NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office Staff Directory

September 2015

About Us

The NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office (NCBO) provides science, service, and stewardship to protect and restore the Chesapeake Bay. NCBO leads NOAA efforts in the Bay in several key areas: fisheries, habitat, education, and observations. NCBO is a division of the NOAA Fisheries Office of Habitat Conservation, and through its programs in Ecosystem Science and Synthesis; Environmental Literacy and Partnerships; and Operations, it represents an integrated approach to ecosystem management that helps scientists, managers, and the public better understand and appreciate the interconnectedness of the Bay ecosystem. NCBO also coordinates NOAA's implementation of the Executive Order of 2009 on Chesapeake Bay Protection and Restoration.

Peyton Robertson, Director
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Peyton provides overall vision, direction, and leadership to ensure that NOAA's science, service, and stewardship capabilities are effectively applied to protect and restore the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem. He serves as a member of the Chesapeake Bay Program's Management Board and chairs the Sustainable Fisheries Goal Implementation Team. In addition, he serves as NOAA's representative on the Federal Office Directors, ensuring interagency coordination and implementation of the President's Executive Order on Chesapeake Bay Protection and Restoration. His early career posts included serving as an environmental educator for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation in Norfolk and a watershed manager in Albemarle County, Virginia. His 23-year career with NOAA includes managing the agency's coastal nonpoint pollution program, conducting the assessment of NOAA's services during Hurricane Sandy, and leading NOAA's North Atlantic Regional Team. Peyton has a master's degree in urban and environmental planning from the University of Virginia.

Sean Corson, Deputy Director
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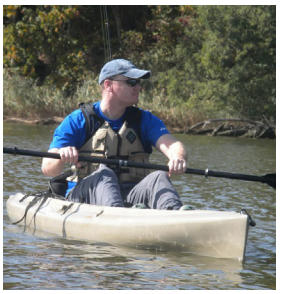
Sean oversees daily operations of NCBO, providing leadership and strategic planning to shape and implement office activities. He is the lead for for budget formulation and execution as well as personnel matters. Sean works with all staff and programs to ensure NCBO goals are met. He joined NCBO in 2008 after serving as NOAA's Deputy Superintendent of Papahanaumokuakea Marine National Monument located in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Sean holds a master's degree from Yale University in forest science with an emphasis on anadromous fish.

Ecosystem Science and Synthesis

Monitoring, modeling, funding and conducting fisheries and habitat science, and providing resource managers science-based policy advice that recognizes the interconnectedness of fisheries and habitat



Bruce Vogt, Ecosystem Science and Synthesis Manager
Bruce.Vogt@noaa.gov; 410-267-5655
Bruce manages ecosystem science and habitat assessment activities. He works with staff and other Bay scientists to deliver sound and timely science to resource managers across the Bay to inform habitat and fishery policy decisions. He also serves as the coordinator of the Chesapeake Bay Program's Sustainable Fisheries Goal Implementation Team. Bruce joined NCBO in 2009 from the National Ocean Service's policy office. Bruce holds a master's degree in marine science with a concentration in benthic ecology and ecotoxicology from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science.

David Bruce, Ecologist/Geographic Information Systems
David.Bruce@noaa.gov; 410-226-5193
David uses seabed survey data to create digital mapping products and provides GIS and analytical support for oyster restoration and other resource management projects conducted by NCBO and its partners. He also uses fisheries sampling techniques to quantify fish utilization of restoration sites and natural seabed habitats in the Bay. Prior to joining NCBO in 2006, David worked for the state of Delaware, where he managed commercial fisheries using fisheries-dependent surveys, stock assessments, acoustic seabed surveys, stock assessments, and GIS. David received a master's in fisheries science from the University of Georgia.

Emilie Franke, Fishery Program Analyst, contractor with ERT
Emilie.Franke@noaa.gov; 410-267-5643
Emilie coordinates the Chesapeake Bay Stock Assessment Committee's work on blue crab research and management and supports the Chesapeake Bay Program's fisheries efforts. She works to expand partnerships with fisheries stakeholders to ensure shared understanding of NCBO's goals and advance fisheries priorities in the region. Previously, Emilie was a Chesapeake Research Consortium Environmental Management Fellow, where she staffed the Chesapeake Bay Program's Sustainable Fisheries Goal Implementation Team. Emilie holds a bachelor's degree in environmental science from Duke University.

