

AN EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL INTEREST GROUPS AND THEIR  
EFFORT TO INFLUENCE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY IN DELAWARE

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

Environmental interest groups are critical to the conservation and protection of environmental resources. They play an essential role in the public policy process by bringing attention to environmental issues, building support for change, and lobbying for new laws. These organizations have been studied extensively at the national scale, but our understanding of them at the state level is incomplete.

This thesis is the first comprehensive description of the environmental interest groups active in Delaware. The research provides an inventory and characterization of Delaware's environmental interest group community. Seventy-two environmental organizations comprised of local, statewide, regional, and national groups with activity in Delaware were identified and surveyed. Analysis shows this community is comprised of a diverse group of formal and informal organizations with varying missions, funding, and staffing resources.

The existing core of Delaware organizations has shown considerable resiliency, with an average age of 22 years. The network of environmental interest organizations does have a substantial base of resources, including funding, staffing, and volunteers. Collectively they utilize an estimated \$8-10 Million in annual operating funds, 115 paid professional staff, and volunteer services from a reported 2,380 to 4,485 volunteers with an estimated value of \$4.3 to \$8.5 million for work in Delaware.

Delaware's environmental organizations have broad issue agendas with significant implications for collective action. They use a limited range of traditional tactics to influence policy. When attempting to influence environmental policy, the groups work in a challenging social and political context of insider politics where environmental interest groups are usually outsiders. In Delaware, there may be negative consequences for environmental advocacy, with 45% of the organizations reporting they had experienced or suspected retribution for advocacy efforts.

This study demonstrates that environmental interest groups are well-established in Delaware, have diverse interests and capacity, and have interest in public policy advocacy. While they likely have some impact on environmental resources through a wide range of programs, they have limited resource capacity to influence environmental policy. Despite this finding, they have a solid base of bench strength upon which to build and opportunities to be more effective in the future.

## **Chapter 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The State of Delaware enjoys a rich natural setting with an abundance of natural and environmental resources. However, these resources have long been contaminated by industrial, agricultural, suburban and urban-produced pollution, and been destroyed to make room for economic development. Despite enactment and implementation of numerous environmental statutes over the past 40 years, these resources continue to be at risk to degradation and destruction. Delaware has a checkered past regarding efforts to address pressing environmental problems and the State's leadership has a long history of dragging their feet on important environmental issues (Boyer & Ratledge, 2009; Williams, 2008). This is due to the State's political culture that is often resistant to actions on environmental problems and policies due to an entrenched predisposition to business interests (Williams, 2009; Johnson & Pika, 1993). Ensuring that important environmental issues are addressed requires leadership from government officials that is more likely to occur with pressure from organized environmental interest groups that inform and motivate Delaware's citizens to advocate for these public policies.

The aim of this research is to describe and characterize Delaware's environmental interest groups and the collective efforts they take to influence public policy related to improving the State's natural and environmental resources. More

specifically, this study will (1) characterize the size, breadth and capacity of the environmental interest group operating in Delaware, (2) describe the structure of this interest group, (3) identify the diversity of issues and concern of organizations that make up this interest group, and (4) determine the extent to which this group actively advocates to affect public environmental policy and programs with a primary focus on efforts targeting the state level of government in Delaware.

Delaware is a small state in which many environmental policy efforts are addressed at the state level. The State level of environmental policy is also of particular interest, particularly as the policy debate over environmental deregulation by state governments continues as part of a hope by some officials that it will improve economic growth. It is also important as the environmental debate and partisan divide in Washington make it increasingly difficult to pass new environmental legislation or even to re-authorize current environmental laws, potentially leading to devolution of these responsibilities to the state level.

To add context and relevance to this research, this thesis also describes the social and political framework in Delaware within which the environmental interest groups must operate. Understanding this culture is needed to better identify the potential opportunities and constraints of activities by the environmental interest groups to influence public policy decisions.

Building upon the existing literature, this study evaluated Delaware's environmental interest groups using available national data sets, existing local data sets, and survey data obtained from environmental organizations with actions in Delaware to

better describe their contribution to environmental policy in the State. As part of this characterization of the environmental groups, the study also compared Delaware's environmental interests groups that are local with the national groups with activity in the State. An assessment of how much, in what ways, and what factors influence decisions about engaging in public policy advocacy and lobbying by Delaware's environmental interest groups was also conducted. Finally, the study described some of the ways the social and political context at the State level influences environmental organizations' work in Delaware.

The political context for public policy and advocacy is important. While advocacy is important at all local levels in Delaware, this thesis will focus on those efforts of environmental organizations to influence environmental programs and policies at the state level. This is assumed to be a reasonable approach since in a small state, many environmental policy issues are addressed at the state policy level more often than at the local level, where it occurs in other areas. Also, with the exception of land use approvals, local and municipal governments have less capacity and authority in Delaware than State government to address environmental issues.

### **Importance of Environmental Interest Groups in Delaware**

Delaware is a small state with a base of environmental and natural resources that are threatened by a range of natural and human influences. Similar to a national trend, Delaware experienced a rise in environmental concern in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Williams, 2008, Bosso, 2005; Dunlop & Mertig, 1992). During this period,

Delaware citizens experienced an unprecedented boom in construction and the associated destruction of wood lots and prime farmland as part of the suburban sprawl (Williams, 2008). They also experienced a new wave of air and water pollution from toxic and organic chemicals from many sources. By the first Earth Day in 1970, these issues had coalesced nationally into a broad common environmental concern that had become the environmental movement (Dunlap & Mertig, 1992). This led to the creations of new environmental agencies and environmental legislation at the national level for environmental improvements such as those that led to reduction of air and water pollution by the end of the 20th century. Delaware also experienced this change with the establishment of the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control as a Governor's Cabinet level environmental agency that was consolidated from 14 commissions, boards, and agencies in 1970 (Williams, 2008). The State also passed numerous new environmental statutes such as the Delaware Coastal Zone Act of 1971 and the Delaware Wetlands Act of 1973.

While significant strides have been made to address environmental issues in Delaware, significant problems remain. Addressing these problems requires leadership willing to take action and who are also focused on the specific environmental issue and skilled at navigating the public policy process in Delaware. In the past, these environmental policy efforts are believed to have come, in part, as a result of the emerging environmental movement that championed the environmental issues ignored in prior decades. In Delaware, activists associated with this movement have been

credited with confronting the forces of apathy and opposition to mobilize the public and create political will for action (Williams, 2008).

At the national level, some of the grassroots environmental organizations have now become more mature, particularly those working at or associated with national organizations, leading to concerns about them leaving their grassroots origins and becoming estranged from their broader environmental purposes or their membership. Competition for funding to sustain these organizations may be leading to friction and fragmentation, rather than a unified movement capable of collective action. Moreover, some have expressed concerns that the major national environmental interest groups that are often highly influential on the national agenda and that influence local groups are “turning tame, corporate and compromising” (Bosso, 2005, p. 4). It is unclear whether these descriptions are pertinent to state and local environmental interest groups. What is clear is that Delaware has no shortage of environmental problems that would benefit from support and championing by environmental interest groups. Some of these problems will be discussed to provide context and understanding of the need for environmental action in Delaware.

### **Environmental Issues in Delaware**

Significant environmental issues in Delaware currently include the destruction and fragmentation of habitat due to development and suburban sprawl, the legacy effects of industrial contaminants, ongoing problems of air pollution and water pollution from numerous sources and the impacts of pollution on human health, fish and wildlife.

The State is also experiencing declining fish and wildlife populations. Key habitats such as wetlands continue to be lost due to direct human activity such as filling and due to indirect actions such as coastal erosion. The State periodically experiences fish kills and harmful algae blooms. There are also emerging issues, including the potential impacts of global climate change and the associated issues of sea level rise in this low lying coastal state.

While Delaware has made significant progress on many environmental issues such as protecting the coastal zone from industrial development, cleaning up industrial pollution from our major rivers, protecting tidal wetlands, and protecting sizeable tracts of open space, many challenges remain. These include the need to find solutions to current and emerging problems, as well as ensuring that past successes that led to Delaware's environmental improvements are not reversed. There are periodic proposals to revise the State's Coastal Zone Act, Delaware has had limited success in addressing nonpoint source pollution entering our waterways, the State has never passed protections for critical freshwater wetlands, and our existing protected lands are under new pressures from development encroachment and conflicting uses. We will discuss the existing and emerging issues in this section to better understand the potential issues and needs for advocacy in Delaware.

Land use remains a significant problem that affects many environmental issues. More specifically, Delaware is experiencing a spread-out land development pattern, known as sprawl, which exacerbates many other problems. Sprawl tends to consume large tracts of open land in a way that degrades water quality, while also destroying

forest, wildlife habitats, and working landscapes such as farms (McEvelly, Shipley, Steffens, & White, 2000). In an American Farmland Trust report, Hollis (2006) found that Delaware lost 384,000 acres of farmland from 1950 to 2005. Just as important, from 1984 and 2002, 118,000 acres of land were consumed by 96,000 units of residential housing. This amount is almost equal to the amount of land consumed for residential housing for the first 300 years of Delaware history. This changing land use pattern contributes and often exacerbates other environmental issues in the State.

Water quality remains a serious problem in Delaware where 86% of the State's 2,509 miles of rivers and streams do not fully support the swimming use and 98% do not fully support the fish and wildlife use (DNREC, Watershed Assessment Section, 2010). The State continues to experience challenges and setbacks to efforts to improve water quality, such as the recent court ruling to overturn the riparian buffer protection regulations in the Delaware Inland Bays and tributaries (Hoenen, 2011).

Delaware has experienced a significant loss of biodiversity, or the diversity of life. An estimated 41% of the state's plant species are considered rare and are in need of protection, along with 6 species of mussels, 17 species of fish, 11 species of amphibians, 20 species of reptiles, 21 species of butterflies, 59 species of dragonflies, 6 species of mammals, and 93 species of birds (Environmental Law Institute, 1999). These have primarily been caused by habitat degradation or destruction, habitat fragmentation, and the proliferation of invasive exotic species that out compete native species. In recent years, the most prominent cause has been sprawling residential

development and the associated constructions of roadways to support this new development. (DNREC Division of Fish and Wildlife, 2006).

Wetland loss is a key component of habitat loss, and one that has a negative effect on water quality due to the filtering of pollutant that occurs in these systems and biodiversity due to the disproportional number of rare species dependent upon this habitat type in Delaware. According to Tiner (2001), Delaware had about 350,000 acres of wetlands inventoried and an estimated historic loss of 54 % of its wetland habitat. While regulation of tidal wetlands since the 1970s has reduced wetland loss, significant losses are still occurring, especially in isolated non-tidal wetland areas. In fact, the rate of loss in non-tidal areas is about 10 times higher than the current loss of tidal wetlands. From 1992 to 2007, the most significantly impacted wetland type was non-tidal forested wetland areas, with a loss of 2,940 acres (DNREC Delaware Coastal Programs, 2010). Delaware has no state regulations to protect these wetlands, and the protection provided by the US Army Corps of Engineers is limited and inadequate (Tiner, 2001). These federal protections were significantly limited by the United States Supreme Court (2001) decision that excluded many isolated wetlands from federal regulation, and no statutory or regulatory changes have occurred since this decision to improve the protection of these wetlands. The continued loss of wetlands is likely to have significantly negative impacts on the State's habitat, biodiversity, water quality, and flooding.

Delaware has experienced improvements in air quality in recent years as the State has more aggressively approached reducing industrial emissions and experienced

improvements in automobile pollution emissions. These have largely been done through Delaware's State Implementation Plan in which the State identified its enforceable measures and strategies to meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) under the Federal Clean Air Act. As of 2008, only two air pollutants were found to exceed or be close to exceeding the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's NAAQS for pollutants shown to threaten human health and welfare. These exceedances included ozone and fine particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in size (DNREC, Division of Air and Waste Management, 2008). Ozone is a strong respiratory irritant that can affect human health, as well as trees, crops, and other vegetation. In 2008 there were fourteen days where the ozone level exceeded the 8-hour standard. Fine particulate matter can penetrate deeply into the lungs and also create health problems. The State of Delaware has been deemed in non-attainment for fine particulate matter. Both of these pollutants come from numerous sources such as industrial releases and automobile emissions, and are difficult to control. It should be noted that these air quality issues are linked to our current development patterns. While technology improvements to automobile emissions may help in the coming decades, it will likely require landscape scale changes in our development and urbanization patterns that reduce sprawl, provide alternative modes of transportation, and reduce commuting times and distances.

Despite reductions in recent years, Delaware still experiences significant toxic releases into our environment. These amounts were down significantly in 2009, with 75 million pounds of chemical releases reported as part of the toxic release inventory (DNREC Division of Waste and Hazardous Substances, 2009). This reduction was 44%

compared to 2008. However, over half of this reduction was believed to have resulted from the economic downturn and closing of several facilities that produced these toxins. Reducing the release of these chemicals into the environment will continue to be a challenge well into the future.

Prominent emerging issues include climate change, sea level rise, and meeting the State's energy needs in a more sustainable way. Efforts are underway to develop renewable energy in Delaware, focused on wind and solar energy development, and to develop a sea level rise adaptation plan. These efforts can conflict with other environmental issues, such as concerns over the impact of wind energy facility siting on migratory species and sensitive benthic habitat.

Environmental issues associated with energy development considered in the past are re-emerging, such as the development or expansion of nuclear power and the development of a new liquid natural gas terminal in Delaware Bay (Guen, 2010; Montgomery, 2009). New issues upstream of Delaware may also impact our environmental conditions such as new technology for gas extraction known as hydraulic fracturing or fracking (Rogers, 2011). All of these have both significant costs and benefits with implications for Delaware's environmental quality.

Meeting these and other environmental challenges in Delaware is often difficult due to the dominance of pro-business interests, a political culture that limits the influence of interest groups, and the general public's apathy and unfamiliarity with these environmental issues. Regardless of the challenge, environmental interest groups are needed to provide the voice for environmental issues (Williams, 2008; Bosso, 2005;

Bass, Arons, Guinane, and Carter, 2007). They form the core of environmental advocacy and speak for those that cannot or will not speak up on key environmental issues affecting the state. .

### **Environmental Interest Group Advocacy & Lobbying**

Environmental advocacy organizations are critical to the establishment of public policies for natural resource conservation and the protection of environmental resources (Bosso, 2005; Andrews & Edwards, 2005). These organizations play an essential role in the public policy process by bringing attention to conservation and environmental issues, building support for change and lobbying for new laws. They often identify many environmental problems and perceive that government agencies and elected officials sometimes lack the political will to address these problems. In response, they organize as interest groups to influence decision-makers, policy, and public perception on issues related to the environment.

Bass, Arons, Guinane, and Carter (2007) have pointed out that advocacy and lobbying efforts by nonprofits, like many of the Delaware environmental organizations, are different from similar efforts taken by for-profit interests in a very important respect. The efforts are made in the public interest. As such, it is likely that environmental organizations typically advocate for protection of environmental trust resources such as clean air, water, and protection of natural resources for all citizens. They often work to offset those competing interests that damage environmental resources in Delaware.

Environmental advocacy can and does occur in various ways. It can be simply participating in environmental activities that improve the public's understanding and interest in the environment, environmental education, indirect grassroots advocacy efforts, political protests, civil disobedience and formal lobbying. The range of efforts can be from very timid to strong direct action.

Advocacy actions and lobbying are allowable activities for all nonprofits, although there is significant confusion and a dearth in understanding by many nonprofit organizations regarding the extent to which they are permitted to advocate and lobby on issues of importance to them (Bass et.al., 2007). For formal IRS designated tax exempt and tax deductible nonprofit groups, some advocacy efforts described as lobbying require financial reporting. Typically, those that are social welfare or civic organizations that have an IRS 501(c)(4) nonprofit designation that does not allow acceptance of tax deductible charitable donation, have no limitations on lobbying. However, charitable organizations such as those incorporated under Section 501(c)(3) of IRS Code have reporting requirements and some modest constraints on lobbying activities. Section 501(c)(3) says that nonprofits may lobby, but not to a "substantial" degree (Internal Revenue Service, 2010, p.44). Defining substantial can be difficult. Fortunately, there is a reporting option available that allows nonprofits to lobby without having to worry about it impacting their tax exempt status. The solution is the 501(H) election for IRS reporting. By opting to use this tax reporting election, a nonprofit can clearly define the amount that can be spent on lobbying according to a sliding scale, and just as important, define very narrowly what is considered lobbying.

Most of what nonprofits do as advocacy would not be considered lobbying under the 501(h) election (Berry, 2003). Whether an action and expenditure is considered a lobbying activity and how much an organization can spend on it can be clarified by a nonprofit organizations simply by choosing the 501(h) option for IRS reporting. It can also allow them to understand that those working in the best public interest should be part of the public policy discourse. Without doing so, their message will likely continue to be muted and they will be left behind. It is perplexing to recognize that many of the organizations that are formally recognized with tax exempt status to have a charitable or social welfare interests also have negative views about engaging in advocacy and lobbying. These are the very groups that look out for the public interest and should be most active in public policy debates in a democracy. They can bring needed insights to the policy discourse and balance the input of private interests. As Jeffrey Berry puts it, nonprofits groups need to know “it’s legal to lobby extensively”... “and lobbying is necessary because nonprofit groups must give voice to those who can’t speak for themselves” (Berry, 2003, p. 4).

While Delaware’s environmental organizations likely undertake many efforts to protect the environment and to build environmental awareness, their capacity and the extent of their actions to directly advocate for changes in environmental policy is not clearly understood. This study is particularly interested in determining those actions that are used to directly influence public policy, such as lobbying elected officials or providing public pressure for public policy changes. These require resources, expertise, and leadership. Do the organizations have the fiscal and human resources

needed to influence environmental policy? To what extent do they directly engage in the public policy process by advocating their positions to public officials? Do they directly lobby officials for these changes? In short, do these groups have the organizational capacity as a collective lobby to influence environmental policy in Delaware?

### **Contribution to Literature**

This research will add to our knowledge about environmental interest groups engaging in environmental advocacy and policy activity at the state level. There are numerous national studies and evaluations of environmental interest groups, but few that are State specific. This thesis is the first comprehensive evaluation conducted on environmental interest groups active in the State of Delaware. While studies at the national level or of national organizations provide valuable insights and help explain national influences on state and local environmental interest groups, local groups are often closer to the issues. They are connected by a sense of place and more directly impacted by the local environmental resources and quality. As such, they can be expected to have some important differences that provide valuable insights into environmental interest at the state scale, adding to the growing literature about the local contribution to the national environmental movement. Although not specifically addressed in this study, advocacy at the municipal, county, or even local community scale may also play a similarly important role, potentially making it a topic of interest for future studies.

By focusing on this largely ignored, but vital aspect of environmental policy development in Delaware, it is my hope that this study will stimulate further discussion, research, understanding, and strengthening of environmental interests and policy at the State level.

### **Research Questions**

The primary research questions to be address include:

- What are the major characteristics of the social and political framework within which Delaware's environmental interest group community operates?
- What are the current size, structure, and capacity of Delaware's Environmental Interest Group?
- What issues are of interest to Delaware's environmental interest groups and what tactics do they utilize to address these issues?
- How much do Delaware's environmental interest groups engage in public policy advocacy and lobbying?

## **Chapter 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Prior to conducting research on Delaware's environmental interest groups and their efforts to influence public policy, it is important to review the major literature related to the social and political context for environmental interest group activity, characterizing environmental organizations and interest groups, and environmental advocacy.

The U.S Environmental Movement has largely been attributed to a core of large nationally organized groups such as the Sierra Club, National Wildlife Federation, Nature Conservancy, and others that are often identified as the primary players in affecting government policy (Mitchell, Mertig, & Dunlop, 1991). Recent literature questions this assumption, and recognizes the need to evaluate the broader environmental movement as well as the role of local environmental groups in this process (Bosso, 2005, Straughan & Pollack, 2008, Kempton et.al, 2001, Smith, 2000). However, there is limited literature specific to advocacy efforts and the role of environmental interest groups at the state level (Newmark & Grady, 2005; Andrews & Edwards, 2005; Kempton et. al, 2001; Salazar; 1996; Bruelle, et. al. 2007). In addition, much of the work focuses on established nonprofit groups, missing the informal all-volunteer grassroots associations that some believe play very important roles in public

policy (Smith, 2000). Whether a formal nonprofit group or a grassroots association working on environmental issues and policies, literature indicates that the social and political context is likely to be very important.

### **Context of State and Local Environmental Interest Group Activity**

In her study of the structure of environmental policy among American states, Bromley-Trujillo (2010) asserts that states are taking the lead on many key environmental issues as a result of devolution from the federal government, making them increasingly important with regard to environmental policy. As part of her study to determine whether climate change policy adoption fits into an overall environmental policy dimension at the state level, she found that environmental policies that have larger networks of state interest groups are more coherent and successful than those that focus on narrow single issues. She also found support that climate change, energy policy, and sustainable development are policy issues that are intrinsically linked and that the clustering of issues such as these likely leads to broader support for environmental policy and its passage in states. She suggests that the proper framing of linked issues by political figures and interest groups encourages state policy innovation.

In a study of the state environmental and natural resource spending, Newmark and Witko (2007) found that the strength of a state's environmental movement was a significantly more important factor in determining state environmental spending than the severity of environmental problems. While this is a compelling finding, the data used for state level environmental interest was actually based on one organization, the

Sierra Club. They used the number of Sierra Club members in each state per 1000 residents. This study does, however, address an important topic about the political context for environmental policy at the State level. In addition to environmental groups, they make an effort to consider business interest groups. They considered population size and land and water area as factors affecting state environmental spending. Finally they factor for citizen and elite ideology by using a measure of state public opinion liberalism that was previously found by Erikson, Wright, and McIlver (1993) to be a significant predictor of state elite attitudes. Newmark and Witko use this measure of public opinion liberalism that they believe also influences environmental spending. Their work documents that the social and political context matters for environmental policy, and that environmental interest groups may be more or less effective based on size and political context at the state level.

Delaware is 49<sup>th</sup> in geographic size and 45<sup>th</sup> in population size when compared to all U.S. states (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). This may provide a limited population for environmental interest groups to draw upon for volunteers, dues paying members, and resources. In addition, the small size makes for close personal relationships among those involved in policy, creating a unique social and political context for advocacy. These issues are critically important to understanding the context of environmental advocacy in Delaware. It is likely that this social and political context for advocacy influences both the structure of the Delaware environmental interest group community as well as the ways in which they operate to overcome the obstacles and have influence. As such, we will provide a more complete qualitative review of these issues in Chapter

3. This chapter on the social and political context of Delaware will more comprehensively describe and assess the social and political framework of environmental interest group activities in Delaware, providing critical insights into the opportunities and constraints it places on environmental interest groups. This will provide the public policy contextual basis for the evaluation of Delaware's environmental interest groups by helping to place their role into the larger public policy framework of the state.

### **Interest Group Characterizations and Descriptions**

Accurately describing a complete or representative community of environmental groups and their resources to carry out environmental work requires information about each organization. Studies have found utility in analysis of fiscal and staff resources, organizational structure, policy interest, and approaches used by individual groups and as part of collective action. These factors are critical to the understanding of the broader community of environmental interest groups. It is the basis for understanding their capacities, activities, and why they do or don't engage in public policy activities or advocacy efforts.

In a multiyear investigation of factors that motivate nonprofit organizations to engage in public policy matters, Bass, Arons, Guinane, and Carter (2007) conducted a national survey of 1,738 tax-exempt public charities under 501(c)(3) of the federal tax code (p. 16). The study analyzed all charitable nonprofits, but did not focus specifically on environmental groups. However, it does provide valuable insights into assessing

organizational capacities and their involvement in public policy activities that can be applied to the study of environmental organizations. The primary purpose of the study was to investigate and understand the factors that motivate these organizations to engage in public policy. To accomplish this, Bass, et. al. (2007), conducted surveys that enabled them to obtain extensive data to describe and characterize the capacity of the organizations; including staffing, budgets, and other characteristics. They found that the frequency of policy participation was low and that it was influenced in large part by limited resources and other capacity issues such as training. The source of these funds was also important, especially regarding government grants or funding. They found that for organizations who receive significant public funds there is confusion over the rules regarding public policy participation and there is a fear of retribution. This work does demonstrate the utility of collecting resource information beyond that reported to the Internal Revenue Service, along with policy participation perception information in order to understand the important influences they have on advocacy efforts by environmental organizations.

However, Berry (2009) who included environmental groups in his study indicated that overall budgets or staff size is a crude indication of the groups resources since they may spend a great deal on fundraising. He believed that for interest groups, staff size may be the better indicator since the groups often rely on outside consultants for direct mail that can be a significant organizational expense. In addition, he found that for environmental groups, their large memberships were important and may be an important counterweight to corporate interests since elected officials, or at least those

elected to the U.S. Congress know these groups may be informed by the environmental lobby. Berry (2009) also noted that for a majority of these groups, membership dues are a significant source of their funding. This source of funds may be less restricted and available for lobbying and direct advocacy. Despite the limitations, this data will provide valuable insights into Delaware's environmental interest groups capacity, and should help in obtaining some information about resources expended on direct advocacy and lobbying.

In a more targeted study of environmental groups at a local scale, Kempton, Holland, Bunting-Howarth, and Payne (2001) quantified characteristics of local environmental groups in North Carolina and the Delmarva Peninsula through survey research. They estimated the total number of groups for DelMarVa to be 95 adult groups with an average of 31 core members per group. Core members were defined as those most active in the organizations and the data was obtained by interviews with the environmental groups. Their census approach started by reviewing various existing local list of environmental groups for the Delmarva area including local list such as that of the Alliance for the Chesapeake Directory, the Delaware Nature Society Directory of Environmental Groups. They also utilized national lists such as the 1993 National Wildlife Federation Conservation Directory that listed 15 environmental organizations for Delaware and other sources. They continued their search for local groups as they interviewed environmental officials and group members, finding this to be an important, and perhaps most valuable source of data for the census of environmental organizations. They found that taking a census of local environmental groups greatly increased the

understanding of the number and types of groups, but that it is time consuming and costly. They conclude that local environmental groups are significant in expanding the structure of environmental action and local policy decisions.

These studies focuses on organizations identified in national data sets or by utilizing local information that indicates that environmental interest group activities are primary activity of the organization. This subset of groups will also be identified in Delaware to be included in the study. However, literature also indicates that at key times when major environmental policies were passed in Delaware, many other groups also played a critical role. This was noted as an important factor for the passage of Delaware's landmark Coastal Zone Act, when labor unions, church groups, and other organizations not typically associated with environmental interest played key roles (Peterson, 1999; Williams, 2008; L. Fleming, personal communication, January 17, 2011). Other groups, such as civic associations and maintenance organizations may also play critical roles episodically. While including and understanding the role of these groups at the fringe of the environmental interest group community that may episodically become involved, or be particularly important at influencing issues at the municipal, county and community scale may be of interest, their inclusion is beyond the scope of this initial characterization.

### **Identification and Census of Environmental Interest Groups**

Various approaches have been used to identify, survey, and describe environmental interests groups. These have been dominated by national studies, but

more recently have included several localized studies. A review of these studies indicates that there are significant differences between national environmental interest groups and local interest groups. In addition, existing national data have been found to have limited use for identification and characterizations of local groups. An over reliance on these data sets would likely provide an incomplete or inaccurate description of local environmental interest groups working at the state level. Despite these limitations, these studies do provide useful approaches and needed context that can add value if a part of a state and local study when supplemented with additional information specific to the locality.

Bosso (2005) conducted a comprehensive evaluation of environmental advocacy in the United States that covered the period from the 1970's to the mid-2000s. This work focused on the national environmental advocacy community. He found that environmental advocacy in the United States is dominated by a loose knit community of established organizations. These organizations are now well-established, having existed for many decades. Many of the national organizations now have multimillion-dollar budgets, well-paid executives, and are well-staffed with highly trained experts such as executives, managers, development staff, government relations staff, attorneys, and scientist. Unlike the early years of these organizations, they are amateurs no more.

