's image and profile, and develop a physical infrastructure commensurate with its growth. Revenue-generating strategies position PDE to attract greater financial resources on behalf of the organization and the Estuary as a whole.

The following goals will be pursued in partnership with many organizations, agencies, and individuals throughout this estuary of national significance:

- Continuous improvement of the health of the Estuary through sustained momentum of current successful science-based activities and new high-priority activities.
- Public, community, and key stakeholders highly engaged in improving the health of the Estuary and its tributaries.
- Heightened visibility, profile, and organizational capacity for improving the health of the Estuary.
- Financial resources for PDE and for the Estuary to enable a greater impact on improving the health of the Estuary.

These goals, and the objectives and strategies to achieve them, are the most urgent and important for PDE to pursue in the 2013-2018 timeframe to meet its mission and fulfill its role as a National Estuary Program. Undertaking these objectives and strategies will advance implementation of the *Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan for the Delaware Estuary* and help to achieve its goals for healthy waters, healthy habitats, and healthy communities, in and around the tidal Delaware River and Bay.

PDE is a non-profit organization established in 1996 to take a leadership role in promoting and coordinating the protection and enhancement of the Delaware Estuary. The Estuary, where fresh water and salt water mix, also is known as the tidal portion of the Delaware River and includes parts of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware. The Delaware Estuary is one of 28 congressionally-designated National Estuary Programs in the country, working to improve the environmental health of the nation's estuaries. For more information about the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary, visit www.DelawareEstuary.org.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Mission

The Partnership for the Delaware Estuary, a National Estuary Program, leads science-based and collaborative efforts to improve the tidal Delaware River and Bay, which spans Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.

Vision

We envision everyone working together for clean water, thriving fish and wildlife, and abundant recreational activities in and around the tidal Delaware River and Bay to support communities and a robust economy. To make this vision a reality, the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary will become:

- A model implementer of practical solutions that fill critical gaps and engage people as stewards of the Estuary;
- The driver of attention and joint problem solving to overcome the challenges facing the Estuary; and
- The driver of attracting financial support and sustainable investment in the Estuary.

PDE values...

- **Science** – using science as an objective basis for decision-making and holistic action.
- **Collaboration** – working together across sectors and jurisdictions to set common goals, share responsibility for actions, and achieve powerful results.
- **Innovation** – combining science and forward-looking creativity to develop and implement new and better tools, projects, and programs.
- **Balance** – taking into account the many different values of the living and working river to maximize engagement and stewardship of a diversity of stakeholders with integrity and objectivity.
- **Strategic Investment** – identifying and pursuing opportunities with the greatest potential net impact.

SCIENCE-BASED STRATEGIES

Given the vastness of the Delaware Estuary, geographically, and the complexity of the Estuary’s needs, PDE’s science-based strategies reflect an incisor-like focus. Over the next several years, PDE will direct its leadership toward addressing priority issues through value-added activities for current and future generations. PDE will continually ask and answer questions such as: What should PDE take on directly? What should PDE facilitate? How can PDE support the work of others either by filling gaps in knowledge or jurisdiction or by helping to build the capacity of its partners?

The goal is **Continuous improvement of the health of the Estuary through sustained momentum of current successful science-based activities and new high-priority activities**. To that end, tidal wetlands are of primary concern. As underscored by the effects of Superstorm Sandy, wetlands are the crux of the Estuary’s survival – the most important natural resource to protect. Shellfish also are a high priority. The potential benefits of returning mussels and oysters to the system are tremendous, and PDE’s expertise in this arena elevates its impact.

