



February/March Summary

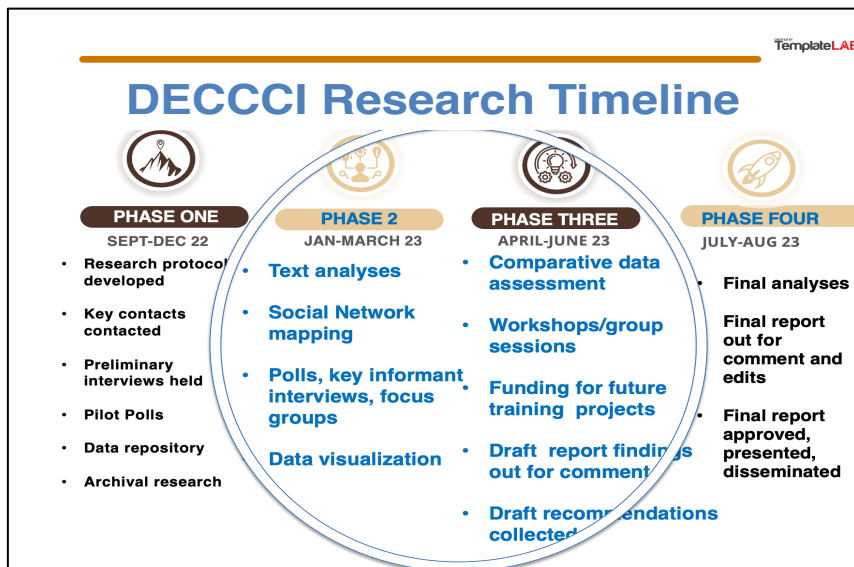
February and March were the mid and end point of Quarter 2 (January, February, March) of the **Delaware Extension Climate Change Coordination Initiative (DECCCI)**. Beginning with the mid-point of Quarter 2, the research moved from a focus on climate change related “**educational**” activities to a focus on climate change “**policy**” initiatives. This shift in focus addressed local, state, regional and national climate change policy activities and their relationship to UD Cooperative Extension.

This summary offers:

- 1) an overview of recent research activities
- 2) a brief outline of emerging policy activities with respect to responding to climate change.

Quarter 2 Objectives

- Continue data collection (who, what, where, when, why, how) of policy related activities in Extension and other actors and search for geographic visualization software (GIS mapping)
- Continue content analysis of documents (linguistic and text analyses)
- Increase social network mapping of key actors, stakeholders, partners (object relations)
- Continue in-depth key informant interviews
- Facilitate focus group oriented “collaborative conversations”



Overview of February/March Research

For the months of February and March, participant observations, interviews, and materials collection were conducted at the following events:

- The 2023 Pennsylvania Sustainable Agriculture (PASA) Conference where DECCCI
- A meeting between the National Extension Climate Initiative (NECI) and a New England Extension Directors (NEED) meeting
- A policy-oriented event, known as the 2023 Climate Can't Wait Lobby Day, organized by the DE chapter of the Sierra Club and Nature Conservancy

PASA

From February 11-14, more than 1,500 farmers and food system changemakers gathered at the 2023 in-person Sustainable Agriculture Conference in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Founded in 1992, PASA is devoted to advancing the art and science of sustainable agriculture. Based on a participatory peer community model, PASA offers education and resources for farmers who want to steward their land in harmony with natural ecosystems and who want to sell their products locally to support the health and vibrancy of local communities. PASA administers farmer training, research, policy, peer education, and local food programs as well as maintaining and growing a network of tens of thousands of farmers, food system professionals, and changemakers working together to advance regenerative and equitable agriculture in numerous communities across the nation.

The conference offered the opportunity to meet and interview key stakeholders in the sustainable agricultural domain, as well as offer background and a link to a “Quick Poll” to gather information regarding climate change.

Members of the DECCCI team collected written materials and held interviews with farmers, state agricultural representatives, commercial stakeholders, and Penn State Extension personnel.



Additionally, a DECCCI informational flyer was distributed to all exhibitors and people were asked to respond to a “Quick Poll”. Compared to the three previous polls (which were administered at UD’s CANR Fall Fest

and Ag Week, as well as to Extension personnel and members of the Master Gardener program), respondents revealed a similar pattern: 1) they learn about climate change primarily from the news and media, 2) they think about climate change as it relates to “changing weather patterns”, “more and frequent droughts and floods”, and “global warming” 3) they associate feelings of “anxiety”, “frustration” or “depression” with climate change; and finally 4) they focus on actions like “recycling, repurposing, reusing”, “using permaculture and agro-ecology methods”, “using smart ag practices” or “teaching” to address climate change concerns.



Climate Can't Wait Legislative Day of Action

On Thursday, March 9th, 2023, the **Delaware Chapter of the Sierra Club**, in partnership with the **Clean Energy Coalition**, organized the largest lobby day in the Chapter's history. The focus of the activity was to speak with DE legislatures to lobby for the passage of SB305. This legislation, known as the **Delaware Climate Change Solutions Act**, *which was not passed in 2022 and is sought to be passed in 2023*, follows the issuance of Delaware's Climate Action Plan in 2022, and establishes a statutory requirement of greenhouse gas emissions reductions over the medium and long term to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change due to anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions.