In their review of nonprofit environmental and conservation organizations from 1989-2005, Straughan and Pollack (2008) took a broader look at the breadth and health of the environment and conservation sector of nonprofits. They expanded the work of Bosso (2005) that was limited to national environmental organizations to include the

full set of Internal Revenue Service (IRS) data on environmental organizations. This study showed a core of national organizations with a much larger and rapidly growing number of lightly-staffed and all-volunteer organizations that were located outside the Washington, D.C. area and typically operating at the local level.

Andrews and Edwards (2005) conducted a state level study of the structure of local environmentalism in North Carolina. They focused on the local and state level based on their assertion that there is a trend of policy devolution and more localized citizen participation on environmental issues. They found that focusing at the sub-national level is needed to provide a correction to the longstanding emphasis on national organizations and activities.

A primary source of data for the national studies and many of the local studies was derived from Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Form 990s. These are the forms used by tax-exempt organizations to report financial and other code compliance information to the IRS. For a study at the state scale, this method is only useful for evaluating those organizations for which Form 990 data is available. As Andrews and Edwards (2004) point out in their study of the role of advocacy organization in the U.S. political process, the reliance on tax data to define local advocacy creates gaps and can lead to an inaccurate picture because advocacy is not limited to nonprofit groups defined by the tax code. They also point out that the literature has largely ignored those groups that operate outside this code. Smith (2000) also identified a problem with the existing literature on nonprofit organizations that usually misses small, volunteer-run grassroots organizations. He finds it due to the reliance on the IRS reporting, which he lists a

number of studies to document how this data significantly underestimates and misses many small grassroots organizations that have not historically be required to report to the IRS. He also points out that many grassroots organizations may not obtain formal IRS nonprofit status.

Kempton, Holland, Bunting-Howarth, and Payne (2001) conducted a systematic inventory of local environmental groups on the Delmarva Peninsula and the State of North Carolina. In this census of groups they found 566 local groups, which was 7 to 20 times the number reported in published directories, documenting that conducting a direct census approach is a more reliable method of identifying local and state environmental organizations.

Only one published description was found regarding the size and make-up of Delaware's environmental organizations. Williams (2008) found that it is impossible to estimate the number of Delawarean's involved in environmental organizations and advocacy in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but asserts that their commitment can be measured by their ability to persuade the Delaware General Assembly to pass environmental laws despite the strong opposition of business interests. This may not be a fair approach to evaluation commitment, given the other factors involved. As part of his historic review, he did find that over 45 organizations were founded by Delaware environmentalists during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that continued to exist as of 2000.

Based on this literature, it is critical that multiple approaches be used to identify a state level environmental interest group that avoids over reliance on the readily

available national data to provide an accurate understanding of Delaware's environmental interest groups.

### **Comparison of State, Local, and National Environmental Interest Groups**

When considering the structure of local environmental interest organizations in comparison to national organizations, it is important to recognize that both groups have a role at the state level, and may influence each other. It is assumed that larger national groups can provide significant support to local organizations and strengthen their role and influence on environmental policy, provided their efforts are coordinated.

Although it should not be the only source of information used for studies of local environmental groups, there is value in utilizing existing national data. Bosso (2005) found it invaluable for defining many of the capacities and sizes of the core of high profile national environmental groups. Straight and Pollack (2008) also found it useful in a more inclusive study of environmental and conservation organizations that identified that while the national groups are larger and well-funded, the most growth in environmental organizations from 1989 to 2005 occurred in smaller, younger cohort of groups more often working at the local scale. Smith (2000) recognized the importance of this data for understanding what he refers to as the working voluntary organizations, but argues that scholars have all but ignored the contributions of informal voluntary grassroots associations that make significant contributions. One area where this may be particularly significant is with regard to grassroots environmental justice organizations. Bullard and Wright (1992) found that this issue had a great deal of overlap with other

social action groups, neighborhood associations, and community based groups in minority communities. These groups may often be too small to be included in the national datasets, and also deal with many social issues that may mask their involvement in environmental issues. Bullard and Wright also found that these groups are underrepresented in mainstream environmental organizations at all levels.

Studies using this national data provide valuable insights and data for comparative analysis of organizations working within and outside the tax code. For Delaware, this will allow some comparison between the more formal groups who report under IRS code, with the broader local community of environmental organizations including grassroots associations by utilizing additional survey data collected for these groups along with the national data.

### **Interest Group Engagement in Public Policy**

Environmental interest groups are often involved with advocacy as a key part of their mission and program efforts. Environmental advocacy organizations are critical to the establishment of public policies for natural resource conservation and the protection of environmental resources (Bosso, 2005; Andrews & Edwards, 2005). These organizations play an essential role in the public policy process by bringing attention to conservation and environmental issues, building support for change, and lobbying for new laws.

Environmental interests have a long history in public policy engagement that prior to the modern environmental movement that emerged in the 1960s. Berry (1999)

points out that the groups like the Sierra Club, National Wildlife Federation, the Wilderness Society, the Izaak Walton League, and Audubon Society had ambitions conservation agendas decades before the modern movement but made limited progress in Congress. He points out that they likely exploited the new movement, spurred on by the impetus from events such as the publishing of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* and the political opportunity to move forward effectively on their policy agendas. This indicates that even during periods of limited environmental policy progress, policy work and persistence may be critical to positioning environmental interests for future opportunities.

At the national level, Bosso (2005) found that the national environmental groups have transformed from protest groups to advocacy organizations. They now have a seat at the table for nearly all important national environmental policy issues. In addition, their transformation to professional organizations has enabled them to overcome many of the collective action problems. While each group has specific issue or policy niches, as a community they tend to collaborate and work together as professionals when common issues arise. They also have the resources to support this collaboration and find mutual benefit in it. Bosso (2005) found that most have extensive capacity to “simultaneously promote multiple goals using multiple techniques at multiple levels (local, state, national, and international) of political action” (p. 7).

Straughan and Pollack (2008) in their study of all nonprofits environmental and conservation groups in the United States found that despite the public perception that the sector of environmental organizations primarily engages in advocacy, the majority

of the groups focused on projects and public education. Foundation and government grants were found to be a significant part of their funding. The larger organizations were still national organizations typically in the Washington, D.C. area.

Factors important to strengthening public policy improvement are also considered. The most common is resource limitations. Bass, et. al. found this to be a primary factor for national nonprofits. Bosso (2007) also found that competition for policy niches affected funding and the sustainability of national nonprofits, which affects their ability to operate and in some cases survive. It may be that small, all voluntary organizations have less overhead, less capital expenses, and less reliance on government for funding, removing some of these inhibitions to public policy participation (Smith, 2000). One key resources that may be critical is that of volunteer staff and the patience and commitment that may be associated with these self selecting individuals that are motivated to take environmental action. Conversely, they may simply not have the resources to engage to a level that makes a significant difference. Another key issue may be the ability of the local environmental community to work together on issues to develop a common message, leverage limited resources, and take a unified position on environmental issues.

### **Issues and Tactics Utilized by Environmental Interest Groups**

The extent to which local groups have independent issue agendas or mimic national organizations has also been analyzed. Andrews and Edwards (2005) collected data on the organizational demography, environmental philosophy, strategic orientation,

public activities and perceived impacts. By focusing on state and local environmental groups, they found that environmental organizations acting at the state level are not simply branches of the national organizations, but that they pursue independent agendas within a local context. In comparison to national organizations, they found that as a group state and local organizations use a wide range of tactics, are more likely to participate in partisan activities, and are more likely to have diverse environmental philosophies. The organizations were also found to be less likely to directly lobby public officials and have tax-exempt status than national groups. While the study was informative about key aspects of the organizational structure, it did not address the size, funding, and capacity of these organizations or the social and political framework in which they work. These factors may be significant determinants of Delaware's environmental interest community, particularly considering its small size in comparison to North Carolina.

Kempton, et. al. (2001) evaluated the orientation and activities of environmental groups. They made rough classification of primary activities of groups. While they found the categories of primary activities less than perfect, they do believe they provide a useful snapshot of the real activities of local groups. These activities did not align well with those categories claimed in the literature and most groups undertake a variety of activities, including political actions or involvement in public policy matters. For this issue, they found that political activity was the primary activity for more than one half of the Delmarva groups. Most of this activity was attending and speaking at

government-related meetings. It is expected that Delaware's environmental interest groups will have similar characteristics to those identified by Kempton, et. al. (2001).

### **Cooperation among Environmental Interest Groups**

Bosso found that national organizations have become more professionalized, enabling them to overcome many problems of collective action. Straughan and Pollack (2008) found indirect evidence that there is a benefit to collaboration among the broader environmental and conservation organizations, documenting that 13% of the organizations included the words "coalitions," "alliances", "networks", "leagues" or the like indicating that there is a special benefit to working together in this community (Straughan & Pollack, 2008, p. 13; see also Berry, 1999). However, it is unclear if using these words is an indication all groups are actually collaborating.

Williams (2008) discusses the collective action of Delaware's environmental groups in his historical review of the State's environmental history. He posits that Delaware's statewide environmental movement splintered into many organizations that focused on different environmental priorities. This is the only published accounting found specific to the policy and issue orientation of Delaware's environmental interest groups. Williams also wrote that "an indispensable mortar that provided unity and purpose to these disparate groups and their members was a general commitment to seeing the natural world through an integrated biological perspective provided by ecology." (Williams, 2008, p. 200).

It is expected that many of the local volunteer based groups in Delaware that lack paid professional staff and adequate budgets struggle with effective collaboration. Working together usually provides significant benefits, but requires an upfront investment in time and resources that may not be available to many fiscally strained and staff limited organizations working in the State of Delaware. However, this critical need to combine limited resources may also serve as a key incentive that motivates groups to overcome these limitations for issues they determine to be of critical threats to their issues of interest.

## **Chapter 3**

### **THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT OF DELAWARE**

The social and political context of Delaware is a critical factor in understanding the role of environmental interest groups and their activities to influence environmental programs and policies. The small size and associated close personal relationships, variety of lifestyles, community culture, and political ideology help define the broader context that can provide opportunities for influencing public policy or limit access and influence. It is likely that these external societal conditions guide and define many of the characteristics of the environmental interest community, the manner in which they operate, and the functions they serve in the public policy development system in Delaware.

#### **Geography and Demographics**

Delaware is a small state, with a land area of 1,982 square miles (U.S. Department of Interior, 2011). Nationally it ranks 49<sup>th</sup> in size, with only the State of Rhode Island being smaller. Delaware is located in the mid-Atlantic region, in close proximity to major cities including Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, DC. Within this region, Delaware is much smaller than the surrounding states, which are geographically 3 to 20 times larger.

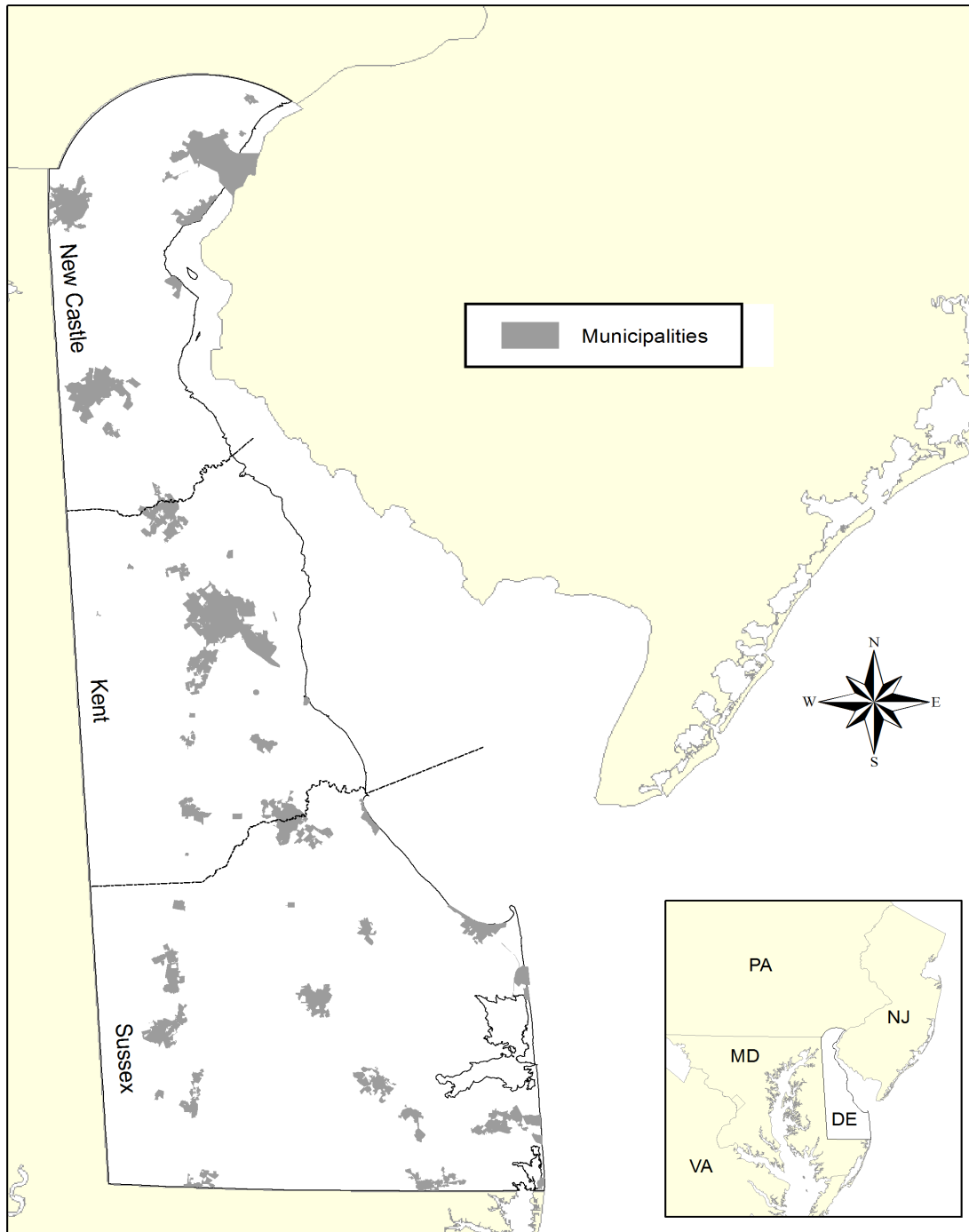
The State of Delaware is comprised of three counties, with the most populated New Castle County (438 square miles) in the North, the more rural Kent County (594 square miles) in the center, and the mostly rural County of Sussex (950 square miles) in the South. Delaware also has 57 municipalities scattered throughout the state that are generally quite small in population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Figure 1 is a map of the State of Delaware depicting these different political boundaries.

As of 2010, Delaware's statewide population was 897,934 people, making it the 8<sup>th</sup> most densely populated State (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). As seen in Table 1, Delaware's population grew from 783,600 in 2000 to 897,934 in 2010 – a 14.6 % increase. Most of the growth occurred below the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal in Southern New Castle County and Kent and Sussex Counties. Kent County and Sussex Counties grew by between 25% and 30 %, while New Castle County only grew by 7.6%. Much of the growth in the southern areas of the State comes from in-migration, potentially bringing in new people with new perspectives on public policy issues. Despite this influx of people from other areas, Delaware's population is still comprised of many long term residents including 46 % that were born in the State (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). These recent population shifts have resulted in a redistricting of legislative districts that shifts two state representative seats and one state senate seat from the northern part of New Castle County to the more rapidly growing populations further south. If this trend continues, it may eventually change the politics of Delaware, which has long been characterized with an ideological split between the more urban area of northern New Castle County and the rest of the State south of the

Chesapeake and Delaware Canal. However, with nearly 60% of the population residing in New Castle County, the north-south political ideology divide may continue for years to come.

**Table 1. Population Change 2000-2010, State of Delaware and Counties.**

<b>Name</b>	<b>2000 Population</b>	<b>2010 Population<sup>1</sup></b>	<b># Change</b>	<b>% Change</b>
<b>State of Delaware</b>	783,600	897,934	114,334	14.6%
<b>New Castle County</b>	500,265	538,479	38,214	7.6%
<b>Kent County</b>	126,697	162,310	35,613	28.1%
<b>Sussex County</b>	156,638	197,145	40,507	25.9%



**Figure 1. Map of Delaware depicting boundaries of Counties and Municipalities.**

While southern Delaware is largely rural and northern Delaware more urbanized, much of the population growth is occurring in developing suburban areas, not in urban centers. Delaware has 388,000 housing units. Thirty two percent of these units were built since 1990 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010.) This dispersed land form is expected to continue in the future in Delaware despite slowing rates of population growth, consuming more land area and creating a new set of social, political, and environmental issues for the State (Ames, 1999). While this occurs, Wilmington, Delaware's largest city is projected to continue to decrease in population through 2030 (Delaware Population Consortium Annual Projections, 2010). This indicates that for the foreseeable future, Delaware will continue to see more growth outside our established primary urban centers rather than an emphasis on urban centers often opined during comprehensive planning efforts in Delaware.

According to the 2010 census, whites represent 68.9% of Delaware's population, while African Americans represent 21.4% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Hispanic or Latinos are the fastest growing ethnic group in Delaware. They now represent 8.2% of Delaware's population, nearly double the 2000 census estimate for Delaware.

Like much of the United States, Delaware's population is aging. As of 2009, Delaware's population was comprised of 23.4% under the age of 18 years, 62.3% of persons 18 to 64 years old, and 14.3% 65 or older (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010.) The population of those 65 and older increased by only 1.4 % in the past decade, but is projected to increase significantly in the coming decades due to the aging of the baby

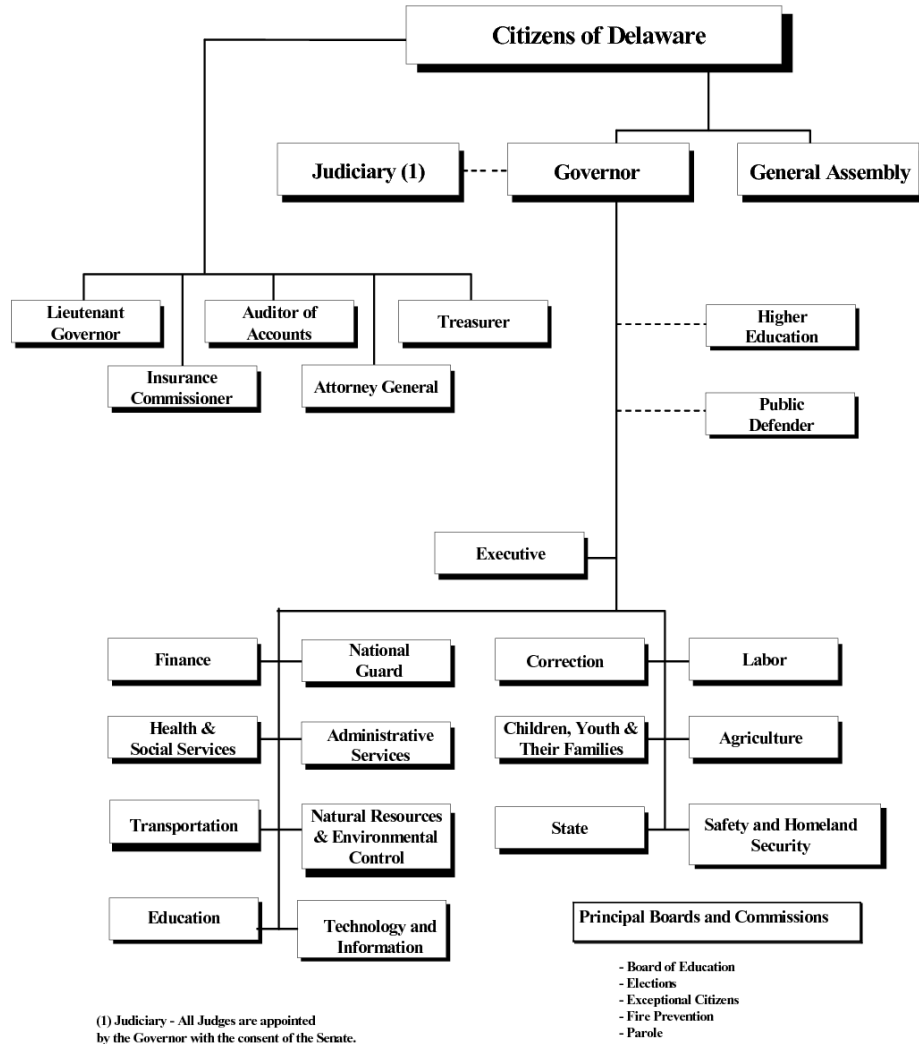
boomer generation and in-migration of retirees to Delaware. (Jacobson, 2005; Delaware State Treasurer's Office, 2008).

### **Structure of Delaware Government**

Delaware's State government is structured in accordance with its State Constitution that provides for the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government, with "all just authority...derived from the people, and established with their consent" (Delaware Constitution, 1897, pg. 1.) Figure 2 provides an organizational chart of State government.

Delaware's General Assembly is the primary legislative body for the State. This branch of State government is a bicameral legislature comprised of 41 members of the House of Representatives and 21 members in the Senate. (Delaware General Assembly, Retrieved April 6, 2011 from [www.legis.gov](http://www.legis.gov)). Delaware's legislators serve as part time officials. They typically are in session from January through June with a lengthy spring recess, during which time legislative committees meet.

**STATE OF DELAWARE ORGANIZATION CHART**



**Figure 2. Organization Chart of Delaware State Government.**  
 Source: Delaware Office of the Budget.

Delaware's judicial branch is comprised of several courts established under Article IV, Section 1 of the State Constitution. These include the Supreme Court, Superior Court, Court of Chancery, Family Court, Court of Common Pleas, Register's Court, Justices of the Peace Court, and other courts established by the General Assembly such as a local government's Alderman's Court. All judges are appointed for 12 year terms by the Governor of Delaware, with the consent of a majority of the members of the State Senate. The Court of Chancery is somewhat unique to Delaware. Its primary jurisdiction is over equity cases that often arise in corporate disputes related to actions such as corporate mergers and acquisitions. This Court allows corporations to do their business in Delaware with one court, rather than spread among numerous courts that have jurisdiction. It is complemented by Delaware's incorporation law and provides a venue for specialization of judges in corporate law contributing to what is considered an extremely business friendly condition in Delaware (Boyer and Ratledge, 2009)

As previously discussed, Delaware is divided into three unincorporated counties that have slightly different political structure and processes. In New Castle, voters elect a county executive who oversees the executive departments and a county council that serves as their legislative body. In Sussex, the members of the elective county council choose a county administrator, who supervises the executive departments of the county government. Kent operates under an elected levy court, a system that has its roots from colonial government structure. The Levy Court sets tax rates and runs the county according to regulations spelled out by the assembly. Most of Delaware's 57

municipalities elect a mayor and council. In 2002 Delaware had 19 public school districts and 260 special districts. Because of the state's small geographic size, local government in Delaware tends to be weaker than that in surrounding states, with the exception of land use and development approvals. Under Article II, Section 25 of the State Constitution, the Delaware General Assembly is authorized to enact laws under which county and municipal governments may adopt zoning ordinances and laws limiting land use. This has been done, and the General Assembly has granted most land use authority to the local level of government in Delaware. This has created a situation in Delaware where the State operates many programs that elsewhere are found at the local level such as road maintenance, police, environmental management, schools, and social programs that are directly impacted by land use decisions. This creates disconnect between land use development approvals and the financing of the services and infrastructure to support it.

### **Delaware's Social and Political Culture**

As referred to in the previous section on Delaware demographics, there are distinct social and political ideological differences between upstate and downstate residents. This cultural separation is often associated geographically with the areas north and south of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal. The northern area of the state is more urbanized, with more wealth, commercial activity, and industry. It is also more densely populated and associated with the greater Philadelphia area. The southern portion of the state is generally more rural, more agricultural, less wealthy and less

populated. Southern Delaware is also considerably more politically conservative than the northern portion of the State.

Boyer and Ratlege (2009) provide context to the politics in Delaware. They point out that “every state develops a ‘political culture’ that consists of norms and symbols of political engagement” (p. 15). They use three environmental policy areas to illustrate aspects of governance in Delaware and conclude that Delaware’s traditional conservatism is alive and well. They also found that Delaware’s government entities are in conflict over environmental issues which will ensure any changes will occur slowly, that the competition will force compromise, and that it is the State’s tradition that when an issue grows too contentious it will be assigned to a task force to deflect the pressure and come up with a new solution after the next election. They conclude that “there is rarely a rush to regulate in Delaware” and that this is unlikely to change without environmental crises (p.169).

Johnson & Pika (1993) took an in-depth look at interest group politics in Delaware, and also provide valuable insights into politics in the State. They found interest groups to have a moderate role in Delaware, but that public interest and social-issue groups were particularly weak or inactive. However, the study did not specifically evaluate environmental interest groups.

Delaware has a strong corporate history and a decidedly pro-business culture that can create conflict with environmental interests (Johnson & Pika, 2003; Peterson, 1999; Phelan & Pozen, 1973). The State’s political culture presents a unique set of challenges for natural resource conservation and environmental protection.

Environmental interest groups can be critical to ensuring that these issues are prominently considered and acted upon in the public interest and public trust. It is likely that this social and political context for advocacy influences both the structure of the Delaware environmental interest group community as well as the ways in which they influence policy and operate to overcome the obstacles.

Despite the many environmental issues and concerns in Delaware, the political culture of the State provides a challenging framework in which environmental organizations must operate. The State's political culture has been shaped by a combination of the personal nature of politics in a small state where most people know each other and by the evolution of the State's economy. These influences have led to a political culture defined as individualistic, which emphasizes the conception of democratic order as a marketplace. Describing this cultural attribute of Delaware, Boyer and Ratledge (2009) assert that "Political life within an individualistic political culture is based on a system of mutual obligations rooted in personal relationships" (P. 16). Delaware also has a legacy as the chemical and corporate capital of the world with a disproportionately high number of incorporated companies under the law of Delaware, many of which do little or none of their business in the State. (Boyer & Ratledge, 2009; Phelan & Pozen, 1973). At the same time, their corporate franchise and income taxes comprise about 28% of Delaware's general fund revenue sources (Delaware Department of Finance, 2008)

This culture creates a serious challenge to environmental advocacy, where ideas must compete in a marketplace of ideas that are often weighed against their potential

impact on the economy and are often presented by individuals with business ties and close personal relationships with public officials. When weighed against the economy, economic considerations usually trump environmental considerations in Delaware. Creating jobs and keeping the business community happy is of high priority (Boyer and Ratledge, 2009). This can at times cause added tension in the environmental interest group community that may be weary of public relations strategies used by businesses in a manner that is sometimes referred to as “greenwashing”. Greenwashing is a tactic used by business interests for damage control of poor environmental practices (Switzer, 1997). Despite some legitimate efforts to improve environmental practices that are also profitable, there is still significant suspicion in the environmental community.

### **Public Policy Making in Delaware: Transparency vs. Insiders Game**

In addition, Delaware’s small size makes policy making an insider’s game, with much of the debate occurring without broad public input. Citizens and interest groups are often unaware of, or intentionally isolated from, public policy decisions. In fact, Delaware’s legislature had completely exempted itself from the Freedom of Information Act until 2009, when several activist groups and media organizations successfully created enough public interest and pressure to arouse the public to support the efforts of legislators, such as Senator Karen Peterson, to pass a law changing this situation (Delaware State News, July 5, 2009). This effort was also aided by some notable changes in long-term incumbents of the Delaware General Assembly who had consistently opposed efforts to increase transparency. Several new Senators elected in

2008 helped shift the balance of power. All three new Senators had campaigned on open government leading to the modest improvements in transparency. This and other factors led to the introduction and passage of House Bill 1 to include the General Assembly under the Freedom of Information Act. The legislation:

allows the public to have access to meetings of the Delaware General Assembly except for caucuses. Additionally, the bill allows the public to have access to records of the Delaware General Assembly. The current exceptions that apply to public bodies and public records would apply to meetings and records of the Delaware General Assembly. (Retrieved on January 18, 2008 from [http://legis.delaware.gov /LISLIS145.nsf/vwlegislation/](http://legis.delaware.gov/LISLIS145.nsf/vwlegislation/)).