<p>Goal 1: Continuous improvement of the health of the Estuary through sustained momentum of current successful science-based activities and new high-priority activities.</p>				
<p>Objective 1.1 Improve the health and sustainability of wetlands for clean water, healthy habitat, and community resilience.</p>	<p>Objective 1.2 Restore shellfish to improve water quality, habitat, and community resilience.</p>	<p>Objective 1.3 Facilitate partnerships and capacity building to improve the health and sustainability of watersheds and waterfronts.</p>	<p>Objective 1.4 Coordinate science activities for improved management of the Estuary’s natural resources</p>	<p>Objective 1.5 Advance scientific knowledge and its use for improved management of the Estuary’s natural resources.</p>
<p>a) Serve as the regional lead for tidal wetland assessment and monitoring, and improve data dissemination to managers and the public through programs such as Mid-Atlantic Coastal Wetland Assessment (MACWA).</p>	<p>a) Expand and improve the data and information available on mussel status, distribution, and abundance, thereby guiding protection and restoration efforts, through programs such as the Freshwater Mussel</p>	<p>a) Advance the use of green infrastructure for clean water and healthy habitat by implementing projects like streamside buffers and rain gardens, through partnerships like the Schuylkill Action Network (SAN), Christina Basin Task Force (CBTF), South Jersey Bayshore Coalition, Corporate and Community</p>	<p>a) Sustain the interdisciplinary Science and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) and affiliated technical groups to provide scientific leadership including peer review, guidance, and additional expertise.</p> <p>b) Lead the biennial Science and Environmental Summit and other technical workshops to identify and address continued and emerging</p>	<p>a) Focus regional restoration efforts on the priorities identified via the Regional Restoration Initiative (RRI) through broader promotion, use and development of the RRI, including the Project Registry, the Alliance for Comprehensive Ecosystem Solutions and participation in and support for regional</p>

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<p>b) Facilitate or directly implement projects to protect and rebuild tidal wetlands and build coastal resilience in the face of climate change, through programs such as the Delaware Estuary Living Shorelines Initiative (DELSI) and Weathering Change outreach program.</p> <p>c) Advance the science and practice of restoration using the best available information, such as that provided by the Mid-Atlantic Coastal Wetland Assessment (MACWA), through programs and partnerships like the Delaware Estuary Living Shoreline Initiative (DELSI) and Regional Sediment Management Team.</p>	<p>Recovery Program (FMRP).</p> <p>b) Lead efforts to rebuild bivalve populations from the headwater streams to the Delaware Bay to enhance water quality, improve habitats for other organisms, and sustain rare native species, through programs and partnerships such as the Freshwater Mussel Recovery Program (FMRP), the Delaware Bay Oyster Restoration Task Force, and the Delaware Estuary Living Shoreline Initiative (DELSI).</p>	<p>Environmental Stewardship Program (CESP). and in coordination with initiatives like the the City of Philadelphia’s Green Cities, Clean Water program, and the State of Delaware’s new Delaware Bayshores Initiative.</p> <p>b) Advance the design and implementation of projects along urban waterfronts that enhance ecological conditions, environmental benefits, and public access, through partnerships and programs such as the Regional Restoration Initiative (RRI), Delaware Estuary Living Shoreline Initiative (DELSI), Freshwater Mussel Recovery Program (FMRP), and Mid-Atlantic Coastal Wetland Assessment (MACWA).</p>	<p>CCMP scientific and management needs.</p> <p>c) Track, compile, and coordinate data on the progress of CCMP implementation and on the health of the Estuary, for State of the Estuary reporting every 3-5 years. Work with partners to strengthen systems that gather, analyze, share and translate scientific data that has a direct bearing on policies and tracking improvements in clean water, healthy habitat, and resilient communities.</p> <p>d) Foster regional coordination on key issues by convening workshops or meetings and conducting or compiling research to address emerging needs (such as climate change adaptation) or information gaps (such as the Delaware Estuary Benthic Inventory, DEBI) related to signature Estuary species, habitats, or functions. Analyze, translate and provide results with civic leaders and resource managers to incorporate in their decision making, using tools like the Delaware Estuary Science & Environmental Summit, State of the Estuary reporting, Estuary News, and DelawareEstuary.org.</p> <p>e) Support the efforts of water resource agencies to improve water quality and flow for healthy communities and habitats around the Estuary.</p>	<p>grant-making programs. Continue to refine priority-setting tools, and use them to identify and support on-the-ground projects that address priorities.</p> <p>b) Conduct and facilitate targeted and applied research to fill gaps, particularly in our understanding of key drivers and conditions that govern life-sustaining ecosystem services. Facilitate continued development and monitoring to support critical indicators including “next generation” indicators that enhance understanding of trends in life-sustaining ecological functions for State of the Estuary reporting every 3-5 years.</p> <p>c) Strengthen PDE as a center of excellence for science-based solutions, including developing and formalizing partnerships for urban waters programs, training of graduate and undergraduate students, stimulating university research, and presenting and publishing scientific outcomes.</p>
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STRATEGIES FOR EDUCATION & OUTREACH