Tom Ihde, Fisheries Ecosystem Modeler
Tom.Ihde@noaa.gov; 410-295-3148
Tom leads NCBO's efforts to apply a spatial fisheries ecosystem model designed to explore living resource management options for the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed using the Atlantis software. This gives resource managers a science-based comparison of tradeoffs for different management choices. Tom provides marine science support and is a member of STAC (Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee of the Chesapeake Bay Program). Tom holds a Ph.D. in marine fisheries stock assessment and a master's degree in marine science from VIMS at the College of William & Mary and completed his postdoctoral work in fisheries management while with the University of Maryland at the Chesapeake Biological Lab.

Zoe Johnson, Climate Change Coordinator
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Zoe coordinates climate change research, planning, and policy efforts for the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office and the Chesapeake Bay Program. Zoe works to enhance the resiliency of the Chesapeake Bay watershed, including its living resources, habitats, and public infrastructure, to withstand adverse effects from changing environmental and climate conditions. Prior to joining NCB, Zoe served as the director of Climate Policy and Planning at the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. Zoe received a master's degree in coastal and marine policy from the School of Marine Affairs at the University of Washington.

Jay Lazar, Field Program Coordinator/Hydrographer
Jay.Lazar@noaa.gov; 443-949-9139
Jay ensures the acoustic seafloor mapping component of NCBO habitat assessments meets the highest-quality standards in a manner that meets hydrographic and habitat mapping needs for use in oyster restoration and fisheries assessments. As field program coordinator and a licensed captain, he is responsible for keeping the program moving forward in a safe and strategic manner. Jay combines acoustic seafloor mapping with GIS analytical tools to streamline and standardize native oyster restoration processes for the Chesapeake Bay. Jay holds a hydrographer's certification from the American Congress on Surveying and Mapping and a bachelor's of science in natural resource management with a concentration in marine and coastal resource management from North Carolina State University.

Kara Skipper, Sustainable Fisheries Goal Implementation Team Staffer
kara.skipper@noaa.gov; 410-295-3144
Kara provides direct support to the chair, vice chair, and coordinator of the Chesapeake Bay Program's Sustainable Fisheries Goal Implementation Team. She performs research, organizes meetings, coordinates members, and provides communication for fisheries management efforts. Prior to joining NCBO, Kara worked as a stormwater technician, where she analyzed stormwater samples and technologies. Kara earned a biology degree from St. Mary's College of Maryland.

Howard Townsend, Fisheries Ecosystem Modeler
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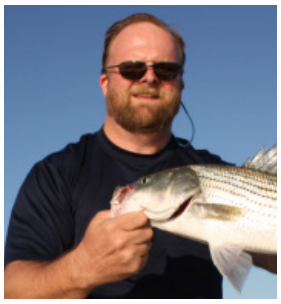
Howard leads the NCBO modeling team; the team's goal is to support holistic, ecosystem-based fisheries management by developing and implementing ecosystem models and other analytical tools. These tools help managers understand the tradeoffs in ecosystem services under different management scenarios. Howard also provides administrative coordination of NCBO programs at the Cooperative Oxford Laboratory. Prior to joining the office, he conducted statistical analysis for the health care industry. Howard has a Ph.D. in biology from Wake Forest University.



Stephanie Westby, Oyster Coordinator
Stephanie.Westby@noaa.gov; 410-267-5660
Stephanie coordinates oyster activities and manages grants related to oyster restoration for the NOAA Restoration Center and the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office. Previously, Stephanie oversaw the oyster restoration program and served as the technical and policy lead for fisheries at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. She holds a master's degree from Johns Hopkins University in environmental science and policy and a U.S. Coast Guard 100-ton captain's license.

Environmental Literacy and Partnerships

Fostering citizen stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay by providing learning opportunities designed to increase environmental literacy and strengthening partnerships that are key to Bay restoration.

Shannon Sprague, Environmental Literacy and Partnerships Manager
Shannon.Sprague@noaa.gov; 410-267-5664
Shannon manages education, outreach, and communications for NCBO. She also serves as cochair of the Chesapeake Bay Program Education Workgroup, working with states to develop policies and practices that embed rigorous, science-based environmental education in schools throughout the mid-Atlantic region. Shannon joined NCBO in 2003 after serving as a budget and management analyst for NOAA and the Department of Interior. She holds a master of public affairs in environmental policy from Indiana University.