There are still significant limits to full transparency. The current law exempts political party caucus meetings, at which many of the policy decision are made behind closed doors leading to perfunctory votes during legislative sessions. In addition, the current President Pro Tempore Anthony Deluca determines what is posted for public view, such as selective posting of individual roll call votes in the Delaware Senate. Fortunately, the Delaware House of Representatives is much more transparent. They have historically brought bills up for a vote in committee, unlike the long history of the desk drawer veto in the committees of the Delaware Senate. The House also posts all votes on the web for the public to review.

Even with these modest improvements to transparency, politics in Delaware is still an insider's game, dominated by the State's political elite that often operate outside the public view. Without increased transparency, environmental interest groups will continue to be at a distinct disadvantage where insiders wield power and influence without public awareness or engagement.

## **Legislative Lobbying in Delaware**

Delaware's individualistic political culture is characterized by indirect public participation, where many citizens and politicians view policy actions as a job of professional politicians that have been delegated this authority by the public (Boyer and Ratledge, 2009). This can often present challenges to the acceptance of grassroots volunteers that make up much of the environmental advocacy community. Pika and Johnston (1993) identified several factors related to this issue that may affect the amount of influence of interest groups that must work within the context of the clubby atmosphere of personal relationships in Delaware's State Legislature. These include different categories of lobbyist that are often viewed differently by policy makers in Dover and the policy domain in which different interest groups exert different levels of power within the system. While lobbying activity in Delaware is not limited to those who register with the Public Integrity Commission, a review of those who are registered may provide insights into the influence of environmental lobbying groups within the larger framework of interest group advocacy in Delaware.

Delaware's small size makes personal relationship much more important; it is not only possible, but highly likely, that those involved in policy issues frequently interact socially. When combined with the low turnover of elected officials and lobbyist, the limited staff available to Delaware's part-time legislators and a political culture that is very pro-business and supportive of corporate interests, the policy process can be readily influenced by those seeking to influence public policy such as registered lobbyist.

Janet Johnson and Joseph Pika (2003), who studied lobbying in the State of Delaware, described the challenging situation created by Delaware's small group of political elites, low turn-over of elected officials and lobbyists, and commanding presence of corporate interests as being a clubby, old-boy politics that many call "the Delaware Way." (Johnson & Pika, 2003; Boyer and Ratledge, 2009). Within this framework of the Delaware Way, Johnson and Pika found that important public interest and social interest groups, including environmental organizations, were particularly weak (1993). Key policy influencing interest groups identified as of 1993 included the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce, Delaware Trial Lawyers Association, and the Delaware Teacher's Association (Johnson & Pika, 1993). They also found that three fourths of the legislators acknowledge receiving contributions from special interest groups, such as the key influence groups previously noted. They did not have any analysis of contributions from environmental groups in Delaware, as this was not a focus of their study.

### **Administrative Agency Lobbying**

For many of the same reasons that lobbyist can have significant influence on public policy in the legislature, the Executive Branch is also very influential and may be the most dominant influence on policy in Delaware. Delaware's part-time legislators will often depend on the Governor, the Governor's Staff, and Executive Branch appointees and high level state employees for technical information, research, and

advice on policy issues. As a result, interest groups increasingly lobby the Governor and the various offices of the Executive Branch. (Pika & Johnson, 1993).

Agency staffs have significant influence and ability to change a policy agenda. As such, those seeking to influence policy can significantly strengthen their influence if they can find allies in leadership positions with the agencies responsible for development and implementation of those public policies. Environmental interest groups, like all interest groups, can exert considerable influence if they are able to establish allies within these agencies on key issues (Baumgartner, 1998; Berry, et. al., 2001).

Delaware's environmental community has, at times, had political insiders among their ranks. For example, past elected officials or appointed officials may be involved with environmental groups, providing added insights into the interworking of government, as well as connections to those with influence. These former insiders can help overcome the marginal status that is often experienced by smaller environmental groups who lack the professional staff and expertise that builds confidence and credibility. However, more often, these officials end up as representatives of business interest or lobbyist that may not be motivated by environmental considerations, but by for-profit considerations. In this case, they often use their relationships with insiders and their expertise to further private interest. This can provide additional challenges due to past relationships and influence of these former insiders.

## **Influence of the Political Power Elite**

Delaware also has a limited number of individuals that make up its political elite. These individuals are attorneys, lobbyist, corporate leaders, former elected officials, and other special interest representatives that have a very high level of influence. In fact, it is possible that on selected issues, members of the State's political elite quietly exercise more influence in the environmental policy arena than the collective influence of the environmental organizations. For example, Michael Parkowski, an attorney with the law firm Parkowski, Guerke & Swayze, P.A. is one of Delaware's political elite involved with environmental issues. Parkowski started his career as a deputy director of enforcement of the Environmental Protection Agency, and then worked as a Deputy Attorney General (DAG) as general counsel to the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (George, 2010). While a DAG, he drafted numerous key environmental laws and regulations in effect today, such as the solid waste law that created the Delaware Solid Waste Authority and the Delaware Agricultural Lands Preservation Act. Today, in his private practice he serves as counsel for the Solid Waste Authority, often representing them against the Delaware Department of Natural Resources & Environmental Control. He also serves as counsel for Delaware's Farmland Preservation Foundation, administered by the Delaware Department of Agriculture. He handles cases involving agricultural land preservation on behalf of the State, as well as represents landowners on development issues. Parkowski has many strong government ties, serving on boards and representing numerous government agencies, often as an appointee of the Governor. He also has strong

environmental group ties. He serves as a Board Member of the Delaware Chapter of the Nature Conservancy (The Nature Conservancy, 2011). His role as one of the Delaware's political elite can serve to support or derail Delaware's environmental groups' efforts, depending on the context, the issue, and their relationship to an interest involving Mr. Parkowski. In an article published in the *Delaware Today* Magazine, Sam Waltz described the type of insider influence of Michael Parkowski.

Delaware has moved past much of the “clubby world” of its civic traditions, but that chubbiness is not as archaic as some believe. In the meritocracy that is Delaware's bench and bar, some, like Parkowski, are “more equal” than others. (*Delaware Today*, Nov. 2004).

In addition to Michael Parkowski, there are a number of other members of Delaware's political elite that have significant influence on environmental issues and policy in the State. Many are within the ranks of the State's registered lobbyist, such as William Wood, Bob Whetzel, David Swayze, Robert Byrd, and Gary Paterson. Several of these individuals are attorneys and all are long established professional lobbyist, such as William Wood and Robert Byrd, who in combination represent over 50 lobbying clients. Robert Byrd is also a former member of the Delaware legislature. David Swayze is a partner in the law firm Parkowski, Guerke & Swayze, P.A., who works alongside Michael Parkowski as a partner in the firm. Swayze was of former Chief of Staff for Governor Pete DuPont and has over 30 lobbying clients in Delaware. Bob Whetzel is an attorney with Richards, Layton, and Finger who often works on environmental issues, particularly with contaminated lands and redevelopment. Gary Patterson is a former assistant to U.S. Senator Bill Roth and a lobbyist for the American

Petroleum Institute. Patterson's son served as a staff person under former Governor Ruth Ann Minner, and now is part of the staff for Governor Jack Markell.

Personal relationships and access is critical to influence in Delaware. Members of the political elite know who in Delaware's power structure to contact and they have access to them. Few, if any, members of Delaware's environmental interest groups exhibit influence approaching the level of these and other members of the State's political elite.

While many of the lobbyists on the list of Delaware's political elite are paid to spend their time at legislative hall and to do work for legislators to further their clients' interest, the environmental groups largely depend on volunteers and citizens as lobbyist. It is likely that these individuals have less influence than paid professional lobbyist.

## **Chapter 4**

### **RESEARCH METHODS AND DESIGN**

This analysis employs both qualitative and quantitative methods. It builds upon previously conducted studies to design a series of data collection and analysis to understand environmental interest groups working to influence policy at the State level of government. These efforts begin with the development of the sample population which is a list of the environmental organizations active in Delaware. I then obtain existing IRS data and Delaware Public Integrity Commission lobbying data and analyzed this information to address several of the research questions about the organizational structure, capacity and approaches used by this group of organizations to influence public policy in Delaware. This analysis is then strengthened by the collection of new survey data specific to the organizations confirmed as having activity in Delaware.

This research seeks to develop a comprehensive census of the environmental organizations that make up Delaware's environmental interest group, characterize this group, develop an understanding of the larger framework in which it must operate, and outline some of the tactics used to influence environmental programs and policy in the State. The organizations included in this study are intended to be inclusive of the majority of those groups working to strengthen and improve environmental programs or

policy in Delaware as a primary activity of their organizations. It is important to note that there are many other groups that influence environmental policy that were beyond the scope of this study. For example, there are many groups that are episodically involved, such as homeowner organizations, churches, business groups or organizations, and environmental opposition groups. There is also a broad range of community groups that are likely involved with related issues at the local or even neighborhood scale. Understanding the role of these groups as part of the political influence system in Delaware is beyond the scope of this research which will focus on the more mainstream environmental interest organizations.

### **Development of Sample Population of Environmental Organizations**

First, this research compiled a comprehensive list of environmental organizations in Delaware. To do this, I utilized numerous national directories, web searches, rosters of environmental organizations attending or cosponsoring various environmental events, State of Delaware Public Integrity Commission lobbying registration lists, and consultation with environmental organization representatives active in the State of Delaware.

The major criteria for constructing the sampling frame or population are 1) location; the group has a Delaware mailing address and/or documentation of activity in the State of Delaware, 2) organizational structure, which includes subunits or chapters of organizations, 3) values; the actions are for public benefits in contrast to private interest claims such as those conducted by for profit entities, 4) non-state actors or non-

government organizations, 5) have language in their mission or a specific project task that addresses a natural resource conservation or environmental protection objective in Delaware, or 6) have a lobbyist registered with the Delaware Public Integrity Commission.

Using the criteria outlined above, the following sources of information were considered in determining whether an organizations are part of Delaware's environmental interest group:

- Mission Statement of organization.
- IRS 990 Tax Form
- Listed as having a registered lobbyist with the Delaware Public Integrity Commission
- Listed as an Organization in the Guidestar database (<http://www2.guidestar.org/>)
- Listed as an Organization in the National Center for Charitable Statistics database (<http://nccs.urban.org>)
- Identified as an active Delaware environmental interest organization by two or more others Delaware environmental interest organizations.
- Organization information from web sites
- Review of news and media articles related to environmental issues.

### **Review of Existing Data and Documentation on Environmental Organizations**

For each organization, a search was conducted using the national database available from both Guidestar and the National Center for Charitable Statistic. These were searched to identify any environmental or conservation organizations in their database active in Delaware. For those with an IRS 990 form on file, a review of this

form was also conducted to collect additional information about the organization including home address, contact information, web address, mission statement, revenue, expenses, assets, staffing, and lobbying activity and expenditures.

A web search was conducted for each organization. If a site was listed on the IRS form 990 or located through a Google search, the site was visited on the internet, and information collected regarding contact information, organization mission, and any activities related to advocacy activities or lobbying activities.

### **Review of Delaware Lobbyist Data and Records**

A search of the list of lobbyists registered for organizations with the Delaware Public Integrity Commission was conducted to identify those environmental organizations with lobbyist in Delaware.

Records on lobbying available from the Delaware Public Integrity Commission were obtained, reviewed, and analyzed. This included the records of all registered lobbyist as of February 2010. The list of lobbyist was coded as being one of the following types based on those previously defined by Ronald Hrebenar (2003), with some minor modifications.

**Table 2. Type coding and description used for lobbyist.**

<b>Lobbyist Type</b>	<b>Description</b>
Contract Lobbyist	Hired as a contractor for a fee for the specific purpose of lobbying. They may have more than one client.
In-house Lobbyist	Employees of a business, organization, or association that lobby as part of their job.
Citizen or Volunteer Lobbyist	People who lobby on ad hoc and unpaid basis representing a public interest.
Others	Included those lobbyists that could not be placed in one of the defined categories.

The list of lobbyists was also coded by lobbying class. Lobbying class is based on the primary interest that each lobbyist represents. For lobbyists with numerous interests, they were coded according to the interest of the majority of those they represent. The classes included those that primarily represent corporate or business interests, environmental interests, education or academic interest exclusive of teachers unions, labor or union interests, other public benefit or social welfare interests, and a classification for all others.

## **Survey of Delaware Environmental Organizations**

As part of this study a survey was conducted of environmental or conservation organizations identified as having activity in Delaware. All organizations identified as meeting the previously described sampling frame criteria were surveyed. The survey was administered on-line to all organizations for which contact information was found and verified. Prior to e-mailing the link to the online survey, a representative was contacted by telephone or e-mail to briefly explain the research project and to determine if they were the appropriate person to complete the survey on behalf of the organization. The criterion required that the survey recipient be an active member or officer of the organization and had adequate knowledge of the organization to complete the survey. The survey was administered through Survey Monkey<sup>TM</sup>, a web based tool for the creation of online surveys (Survey monkey. 2010, June 21).

The survey was conducted to provide information about environmental organizations and the activities they carry out to influence environmental policy in the State of Delaware and included three thematic sections. These were a general background information section, an interaction with government agencies section, and an organizational capacity section (see Appendices A & B). The survey utilized 32 questions and took approximately 20 minutes to complete. All information collected was kept confidential in accordance with the human subjects' protocol approved by the University of Delaware Research Office.

The first section of the survey collected general background information about the organizations such as the name, date of establishment, type of IRS designation

if any, who from the organization was completing the survey, membership information, the geographic extent of the organization's activities, and a list of issues or topics the organizations views as a priority.

Section two surveyed the organizations perception of their interactions with government. This includes information collection about the types of interactions with government (e.g. testifying, lobbying, letter writing, education, research report submissions). It also surveyed the perceptions of the organizations related to the receptiveness of government officials to their efforts and the effectiveness of their effort. Additionally it collected information related to the level of understanding of permissible lobbying and advocacy activities by nonprofit organizations under the IRS code.

The final section of the survey collected information about the organizations capacity. This included questions about staffing, volunteers, amount of collaboration with other organizations, and the amount of resources specifically dedicated to advocacy.

## **Chapter 5**

### **ANALYSIS**

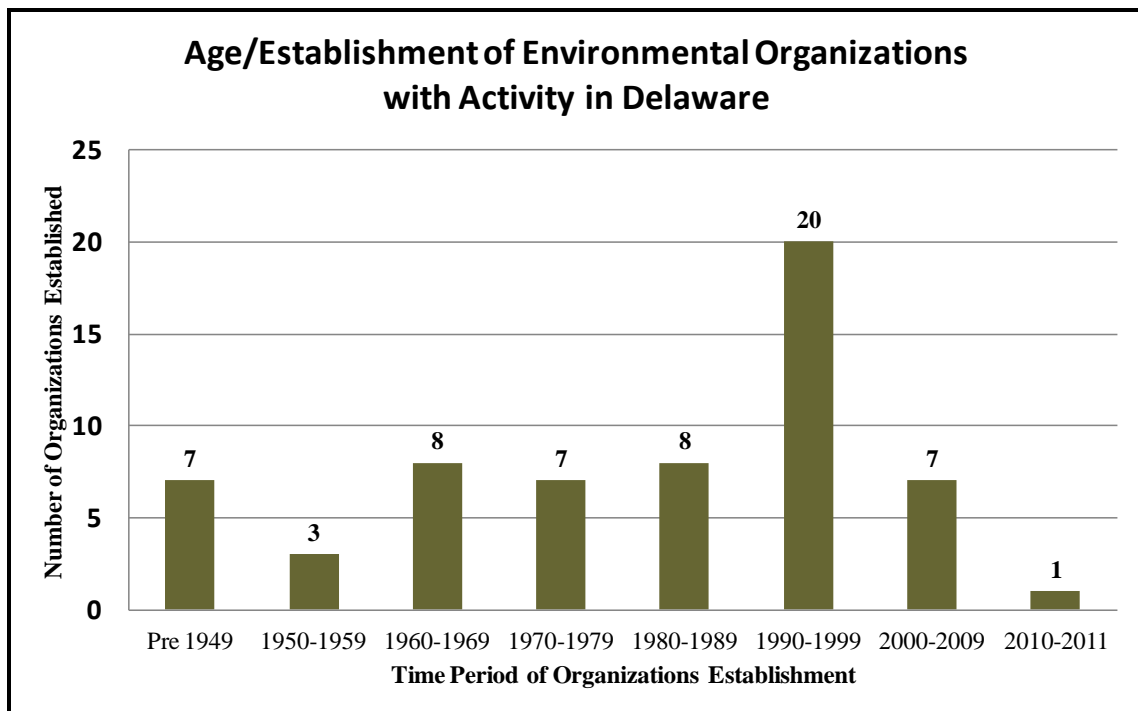
As part of this study, 72 environmental and natural resource interest organizations that met the screening criteria were identified, verified to exist, and were sent a survey. These organizations are listed in Appendix A. The survey had an 84.7 % ( $n=62$ ) response rate. Of these respondents, a small subgroup did not answer all questions ( $n=4$ ). Approximately 95% of the respondents completed the full survey ( $n=58$ ).

These organizations provide the foundation of the environmental and natural resource interest group in Delaware. They exhibit a broad diversity in the issues of concern, geographic areas of focus, composition of staff and membership, size of budgets, and involvement in advocacy efforts. In this chapter, I will first summarize those data that characterizes Delaware's environmental interest group community and some of the social and political context of their development in recent decades. Then I will summarize data describing their operational capacities, areas of interest, level of engagement in environmental policy advocacy, and the tactics used.

## **Age and Establishment of Environmental Interest Organizations Working in Delaware**

Environmental organizations that have activity and involvement with issues in Delaware have been in existence for widely varying time frames. The median age of the organizations surveyed is 22 years. Organizations range in their years of existence from less than one year to 198 years, although it is unlikely that the oldest organizations were active in Delaware until the last several decades. For example, the Sierra Club was established in 1892; however, the organization's early efforts were largely restricted to California until after World War II, when the Sierra Club Board of Directors voted to allow the first chapter outside of California to be established (Bosso, 2005). The Sierra Club experienced growth in chapters and membership during the 1960's and 1970s, which likely included the Delaware Chapter. Of the groups active in Delaware, 5 were state or local chapters of national organizations. These include the Conservation Fund, Ducks Unlimited, Audubon Society, the Nature Conservancy, and the Sierra Club. These groups only have Internal Revenue Service Form 990s at the national level, but were asked to complete the survey using their local data. The organizations and their reported establishment dates are listed in Appendix A as shown in Figure 3, the vast majority of the organizations active in Delaware today were established since 1960. In fact 84% ( $n=51$ ) of the organizations completing the survey were established since this time, with only 16 % ( $n=10$ ) from the pre-1960 A. era. A steady growth occurred at the rate of about 7-8 new environmental organization per decade from 1960 through 2010, with the exception of the 1990s which experienced a much higher number of new

group establishment. During this decade, 38 % ( $n=20$ ) of the environmental organizations currently active in Delaware were founded. There are a number of potential explanations for this high growth rate that may provide important insights into the opportunities and constraints on organizational structure and expansion of the broader community of environmental organizations operating in the State.



**Figure 3. Number Of Environmental Organizations Established In Delaware By Time Periods .**

Putman (2000) observed a similar explosive growth in national environmental organizations in the 1980s which he attributed to the “threat to environmental gains posed by the Reagan Administration” (p. 155). One possible explanation for the high

growth of environmental organizations in Delaware during the 1990s is that the State experienced a lagging response to this national trend, taking nearly a decade to reach the environmental interest community in Delaware.

An alternative explanation may be related to a decline in the corporate influence and dominance of the DuPont Company in political and policy activity in Delaware. This dominance was described in detail in a publication titled “The Nader Report, The Company State” by Phelan and Pozen (1971). By the 1990s, The DuPont Company had begun its decline in Delaware. In recent decades, the Company has reduced its employment in the state by about two-thirds from over 25,000 employees to about 8,000 as it became more a global than local company, and less of a corporate fixture that encouraged public involvement and pursuit of political office by its employees (Cohen, 2006). This reduced corporate dominance of the State by the world’s largest chemical corporation may have reduced the constraints on some environmental policies and efforts by interest groups that were seen as threatening the Company’s bottom line.

Perhaps the most plausible explanation, which does not have to be mutually exclusive of the two explanations described above, is one of political opportunity at the State level. This opportunity was likely created by elected officials in Delaware at this time that combined with a particularly energized group of environmental entrepreneurs of the era. In December of 1986, Governor Michael Castle issued Executive Order 34 that declared and ordered the creation of the Administration’s Delaware Environmental Legacy Program. The executive order instructed all agency heads to use “a broadly inclusive group of representatives of the environmental community, business

community, industrial community, agricultural community, academic community and state and local government” to identify critical environmental issues and problems the State would face and to develop a long range strategy to preserve the quality of the environment (Delaware’s Environmental Legacy Program, 1988, pp. 170-171). In doing so, the highest level of State government was ordered to work not only with business interests, but also specifically with environmental groups. This gave these groups a defined opportunity to participate and be heard, energizing this community to take advantage of the opportunity.

In 1990, Cabinet Secretary Edwin (“Toby”) Clark of the Delaware Department of Natural Resources & Environmental Control and key leaders of environmental organizations were fully engaged in environmental issues in an open and collaborative manner. Secretary Clark had also made it clear that he had the support of Governor Michael Castle for this approach as a way to implement the Governor’s recently completed *Delaware’s Environmental Legacy Report*. This unprecedented high level of access and cooperation sent a message that government leaders and citizen activists both believed these groups were necessary, contributing to the growth of organizations. This was a year that experienced what has been described as the most important and productive legislative session in environmental history in Delaware, with 30 environmental bills being passed (Delaware Conservationist, 1990). These included two land protection bills, a pollution prevention act, the sediment and stormwater act, a recycling act, and the state superfund bill. In his opening letter published in the Delaware Conservationist, Secretary Edwin (“Toby”) Clark closed by stating:

A year ago I made a commitment to the people of Delaware to use the cooperative, open approach to find solutions to the State's environmental problems. This last legislative session has demonstrated how successful that approach can be. The Department will continue to use this approach, for only by working together can we accomplish the goal of protecting Delaware's valuable environment, not only for ourselves, but for the future as well (Clark, 1990, Summer, p. 2).

Clark's approach was in many ways a significant departure from the insider game known as the Delaware Way. This openness, inclusion, and sincerity were inspirational to many in the environmental community. The approach also set the tone and crept into the organizational culture of the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control. Not only the Secretary but many staff worked more openly and cooperatively with outside interest groups. In fact, DNREC was instrumental in establishing many of the organizations that emerged in this era, including the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary, the Center for the Inland Bays, and numerous friends groups (Crofts, M., Personal Communication, March 2011).

Clark was also working to implement the recommendations of Governor Castle's Environmental Legacy. This report provided clear policy guidance and support for many actions from the Governor's Office (Delaware's Environmental Legacy Program, 1988). It also provided an agenda for environmental groups to be vigilant watchdogs over, setting the stage for common interest of the Administration and many of the environmental groups.

Clark established a standing monthly meeting with the environmentalists, providing continuous direct access to him on key environmental issues. These meetings were used to discuss the pressing environmental concerns, the Department's position and plans, and the desires of the environmental community. Clark listened and welcomed open debate on issues during these meetings that were at times rather contentious. This often led to agreements and compromise on key issues, resulting in better collaborations on public policy initiatives. These meetings consisted of a fair and even exchange of views between the Cabinet Secretary and citizen activists.

Experienced advocates with tenure were there to work on the policy issues as well as to mentor new advocates. They included active environmental opinion drivers such as Lorraine Fleming from the Delaware Nature Society, Grace Pierce Beck from the Delaware Audubon Society, Til Purnell from the Inland Bays area of Sussex County, Don Sharp from the United Auto Workers, Dorothy Miller who founded the Coalition of Natural Stream Valleys, Lynne Frink of Tristate Bird Rescue and Research, and Dot Dempsey of Cheswold among many others.

One long term advocate active in this era, summed up the situation as follows:

The '90s were a very active decade for broad awareness and action on environmental issues, particularly the land use connection. Fresh from Gov. Castle's Delaware Environmental Legacy Program the citizenry broadly was charged up to do something about open space acquisition and farmland preservation, along with the less noted protection of species and their habitats. A large coalition of groups that included such unlikely members as knitting clubs, in fact, all manner of women's (and men's clubs) became activists when the Land Protection Act and Farmland Preservation Act were before the General Assembly. The settling of the "escheat funds/abandoned securities" law suit at the beginning of Carper's first term opened the door for the formation of the larger Open Space,

Parks & Farmland Preservation Coalition. Groups were forming right and left--mainly not the 501(c)(3)-recognized types but political forces nevertheless. Even some of the ad hoc groups probably had registered lobbyists; and a variety of labor unions pitched in. After the \$95M for environmental purposes from the settlement's initial windfall (dubbed 21st Century Fund) had been used a large push was begun for a revenue stream for the two preservation programs, which carried into the first decade of this century. (L. Fleming, personal communication, January 17, 2011).

In short, it appears that the context and political opportunity of the time matter a great deal. Bosso (2005) attributed the growth spurt of national organizations in the 1960s to the expansionary context of more political supporters, more avenues for access, and more government policies to promote and defend. This enlarges the carrying capacity of the environmental community and allows it to grow larger simply because it can. There are many more niches and issues to serve. This appears to have also been the case at the smaller geographic scale of Delaware in the 1990s.

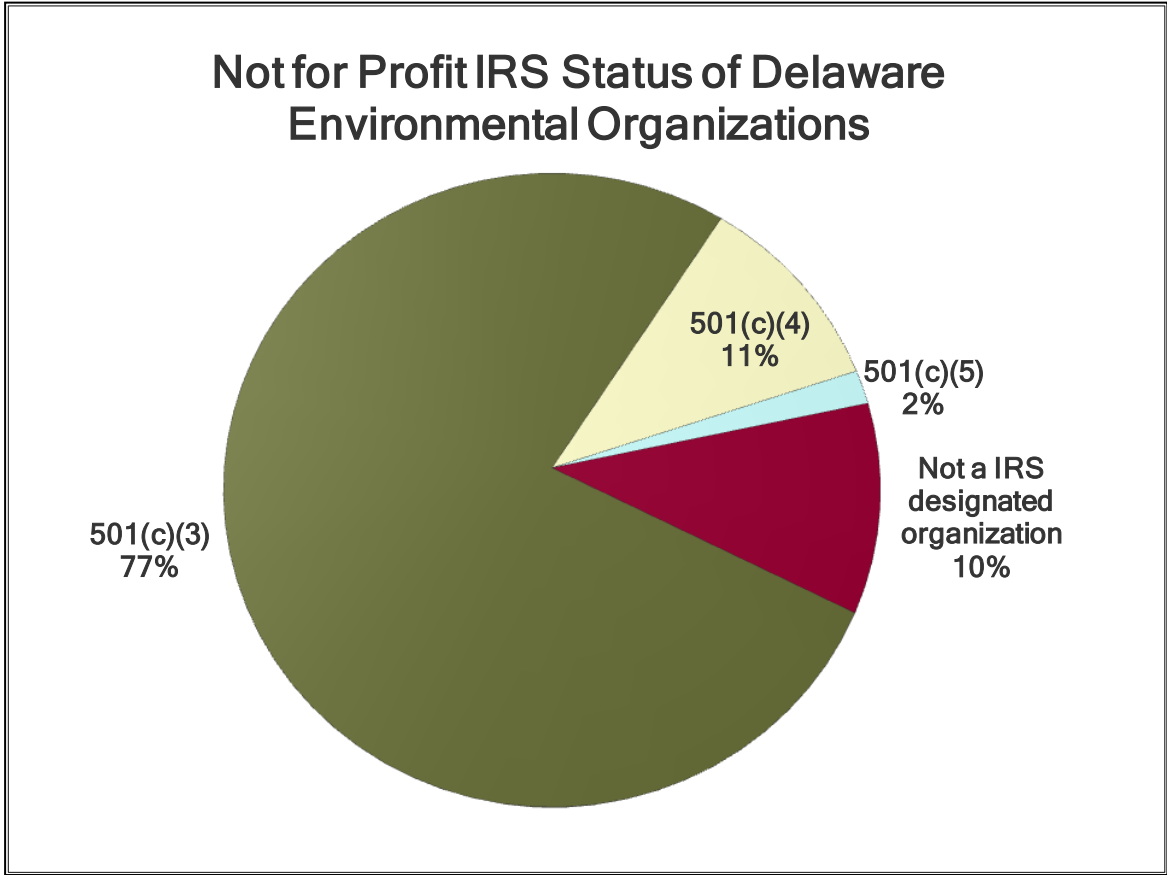
### **Environmental Interest Group Organizational Capacity**

Delaware's formal environmental interest group community does have a substantial base of resources. These include financial resources, membership, volunteers, and staffing. They are also geographically distributed throughout the state and have groups working in the broader regional and national arena that can provide needed context and outside insights. In the sections that follow, I will summarize those data and findings that describe many of the key resources and capacities of the collective group of organizations that make up the environmental interest group in Delaware.