Across three states, well over 6.7 million people live, work, and play in and around the Delaware Estuary. Communities represent the full spectrum, from densely populated neighborhoods to the suburbs to rural areas. PDE’s education and outreach strategies recognize the complexity of the Estuary’s needs, and the variety of its stakeholders. Over the next several years, PDE will continue its successful track record of delivering user-friendly information to support its partners in educating the people of the Estuary about the Estuary and its natural resources. Elevating its work going forward, PDE will strive to develop and implement initiatives that engage people more deeply in taking action to improve the quality of the Estuary.

The goal is **Individuals, communities, and key stakeholders highly engaged in improving the health of the Estuary and its tributaries**. To that end, collaboration is the modus operandi. Grounded in science, PDE will focus on sharing information about emerging and priority issues. It will leverage its holistic view, ability to be nimble, and leadership role to fill gaps in knowledge and facilitate the development of problem-solving tools and techniques.

Goal 2: Individuals, communities, and key stakeholders highly engaged in improving the health of the Estuary and its tributaries.			
Objective 2.1 Increase the preparedness of coastal communities to adapt to climate change and/or sea level rise.	Objective 2.2 Encourage targeted behavior changes that can reduce pollution entering local waterways and improve community resilience.	Objective 2.3 Build affinity for the tidal Delaware River and Bay and its major tributaries.	Objective 2.4 Facilitate collaborative problem solving on key issues and in key areas and subwatersheds.
a) Encourage environmentally-responsible actions to reduce storm surge, flooding, and erosion by providing technical assistance, educational resources and incentives and by expanding upon public-friendly programs such as Weathering Change and the Delaware Estuary Living Shorelines Initiative (DELSI) .	a) Work with the residents of environmentally-vulnerable areas to generate interest and capacity for protecting and improving local waterways, through existing partnerships with the Philadelphia Water Department and City of Wilmington and new initiatives like those emerging in Camden, NJ and along the Bayshores in NJ and DE. b) Promote the use of innovative stormwater and green infrastructure practices focusing on large property owners such as commercial, retail, and	a) Increase the number and import of positive media stories pertaining to the Delaware River and Bay, using press contacts, releases and events and amplify their impact by sharing them using tools such as DelawareEstuary.org and social media.	a) Lead gatherings of resource management professionals such as the Science and Environmental Summit and Schuylkill Action Network annual meeting to identify and discuss current and emerging and priority issues in the Delaware Estuary. b) Translate scientific findings, research, and new techniques to