Kim Couranz, Communications Specialist
Kim.Couranz@noaa.gov; 410-267-5673
Kim coordinates NCBO media outreach, web content, and written communications—linking the public with information they need to make informed decisions on Bay issues. She serves as the NCBO representative on the NOAA Fisheries Public Affairs Team, the Habitat Conservation Communications Team, and the Chesapeake Bay Program Communications Workgroup. Prior to joining NCBO, she edited magazines and developed and marketed educational events for the U.S. Naval Institute. Kim has a bachelor's degree in international relations and Russian studies from Brown University.

Andrew Larkin, Senior Outreach Specialist
Andrew.W.Larkin@noaa.gov; 757-441-6746, x201
Andrew, who works out of NCBO's location at the NOAA Marine Operations Center in Norfolk, Virginia, ensures that NCBO programs are available to our Virginia constituents and that they meet their unique needs. He coordinates B-WET in Virginia and facilitates NOAA's partnership with Nauticus. Leveraging his previous experience in NOAA's Office of Legislative Affairs and on Capitol Hill, Andrew also manages government communications for the office. Andrew has a J.D. from the College of William & Mary School of Law.

Bart Merrick, Education Coordinator
Bart.Merrick@noaa.gov; 410-266-5193
Bart manages the NOAA Environmental Science Training Center at the Cooperative Oxford Lab, which provides training on cutting-edge science to environmental education professionals. Bart brings a wealth of science education experience to his position, having served as the educator coordinator for the Maryland National Estuarine Research Reserves and a field educator for Living Classrooms and Chesapeake Bay Foundation. He holds a master's degree in environmental science from Johns Hopkins University.

Paul "Sammy" Orlando, Regional Coordinator, Northeast and Great Lakes Region
NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (National Ocean Service) on detail to NCBO
Paul.Orlando@noaa.gov; 240-460-1978
Sammy has 15 years of experience with place-based programming in NOAA Sanctuaries. His work in the Chesapeake Bay focuses on maritime landscapes and community engagement strategies. He is the implementation coordinator for NOAA's Choptank River Habitat Focus Area. In addition, he works with community coalitions in the Chesapeake region to support the nomination of special places as potential new National Marine Sanctuaries, including one at Mallows Bay-Potomac River. He holds a master's degree in marine, estuarine, and environmental sciences from the University of Maryland.

Kevin Schabow, Program Analyst
Kevin.Schabow@noaa.gov; 410-267-3145
Kevin manages the B-WET Chesapeake and Fisheries Research grant programs for NCBO. He coordinates the Chesapeake Bay Program's Education Workgroup and manages the NCBO summer internship program. Before joining NCBO, he ran an environmental education center in California and served as staff for the Chesapeake Bay Program Communication and Education Subcommittee. Kevin has a master's degree in environmental management from Johns Hopkins University.

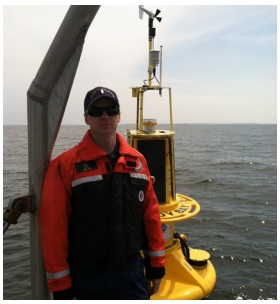
Donna Stotts, Environmental Education Specialist
Donna.Stotts@noaa.gov; 410-226-1015
Donna supports the development of workshops for the NOAA Environmental Science Training Center at the Cooperative Oxford Lab. She also works with school divisions on the Eastern Shore to develop studentn programming about NOAA-supported oyster restoration under way in the area. She worked for the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science for 20 years as an environmental educator, as a toxicologist in private industry, and as a field biologist and educator with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. She holds a master's degree in environmental education from Nova Southeastern University.

Operations

Bill Bradley, Information Technology Program Manager
Bill.Bradley@noaa.gov; 410-295-3146
Bill oversees all facets of information technology at NCBO and leads a team of development and database professionals. He ensures availability of all NCBO websites, network, computer, and telecommunication resources used by NCBO staff and constituents. Bill joined NOAA as a data system integrator in 1990, and moved to NCBO in 2007 after serving for six years as the manager for all national and local area networks for NOAA Fisheries headquarters.