## **Formal and Informal Organizational Structure**

The environmental interest groups in Delaware are comprised of both formal and informal organizations. This may have some impact on their capacity in various respects, such as whether they are able to accept charitable contributions as part of fund raising efforts, the type and extent of lobbying they may perform, and other implications such as credibility or formal recognition by government agencies they seek to influence.

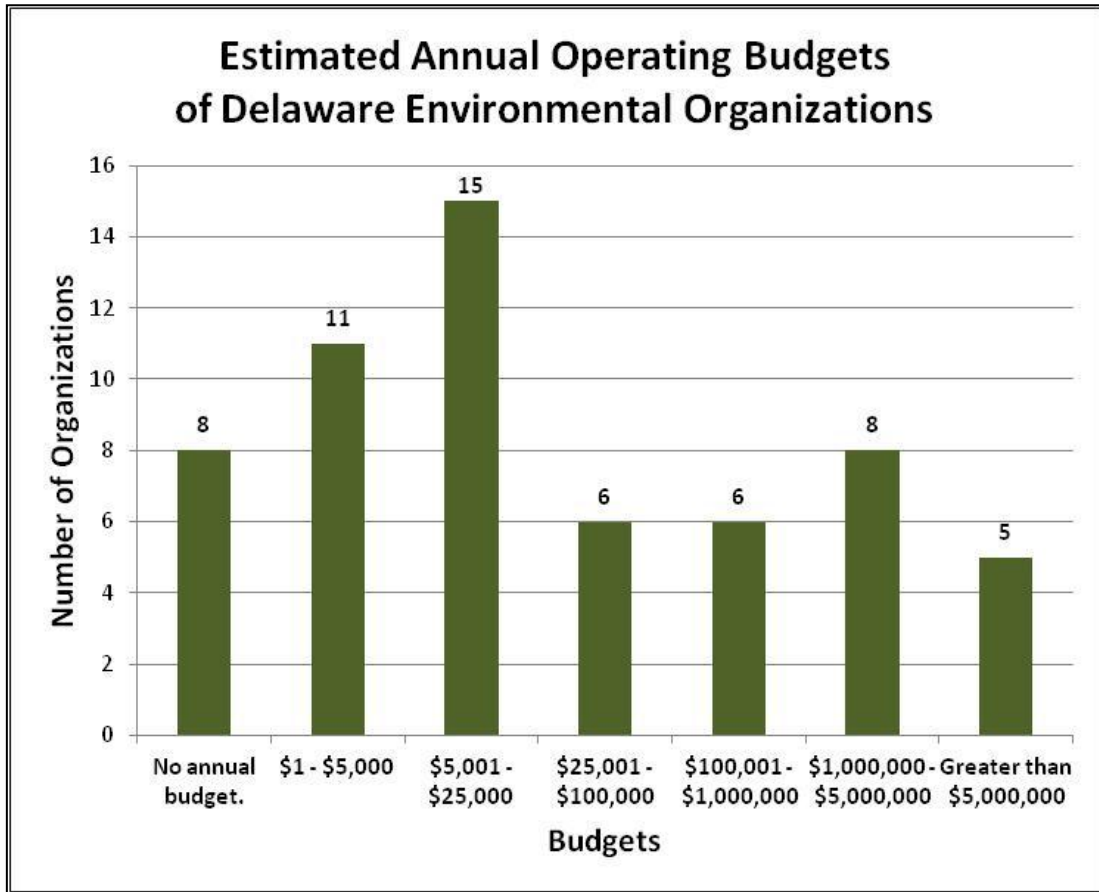
Delaware environmental interest groups are dominated by organizations with official Internal Revenue Service (IRS) nonprofit status under Section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code. The vast majority of organizations are 501(c)(3) organizations, otherwise known as charitable organizations that are eligible to collect tax deductible contributions from donors. As shown in Figure 4, this group comprises 77% of the community. Eleven percent is 501(c)(4), tax exempt social welfare organizations. These groups are typically civic organizations, but also include the Sierra Club and the League of Women Voters. IRS 501(c)(4) groups have very few restrictions on advocacy and lobbying. The group also includes several nonprofits designated as 501(c)(5), which is a designation for horticultural or agriculture. Finally, approximately 10% of the groups do not have any formal IRS status.



**Figure 4.** Summary of the formal United States Internal Revenue Service (IRS) not for profit designation and type of designation under Section 501(c) of the IRS Code (26 U.S.C. § 501(c)).

### Operating Budgets and Revenues

Environmental organizations with activity in Delaware reported widely varying budgets in their responses to the survey of organizations. The distribution of budget ranges is depicted in Figure 5.



**Figure 5. Number of Delaware’s environmental organizations with various estimated ranges of annual operating budgets.**

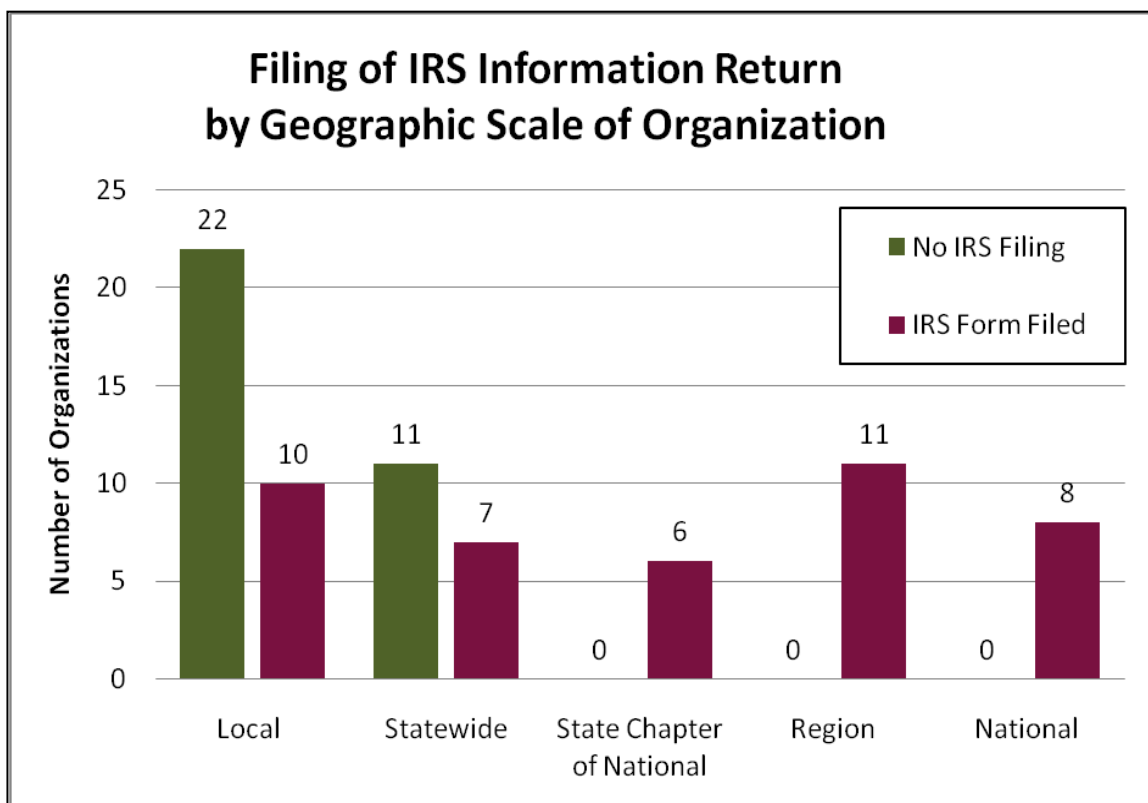
In aggregate, this provides a range of collective operating budget funds environmental organizations with some documented activity in Delaware from \$33,825,032 to over \$72,030,000 based on data from the IRS Form 990s. However, these numbers are highly skewed by the size of large national organizations and regional organizations that have either some smaller scale efforts in Delaware, a state chapter that expends a small fraction of the overall national budget in Delaware, or

broader regional activities that include Delaware. As such, only a small portion of their resources are expended in Delaware.

It should be noted that while the larger organizations may not expend a significant portion of their budget in Delaware, they do demonstrate a significant presence of large well-established organizations that can provide long-term stability, consistency, and bench strength to Delaware's environmental interest groups, especially on key high visibility environmental issues.

We can also gain important insights about the organizations working at various geographic scales and their capacity using IRS Form 990 tax reporting records. As seen in Figure 6, we compare the number of organizations that did or did not file a Form 990 in recent years and group them by the geographic scope of their activities. Those data indicate that the local organizations have much more limited funding available for their operations. Only 58 % ( $n=42$ ) of the environmental groups confirmed as being involved with environmental activity in Delaware filed form 990s. In fact, 57 % ( $n=43$ ) have annual budgets below \$ 25,000. Eight organizations reported having no annual budget.

All of the remaining 41 % ( $n=30$ ) that did not file a Form 990 were either state or local environmental organizations that presumably were not required to file due to budgets below the requirement threshold for filing. Prior to 2008, IRS filing was not required by organizations with revenue below \$25,000.



**Figure 6. Number of organizations filing IRS Form 990 information by geographic scale of organization showing the disproportional number of State and local organizations that do not file.**

Of those filing Form 990s, the median annual revenue reported by groupings based on their geographic area of operations is summarized in Table 3. However, it should be noted that those groups listed as State Chapters of National Organizations only report data at the national level, essentially making their 990 data represent the collective national organization. This data shows the enormous size of the national groups, including the size of the national organizations with a local or state chapter in Delaware, but does not allow the local chapter funds to be identified. We must rely on the data reported in the survey to make these estimates.

**Table 3. Median revenue of environmental organizations working in Delaware grouped by the geographic scale of their activities. This shows how large and financially stable organizations are active in Delaware, although the majority of their resources are expended outside the State.**

Organization Type	Median	Std. Deviation	Sum	Minimum	Maximum
Local	\$81,888	\$265,848	\$1,802,506	\$0	\$851,175
Statewide	\$115,949	\$898,962	\$4,148,310	\$0	\$2,132,051
Region	\$1,234,629	\$6,856,218	\$44,344,493	\$0	\$20,912,784
National	\$9,469,770	\$20,245,930	\$127,365,261	\$0	\$58,813,014
State Chapter of National	\$99,052,228	\$78,774,148	\$555,508,063	\$1,398,742	\$198,767,770

It is clear from the median revenues reported and a review of the standard deviation that the fiscal resources are skewed by a few very large organizations who expend most resources outside of the State of Delaware. However, it is reasonable to assume that most of the \$5.95 Million of reported revenue from the statewide and local organizations, a modest proportion of the \$44.34 million reported for regional groups, and a very small fraction of the \$687.8 million reported for the National organizations is expended in Delaware. By comparing the reported budgets of several of the state chapters of the national organizations that reported budget ranges in the survey for local expenditures, we attempted to adjust the revenue amounts. This provides evidence of a substantial base of fiscal resources for environmental activities in Delaware that is likely in the range of \$8 million to \$10 million annually.

### **Sources of Total Operating Revenue**

As a whole, Delaware’s environmental organizations reported a balanced mix of revenue sources for their total operating budgets with membership dues, contributions from individual donors, and fundraising events being the most prominent revenue generators. Several organizations reported revenue from foundations, endowments and

interest. However, these revenue sources were not prevalent. In most cases, the revenues were from short term sources that require considerable effort to sustain from year to year. Significant time and effort may be required for fund raising to maintain the operating budgets of these organizations. Berry (2009) indicated that overall budgets or staff size may be a crude indication of the groups resources since they may spend a great deal on fundraising. Based on the reported revenue types, this may be applicable to the evaluation of Delaware organizations.

A comparison was also made to identify the sources of revenue for national scale organizations compared to local, statewide and regional organizations. As previously discussed, it is the organizations working at the smaller geographic scale that are more likely to expend a significant portion of their budget in Delaware. Table 4 provides a summary of these two groupings of organizations and the types of revenue generators they use. Membership dues, individual donors and the use of fundraising events were similar for both groups. The prevalence of government income, usually grants, was about 22% higher for national organizations than those working at the local, state or regional scale. Corporate contributions were also slightly higher for the national organizations who reported them as revenue about 12% more often. In addition, the national groups reported using fee for services more often, with about a 24% higher rate. This is most likely related to the higher level of capacity for grant writing, soliciting corporate sponsors, and providing services by the larger national groups.

**Table 4. Comparison of Organization Revenue Types with groupings of organizations working at local, statewide, regional and at the national scale.**

Type of Revenue	Geographic Grouping			
	Percent of Local, Statewide & Regional Orgs. (n=49)	Percent of National Orgs. (n=12)	Number of Local, Statewide, & Regional Orgs. (n=49)	Number of National Orgs. (n=12)
<b>Membership Dues</b>	82%	83%	40	10
<b>Individual Donors</b>	73%	67%	36	8
<b>Government Income</b>	53%	75%	26	9
<b>Corporate Contributions</b>	55%	67%	27	8
<b>Services Provided</b>	43%	67%	21	8
<b>Fundraising Events</b>	63%	67%	31	8
<b>Other Income</b>	39%	42%	19	5

**Professional Staff, Volunteers, and Membership**

Delaware environmental organizations exhibit a diversity of human resource capacity and support. This includes a core of professional staff with varying expertise, a considerable base of volunteers, and a sizeable number of members in the organizations.

Those data for each of these human resource metrics of organizational capacity are described in the following sections.

### Professional Staff

Fifty-nine percent of Delaware’s environmental organizations reported that they do not have any paid staff. They are all-volunteer organizations. Of the 41% that do have paid staff, 11 organizations report over 10 paid staff members. The number of organizations reporting various ranges of paid staff is summarized in Figure 7.

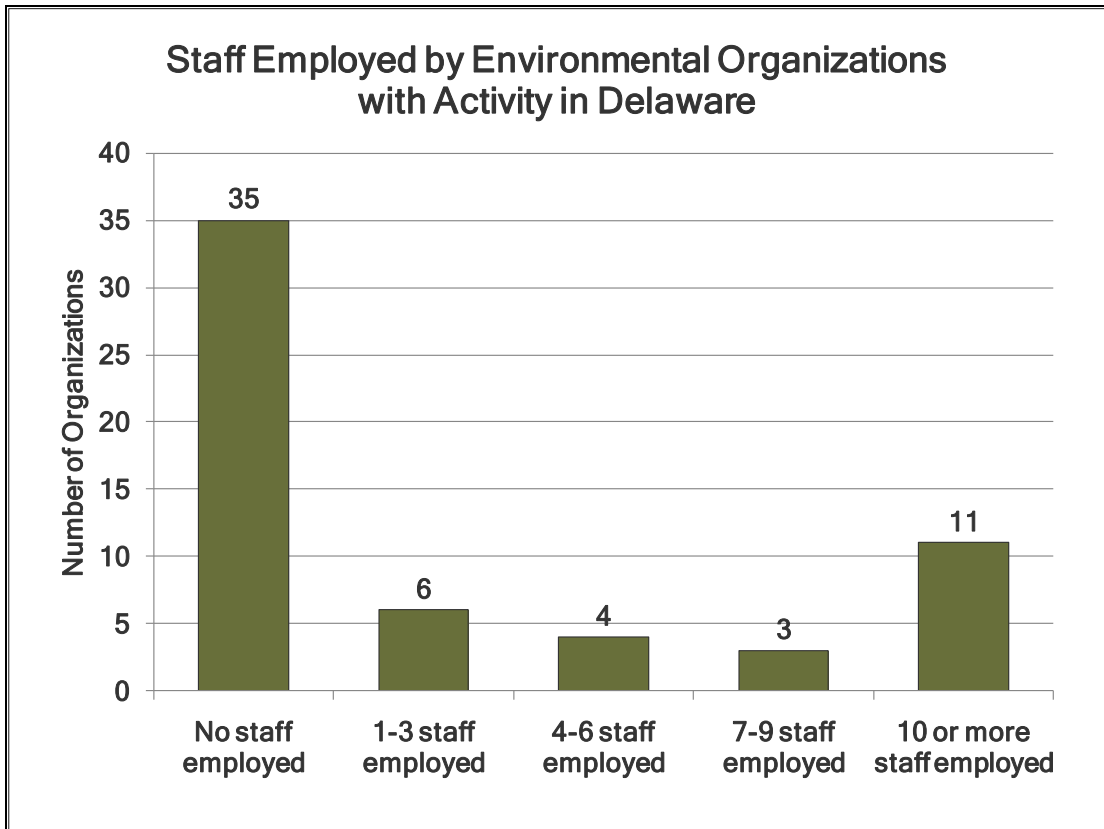


Figure 7. Summary of number of Delaware’s environmental organizations with various ranges of paid professional staff.

The subset of organization with paid staff demonstrated a wide diversity of professional capacity and expertise including executives, managers, development staff, scientists, educators, government relations, attorneys, and support staff. This subgroup with staff reported a total of 115 paid staff positions in the categories depicted in Table Five.

**Table 5. Summary of the number of staff positions reported by Delaware environmental organizations.**

**Summary of Staff Positions Reported by Delaware Environmental Organization**

<b>Paid Staff Positions</b>	<b>Number of Positions</b>
Executive Director	18
Support Staff	17
Development/Fundraising Staff	13
Scientist	10
Policy Staff	10
Volunteer Coordinator	10
Education Staff	9
Government Relations Staff	7
Associate Director	6
Lobbyist	1
Other *	14

\* Includes Program and Project Directors & Managers, Planners, Campaign Directors, Attorney, Administrative Staff, Web Master, Newsletter Editor, and Contractual Staff

While local and statewide organizations comprise about 69% of Delaware’s environmental interest groups and employ about 30% of the paid professional staff, regional organizations comprise about 12% of the groups, while employing about 33%

of the staff. National groups comprise about 18% of the groups while employing 36% of the professional staff.

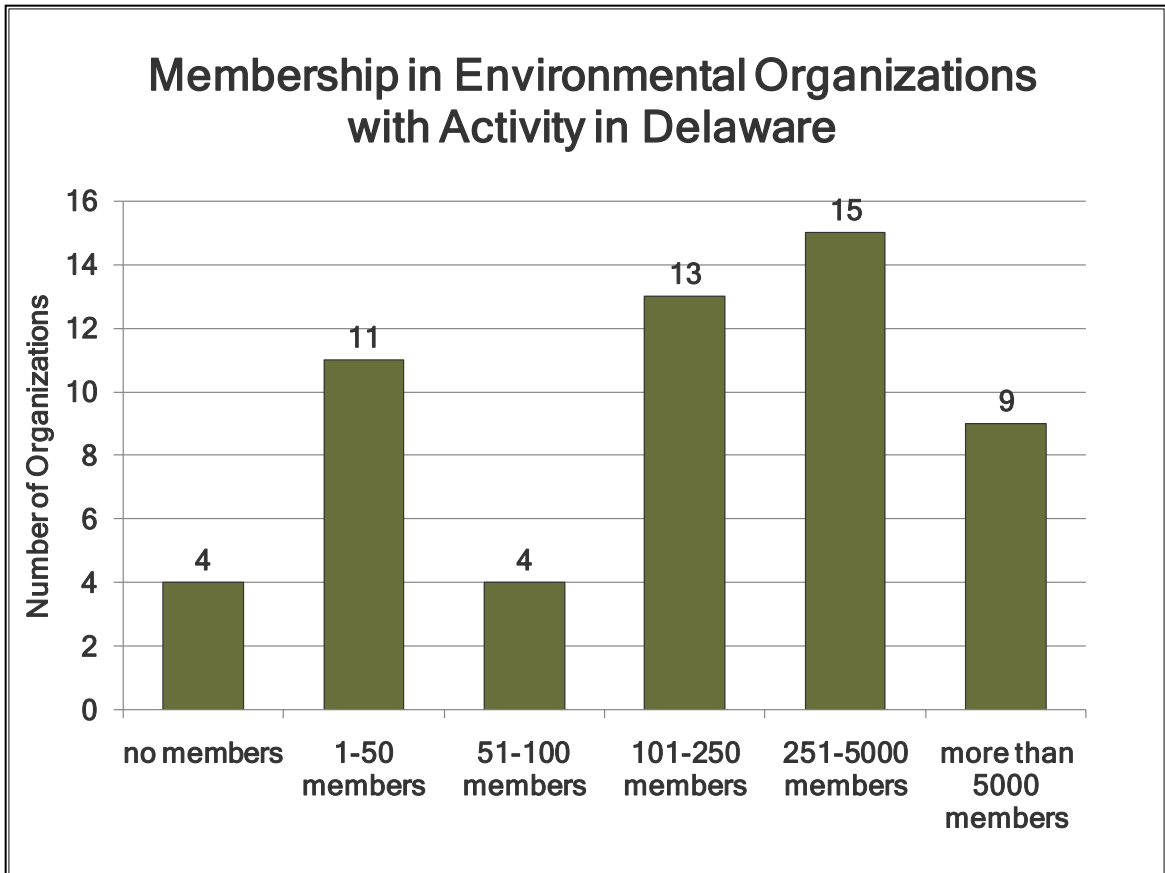
The prevalence of organizations with no staff is skewed heavily toward the state and local organizations. All of the organizations with no paid staff are state, local, or state chapter organizations. National and regional organizations generally have the higher numbers of professional staff.

### **Membership Size**

The vast majority of the environmental organizations operating in Delaware maintain memberships. Figure 8 compares the number of organizations with various membership size ranges. Based on this information, total membership estimates for environmental groups active in Delaware have been calculated to range from 50,278 to more than 124,200. This is a wide number based on estimates from the high and low reporting ranges in the survey choices. Unfortunately, the multiple choice survey questions with ranges did not provide data for a more accurate estimate. Also, this data does not account for multiple memberships of the same person in numerous organizations.

Differences in the size of memberships are assumed to be primarily attributed to the geographic scale of operation and level of marketing. Those data do not discern whether these are primarily mail memberships that simply send in a check, or active members that participate in organization activities and events. It is expected that at the local level, higher percentages of members would be active in the organizations,

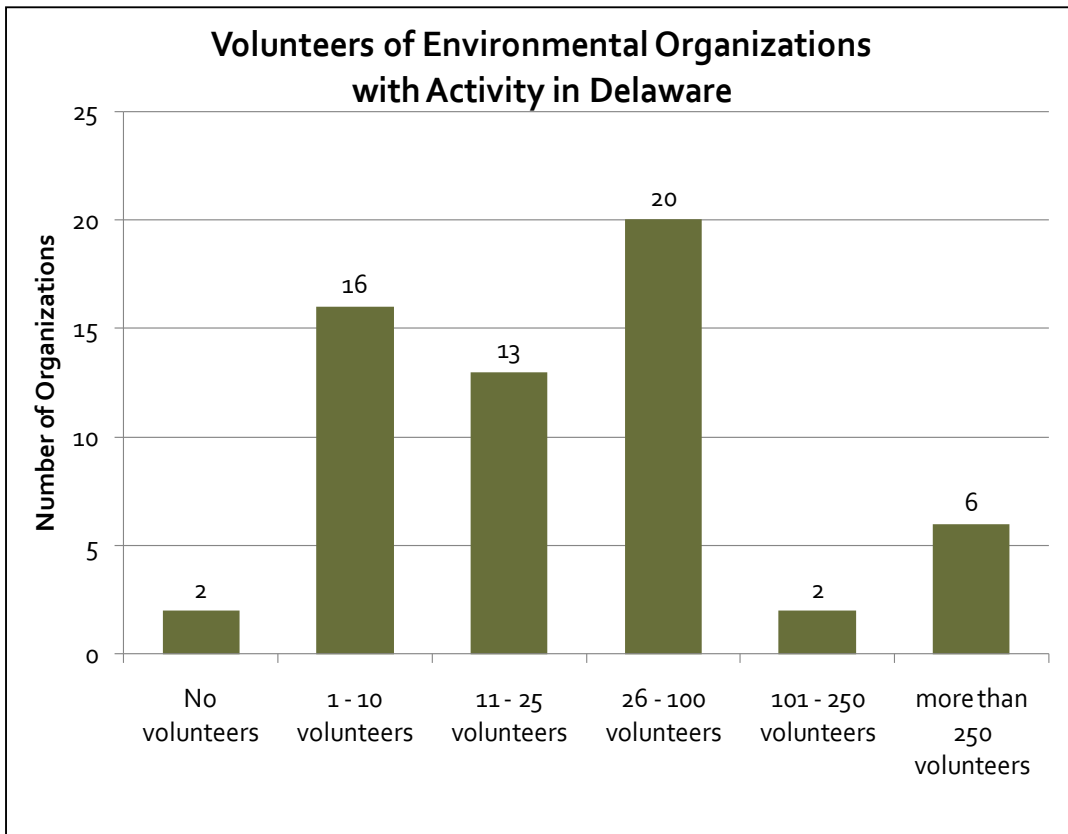
especially those that are all-volunteer organizations with no paid staff. Several organizations do not have open memberships. These groups typically have an endowment or large contributors for activities such as land management, conservation, or acquisition.



**Figure 8.** Number of Delaware environmental organizations with various membership size ranges.

## Volunteer Base

Total estimates of volunteers supporting the organization's programs and conservation efforts, which would include a subset of those doing advocacy range from 2,380 to more than 4,485. These were calculated from ranges in the number of volunteers reported by organizations as part of the survey. The number of organizations reporting various ranges in the size of their volunteer staff is depicted in Figure 9.



**Figure 9.** Number of Delaware environmental organizations with various ranges in the number of volunteers.

This base of volunteers represents a significant amount of the resources available to Delaware's environmental interest groups. Assessing the fiscal value of this resource is difficult. However, an estimate can be made by utilizing information about average volunteer service hours for Delaware and calculated values for volunteer time from published sources. According to the Corporation for National Community Service, a federal agency that tracks volunteering in America, from 2008 through 2010, Delaware had 166,900 volunteers who provided 21.9 million hours of service (Retrieved on November 18, 2011 from [www.volunteeringinamerica.gov](http://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov)). This is an average of 113 hours per year for each volunteer. The Independent Sector, a leadership network for nonprofit organizations, has calculated the average value of a volunteer service hour in Delaware in 2009 to be \$21.88 (Retrieved on November 18, 2011 from [independentsector.org/volunteer](http://independentsector.org/volunteer) time). Assuming that these numbers are applicable to volunteers of environmental groups working in Delaware, this would place the annual value of each volunteer at an estimate of \$2,472. By multiplying this estimated number by the high and low numbers of volunteers reported in the survey, the value of these volunteer resources may be an estimated \$5.9 to \$11.1 million. Just as important, is that \$4.3 to \$8.5 million is associated with volunteers from local and statewide groups.