Goal 2: Individuals, communities, and key stakeholders highly engaged in improving the health of the Estuary and its tributaries.			
<p>b) Promote the activities of forward-looking coastal communities and partners as model initiatives for others to emulate, through programs like Weathering Change and the Climate Change Outreach Roundtable, using new and existing tools, such as DelawareEstuary.org and Estuary News.</p>	<p>municipal property owners, through existing/expanded partnerships with the Philadelphia Water Department, City of Wilmington, Corporate & Community Environmental Stewardship Program (CESP) members, the Schuylkill Action Network, Christina Basin Task Force, and South Jersey Bayshores Coalition, and through targeted outreach to municipalities.</p> <p>c) Provide meaningful youth and teacher education through activities such as Delaware Estuary Teachers Watershed Workshop(s); the Green City, Clean Waters Art Contest; Schuylkill Action Students stream buffers programs and Green Schools Clean Water curriculum development.</p> <p>d) Promote the use of school (elementary, secondary, and higher ed) campuses as outdoor classrooms and demonstration sites via the development of a Green Schools, Clean Waters curriculum, and programs such as Rain Gardens for the Bays and Schuylkill Action Students, which creates on-campus green infrastructure such as rain gardens, stream buffers and naturalized basins.</p> <p>e) Develop education programs and publications for targeted audiences to fill gaps in addressing priority and emerging water pollution issues, such as proper disposal of used/expired prescription medicines, using targeted outreach and tools like Estuary News, and Delaware Estuary.org.</p>	<p>b) Promote and publicize educational and recreational activities around the Delaware Bay to connect/reconnect the public to local waterways via vehicles such as Estuary News, www.EcoDelaware.org, social media, and www.DelawareEstuary.org.</p> <p>c) Publicize volunteer opportunities that improve the Delaware Estuary such as the Christina River Cleanup, the Schuylkill Scrub, Storm Drain Marking, Volunteer Mussel Monitoring, and Spokesdog Contests.</p>	<p>the general public in an interesting and easily digestible manner through products such as the State of Estuary Report, project fact sheets, and Estuary News</p> <p>c) Amplify innovative and successful programs and projects that others are implementing using tools like Estuary News, press releases/events, the Science and Environmental Summit, and online tools.</p> <p>d) Communicate the need to have economic and social impacts (not just environmental impacts) as important factors in dialogue and decision making, using existing and new tools and approaches.</p>

STRATEGIES TO BUILD PDE’S VISIBILITY, PROFILE, AND ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Reflecting on its past accomplishments and how to make a more significant impact on the future health of the Delaware Estuary, PDE acknowledges that it has been constrained, primarily, by the level of its financial and human resources. A stronger PDE would be better positioned to realize the full potential of its talented staff, strong network of partners, and unique charter and leadership capabilities. So over the next several years, PDE will take steps to strategically invest in itself as an organization for the benefit of the Estuary as a whole.

The goal is **Heightened visibility, profile, and organizational capacity for improving the health of the Estuary.** To that end, PDE will pursue more sophisticated marketing and communications and augment staff to fill critical gaps in capacity. It will develop a vision for its physical infrastructure in support of programmatic and administrative growth. Changes in the work scope of staff leadership will be complemented by changes in the management structure, enabling PDE to elevate the quality of its interactions with key decision makers.

Goal 3: Heightened visibility, profile, and organizational capacity for improving the health of the Estuary.				
Objective 3.1 Increase advocacy for the use of science in decision making and for increased investment in the Estuary’s health.	Objective 3.2 Strengthen the framework for shared leadership and responsibility, which transcends geography, jurisdiction, and economic sector.	Objective 3.3 Enhance the sophistication of marketing and communications, including building PDE’s and the Estuary’s brand locally, regionally, and nationally.	Objective 3.4 Improve administrative systems and augment personnel to support growth and to raise awareness and visibility as well as to advance PDE’s role as a lead facilitator and key implementer.	Objective 3.5 Develop PDE’s physical infrastructure, proactively, in support of current and future needs.
a) Build PDE’s capacity for working on priority policy and advocacy efforts, including additional staff capacity and tools with support from the STAC and the Board. b) Focus advocacy on efforts of state, regional, or national scope that have an impact on PDE and CCMP priorities	a) Empower the Executive Director to focus more time and attention on policy and planning issues and initiatives. b) Engage and educate federal, state and targeted local municipal decision makers for support on priority issues and needs facing the	a) Develop a multi-year strategic work plan for marketing and communications. The plan would include strategies for building PDE’s brand and the Estuary’s brand, media relations, website enhancement, public activities, publications, and targeted messaging as well as the identification of key	a) Augment the Development Office to create a more robust program for attracting unrestricted support. b) Undertake a technology assessment to inform future needs for information technology support.	a) Identify and set priorities for short-term and long-term space and other capital needs for supporting potential growth in staff and enhancing PDE’s regional presence. b) Identify partnerships and other approaches designed