Nikiforos Delatolas, Buoy Technical Specialist
Nikiforos.Delatolas@noaa.gov; 410-295-3151
Nikiforos assists with daily operations and maintenance of the Chesapeake Bay Interpretive Buoy System. Out in the field, he performs routine maintenance on the observational array. In the laboratory, he assembles and refurbishes buoys, calibrates and troubleshoots various instruments, and analyzes oceanographic and meteorological data from the sensors. Nikiforos received a bachelor of science from Cornell University in science of Earth systems with a concentration in ocean sciences.

Katie Kirk, Senior Buoy Technical Specialist
Katie.Kirk@noaa.gov; 443-833-4922
Katie is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Interpretative Buoy System. When she is not out on performing routine maintenance or repairs at one of the buoys, she calibrates sensors, builds replacement buoys, coordinates vessel operations, and troubleshoots any technical issues the buoys encounter. Katie holds a masters of engineering in ocean sciences and technology from a joint Cornell University/Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution program. She also holds a bachelor of science from Cornell University in science of Earth systems with a concentration in ocean sciences.



Lieutenant (j.g.) PJ Klavon, NOAA Corps, Vessel Operations Coordinator
Philip.J.Klavon@noaa.gov; 443-949-9319
PJ, a commissioned officer in the NOAA Corps, is assigned to NCBO as the vessel operations coordinator, facility safety officer, and working diver. PJ also assists on many field projects--including hydrographic and fishery surveys, educational trips, and CBIBS buoy operations--aboard NCBO's vessels. He holds a bachelor's degree in natural resource management from the University of Maryland, College Park, and is a native son of the Chesapeake.

Andy McGowan, Field Technician
Andrew.McGowan@noaa.gov; 443-949-9319
Andy provides a spectrum of support that enables NCBO field work. He performs seafloor mapping surveys in the Chesapeake Bay; helps determine where sites are suitable for benthic community restoration; provides technical support for the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Interpretive Buoy System; and performs routine equipment calibration, maintenance, organization, and inventory.

CJ Pellerin, Application Developer
Charles.Pellerin@noaa.gov; 410-295-3151
CJ develops applications to support the scientific mission at NCBO. This includes all facets of software development such as architecture, project planning, design, and implementation. He also performs hardware administration and configuration. CJ joined NCBO in 2009 after working as an independent consultant. He holds a master's degree in distributed computing from Johns Hopkins University.

NOAA Partners at NCBO

Mary Pittek Andrews, Environmental Engineer, NOAA Restoration Center
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Mary is a civil/environmental engineer who designs and acts as project manager on dam removal, wetland, and coastal engineering projects for NOAA's Restoration Center. She has a master of science in ecological engineering and is a licensed civil engineer in the state of Maryland. She has worked in engineering and research of dam removals, tidal wetlands, and coastal shoreline projects for more than 15 years and previously worked for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Smithsonian Environmental Research Center.

John Kuriawa, Coastal Program Specialist, NOAA National Coastal Zone Management Program (National Ocean Service); John.Kuriawa@noaa.gov; 410-267-5668
John works with Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia to facilitate implementation of their coastal management programs. In addition, he provides support for ocean planning to both the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean and the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body. His experience includes the areas of smart growth/development, watershed management, climate adaptation, and nonpoint pollution gained from stints in the private sector and at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. He holds a master of environmental management from the Yale School of Forestry.

Rich Takacs, Restoration and Native Oyster Specialist, NOAA Restoration Center
Rich.Takacs@noaa.gov; 410-267-5672
Rich implements habitat restoration projects for the Restoration Center, including community-based and large-scale restoration. He provides response and restoration support during oil spills or contaminant releases, and serves as a NOAA science diver and vessel operator. Rich joined NOAA in 1998. He has a master of science in marine, estuarine, and environmental science from the University of Maryland.

Ron Vogel, Satellite Oceanographer, NOAA Satellite Service
Ronald.Vogel@noaa.gov; 410-295-3150
Ron supports coastal environmental decision making through the use of oceanographic satellite data. He provides satellite water-quality data to coastal managers and develops and improves satellite products through data analyses, visualizations, and validation with in-water measurements. Ron's near-real-time satellite monitoring of the Bay has proven useful for extreme weather, algal bloom, and sediment discharge events. He is currently researching the incorporation of satellite water-quality data into hydrodynamic and ecosystem models for improving ecosystem forecasts. Ron holds a master's degree in marine science with emphasis on coastal and estuarine processes from the University of South Carolina.