Lobby day leaders represented organizations that are part of the **DE Clean Energy Coalition** including:

- Peggy Schultz – People for Offshore Wind Energy Resources and the League of Women Voters
- John Irwin – Sierra Club
- Mary Douglas – League of Women Voters
- Emily Knearl – Nature Conservancy
- Mark Nardone – Delaware Nature Society
- Shweta Arya – Delaware Interfaith Power and Light
- Donna Hitchner – Methodist Action Program
- Representatives of the Delaware Working Families Party



UD Extension Agricultural Team “Card Conversations”

On February 23, 2023, as part of the UD Agricultural team meeting, members of UD Extension participated in a group conversation about climate change and their work with farmers and agricultural producers. Comments and observations from the Extension personnel reflected a similar perspective as has been observed from previous interviews and polls conducted by the DECCI team. Chief among their comments were:

- Members of the UD Ag group who expressed a hesitancy to use the term “climate change” as it is a “trigger” for farmers and some members of DE agricultural communities. Extension personnel do not use the term, but rather talk about “sustainability” and the “weather” to explore responses to changing weather patterns, drought, and flooding.
- There is deep mistrust of government agencies and their implementation of regulations that impact farmers and their ability to pay for the changes required.
- There is deep mistrust of the information that is being presented as part of “climate change policy” that “make” farmers use practices they don’t want to use.
- Extension personnel do not want to discuss climate change as they feel it is not taking into consideration DE farmers reality.
- There is a sense that “science” is simply another “belief system” and they don’t have to believe it.

Overview of Delaware State Policy Climate Change Initiatives

As defined by the EPA, **climate change adaptation** means taking action to prepare for and adjust to both the current and projected impacts of climate change. **Climate change mitigation** refers to actions limiting the magnitude and rate of future climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and/or advancing nature-based solutions. Delaware’s past and present policy responses to climate change have been to minimize emissions and focus almost exclusively on “mitigation”. The focus has been related to initiatives pertaining to clean and renewable energy, energy efficiency, transportation and reducing “high global warming potential”

greenhouse gases. “Adaptation” related policy activities appear to be limited.¹ Previous policy activities and actions include the following:

- Delaware first signed the MOU to join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative in 2005, and the first RGGI auction was in 2008. (For more information, click [here](#))
- A minimum statewide code for energy conservation was first established in 1979. The General Assembly updated the [Code for Energy Conservation](#) in 2009 to bring the state in line with the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) and the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE). Delaware is required to review and update codes every 3 years, and is currently on 2018 IECC and ASHRAE 90.1 2016. (For more information, click [here](#))
- The renewable energy and energy efficiency incentive programs encompass a wide variety of programs run by DNREC.
 - The [Green Energy Program](#) began in 1999.
 - The [LMI Solar Pilot Program](#) launched in the summer of 2022.
 - [EEIF](#) was established in 2011, and revised in 2017; data is available going back to FY2017
 - There are a few different components to the Clean Transportation Incentive Program. [Clean Vehicle Rebates](#) and [Charging Equipment Rebates](#) have been running since 2015 (and will be updated this year).
 - "[Cool Switch](#)" began in 2020.
- Technical Assistance and Funding is another broad category:
 - A list of Resilient Community Partnership projects going back to 2016 can be found [here](#).
 - [RASCL](#) was also established in 2016.
 - SOFA grants had two rounds: one in 2016 and one in 2018.
 - Sustainable Communities Planning Grants were outlined in 2017.

State-related climate change policy activities in Delaware, according to some key informants, have evolved with limited collaboration across state agencies. DNREC appears to have taken a lead role in responding to climate change with a focus on **mitigation** efforts. There is limited evidence of any emphasis or focus on **adaptation** response in municipal, county, or state adaptation policies.

Textual analysis of key strategic documents, and policy statements are most often written as “intentions” with little attributed accountability or clear responsibility and/or authority to enact and implement the presented policy ideas. For example, the 2022 Delaware Climate Change Action plan states:

“As noted previously, while Delaware’s Climate Action Plan indicates the types of climate action the state should take, it does not dictate all the details of how those actions will (or should) be implemented. The plan itself also does not create new mandates or requirements. As such, how the plan is carried out will require further engagement with stakeholders that is concerted, thoughtful, intentional and inclusive.” (Delaware Climate Action Plan, 26)

“Throughout the process of developing Delaware’s Climate Action Plan, the state used technical analysis and stakeholder engagement to identify strategies that can be implemented to meet our 2025 goal and set a course for long-term emissions reductions. Many of these strategies are already supported through existing programs and policies. However, scaling up climate action will require new and expanded policies and programs, as well.” (Delaware Climate Action Plan, 27)