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<p>and/or resource needs.</p> <p>c) Focus advocacy efforts on precedent-setting situations and/or situations that have a direct impact on a PDE project or program.</p>	<p>Estuary.</p> <p>c) Refine the PDE management structure to make it more streamlined and cohesive to increase effectiveness and high-level collaboration and support.</p>	<p>performance indicators.</p> <p>b) Engage PDE Board, staff, and partners in the implementation of the multi-year strategic work plan for marketing and communications.</p>	<p>c) Increase the use of volunteers to expand PDE’s reach and resources.</p> <p>d) Deepen relationships with academic institutions to augment PDE’s capacity as well as lay a foundation for the next generation of scientists.</p>	<p>to elevate PDE’s ability to conduct field work and deliver hands-on educational experiences.</p> <p>c) Develop and begin to implement a five- to ten-year vision for PDE’s physical infrastructure that incorporates the priorities, partnerships, and approaches identified.</p> <p>d) Strengthen PDE as a center of excellence for science-based solutions in a way that supports/augments PDEs systems, personnel, and physical infrastructure.</p>
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REVENUE-GENERATING STRATEGIES

Through targeted investment, there have been significant improvements to the health of the Delaware Estuary in recent decades due to the efforts of many organizations and agencies working in partnership to accomplish goals. Indeed, the profound nature of the improvements to date underscores the value of scientifically-based, well placed investments. At the same time, the level of resources available to PDE as a lead organization and to the Estuary as a whole still fall far short of what could be utilized given the character and scope of the challenges that the Estuary continues to face.

The goal is **Increased financial resources for PDE and for the region to enable a greater impact on improving the health of the Estuary.** To that end, among other initiatives, PDE will lead the establishment of a “Science and Restoration Trust.” The Trust would be a major tool for accelerating the implementation of the CCMP. In addition, PDE will emphasize raising unrestricted funds while sustaining project-based support. Unrestricted funds will fuel capacity-building activities and initiatives that go beyond traditional funding sources.

<p>Goal 4: Increased financial resources for PDE and for the region to enable a greater impact on improving the health of the Estuary.</p>		
<p>Objective 4.1 Increase financial resources for implementation of the CCMP.</p>	<p>Objective 4.2 Increase the level of unrestricted support for PDE.</p>	<p>Objective 4.3 Increase the amount of dedicated support (grants and sponsorships) for PDE and partner programs and projects.</p>
<p>a) Increase support for PDE and partnering organizations at the state, regional, and national levels, through grant writing, support and promotion of the Regional Restoration Project Registry and PDE Alliance, advocacy for federal funding, and support for regional grant-making programs.</p> <p>b) Explore and pursue feasible opportunities to establish and fund a “Science and Restoration Trust” for improving the health of the Estuary, utilizing the PDE Alliance and/or sustainable funding mechanisms such as user fees or similar approaches.</p>	<p>a) Empower the Board to establish fund-raising as organizational priority, and to heighten individual and collective involvement in resource development.</p> <p>b) Establish a robust major gifts program through strategic cultivation and stewardship.</p> <p>c) Broaden PDE’s base of support from individuals by tracking the effectiveness of new messages and new methods of outreach, and refining approaches accordingly.</p>	<p>a) Build PDE’s corporate giving program by aligning the presentation of PDE’s activities with business development and philanthropic goals.</p> <p>b) Maintain grant writing and grant-management activities with corporations, foundations, and government agencies with a strategic focus on large grants, funding for strategic partnership activities/initiatives, and general operating support.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">d) Develop targeted messaging and outreach to corporations for unrestricted support, matching corporate/business interests in supporting the Estuary with PDE’s initiatives.e) Enhance the nature and scope of communications with donors to engender greater understanding of PDE’s mission and work.f) Investigate ways to revise PDE’s charges, grant submissions, and proposals in order to capture more of the costs of PDE’s work.g) Develop and implement targeted planned giving activities, focusing initially on messaging and recognition steps.	
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The Partnership for the Delaware Estuary’s 2013-2018 Strategic Plan was completed with the help of The Nonprofit Center at LaSalle University’s School of Business, thanks in part to support from the William Penn Foundation.