Ninety-seven percent of Delaware's environmental organizations reported that they have volunteer staff. The majority, at 69%, reported that they had more than 10 volunteers. Only 3% of the organizations reported that they have no volunteers. This indicates that whether or not these groups have paid professional staff, they still depend heavily on a volunteer workforce for their activities. This includes a range of volunteer

activities. Seventy-two percent of the organizations have a volunteer board of directors, 58% have volunteer officers, 28% have volunteers conduct development or fundraising activities, 19% reported volunteer scientists and 10% have volunteer policy staff. For those position often associated with advocacy, 7% reported using volunteers for government relations and 7% reported having volunteer lobbyist.

These data do not account for overlapping volunteers that are members of numerous organizations. However, volunteer numbers are particularly important as it indicates the number of individuals that can potentially be mobilized for grassroots advocacy and other environmental actions.

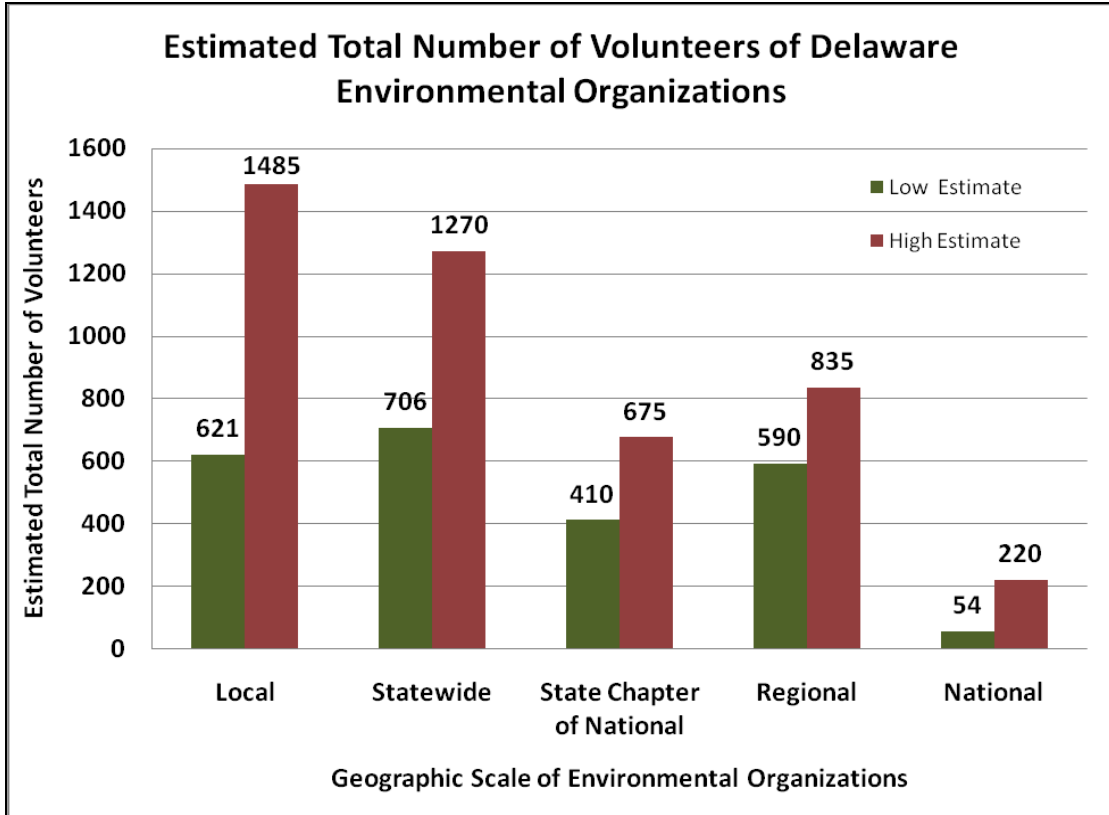
There is a much higher prevalence of volunteers in state, local, and regional environmental organizations than in the national organizations. Table 6 summaries the high and low estimates of the number of volunteers per organization working at different geographic scales. As can be seen, organizations working at the regional, state, and local scale have a higher number of volunteers per organizations than those working at the national scale.

**Table 6. Estimated Number of Volunteers per Organization at Various Geographic Scales of Operation calculated from the survey responses**

**Estimated Number of Volunteers per Organization at Various Geographic Scales of Operation**

<b>Geographic Scale</b>	<b>Low Estimate</b>	<b>High Estimate</b>
Local	22.2	53.0
Statewide	50.4	90.7
State Chapter of National	68.3	112.5
Regional	84.3	119.3
National	13.5	55.0

The estimated total number of volunteers by the geographic scale of the environmental organizations was also calculated, and is depicted in Figure 10.



**Figure 10.** Estimated High and Low Number of Volunteers in Delaware Environmental Organizations calculated from survey responses and grouped by geographic scale of operations.

### Diversity of Environmental Issues & Tactics Utilized

Delaware’s environmental organizations address a wide range of issues. As such, it is likely that doing environmental work means something different to different groups. These groups also use a variety of tactics as part of their efforts to improve the environment. The range of issues and concerns of the groups and an initial effort to identify thematic groupings of similar issues, data and analysis of those groups with the

most similar interest, data related to collaboration and cooperation among groups, and data on the variety of tactics used by these groups will be discussed below.

### **Environmental Issues of Interest**

Twenty-one selected environmental issues were included in the survey to determine the range of issues considered to be part of the organizational missions of Delaware's environmental interest group community. These issues were selected by developing a list based on issues identified during the review of environmental issues in Delaware, during review of web pages that included missions or organization activities, and by reviewing past surveys on environmental issues. The twenty-one issues selected were those identified as being most relevant to Delaware. Figure 11 shows the number of organizations that identified each of the twenty one issues as being mission critical. Mission critical is defined as an issue of key importance to the organization that makes it an area of primary interest or activity.

Organizations reported a mean of 8.5 [S.D. 5.025] issues out of the 21 that were of primary focus or mission critical.

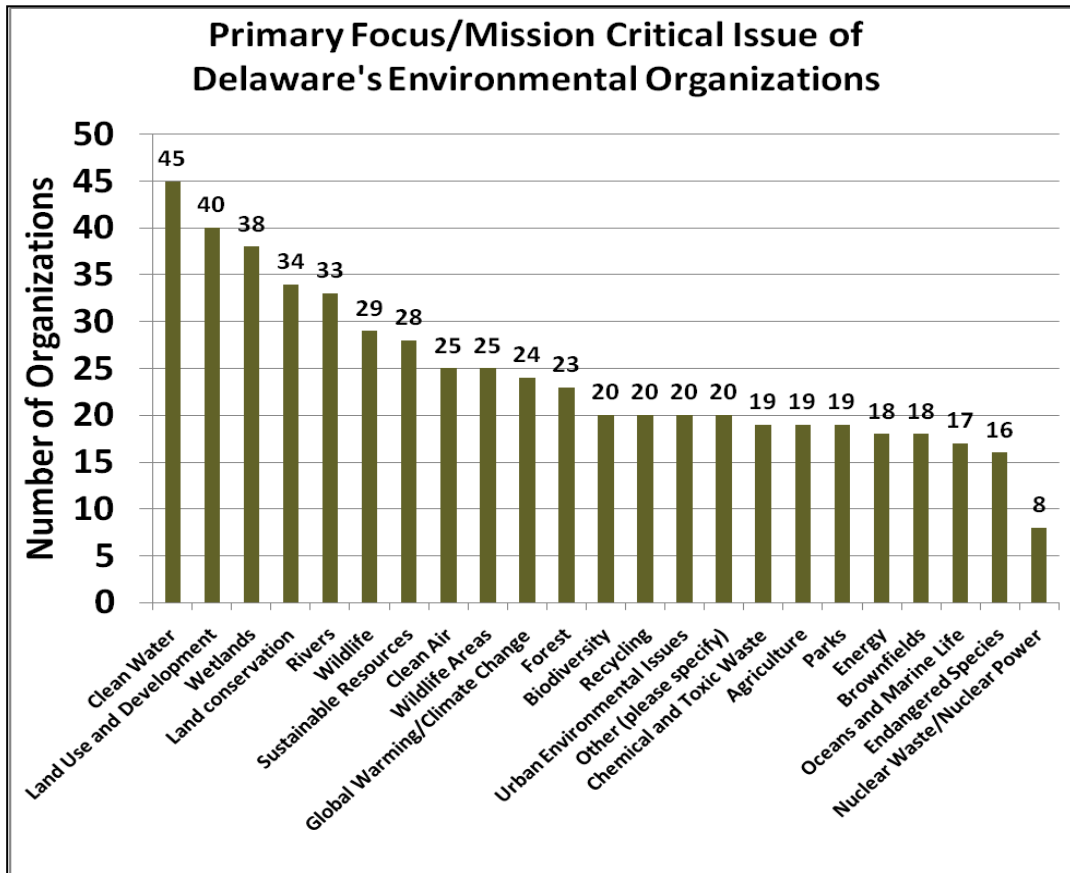


Figure 11. Primary focus/mission critical issues of Delaware’s environmental organizations.

The issues of interest to the most organizations include clean water, land use, wetlands, land conservation, and river conservation. These are older conservation values that may reflect the influence of traditional groups aligned with national priorities (Dunlop & Mertig, 1992; Bosso, 2005). These issues may also represent some of the core values that provided the motivation and origin for establishment of many of the environmental organizations in Delaware, as these were key issues in the 1990s, when many of the groups were founded. Other more specific issues of interests included wildlife, sustainable resources, clean air, climate change, forest loss or protection,

agricultural lands protection, energy, and biodiversity. These are more focused niche issues that are often subsets of broader issues. This may reflect an increasing level of specialization of environmental interest groups in Delaware.

Organizations reporting the broadest issue agendas included the National Wildlife Federation, Delaware Audubon Society, Delaware Riverkeeper Network, Defenders of Wildlife, Delaware Chapter of the Sierra Club, Milltown-Limestone Civic Alliance (MLCA), and the Green Watch Institute. These organizations reported 15 or more issues as mission critical. Other organizations reported various levels of specialization, including some that were highly specialized and only reported one or two issues. A matrix of organizations and the issues they reported as mission critical is found in Table 7.

In addition to the 21 selected issues, an open ended question was included in the survey to identify other issues. There were 20 open ended response that primarily identified localized areas of focus for issues or sub-issues under the 21 issues listed in the survey. For example, local issues included wastewater and water quality concerns in the Delaware Inland Bays, contaminant concerns in the vicinity of Delaware City, and water quality issues in the Christina River watershed. Other subissues included specific habitat and wildlife issues such as bird strikes by wind mills, invasive species, and urban forestry. Two new issues were identified including a sustainable tourism and resource extraction issues such as natural gas exploration and coal mining. Each was listed by one respondent.

This review of issue focus as reported by the organizations is important, as it may provide insights about which issues the diverse organizations are more or less likely to pursue and advocate for as part of the State's public policy agenda. It can also help to explain the extent of common interest and fragmentation of the interest group community. Understanding the diversity of issues may help identify the opportunities for collaboration of groups, as well as the causes for competition or disagreements among groups. It provides insights into the challenges of collective action efforts that are complicated by the large number of issues and the dilution of advocacy resources available to focus on more discretely defined issues.

**Table 7 Organization Focus/Mission Critical Issues.**

**Organization Focus/Mission Critical Issues (Page 1 Of 3)**

Organization	Issues																						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
7&40 Alliance	X	X		X				X					X					X					
American Rivers	X				X					X													
Appoquinimink River Association	X				X																		
Association of State Wetland Managers	X		X	X	X	X	X			X		X											
Bear Glasgow Council of Civic Organizations	X	X		X			X						X	X			X		X				
Chesapeake Bay Foundation	X																						
Christina Conservancy, Inc.	X	X	X		X								X	X		X			X				
Citizens Coalition, Inc.	X	X	X	X			X													X			
Citizens for Clean Power							X	X		X					X			X		X			
Civic League for New Castle County	X	X	X	X	X			X												X			
Claymont Community Coalition Dust Study Team								X															
Clean Air Council		X					X	X		X			X	X	X	X		X	X			X	
Coalition for Natural Stream Valleys, Inc.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X		X								X	
Council of Civic Organizations of Brandywine Hundred	X	X	X		X			X					X	X	X					X			
Defenders of Wildlife	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Delaware Audubon Society	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Delaware Bass Federation	X		X		X	X	X						X									X	
Delaware Center for Horticulture								X		X	X			X		X	X						
Delaware Center for the Inland Bays, Inc.	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X				X						X	
Delaware Chapter of the Sierra Club	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X			
Delaware City Environmental Coalition (DCEC)	X	X			X			X							X					X		X	
Delaware Greenways		X		X						X						X							
Delaware Invasive Species Council																							
Delaware Native Plant Society		X				X			X		X			X									
Delaware Riverkeeper Network	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X				X	X

**Table 7. (Continued)**

**Organization Focus/Mission Critical Issues (Continued: Page 2 of 3)**

Organization	Issues																						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
Delaware Wild Lands, Inc.	X		X	X		X	X				X	X				X						X	
DeIEASI	X	X			X			X					X	X	X	X		X	X				
Delmarva Low-Impact Tourism Experiences (DLITE)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X				X	X				X	X	
Delmarva Ornithological Society						X						X											
Ducks Unlimited, Inc	X		X	X		X				X													
Ecological Research & Development Group Inc. (ERDG)		X	X	X			X														X		
Friends of Bombay Hook, Inc.		X	X			X			X			X											
Friends of Lums Pond, Inc									X								X						
Friends of Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge, Inc.		X	X	X		X			X													X	
Friends of the Nanticoke River	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X					X							
Friends of White Clay Creek State Park				X		X			X		X						X					X	
GHADA	X	X	X	X	X			X			X		X	X			X						
Green Delaware	X	X	X		X			X		X			X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
Green Watch Institute	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X					X	X	X			X	
League of Women Voters of Delaware	X	X	X	X			X	X		X			X	X	X			X	X				
Milltown-Limestone Civic Alliance (MLCA)	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Naamans Creek Watershed Association	X	X	X																				
Nanticoke River Watershed Preservation Group	X	X	X		X	X			X							X					X	X	
Nanticoke Watershed Alliance	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X				X							
National Wildlife Federation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Oceana	X		X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X			X			X	X	
Partnership for the Delaware Estuary	X		X		X					X												X	
Pike Creek Valley Civic League	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X				X		X		X				
Quality Deer Management Association				X		X			X		X												
Red Clay Valley Association	X			X	X	X	X				X	X	X										
Sierra Club, Southern Delaware Group	X	X	X		X			X					X		X		X	X					

**Table 7. (Continued)**

**Organization Focus/Mission Critical Issues (Continued: Page 3 of 3)**

Organization	Issues																					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Southern New Castle County Alliance	X	X		X			X		X							X	X					
Surfrider Foundation Delaware Chapter	X						X						X								X	
The Academy of Natural Sciences		X	X		X		X			X		X		X	X							X
The Conservation Fund	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X					X	X					X
The Nature Conservancy - Delaware Chapter				X	X	X				X	X	X										X
Urban Environmental Center	X	X			X			X					X	X					X	X		
White Clay Flyfishers	X				X													X				
Widener Environmental and Natural Resources Law Clinic	X	X	X	X	X	X		X						X								X

**Legend**

**1. Clean Water**

**2. Land Use and Development**

**3. Wetlands**

**4. Land conservation**

**5. Rivers**

**6. Wildlife**

**7. Sustainable Resources**

**8. Clean Air**

**9. Wildlife Areas**

**10. Global Warming/Climate Change**

**11. Forest**

**12. Biodiversity**

**13. Recycling**

**14. Urban Environmental Issues**

**15. Chemical and Toxic Waste**

**16. Agriculture**

**17. Parks**

**18. Energy**

**19. Brownfield**

**20. Oceans and Marine Life**

**21. Endangered Species**

**22. Nuclear Waste/Nuclear Power**

## **Thematic Groupings of Issues**

An effort was made to cluster issues and groups based on similarity and differences using Ward's Hierarchical Groupings and squared Euclidian distance analysis. While the sample size was too small to provide statistically robust results, it did provide a heuristic approach for thematically grouping issues and organizations that may provide insights into the potential subgroups of Delaware's environmental interest group community with common agendas and a predisposition for collaborative efforts.

The dendrogram from this analysis is shown in Figure 12. This diagram simply represents the hierarchy of clusters as a tree. The right side is the root of the tree, and is most inclusive. The left side is the branches of issues that were determined to be most commonly aggregated together by Delaware's environmental organizations.

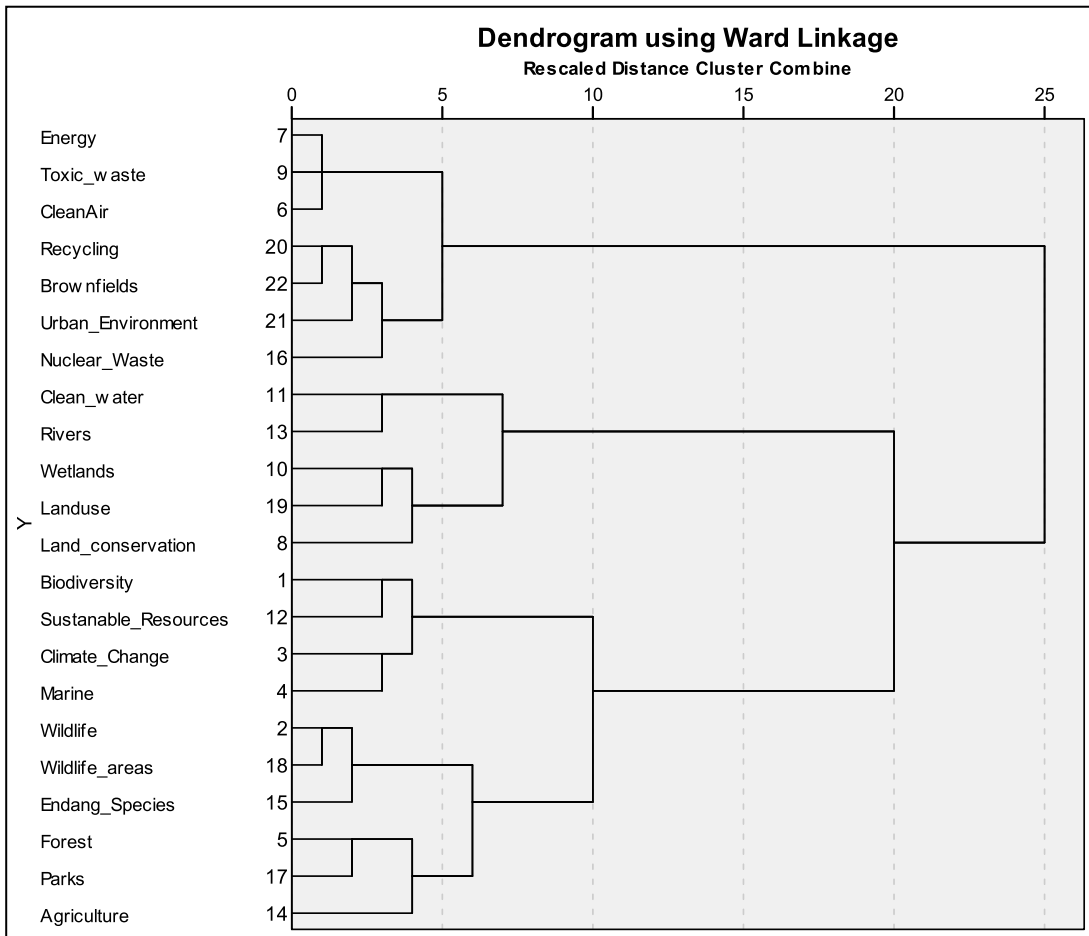
This analysis does provide thematic grouping based on the expressed mission critical issues of the organizations. Based on these, I developed a listing of those organizations most aligned with sets of issues. The sets of issues were clustered into five thematic groups including 1) energy and toxic release, 2) urban, recycling, and brownfields, 3) land and water conservation, 4) climate and sustainability, and 5) habitat conservation. These groupings, the survey issues included in each, and the organizations aligned with these groups are summarized in Table 8.

The energy and toxic release thematic grouping combines the issues of energy, chemical and toxic wastes, and clean air appears to be logical for the local context of Delaware. The Delaware Toxic Release Inventory lists several power plants and a

refinery among the facilities with the highest amount of toxic releases in the State (DNREC Division of Waste and Hazardous Substances, 2009). In addition, the recent debate about offshore wind as a potential alternative to coal fired electricity has likely linked these issues more closely. Jacqueline Piero (2010) noted that these issues were clearly linked by wind energy advocates arguing that environmental benefits of wind would be the “clean” source of energy that does not generate these toxic emissions. The organizations that were most aligned ( $n=20$ ) with the issues in this grouping do include several of the groups directly involved in the issues surrounding the proposed Blue Water Wind offshore wind farm development and the coal burning power plant at Indian River power plant that recently shutdown the Unit 2 coal burning generator (Piero, 2010).

The urban, recycling, and brownfields group ( $n=14$ ) is also a logical grouping that correlates waste management and reduction with areas that deal with environmental issues often associated with more densely developed landscapes. This links efforts in urban and suburban areas to recent efforts such as the statewide recycling bill and a ban on yard waste in Delaware, among others (Montgomery, 2008 & 2010). It also considers the common affinity of these groups to both the clean-up and redevelopment of previously contaminated lands, known as brownfield areas. While these linkages make sense, it was interesting to see that nuclear waste/nuclear power was linked with this group. This may simply be an outlier that fits better with the energy and toxic release grouping, however; the environmental community may not yet have determined how to place nuclear power. There may be a serious ideological split due to the reduced

toxic emissions from nuclear power that cannot be separated from the risk of a radiation leak and the problem of long term disposal of spent radioactive fuels. It will be interesting to see how this issue is handled by environmental interest groups as the energy policy and climate policy debates develop in coming years in Delaware and the nation.



**Figure 12. Dendrogram of hierarchical grouping of issues selected by Delaware**

**Table 8. Thematic grouping of issues and organizations most closely aligned to theme.**

<b>Thematic Issue Groupings and Organizations Most Aligned</b>		
<b>Issue Grouping</b>	<b>Survey Issues Included</b>	<b>Organizations</b>
Energy & Toxic Release	Energy, Chemical and Toxic Waste, and Clean Air	7&40 Alliance; Citizens for Clean Power; Clean Air Council; Council of Civic Organizations of Brandywine Hundred; Defenders of Wildlife; Delaware Audubon Society; Delaware Chapter of the Sierra Club; Delaware City Environmental Coalition (DCEC); Delaware Riverkeeper Network; DelEASI; Green Delaware; Green Watch Institute; League of Women Voters of Delaware; Milltown-Limestone Civic Alliance (MLCA); National Wildlife Federation; Oceana; Pike Creek Valley Civic League; Sierra Club, Southern Delaware Group; Urban Environmental Center
Urban, Recycling, Brownfields	Recycling, Brownfields, Urban Environmental Issues, and Nuclear Waste/Nuclear Power	Bear Glasgow Council of Civic Organizations; Christina Conservancy, Inc.; Clean Air Council; Council of Civic Organizations of Brandywine Hundred; Delaware Audubon Society; Delaware Chapter of the Sierra Club; Delaware City Environmental Coalition (DCEC); DelEASI; Green Delaware; League of Women Voters of Delaware; Milltown-Limestone Civic Alliance (MLCA); National Wildlife Federation; Urban Environmental Center
Land & Water Conservation	Clean Water, Rivers, Wetlands, Land Use and Development, and Land & Water Conservation	7&40 Alliance; Association of State Wetland Managers; Bear Glasgow Council of Civic Organizations; Christina Conservancy, Inc.; Citizens Coalition, Inc.; Civic League for New Castle County; Coalition for Natural Stream Valleys, Inc.; Council of Civic Organizations of Brandywine Hundred; Defenders of Wildlife; Delaware Audubon Society; Delaware Bass Federation; Delaware Center for the Inland Bays, Inc.; Delaware Chapter of the Sierra Club; Delaware City Environmental Coalition; Delaware Riverkeeper Network; Delaware Wild Lands, Inc.; DelEASI; Delmarva Low-Impact Tourism Experiences; Ducks Unlimited, Inc; Ecological Research & Development Group Inc.; Friends of Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge; Friends of the Nanticoke River; GHADA; Green Delaware; Green Watch Institute; League of Women Voters of Delaware; Milltown-Limestone Civic Alliance (MLCA); Naamans Creek Watershed Association; Nanticoke River Watershed Preservation Group; Nanticoke Watershed Alliance; National Wildlife Federation; Partnership for the Delaware Estuary; Pike Creek Valley Civic League; Red Clay Valley Association; Sierra Club, Southern Delaware Group; Southern New Castle County Alliance; The Academy of Natural Sciences; The Conservation Fund; The Nature Conservancy - Delaware Chapter; Widener Environmental and Natural Resources Law Clinic; Urban Environmental Center
Climate and Sustainability	Climate Change, Sustainable Resources, Oceans, Marine Life, and Biodiversity	Defenders of Wildlife; Delaware Audubon Society; Delaware Center for the Inland Bays, Inc.; Delaware Chapter of the Sierra Club; National Wildlife Federation; Oceana; The Academy of Natural Sciences; Association of State Wetland Managers; Citizens for Clean Power; Delaware Riverkeeper Network; Delmarva Low-Impact Tourism Experiences ; Nanticoke Watershed Alliance; The Nature Conservancy - Delaware Chapter
Habitat Conservation	Wildlife, Wildlife Areas, Parks, Forests, Agriculture, and Endangered Species	Coalition for Natural Stream Valleys, Inc.; Defenders of Wildlife; Delaware Audubon Society; Delaware Center for the Inland Bays, Inc.; Delaware Riverkeeper Network; Delaware Wild Lands, Inc.; Delmarva Low-Impact Tourism Experiences ; Friends of the Nanticoke River; Friends of White Clay Creek State Park; Green Watch Institute; Milltown-Limestone Civic Alliance (MLCA); National Wildlife Federation; Pike Creek Valley Civic League; The Conservation Fund

The issue of nuclear energy/nuclear waste may present a unique opportunity for future study of the impact of crisis on priorities of environmental interest groups in Delaware. This issue was identified as a mission critical or priority issue by the least number of organizations ( $n=8$ ) in the survey conducted in 2010. This may be due to the fact that Delaware does not have a nuclear energy facility in the State. However, it could be an important concern as the Salem/Hope Creek Nuclear Power Plant on the Delaware River includes a large part of Delaware as part of its evacuation area. According to the Delaware Emergency Management Agency, as of 2000, 24,976 Delaware residents lived within the 10 mile emergency management area of this facility (Delaware Office of Emergency Management, 2011). The recent crisis at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in Japan in the wake of the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami has raised public concerns about the safety of nuclear power and nuclear waste internationally. This concern is also reaching the U.S. and the State of Delaware (Montgomery, 2011). Interest groups are likely more successful when responding to a crisis and shift their efforts to address these opportunities.

The thematic grouping of land and water conservation had the largest number of organizations ( $n=42$ ) with alignment to these issues. This is no surprise as it includes all five of the issues most frequently selected as mission critical by environmental interest groups in the survey. These are issues on both land and water that are visible and are observed by people almost daily, leading to close association and concern. Also of interest is that this group includes 12 of the 20 organizations that were formed in the

1990's, during a period of major expansion of land protection efforts and water quality improvement efforts in the State.