¹ See: <https://www.epa.gov/climate-adaptation/climate-adaptation-and-epas-role>

Potential Future Actions for Extension

In discussions with policy experts and activists, potential areas where Extension could support DE climate change policy include:

- Assisting in sharing of research through workshops and additional education and training for the general population about what climate change “policy” means (e.g. how it works in Delaware)
- Increasing Extension personnel’s understanding and support of DE state agencies climate change policies
- Supporting policies that introduce and discuss the physical, social and economic impact of change climate and the drivers of uncertainty in the future climate projections
- Working with key stakeholders to support new legislations that recognizes the impact of climate change on the health and welfare of farmers, farm animals and farm communities
- Using evidence to support policies that address the inequities of climate change on diverse cultures that recognize historical, socio-political, economic, religious and scientific variations
- Clarifying policies related to “mitigation” and “adaptation” as part of activities focused on new solutions.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Links to Delaware Related Policy Actors

Level	Organization Name	Description
Macro		
National		
	<u>Associated Press NORC Center for Public Affairs (AP-NORC)</u>	Independent global news organization dedicated to factual reporting
	<u>Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)</u>	Independent executive agency of the United States federal government tasked with environmental protection matters
	<u>Hauser Policy Impact Fund</u>	Aims to ensure that social science analysis and synthesis has a better chance to guide informed policy decisions across the DBASSE portfolio—national statistics, science education, children’s well-being, criminal justice, environmental change, the implications of aging, among others
	<u>Lewis-Burke Associates LLC (LBA)</u>	Leading full-service government relations firm specializing in advocating for the public policy interests of institutions of higher education and other research and education organizations
	<u>National Academies (NASEM)</u>	Private, nonprofit institutions that provide expert advice on some of the most pressing challenges facing the nation and world; work helps shape sound policies, inform public opinion, and advance the pursuit of science, engineering, and medicine
	<u>National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT)</u>	Center that helps people build resilient communities through local and sustainable solutions that reduce poverty, strengthen self-reliance, and protect natural resources
	<u>RAND Corporation (RAND)</u>	Research organization that develops solutions to public policy challenges to help make communities throughout the world safer and more secure, healthier and more prosperous
	<u>United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)</u>	Federal executive department responsible for developing and executing federal laws related to farming, forestry, rural economic development, and food
	<u>United States Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency (USDA-FSA)</u>	Agency that implements agricultural policy, administers credit and loan programs, and manages conservation, commodity, disaster, and farm marketing programs through a national network of offices

	United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS)	Help people make investments in their operations and local communities to keep working lands working, boost rural economies, increase the competitiveness of American agriculture, and improve the quality of our air, water, soil, and habitat
	United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA-RD)	Mission area within the United States Department of Agriculture which runs programs intended to improve the economy and quality of life in rural parts of the United States
	United States Department of the Interior (DOI)	Protects and manages the Nation's natural resources and cultural heritage; provides scientific and other information about those resources; and honors its trust responsibilities or special commitments to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and affiliated Island Communities
	United States Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC)	Organized structure of Federal geospatial professionals and constituents that provide executive, managerial, and advisory direction and oversight for geospatial decisions and initiatives across the Federal government
	United States Forest Service (USFS)	Agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture that administers the nation's 154 national forests and 20 national grasslands. The Forest Service manages 193 million acres (780,000 km ²) of land.
	United States National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA-NIFA)	Provides leadership and funding for programs that advance agriculture-related sciences.
	Wilson Center	The Wilson Center, chartered by Congress in 1968 as the official memorial to President Woodrow Wilson, is the nation's key non-partisan policy forum for tackling global issues through independent research and open dialogue to inform actionable ideas for the policy community
Mid		
State		
	Delaware Department of Agriculture (DDA)	Strives effectively and efficiently to accomplish our mission, to sustain and promote the viability of food, fiber, and agricultural industries in Delaware through quality services that protect and enhance the environment, health, and welfare of the general public

	<u>Mid-Atlantic Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments (MARISA)</u>	Collaborates with Mid-Atlantic communities to enhance their resilience to a changing climate through improved data, place-based decision support, and public engagement
	<u>The New Jersey Climate Change Alliance (NJCCA)</u>	Network of diverse organizations that share the goal of advancing science-informed climate change strategies at the state and local levels in New Jersey, both with regard to adapting to changing climate conditions and addressing the emissions that cause climate change
	<u>Northeast Climate Adaptation Science Center (NE CASC)</u>	Part of a network of nine Climate Adaptation Science Centers managed by the U.S. Geological Survey National Climate Adaptation Science Center that work with natural and cultural resource managers to gather the scientific information and build the tools needed to help fish, wildlife, and ecosystems adapt to the impacts of climate change; located at the University of Massachusetts Amherst
Micro		
Community		
	<u>University of Delaware Biden School of Public Policy and Administration</u>	Academic department at the University of Delaware that creates and uses interdisciplinary, nonpartisan research and empirically-based analysis to teach / inform effective decision-making and policy and to improve leadership and administration