It would be expected that the land and water conservation group would have significant influence due to the close and strong alignments. Antidotal evidence indicates that this group does have influence. Most notable is the 2011 suspension of \$20 million dollars in farmland and open space conservation funding, essentially zeroing out the funding for these programs, by Governor Jack Markell (Montgomery, 2011). This was a significant threat to the core set of issues of this group. The groups response and its influence may be worthy of future study. The group did build or mobilize an alliance to influence the members of the 146<sup>th</sup> Delaware General Assembly to restore these funds with key groups including the Delaware Nature Society and the Delaware Chapter of the Nature Conservancy advocating for funding restoration. Other groups such as the Delaware Farm Bureau also activity pursued this issue, and at least one key member of Delaware's political elite, Mike Parkowski was actively pursuing the restoration of funds. It would be of interest to analyze various cases such as this in the future to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of environmental advocacy efforts.

The survey included a very small number of traditional conservation organizations and environmental organizations. While both of these would be expected to be aligned with this thematic group, the data cannot support such a finding due to sample size. Only 8% of the organizations ( $n=5$ ) responded that they consider themselves traditional conservation organizations ( $n=5$ ). These groups tend to include or be aligned with Delaware's sportsman and hunting community and may have very

different interests and ideologies from other environmental groups. This is not surprising, as it is only slightly higher than the 2% of wise use groups found by Kempton, et. al. (2001) in their study of environmental groups in the Delmarva Region. In Delaware, it is likely that these interests exist but are more difficult to identify as formal groups. They may be found more prevalently in private hunt clubs or other organizations. Regardless, evaluation of the relationship, divergence and alignment of environmental groups with more traditional conservation interest dominated by sportsman, fishermen, and outdoorsman as future research would benefit our understanding of their contribution or lack of contribution to environmental interest in the State. There may be a schism between these groups on the extreme, but in Delaware 66% of the environmental interest groups rank themselves moderately between these two ideologies. This finding should be of importance to the broader environmental interest community, as it signals significant common ground for collaboration. In Delaware, the State's sportsman community includes numerous members of Delaware's political elite with significant influence on environmental policy. A close alliance with these individuals and interests could significantly increase land conservation and other environmental efforts in the State.

The habitat conservation group appears to be a more focused issue subset of the land and water conservation group, with eleven of its thirteen organizations most closely aligned with this grouping overlapping. However, it does provide a more specific core of organizations that have aligned themselves directly with habitat

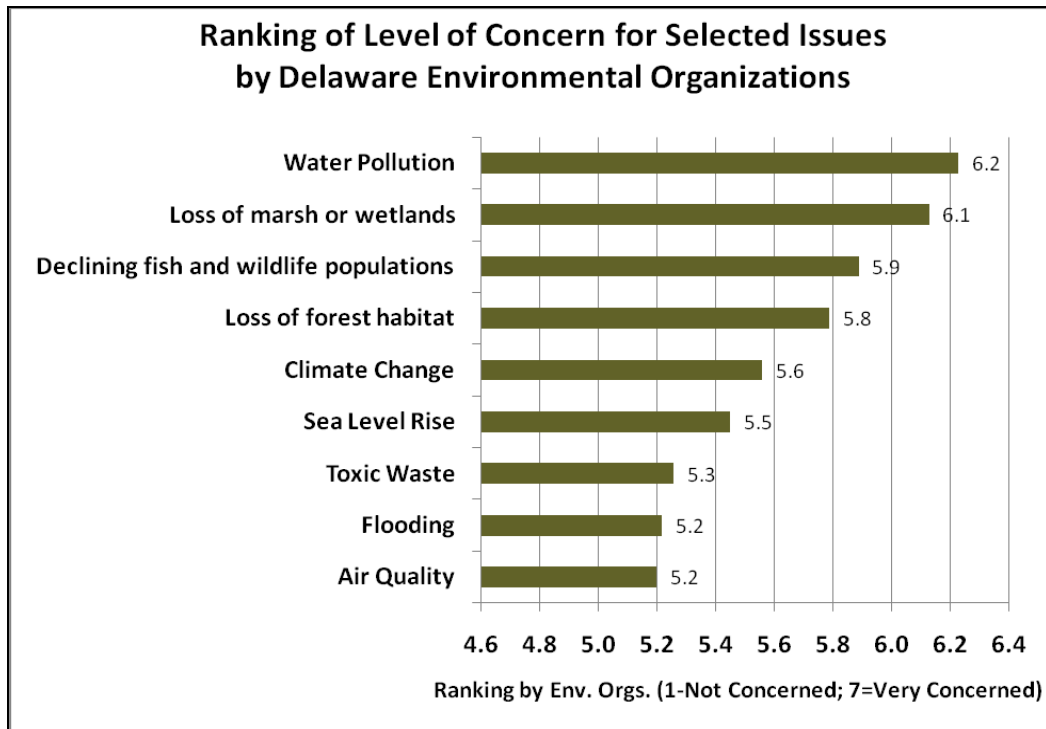
concerns, which is a more focused and specific issue than that of land and water conservation.

The climate and sustainability thematic group is also a more focused niche group (n=13). This group aligns with climate change and sustainability, as well as ocean and marine life and biodiversity. This may be due to the geographic and temporal scale associated with these issues. These are global issues with the most significant impacts often predicted to occur well into the future. Climate change is global and very much influenced by ocean dynamics, linking it in significant ways to marine and ocean issues. Biodiversity is also a broad issue that has been closely linked to Climate Change. While human activities that change the landscape have caused the current high loss of biodiversity, it is now widely believed that human induced climate change will add significant additional pressure and may have already begun to significantly affect biodiversity (Gitay, Suarez, Watson, & Dokken, 2002).

### **Environmental Concerns of Organizations**

Issues of concern for Delaware's environmental organizations are generally similar to their reported primary focus or mission critical issues for those that ranked high. However, they differ on some environmental issues such as air quality that was a moderately high ranked issue, but of low concern on average by the environmental groups. The ranking of issues by environmental organizations can be found in Figure 13. The issues were selected to allow a direct comparison of seven broad issues previously used by Responsive Management (2010) as part of a survey of Delaware's

public to allow a comparison of levels of concern of environmental groups with levels of Delaware public. Close similarity may help indicate if these issues are likely to receive broader public support. Differences may indicate a critical emerging issue for which environmental groups are out in front on or perhaps issues that fall outside of the efforts of the mainstream of environmental interest groups in Delaware.



**Figure 13. Ranking of concerns by Delaware’s environmental organizations.**

On a scale of one to seven (1=not concerned; 7=very concerned) water pollution, loss of marsh and wetlands, declining fish and wildlife resources, and loss of forest habitat all ranked in the upper 50% of issues. These issues were also ranked high

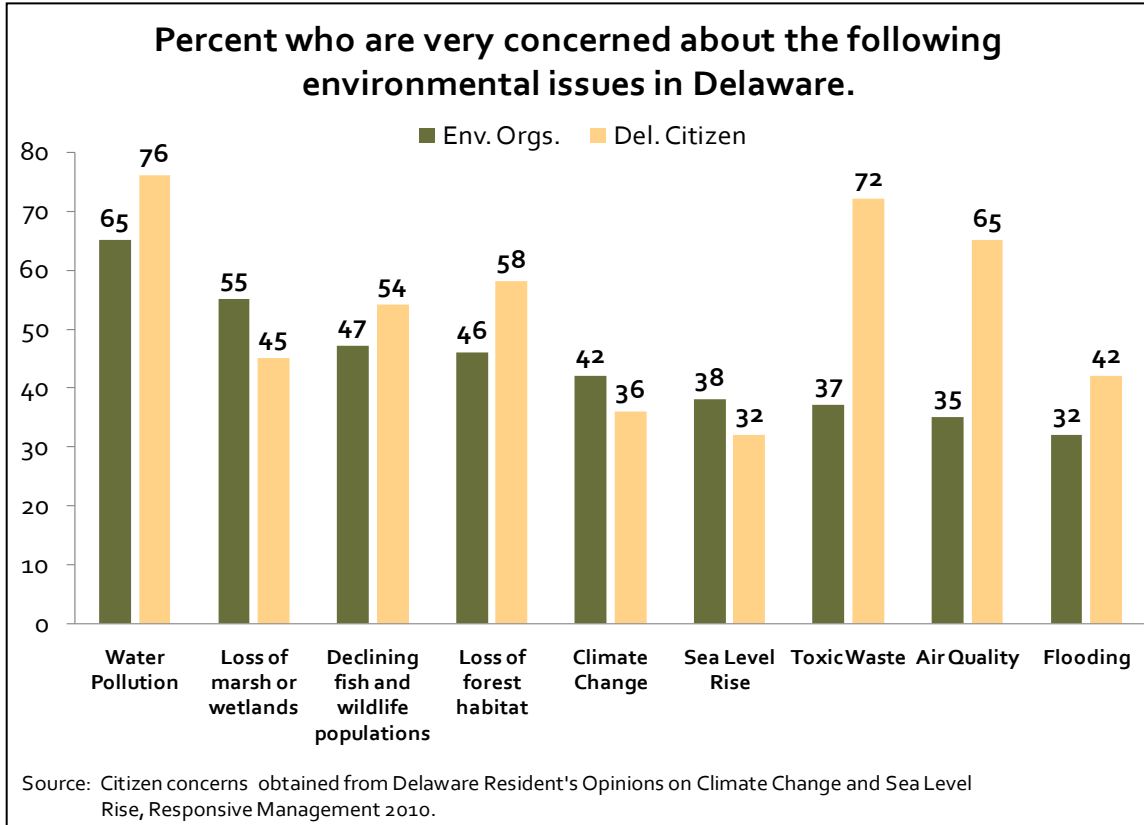
as mission critical issues of interest. Climate Change and Sea Level Rise were issues of moderate concern, and issues of toxic waste, flooding, and air quality were ranked as issues of lower concern.

### **Concerns of Organizations Compared to those of Delaware's Public**

With regard to public policy issues, those that are either very concerned or not concerned at all are often the groups with strong convictions about an issue and inclined to take a policy position. With this in mind, I analyzed the number of organizations reporting these strong views and compared them with survey results conducted by Responsive Management (2010) for a statistically valid sample of Delaware's population. This enables the comparison of the issues of concern to Delaware's environmental organizations with the general population of Delaware citizens. This comparison can be seen in Figure 14.

When comparing the survey results of those very concerned about the selected environmental issues, Delaware's environmental organizations are typically within about 10% of the responses from Delaware's citizens statewide. However, two issues show a significant difference in the level of concern, the issues of toxic waste and air quality. Seventy-two percent of Delaware Citizens ranked toxic waste as an issue they are very concerned about, while only thirty 37% of environmental organizations ranked it as an issue they were very concerned about. This represents a difference of thirty-five percent. Similarly, 65% of Delaware citizens ranked air quality as an issue they are very

concerned about; while only 35% percent of environmental organizations ranked it as an issue they were very concerned about, representing a 30% difference.



**Figure 14. Comparison of Delaware environmental organizations and statewide residents that is very concerned about selected issues.**

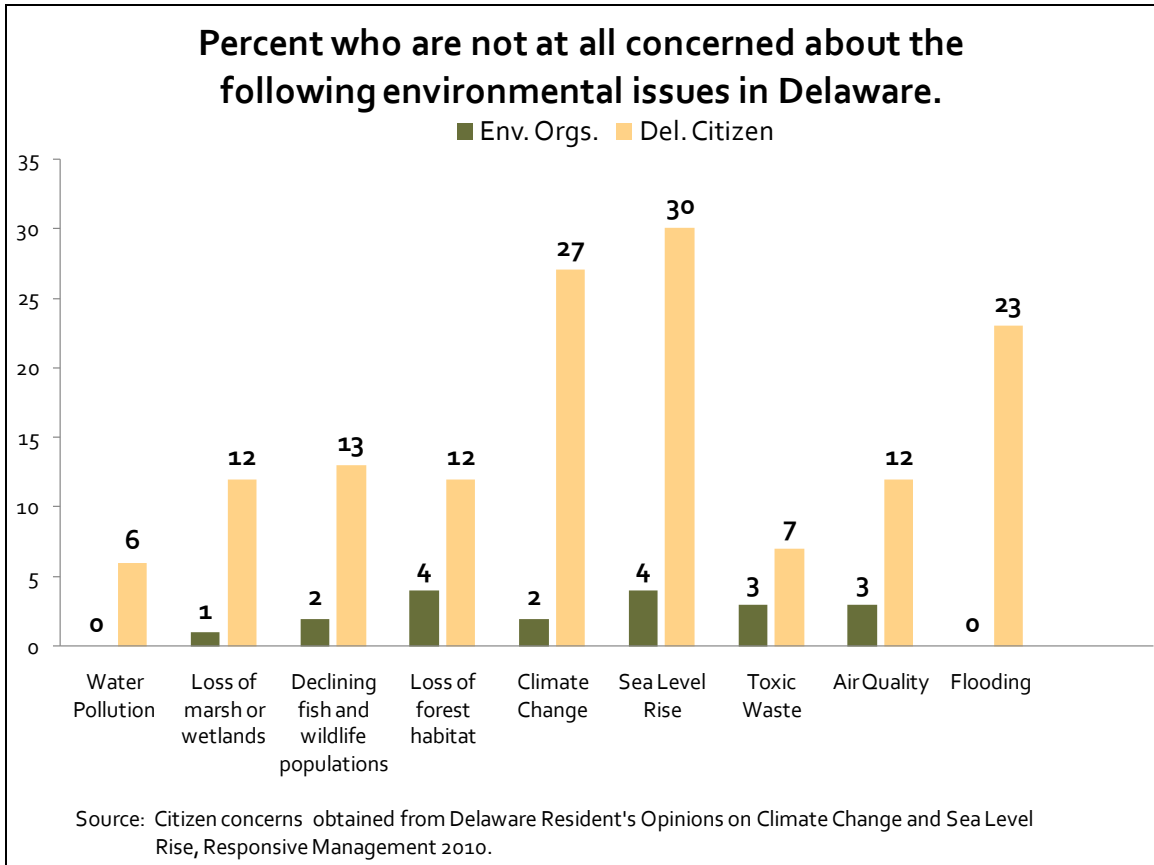
The issues of toxic waste and air quality are often associated with health issues and environmental justice concerns. They were often a key motivating factor for the establishment of local grassroots environmental efforts in the past (Freudenberg & Steinsapir, 1992). They are also issues that may disproportionately affect poor and minority citizens who often live in urban areas, near industry, or near major

transportation arteries due to suppressed housing cost in these areas. The low level of concern could be the result of Delaware's environmental organizations becoming more main stream or aligned with national issues, as well as dominated by more affluent and often white members. This may lead to a reduced potential to attract poor and working class persons or the urban underclass to the environmental interest group community (Bullard & Wright, 1992). A resulting lack of diversity could lead to a perception of elitism of the environmental interest group community in Delaware. It may also lead to the potential for more tension between economic interest for jobs by working class citizens and environmental protection. At a minimum, it removes the opportunity to leverage the power of environmental fairness and equity to all groups through environmental justice claims.

When comparing the survey results of those not at all concerned about the selected environmental issues, Delaware's environmental organizations were also within about 10% of the responses from Delaware's citizens statewide (See Figure 15). However, three issues show a significant difference in the level of concern; the issues of flooding, climate change, and sea level rise. Twenty three percent of Delaware citizens ranked flooding as an issue they are not at all concerned about, while no environmental organizations ranked it as an issue for which they were not at all concerned. This may simply be due to a sizeable portion of the state residents that have never experienced flooding issues.

Of greater interest is the difference in concern level over climate change and sea level rise. These issues had 25% and 26% respectively higher levels of citizens that

ranked them as being not at all concerned. This is of interest due to the surge in new activity on global climate change nationally.



**Figure 15. Comparison of Delaware environmental organizations and statewide residents that are not at all concerned about selected issues.**

In a study of nonprofit environmental and conservation organizations, Straughan and Pollock (2008) found that nationally the emerging climate change focused groups had two broad strategic goals. These included transforming local communities and economies for sustainability and creating political will for alternative energies and policy reform. At present, these are similar to the environmental objectives of Delaware

Governor Markell's administration. With a significant percent of the public not at all concerned, it remains to be seen if these efforts will prosper under Delaware's political framework or meet strong opposition. This may present an additional opportunity for future research on the impact of political opportunity influence on advocacy mobilization and effectiveness.

### **Collaboration of Environmental Organizations**

An important consideration for Delaware's environmental organizations is the level to which they are able to work together and collaborate on issues. It is assumed that effective public policy issues are strengthened through collaboration and collective action (Straughan & Pollak, 2008). However, Delaware's environmental community may struggle with this issue due to the high diversity of issues. It could be that the differing missions and capacities of the various groups that comprise the environmental community in Delaware do not bode well for easy identification of collaborations on issues. Conversely, the broad agendas may make these organizations more flexible and potentially more responsive to an emerging threat to an issue of interest. When asked about how often an organization works together with other environmental organizations, 90% ( $n=53$ ) of the responding organizations reported that they work with other groups each year. Of these, 41% ( $n=24$ ) work with other organizations 10 or more times a year. The annual frequency of organizations collaborative working efforts on key issues is summarized in Figure 16.

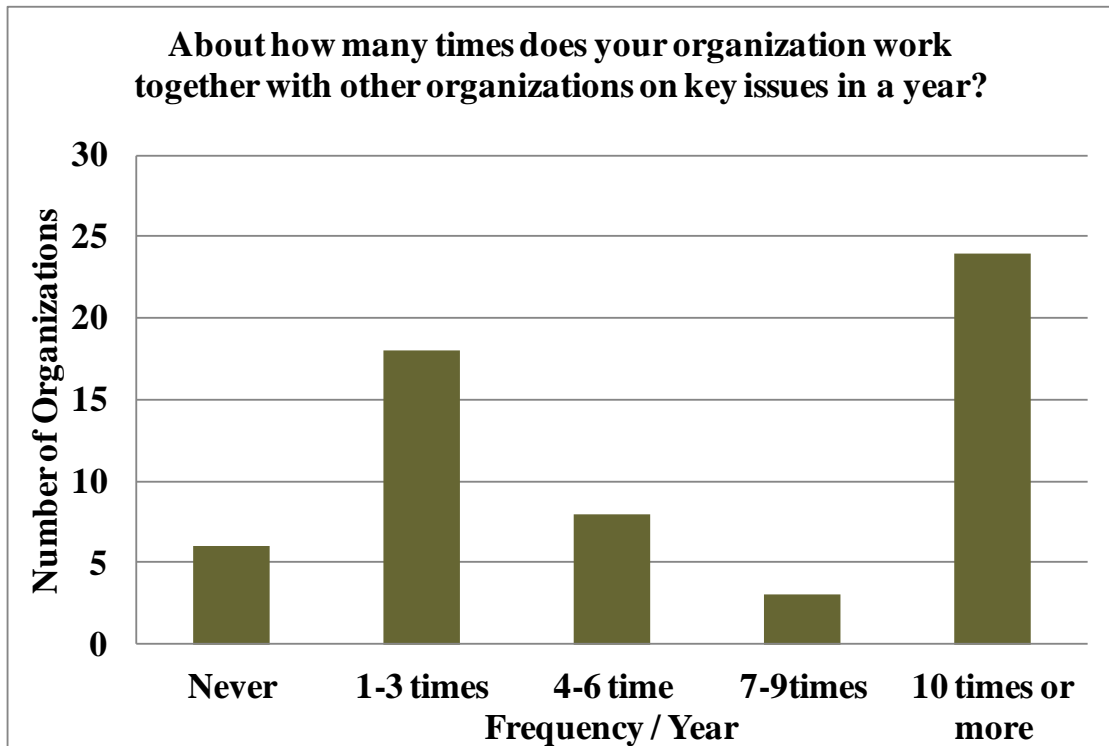


Figure 16. Frequency in which Delaware environmental organizations work together on issues annually.

While data were not specifically collected about which organizations work together, an open ended question was included that asked those reporting who work with other groups annually to list those groups. The most frequently listed groups, ones that were listed at least three times, include the Sierra Club ( $n=7$ ), Delaware Nature Society ( $n=6$ ), Delaware River Keeper ( $n=5$ ), Partnership for the Delaware Estuary ( $n=5$ ), American Littoral Society ( $n=3$ ), Audubon Society ( $n=3$ ), Center for the Inland Bays ( $n=3$ ), Ducks Unlimited ( $n=3$ ), and the National Wildlife Federation ( $n=3$ ). In addition, three organizations reported that they coordinated with too many groups to be able to list them.

Of note is that 67% (n=48) of the organizations included in the survey were not listed by any other organizations as a collaborator. This may indicate that while significant collaboration may occur, it is only occurring among a small number, or small subgroup, of Delaware's environmental organizations.

While this summary indicates considerable interest in collaboration in Delaware, Bosso (2005) found in a study of national environmental groups that there is often competition and conflict among environmental groups over issue and policy niches. There may also be a carrying capacity of the number of organizations that can be supported in a small geographic area such as Delaware. While collaboration occurs, those data do not clearly address whether they are limited to a small subset of the environmental organizations in Delaware or more broadly distributed. It may be that there is a small core that collaborates well, or subgroups of organizations that work well in various niches or issues.

One organization did list the Delaware Environmental Summit as a collaborator. This event has been held in Delaware over the past three years (2009, 2010, & 2011) to improve collaboration on environmental advocacy (Tommywonk Blog, February 17, 2011). Additional study of collaboration among the environmental interest groups in Delaware is needed to better understand the extent, reach, context, and effectiveness of collective action occurring among Delaware's environmental organizations. Since many are small all-volunteer grassroots organizations, the resource constraints for survival that often limit collaboration or cause competition for resources may be much lower than what Bosso (2005) found for the larger national organizations, reducing the need to

find clear niche's or issue areas that separate organizations and reduce collaboration. However, these numerous small organizations with limited resources may lack the capacity to support significant intergroup collaboration, despite the likelihood that collaboration and sharing of limited resources may be one of the most viable strategies to have a measureable impact on environmental policy in Delaware. The previously discussed listing of the larger organizations as collaborators most often combined with the high response rate for working together may indicate that collective action and collaboration are most likely to occur if the larger, better funded organizations with professional staff are key players in making this happen.

### **Adoption of Technology**

Increasingly, information technology is a critical capacity for environmental interest groups. It is used for fundraising, outreach, and to mobilize grassroots efforts. New information sharing technology, made possible with innovations for more sophisticated use of the internet, will provide increasingly greater opportunities for fundraising, citizen engagement, advocacy, information sharing, and collaboration (Burt & Taylor, 2000; Layne & Lee, 2001; Moon, 2002). These changes will transform the way organizations interact with people and society. It may also impact the structure of environmental organizations, their relationships with other organizations, and the way they do their day-to-day business. Depending on how organizations respond to emerging technology, they may experience new opportunities or become increasing disconnected and potentially irrelevant organizations. Those who embrace the

technology, articulate where it is useful, determine how best to use it, and build capacity to harness its potential may have a competitive advantage and become better organizations than those that do not. We are increasingly connected by this technology, and in the future it is likely that it will be critical to reach more people, recruit members and volunteers, and reduce dependence on the mainstream media to get out messages and frame key issues early in the public policy process.

Delaware's environmental organizations are using the mainstream internet technologies such as e-mail and the web extensively. Ninety-seven percent of those included in the survey were able to provide e-mail addresses and stated they could respond to the survey online. The two organizations that did not utilize the internet had respondents that prefer using traditional mail and phone for communications. Eighty-two percent of the organizations included in the study have web sites.

A review of the websites of Delaware's environmental organizations shows a wide range of sophistication and use of this technology. Overwhelmingly, the World Wide Web is used to push out basic information about the organizations. This includes many very simply websites, and several highly developed and sophisticated uses of the technology for fundraising, recruitment of members and volunteers, and electronic advocacy.

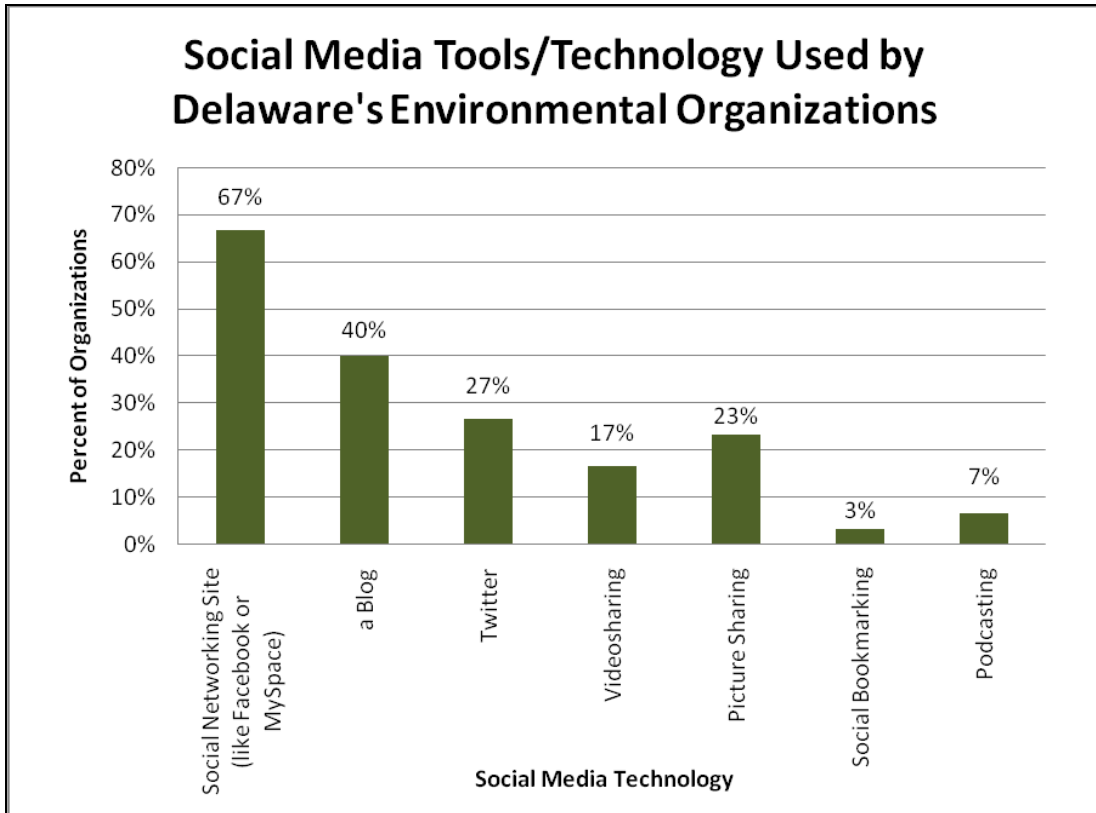
Of the 59 sites reviewed, 42% conduct some form of fundraising from their website. These include electronic payment of memberships, donations, and in several cases gift store shopping. Fifty-six percent of the groups have membership information available and 34% have information about volunteering. Many also use the web to

develop databases of supporters. Forty-five percent of the sites harvest contact information of various forms into databases from their website.

Electronic advocacy efforts are much less prevalent from websites. Eighteen percent conduct some form of electronic advocacy, such as encouraging supporters to contact public officials or legislators to support or oppose environmental activities and sign up for action alerts. Only 11% had web functions that allow supporters to sign on and send electronic letters to elected officials. This form of personalized e-mails also appears to have replaced past practices of signing up for web petitions. No site had a web petition.

Of particular interest is the emerging use of social media. Using the internet as a two-way engagement channel instead of as a one-way broadcast channel is becoming commonplace. This allows new ways to share ideas, have them spread by many others in networks, and to do it rapidly. With internet technology, it is possible to learn about a key policy issue in the morning, get the information out before lunch, and generate large numbers of e-mails and motivate grassroots supporters by the end of the day.

A high percentage of Delaware organizations are adopting social media technology. As seen in Figure 17, sixty-seven percent use social media sites, 40% use blogs, and 27% use twitter. Other image sharing technologies have much lower uses, indicating that the primary use may be communication and discussion utilities. While this is promising, more in-depth study would be required to understand the stage of their adoption of this technology, its uses, and its effectiveness.



**Figure 17. Social media tools/technology used by Delaware's environmental organizations.**

### **Engagement in Public Policy Advocacy and Lobbying**

There are a variety of ways in which Delaware's environmental interest groups engage decision makers and the public to influence public policy. In particular, groups advocate for their issues and at times lobby agency staff and elected officials in order to influence their decisions and actions on environmental issues. Some of those data and analyses related to public policy engagement are summarized below to provide a better understanding of the extent in which these groups engage on policy issues, the ways in

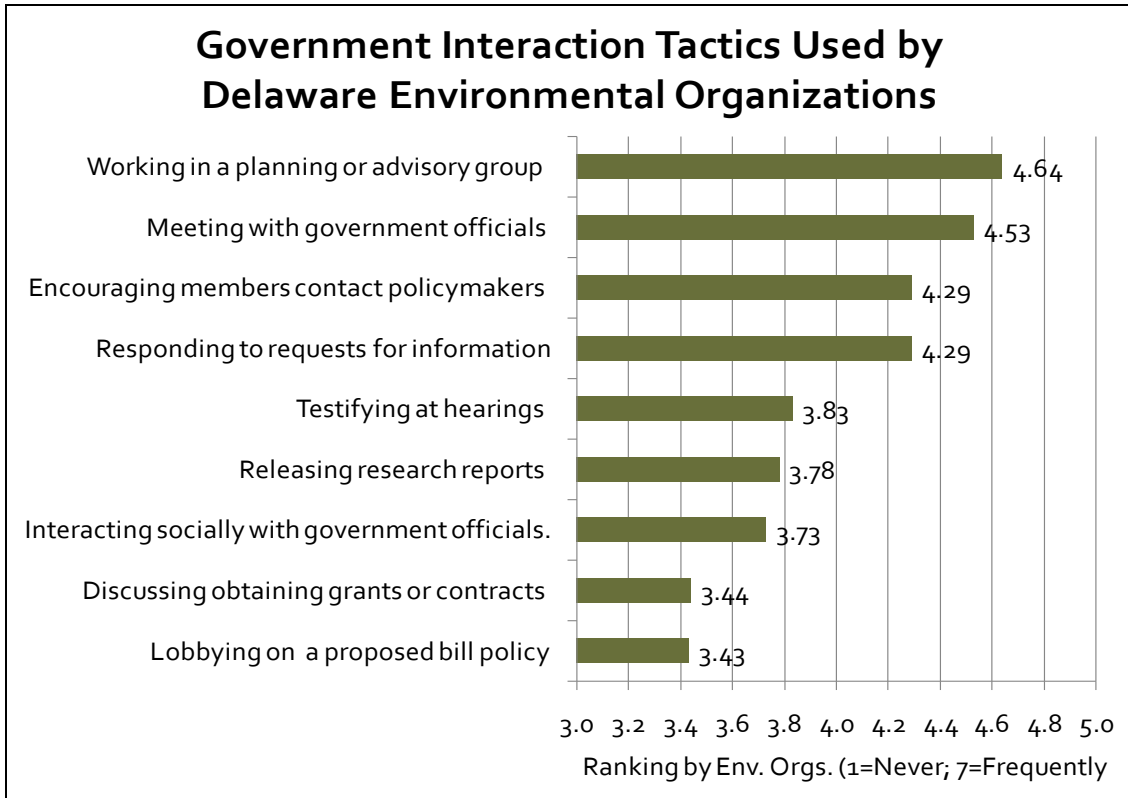
which they engage, and how they compare with other interest groups such as business interest and their level of engagement in Delaware.

### **Interaction with Government Officials**

Delaware's environmental organizations do have considerable contact with public officials. Fifty-four percent reported having one or more persons in the organizations responsible for government relations or public policy. Nearly half of the organizations, 48%, have this responsibility assigned to an executive director and/or a board member. About 22% leave this up to a volunteer and about 11% have it conducted by a lobbyist.

The organizations meet with government officials to discuss matters of mutual interest regularly. Sixty-six percent responded that they meet with government officials at least once a month, with 16% responding that meetings occur 10 or more times per month. Only 19% responded that they never meet with public officials.

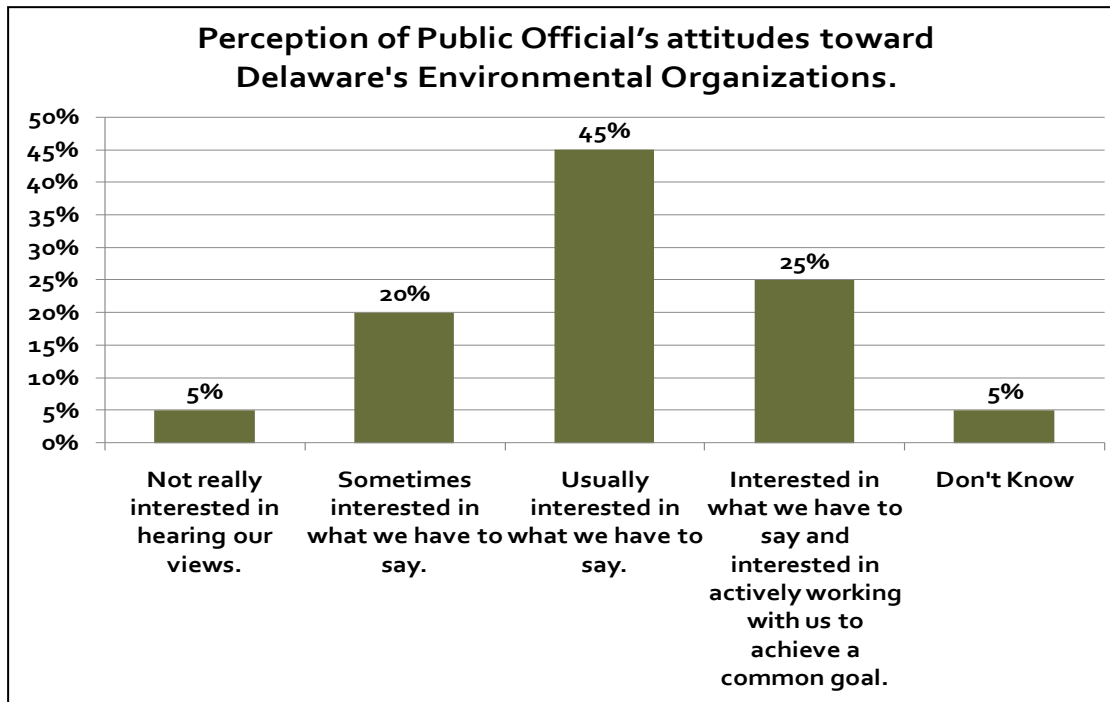
The most frequently used tactics for working with government agencies include participation in a planning or advisory group, meeting with government officials, encouraging members to contact policy makers, and responding to information requests. Discussing or obtaining government grants and lobbying for legislation or policy were the least frequently used tactics. The rankings of the tactics used by Delaware's environmental groups are shown in Figure 18.



**Figure 18. Ranking by organizations of tactics used to interact with government.**

### **Perception of Interest and Impact on Public Officials**

The organizations widely perceive that public officials are interested in their positions and issues. Seventy percent of the organizations reported that public officials are usually interested, while 20% reported they are sometimes interested, and only 5% reported that public officials are not really interested in what they have to say (see Figure 19).



**Figure 19.** Perception of public official's attitudes toward Delaware's environmental organizations.

Despite this positive perception of interest by public officials, the Delaware environmental organizations have a more modest perception of their impact on these officials. On a scale of 1 to 7, with one being no impact and 7 being strong impact, the organizations rank their impact very close to the middle at 4.28 [SD 1.5], indicating that they believe they have some impact but that it is not a major influence on public decisions. The numbers of organizations and their rankings are compared in Figure 20.

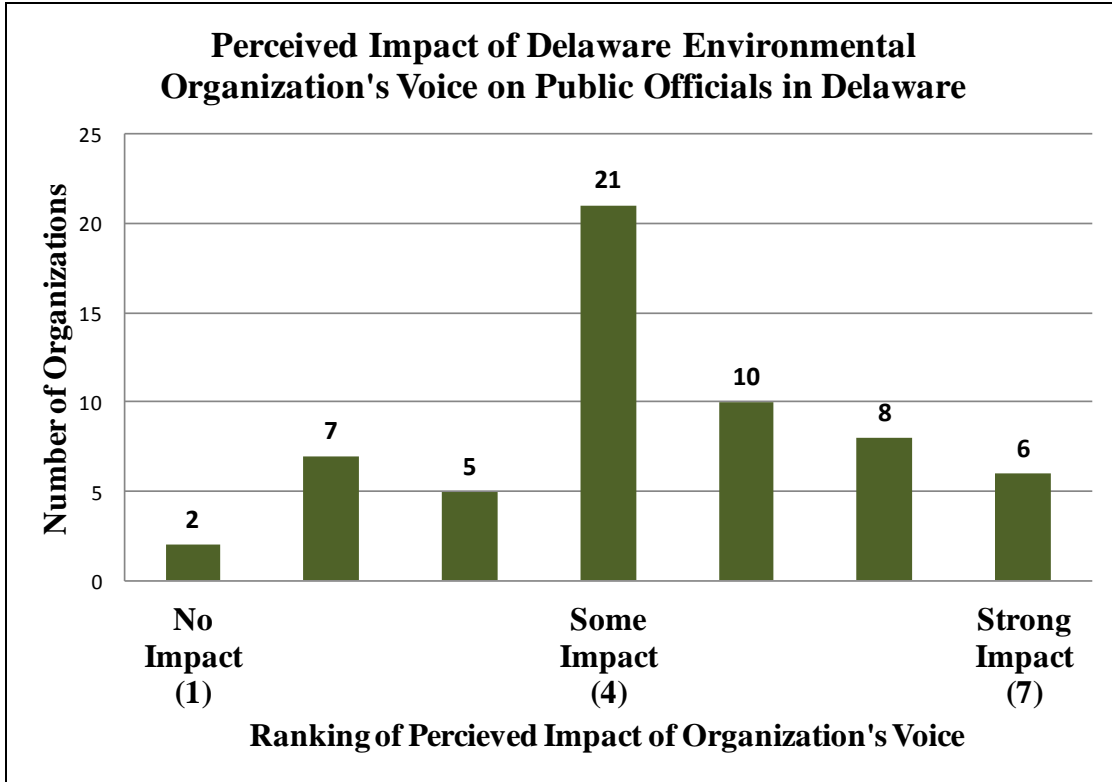


Figure 20. Perceived Impact of Delaware Environmental Organization's Voice on Public Officials in Delaware.

There appears to be some differences in the perception of impacts by organizations working at various geographic scales. For those groups above and below the mean value for perceived impact, state chapters of national organizations perceived their impact as weaker 5 times more often than as having a stronger impact. Local groups perceived themselves as having a weaker impact almost twice as often as having a strong impact. National and statewide organizations are equally split about their perceived impact. Only regional groups had a higher number of organizations that perceived themselves as having a stronger impact. A summary of the percent of each group of organizations and their perceived impact is in Table 9.

**Table 9. Percentage of Impact by Environmental Groups from different geographic scales of operation.**

**Perception of Impact by Environmental Groups of Different Geographic Scales of Operation**

<b>Geographic Scale of Activities</b>	<b>Weaker Impact</b>	<b>Stronger Impact</b>
<b>Local</b>	61%	39%
<b>Statewide</b>	50%	50%
<b>State Chapter of National</b>	83%	17%
<b>Regional</b>	43%	57%
<b>National</b>	50%	50%

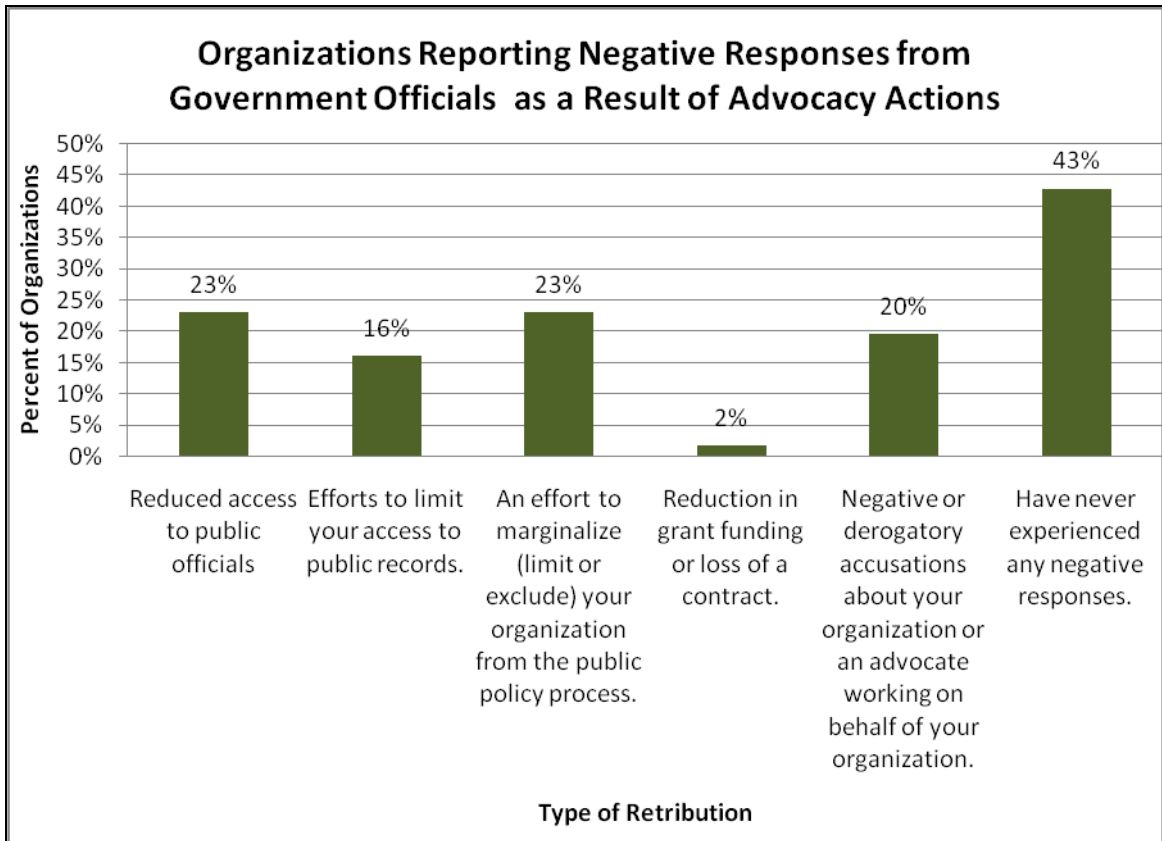
Weaker impact is based on those organizations that responded their impact was in the lower half of the rankings and stronger impact includes those responses that were in the higher half.

**Government Retribution**

It is interesting that despite the high number of Delaware environmental organizations that perceive government officials as usually having an interest in what they have to say; there is also a large number that report some form of government retribution. This ranges from reduced access to public officials and information, to marginalization of the organization and experiencing a derogatory accusation about the organization. In two cases, funding was also reduced to the organization (see Figure 21).

In total, 34% of the organizations responded that they had experienced some form of retribution from government officials as a result of advocacy actions. Under the category of other, an additional 11% commented that they thought retribution had

occurred but that it is too hard to know for sure. If added to those reporting retribution, it is possible that nearly half of all organizations, or 46%, may have experienced some form of retribution in response to their advocacy work.



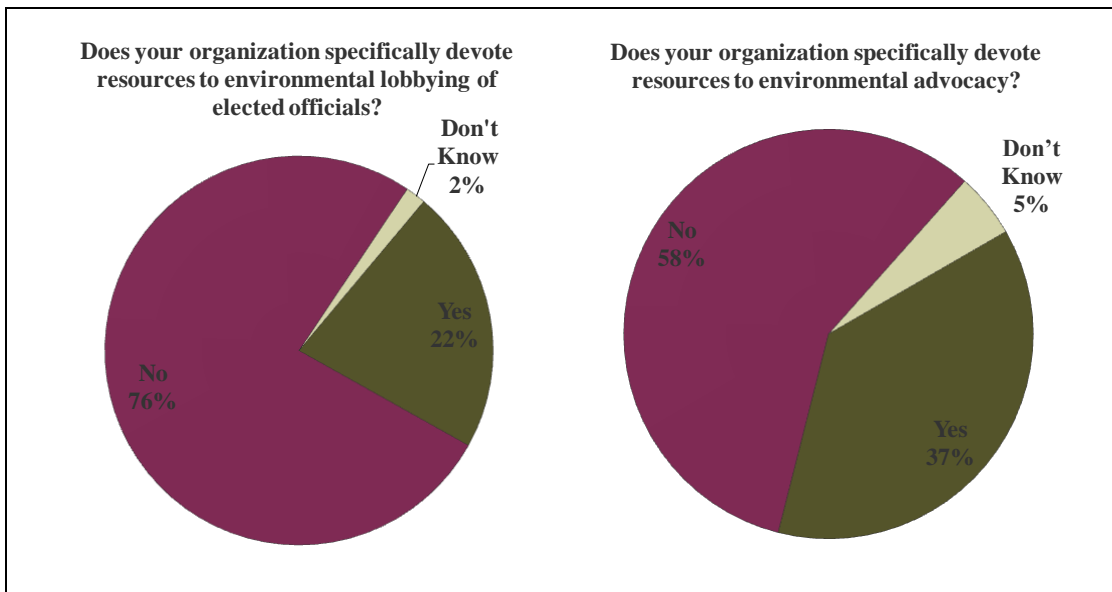
**Figure 21.** Percent of organizations responding to various types of retribution from government officials as a result of advocacy actions.

### **Environmental Interest Group Lobbying**

Many of the groups surveyed reported that they devote resources to environmental advocacy efforts. Just over 1/3 of the organizations ( $n=22$ ) devote

resources to advocacy. However, 56% (n=34) responded that they do not specifically devote resources for advocacy.

Even fewer devote resources to lobbying, a direct form of advocacy by a representative of an organization on issues pending before Delaware’s General Assembly or state agencies. Twenty-one percent (n=13) devote resources to lobbying for public policy. Seventy-four percent (n=45) do not devote resources to lobbying. These responses are summarized in Figure 22.



**Figure 22. Summaries comparing the resources that Delaware environmental organizations devote to advocacy and to lobbying.**

This implies that only a small part of the formal environmental interest group community is likely engaged in the direct actions of influencing environmental policy on matters before the State. Lobbying is often critical due to Delaware’s small size and network of political insiders that can at times work on issues behind the scenes. It does

appear that the organizations understand the importance, and have an interest in indirect or grassroots advocacy and lobbying activities. As seen in Table 10, responses to questions about whether or not they thought various actions were useful approaches to influence environmental policy, common grassroots advocacy approaches were ranked very high. Over two thirds of these groups thought that talking with elected officials, conducting grassroots advocacy, and writing letters to elected officials were useful approaches. Nearly two thirds also thought testifying at hearings on laws or regulations, contacting elected officials by telephone, and tracking legislation were useful. Less than one third believed that endorsing a candidate for office or holding protest or rallies were useful.

**Table 10. Percentage of organizations responding that various approaches to influencing environmental policy were good or excellent.**

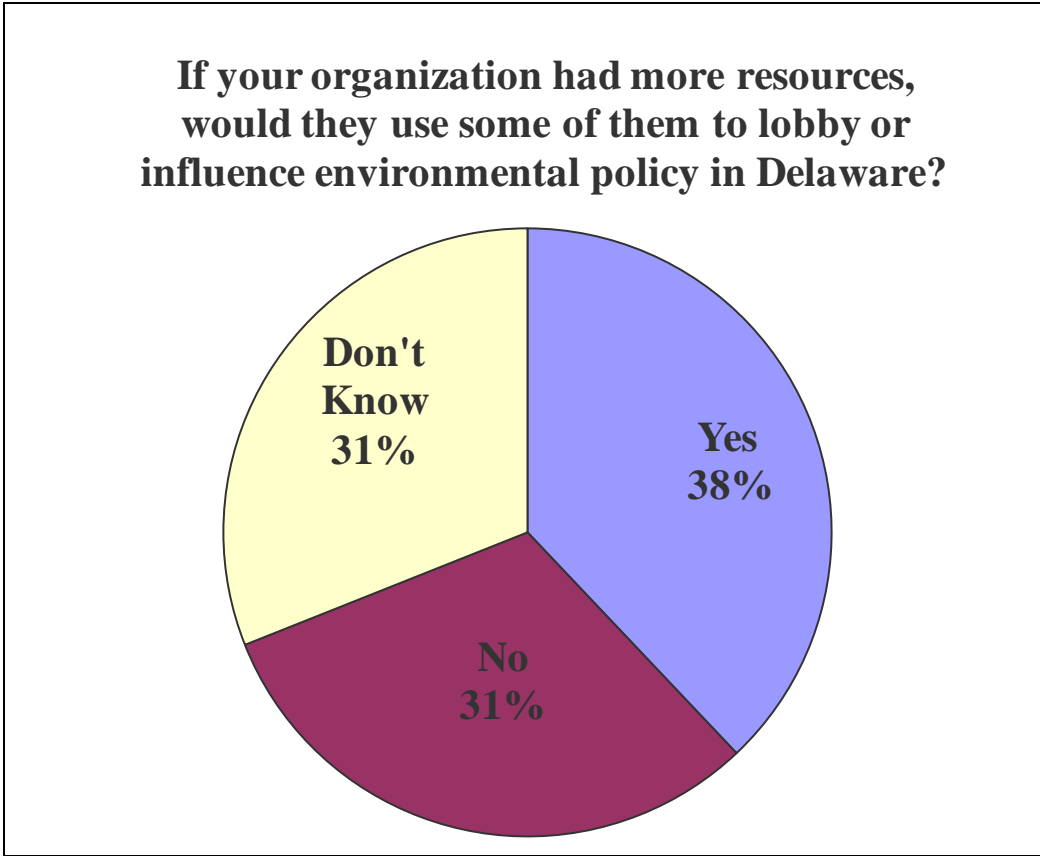
Approach to Influencing Environmental Policy	Percent
Talk to elected public officials	75%
Promote grassroots advocacy	67%
Write letters to elected officials	67%
Testify at hearings	66%
Telephone elected officials	64%
Tracking legislation	64%
Support or oppose regulations	59%
Draft legislation	49%
Sponsor a candidate forum	41%
Having a registered lobbyist	41%
Endorse candidate for public office	31%
Hold Rallies and Protest events	21%

These responses are very similar to the tactics used, in which the groups are conducting grassroots advocacy efforts, but steering away from more direct lobbying or endorsement of candidates for office. It appears that both the tactics and the perception of what these organizations find effective are well entrenched in the culture of these groups. Future research is needed to evaluate if these actions are actually effective in the social and political culture of Delaware, or if other tactics should be emphasized. It

may also simply be that as primarily volunteer organizations, these approaches are the only ones viable with volunteers working with limited fiscal resources.

Discussions with representatives from numerous organizations indicated that many consider lobbying by a nonprofit to be illegal for their nonprofit organization. Part of the problem with low levels of direct lobbying may be due to a lack of understanding of what activities are allowable under Internal Revenue Service (IRS) code and State laws regarding nonprofit lobbying activity. As previously discussed in Chapter 3, it is legal for nonprofits to lobby, and by selecting the 501(H) option as part of their reporting to the IRS on Form 990, they can stipulate the amount they can expend on these efforts and clarifying the exact definition of allowable lobbying activity under the IRS Code.

It should be noted that discretionary resources may also be a hindrance to lobbying. A survey question asked that if organizations had more resources, would they use some of them to lobby or influence environmental policy in Delaware. Figure 23 shows that 38% indicated that they would devote more to lobbying, and an additional 31 % responded they did not know. This indicates that there is the potential for a significant increase in environmental interest group lobbying if resources can be identified.



**Figure 23.** Interest or willingness of Delaware environmental organizations to lobby or influence environmental policy if more resources were available.

### **Resources Devoted to Lobbying**

The levels of resources devoted to lobbying reported in the survey are consistent with findings in the IRS 990 tax forms for Delaware’s environmental organizations. IRS Form 990s were available for 42 of the 72 organizations included in the survey. Three of these were for the national organizations rather than the state chapter. These included the National Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy, and the Sierra Club.

Of the 42 organizations reporting to the IRS on form 990, 15 specifically reported lobbying expenditures. This represents only about 21% (n=16) of the organizations included in the study. More importantly, 73% (n=11) of those reporting lobbying expenses were national organizations. There was 1 state organization and 3 regional organizations that reported lobbying expenses on their IRS form 990. In total there was \$10,188 reported by state and local groups, \$788,739 by regional groups, and \$9,342,358 by national environmental groups in the most recent available tax reporting records. The large amounts spent at the regional and national scale are most likely spent on national campaigns, not in Delaware. None of these expenditures were found to be reported to the Delaware public integrity commission. In addition, there was \$7,200 expended by a state organization to monitor legislative issues affecting the environment and to provide this information to environmental organizations in the region. However, even if the \$7,200 is added to the reported lobbying expenses at the state and local level, it documents that less than 0.18% of the total revenue reported on IRS form 990s was spent on lobbying by local Delaware groups. While local environmental groups may receive some indirect benefit from national lobbying efforts, they spend very little on State level lobbying. This may indicate they have limited influence in the public policy arena through formal lobbying activities. There is clearly a dearth in formal environmental interest group lobbying at the state and local scale, and much more robust lobbying at the national level.

Another argument could be made that Delaware's environmental groups utilize volunteers for their lobbying efforts, which would not be reflected in the revenue

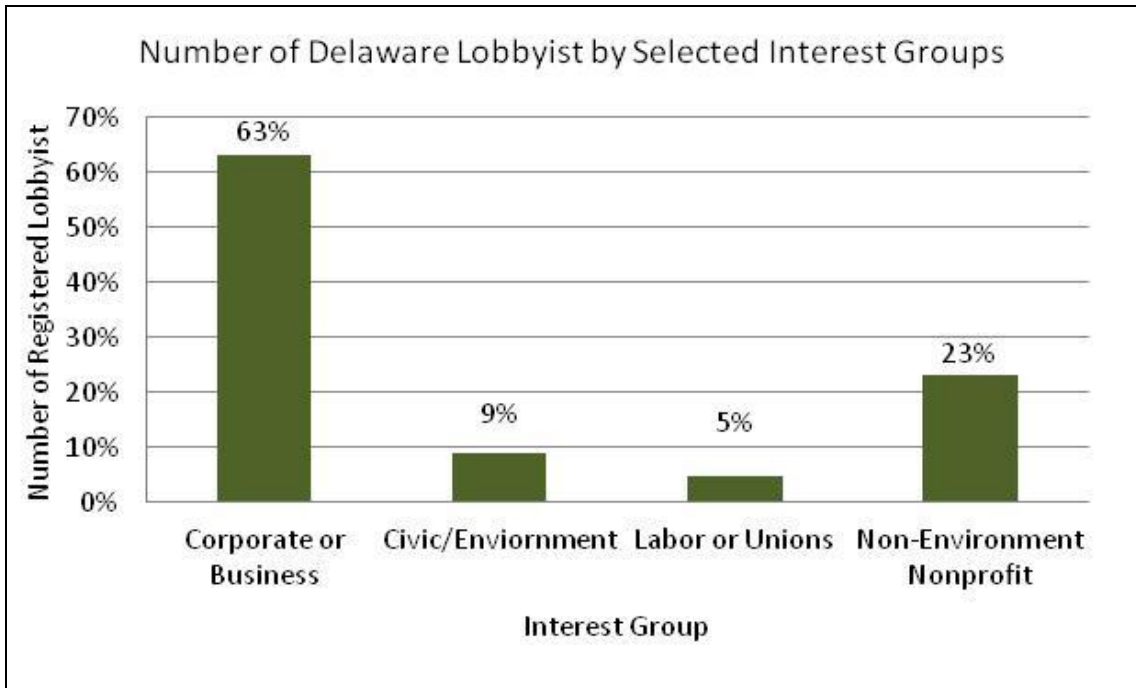
reports. This issue will be considered in the section that follows on the composition of Delaware lobbyists.

### **Composition of Delaware Lobbyists**

An analysis of the lobbying records available from Delaware's Public Integrity Commission provides some insight into the various groups seeking to influence Delaware public policy and the extent that the activities of environmental interest groups fit into the larger framework of policy decision making in Delaware.

As of Feb. 2010, records downloaded from the State of Delaware Public Integrity Commission included 307 registered lobbyists. Those data were coded to place each employer into one of four types based on the primary interests they represent including Corporate or Business, Civic/Environment (including civic organizations documented as promoting environmental issues), Labor or Unions, and non-profit groups promoting public benefits other than environmental policy. As shown in Figure 24, 63% (n=189) represented business interest, 9 % (n=27) represented organizations that are involved with promoting natural resource management or environmental conservation as part of their mission, 5 % (n=14) represented labor interest, and 23 % (n=69) represented other nonprofit charitable or social welfare interests. While these numbers show a significantly higher level of business interests, it is also important to consider the composition of each of these groups by categories of lobbyist that may be viewed differently by public and elected officials.

It should be noted that more than a third of the registered lobbyists that fell in the civic/environmental interest category were associated with just one group, the League of Women Voters, which has 10 registered lobbyists that may not all work on environmental issues.



**Figure 24. Number of Delaware Lobbyist by Selected Interest Groups.**

This analysis shows that there are seven registered lobbyists potentially representing business interest for every one lobbyist potentially representing environmental issues. In Delaware, the part-time legislators must often depend heavily on both lobbyist and Executive Branch officials from government agencies for information, guidance, and professional support. Delaware’s part-time legislature, with its limited professional staffing creates a policy culture where elected officials rely

heavily on what they perceive as professional input. In fact, Johnson and Pika found that Delaware legislators considered an important function of lobbyists to be providing technical information, research, and information about pending bills (2003). It is likely that, in general, they consider contract lobbyist and in-house lobbyists more as professionals or issue experts and give them deference over citizen lobbyist. Whether a lobbyist is paid or unpaid may be used as a proxy for professionalism or level of expertise. In reality, it may also separate them as insiders and outsiders of the political establishment, with volunteer or citizen lobbyist being viewed as well intended “dilettantes” rather than as serious professionals. (Piero, 2010, p. 17; Gitlin, 2000).

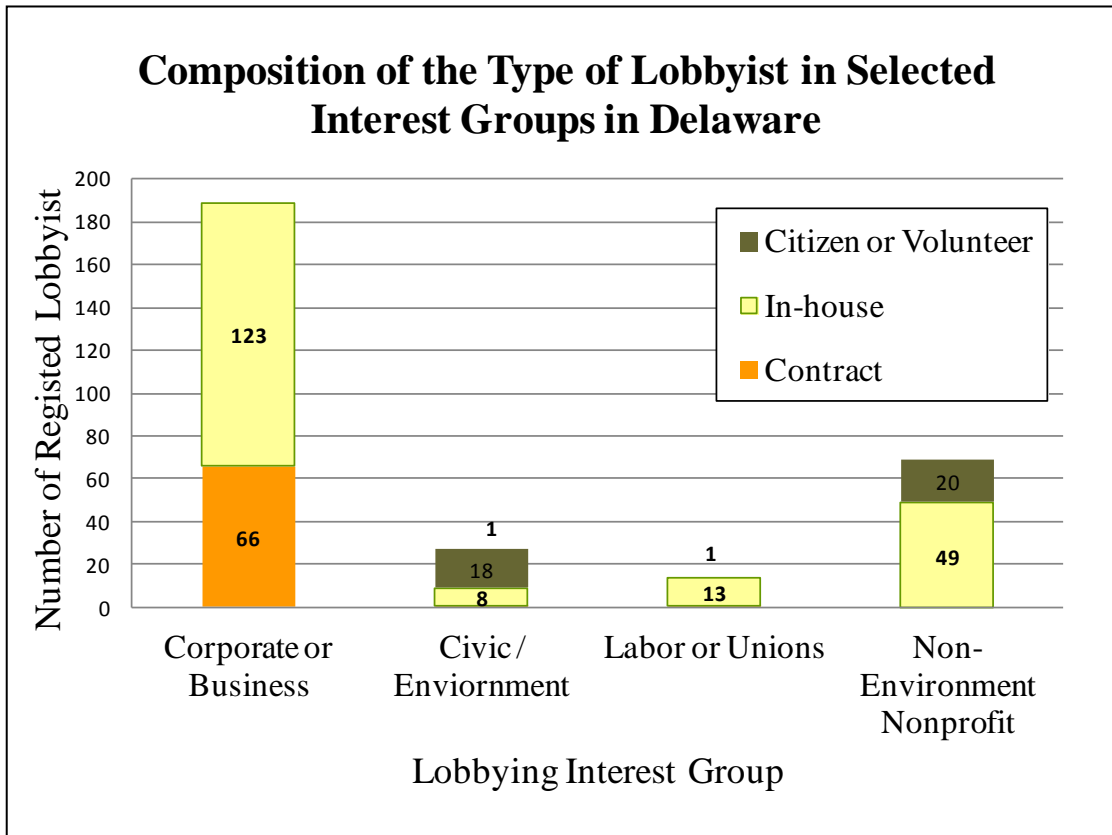
An analysis of both the type and category of lobbyist shows an even more significant power advantage to business groups over environmental groups. To evaluate the potential differences among the types of lobbying interest groups, the list of lobbyist by employers obtained from the Delaware Public Integrity Commission was further analyzed to place lobbyist into a category. As previously discussed different categories of lobbyist are likely viewed differently by policy makers in Dover. Professional lobbyists and in-house company or organization representatives are likely viewed as having particularly expertise. They are viewed as professionals. Alternatively, citizen and volunteer lobbyist likely receive less value for the technical and professional input, but may have influence due to their link to constituents.

The list of lobbyist was coded as being contract lobbyist, in-house lobbyist, citizen or volunteer lobbyist, or other based on personal knowledge of the individual lobbyist and review of information about them and their companies from internet

searches. An analysis of the interest group type of lobbyist and class of lobbyist shows distinct differences between those representing business and environmental issues. Of the 189 lobbyists representing business interests, 66 were contract lobbyist and 123 were in-house lobbyists. No citizen or volunteer lobbyists were identified.

As seen in Figure 25, a significant difference is observed for the Civic/Environmental lobbyists. Of the 27 registered lobbyists, one was a contract lobbyist, 8 were in-house lobbyist, and 18 were citizen or volunteer lobbyist.

This difference in the category of lobbyist, whether professional, in-house, or volunteer that comprise each of the major interest group types indicates an even stronger imbalance of influence between those registered lobbyist advocating for environmental issues and those advocating for business interests. However, it also shows one area of competitive advantage for environmental interests. Since citizen lobbyists are likely more trusted to represent populist views than contract lobbyist, they may be viewed as constituents that are believed to be of value to public officials.



**Figure 25.** Composition of the type of lobbyist found in selected lobbying interest groups in Delaware.

## **Chapter 6**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

This thesis is the first comprehensive description of the environmental interest group active in the State of Delaware. This research provides a detailed characterization of Delaware's environmental interest community that is comprised of a diverse group of formal and informal organizations with varying missions, funding, and staffing resources. Collectively, they have a substantial base of resources. Their conservation efforts to protect places, provide education, and carry out many environmental projects are significant.

Environmental groups in Delaware utilize a variety of approaches to improving the State's environmental and natural resources and work at a wide range of geographic scales. Despite this finding, their impact on environmental policy may be limited due to the small part of their efforts and resources that are directed at influencing public policy. This impact on environmental policy may also be limited due to their position as political outsiders. In Delaware's political culture, close relationships and a clubby environmental of insider politics is the norm. Outsiders have limited access or influence on the policy process. Other factors that may reduce the groups influence include their limited ability to come together on priority issues, a lack of time and resources, and limited expertise in advocacy and lobbying. At best, Delaware's

environmental interest community can be reactionary to significant threats to their interest. They appear to have the capacity and resources to effectively deter significant environmental policy setbacks, and likely play a key role in helping to maintain the policies that have led to many past environmental improvements in the State. However, they do not demonstrate the capacity at present to be a proactive driver that influences environmental policy in Delaware.

While this study only addresses one part of the environmental arena in Delaware, that of the formal environmental organizations, it provides a more comprehensive understanding of the capacities and role of Delaware's environmental interest group. It also provides information on which to base recommendations for the improvement of this group's effectiveness and provides a solid knowledge base for future research on the political influence system for environmental programs and policy in Delaware.

### **Delaware's Environmental Interest Organizations**

Seventy-two environmental organizations comprised of local, statewide, regional, and national groups with activity in Delaware were identified both to exist and to be active with environmental issues in Delaware. Groups were identified from national databases including Guidestar and the National Center for Charitable Statistics, from lists of environmental groups in Delaware provided by several of the environmental organizations, by review of webpage listings, through the review of several mailing lists of government agencies, through newspaper articles and through

discussions with representatives from various organizations. This multi-methods sampling approach was essential to providing a nearly complete census of Delaware's environmental organizations. I have found no other literature that provides such a comprehensive inventory of environmental organizations in Delaware.

However, it is important to note that this study did not capture the full range of organizations involved in the environmental policy arena of Delaware. There are many secondary and episodic players that were missed, such as community groups focused on localized issues, social services groups occasionally involved with environmental health or environmental justice issues, and environmental opposition groups that may exert considerable influence, particularly against energy, climate, and environmental regulatory policy. Inclusion of these and other groups that get involved, but not as a primary activity of their organizations, was beyond the scope of this research.

### **Characteristics of Delaware's Environmental Interest Groups**

Since the 1960's, Delaware's environmental interest groups have experienced a steady rate of establishment of new groups and the expansion of the overall number of groups. The existing core of organizations has shown considerable resiliency, with an average age of 22 years since establishment and with 90% having formal Internal Revenue Service nonprofit status. This is similar to the findings for the large national environmental organizations that are now stable and often key players in environmental debates (Bosso, 2005). It appears that the Delaware environmental interest community is stable. This is a significant finding, as it indicates that even if this group has limited

public policy effectiveness on a consistent basis, they have a well-established base and organizational structure that can provide episodic mobilizations on issues. It also provides a foundation to build upon for those interested in strengthening the role and influence of this community.

The community is comprised of an extensive web of local, statewide, regional and national organizations. While the focus of this study was on efforts by these groups at the State level of programs and policies, the local activities of the regional and national groups may be a key mechanism for bringing in ideas and practices from other states. They have considerably more resources and professional expertise than state and local groups that may be more effectively accessed to help strengthen local capacities. The larger national and regional organizations likely play a role in shaping the State interest group, the issues of concern, and the tactics used by accelerating the transfer of ideas and approaches used in other areas.

### **Environmental Interest Group Organizational Capacity**

As a whole, the loose network of environmental organizations does have a substantial base of resources available including funding, staffing, and a volunteer force. Both the estimated operating funds and an estimated value of volunteer service are important. They are substantial. They are also unevenly distributed among groups working at different scales, with most operating resources skewed toward larger national and regional organizations, and volunteer resources available at the state and local level.

An effort to adjust for the skewing of funding from national and regional organizations that expend most of their resources outside of Delaware resulted in an estimated \$8-10 Million in annual operating funds for environmental interest work in Delaware, including a variety of environmental programs and projects. This estimate was derived by assuming that most of the \$5.95 million reported in IRS Form 990s by local and statewide organizations that comprise 71 percent of those included in the study was expended on issues in Delaware. A modest amount of approximately \$ 2-4 million was then added for additional expenditures by the regional and national organizations based on a review of what they reported in the survey and identification of tasks and activities specific to Delaware reported as tasks in their IRS Form 990s. The funds are generated from a variety of sources including membership fees, donors, government grants, fees for services, and fundraising events. However, only a very small portion of this is allocated to environmental policy advocacy or engagement. The remainder is spent on staffing, environmental projects, and other services.

It should be noted that most government grants are restricted from use for lobbying, and organizations may also be hesitant to use these funds for advocacy efforts. Forty-eight percent of the organizations (n=35) reported some level of funding from government. Of those reporting government as a source of revenue, 63% (n=22) reported less than 10% of their funding was from government while 14% (n=5) reported that over 50% of their budget was from government sources. This could have implications on both the availability of funds for public policy advocacy as well as act as a deterrent to public policy advocacy which is sometimes viewed inappropriate by

government funders. Conversely, the publically funded projects of these organizations may foster stronger environmental values by the public leading to more environmental support. The organizations may also increase lobbying activity to get additional funds for their particular projects.

Results suggest that 43% of the environmental interest groups active in Delaware, all of whom were either local or statewide groups, were not required to file federal tax forms and were not identified from national databases. It was only through the multi-methods sampling approach that supplemented the national data with a more comprehensive inventory and survey data that allowed an adequate census of the interest group.

Environmental organizations with activity in Delaware exhibit a diversity of human resource capacity including professional staff, volunteers, and membership. This includes 115 identified paid professional staff with high levels of expertise, tens of thousands of members, and a range of volunteers estimated to be in the range of 2,380 to 4,485. Using the assumptions previously discussed in the analysis chapter for average service hours and the value of this service, it is estimated that the value of this volunteer service is from \$5.9 to \$11.1 million. More importantly, the majority of this value is associated with volunteer service at state and local environmental organizations, which account for \$4.3 to \$8.5 million in volunteer service value.

In combination, the operating funds and value of volunteer service provide an estimated range of \$12.3 to \$18.5 million in annual resources for the work of environmental organizations in Delaware.

Fifty-seven percent of the organizations have annual operating budgets below \$25,000, although these groups do have volunteer service for operations. All of these are either local or statewide organizations. Analysis also confirms some significant differences between groups working at different geographic scale, such as a high prevalence of all voluntary organizations at the more local geographic scale of operation as compared to higher levels of professional staff at the regional and national scale organizations. Those data clearly indicate that the most resources are available at the national level, with the exception of volunteers, despite concern that much of the environmental policy activity is now devolving from the national to state policy arenas. Based on membership data, it is also assumed that the majority of members are check writing members that have little direct engagement in local environmental activities of the local organizations. Assuming many donors prefer organizations to act locally, this may have implications for fundraising efforts of state and local organizations who may market this for a fundraising advantage.

Of particular interest is the role of those groups with very small budgets versus the role of the more established organization. There appears to be a significant separation of two classes of organizations that make up Delaware's environmental interest group community. These include the professional working non-profit organizations with paid staff, and the all-volunteer grassroots organizations. The former may have more clout in the public policy process in Delaware due to them being viewed as professionals and experts. They are more likely to get a seat at the table during the development of policy initiatives. Despite limited fiscal resources, all-

volunteer grassroots organizations provide an abundance of potential volunteer staff resources that can be mobilized on key issues. At times they may also have professional experts in their volunteer ranks. Identifying a clear and mutually beneficial nexus between the professional working organizations and all-volunteer organizations that leverages the strengths of each is needed. For example, if issues of common interest can be identified for advocacy campaigns, the working organizations may be willing to support or fund advocacy training for volunteers from other groups to further their mutual interests. In turn, the all-volunteer groups can assist in these efforts, and also apply the new techniques to other issues in the future. This will help build capacity in the broader interest group community while also providing benefits specific to the organizations involved with the environmental campaigns.

### **Environmental Issues & Concerns**

Delaware's environmental organizations have broad issue agendas with significant implications for collective action. Opportunities for working together may be complicated by conflicting and competing issues agendas that result in a lack of collective focus by the interest group community. The survey results indicate that in Delaware the environmental community is not coalesced as a unified group around any single issue or group of issues, but very loosely linked by their concern about some aspect of protecting the environment. While this may ensure a diversity of issues are considered, it may at times dilute available resources. Other researchers have found that a high diversity of specialized interests may make it extremely hard to select and

focus on common agendas. Ingram, Colnic, and Mann (1995) found that it likely weakens the impact of environmental interests and makes it more likely that at best, environmental policy will only be advanced in a piecemeal fashion that results in environmental policies that only approximate the desired solutions, if passed at all. This fragmentation of issue interests may also hinder the willingness to commit resources to collective actions involving multiple organizations, significantly reducing the impact of this community, despite its resources and potential.

While there is limited uniformity of environmental issues among the groups, preliminary cluster analysis shows that there are likely thematic groupings that provide opportunity for collaboration among subsets of the environmental community. Land and water conservation is one such area of interest, with two to three times as many organizations aligned with it than with any other cluster of issues. Other issue areas included 1) energy and toxic releases, 2) urban, recycling and brownfields, 3) climate and sustainability, and 4) habitat conservation. Effective alliances require common interest to unify organization involvement and my initial findings indicate that common interest exists, at least among subgroups, which could lead to more productive collaborative issues and resource sharing.

For the broad issues of concern included in the survey that had been previously used by Responsive Management (2010) to gauge public opinion on environmental issues in Delaware, Delaware's environmental organizations are typically aligned with those of Delaware's public. However, there are a few notable exceptions. These include a lower level of concern by environmental organizations about toxic waste and

air quality, and higher levels of concern about climate change and sea level rise by the environmental organizations.

The differences in concern for toxic waste and air quality indicate that some key communities may not be part of the mainstream environmental interest group, particularly underserved communities that are more likely to have environmental justice concerns. These groups may express their concerns through other interest groups, such as local community civic associations or maintenance corporations, community block groups, or health and social services organizations. This may indicate some level of disconnect from a large socio-economic group of Delaware's population directly affected by environmental problems potentially exacerbated by past societal and environmental injustices.

Differing levels of concern for climate change between the environmental organizations and Delaware's public may be related to the recent emergence of this issue. There is considerable debate over climate change science that has caused societal confusion and anxiety related to this issue. In addition, it is likely that the long time frame for results from mitigation actions may reduce the sense of urgency required to mobilize the public, and sustain this mobilization, making it hard to promise any quick fixes to solve the problems like occurred for other environmental policies in past decades (Schroeder, 2009).

## **Tactics and Approaches**

Delaware's environmental groups use a limited range of traditional tactics to influence policy. These are mostly contacting public officials to discuss issues or working on public advisory committees. In general, the groups tend to be much less inclined to utilize confrontational tactics, be involved with electoral politics, or conduct direct lobbying. Efforts are made to work as coalitions, but these efforts appear limited to a small subgroup of the total interest group community and there is little evidence of any significant level of resources being devoted to these efforts.

It also appears from the data that there is an underlying assumption that the best approach is to get results is by working through government agencies. While this approach has been successful in the past, it is unclear if it will continue into the future (Schroeder, 2009; Bosso, 2005; Chertow & Esty, 1997; Switzer, 1997). The environmental issues of today are very different than those of concern in the earlier decades of environmental efforts. The issues are more complex, and unlikely to be met by the same public agency compartmentalized policy structure that worked to clean up heavily polluted rivers or dense smog. It will likely require far more interdisciplinary approaches, involving multiple sectors of society.

## **Collaboration and Collective Action**

Groups recognize a need and the benefit of collaboration. The survey results found that the vast majority of organizations reported that they work with other groups each year. However, the reported organizations listed as collaborators were much more

limited, and this may indicate that this primarily occurs among a small group of the organizations. Some efforts, such as the Delaware Environmental Summit previously discussed have been undertaken to improve collaboration, but appear to have had limited success in creating sustained collaborative efforts or collective environmental campaign initiatives. Some evidence found during the review of web sites and news articles indicates that there have been issue-driven examples of strong collaboration and alliance building, such as those led by the Delaware River Keeper as part of opposition to the Delaware River Channel Deepening and natural gas hydrofracking. However, it should be noted that these efforts are led by a regional, not a local or state organization from Delaware. It may be that working at this scale provides more opportunities for collective action, more resources to draw upon, and is less impacted by the local political context of the small State.

A much more deliberate effort is needed to better identify the groups with the most common interest and complementary resources and capacities, some of whom are likely organizations that work on a larger scale than the State of Delaware. It appears that the potential exists to align subgroups of organizations for policy campaigns in Delaware. However, achieving broader collaboration will require a thoughtful effort to identify the most important environmental issues to them and Delaware's public, better alignment of mutual interests and missions, and committed leadership that devotes resources to make this happen.

## **Engagement in Environmental Policy**

The extent to which the Delaware environmental interest community actively advocates for public policy is limited, and most often occurs as outsiders in a state where policy development is a political insider's game. State and local environmental groups reported that they employ grassroots advocacy, but I also found information that indicates that limited resources is likely a hindrance to environmental advocacy, and especially direct lobbying, in Delaware.

The social and political context in which the environmental organizations must operate presents significant challenges, especially to the large number of all-volunteer groups that make up the environmental interest group community. When it comes to influencing environmental policy in Delaware, the environmental interest community remains on the fringe despite the commitment and motivation of many individual organizations and the staff, members, and volunteers that comprise this interest group. Yet the data on their stable existence over half a century and the substantial base of resource at least indicate that they are likely to continue to be present, and will likely challenge the status quo and work to reduce efforts to reverse past environmental successes.

## **Influence of Social and Political Context**

When attempting to influence environmental policy, the environmental interest groups work in a challenging social and political context of insider politics where they are usually outsiders. In Delaware's political culture, close relationships and a clubby

environmental of insider politics dominated by a political elite who wield influence and have access to policy makers is the norm. Outsiders have limited access or influence on the policy process, unless they have significant resources.

For those working from the outside, there are also signs of negative consequences. Thirty-four percent of the organizations directly reported they experience retribution, with an additional 11% commenting that they suspected it. This indicates that as much as 46% of the environmental interest groups may have experienced negative consequences, most often from government, for their activities. This may have a chilling effect on organizations in Delaware.

Qualitative assessment also indicates that Delaware's environmental interest groups are likely impacted by the political opportunity structure created by State government. This alignment was identified by former Governor Peterson as part of the efforts to build the public support for the passage of Delaware's landmark Coastal Zone Act (Peterson, 1999; Oates, 2011). The strong alignment and support by the Governor for this environmental agenda with that of the environmental groups, as well as many other interest groups not associated with environmental actions, was critical to swaying public opinion and pressure for its passage.

In the early 1990's the political opportunity structure again led to extensive collective action for land protection and many other environmental issues believed to be associated with the policy agenda of Governor Michael Castle. This event appeared to be a result of a sound framing of the issues by State government through its Environmental Legacy Program Report, an awareness of the public for a need for action

that arose from a common and united message, and a collaborative and supportive Governor. The political opportunity of this era is also identified as a likely reason for an unprecedented growth of environmental organizations. The data does not indicate whether or not Delaware's environmental interest groups played a role in creating the political opportunities, the role of the individual government leaders, and the role and influence of external policy efforts at the national level or in other states.

Although there have been era's when Delaware's government was aligned with the State's environmental interest group, environmental organizations most commonly engage in public policy advocacy in a challenging social and political context of insider politics where environmental interest groups are political outsiders. There are at least seven times more lobbyists representing business interests than environmental interest in Delaware. Business interests are represented by paid professional or in-house lobbyist, while environmental interests are most often volunteer citizen lobbyist that are given less stature. Environmental groups promote and conduct grassroots advocacy, but have reservations about direct lobbying. Only \$10,800 was reported on IRS tax records and \$1,541 in Delaware Public Integrity Commission records for lobbying by those advocating for environmental policy at the state or local scale. This amount is a fraction of the amount expended by other competing interests in the State of Delaware.

This study demonstrates that environmental interest groups are well-established in Delaware. They have diverse interests and capacity and have a substantial base of operating resources and volunteers. They appear to have interest in public policy

advocacy. They likely have some impact on environmental resources through a wide range of programs, but have a very limited influence on environmental policy.

State level advocacy efforts by Delaware's environmental groups are not well organized, well-funded, consistent, or as robust as those advocating for competing interests. In fact, when it comes to advocating to members of Delaware's legislature, the lobbying data indicates that the occasional voice from these groups is muted by other competing interests. The largely volunteer citizen based environmental groups are no match for the much better organized, staffed and funded business and other special interest in Delaware.

Despite this finding, the data indicate that they do have the existing structure, resource, and capacity that are necessary to react to serious environmental threats or crises. While they are not a strong proactive force for environmental policy, it is clear that they will continue to provide a presence, be willing to challenge powerful interests, and be capable of swinging public opinion when political opportunities present themselves. Indeed, while a stronger environmental interest group would make it easier to meet the remaining environmental challenges in the State, it is likely that the opposing forces would have a far more negative impact without the long standing presence of Delaware's environmental interest group.

### **Recommendations for Improving Environmental Advocacy in Delaware**

There are options for improving environmental advocacy efforts by Delaware's environmental interest group. To be more effective, the community needs to improve

its coordination of efforts, better prioritize common issues, share limited resources, be more inclusive, and better frame the environmental issues in terms the public can understand and support.

While Delaware has a stable environmental interest group with a substantial base of resources that has experienced episodes of significant effectiveness, such as with the passage of Delaware's Coastal Zone Act of 1971 and with the open space coalition in the late 1980s, at present it does not appear to be a prominent force on environmental programs and policy in the State. To have more influence, the group must adapt or change its approach. Strengthening the group will require effective leadership that transcends multiple organizations, employs new and more effective strategies, and forges much stronger and more inclusive coalitions.

Delaware's environmental groups see a need to increase their efforts and resources for advocacy and lobbying, indicating a desire to increase the level of engagement in the environmental policy arena. While the resources devoted at present are limited, 38% of those organizations that completed the survey expressed that they would devote more resources to lobbying for environmental policy if additional funds were identified. In addition to seeking other funds, organizations may consider identifying opportunities for outside assistance that helps them describe, prioritize, and select key environmental issues, conduct an more detailed assessment of existing capacities, and identify and develop strategies to build capacity where deficiencies are identify that would help create a more consistent and focused engagement in environmental policy. These resources may be available at Delaware's academic

institutions, within some of the larger environmental organizations, or eligible for funding from foundations. Also, while it is assumed that more resources increases the potential for more advocacy, it may be just as important to improve coalition building, better define common issues, and identify effective leadership to ensure any resources are more effectively utilized. A strong argument can also be made that efforts would be best improved by identifying or recruiting champions for key issue that are part of Delaware's political elite, and bolstering their work with grassroots support.

Fortunately there is a solid base to build upon. Delaware's environmental groups do have what can be defined as significant "bench strength" (Morse, 2004). In this context, bench strength refers to building upon the existing capacities, recognizing that it is better to build upon existing strengths. While it does not appear the groups are collectively capable of providing resources on the consistent and sustainable basis required for most complex environmental policy changes, they do have the capacity to sporadically mobilize for a specific incident, crises, or on issues where their interests are closely aligned with the policy position of Delaware's powerful executive branch of government. The challenge is to find new ways of doing business that make the episodic events more common and consistent over the longer time periods required for public policy development. To do this, a better understanding of the key elements that made these events successful and whether they can be recreated for other policy issues is needed. A case study analysis would improve our understanding of these events to inform and guide future policy advocacy efforts.

**Recommendation 1. Better Alignment of Issues and Mutual Needs of Subgroups of Organizations: Environmental organizations should undertake deliberate efforts to identify common issues of environmental organizations, public understanding of the identified issues, and an assessment of organization capacities to address the issue.**

It is important to recognize the diversity of issues that are of interest to each organization within Delaware's environmental interest group, and that not all groups have the same focus or interest. While some common issues may seem intuitive to many, a more deliberate identification of the key issues aligned with groups, and the potential cost and benefit of collaborating on these issues is needed. This would likely indicate which groups have close common interests, which have an important niche or specialization related to different environmental focus areas, and where opportunities may exist or be created to leverage the variety of skills and interests in a manner that is mutually beneficial, promoting better collaboration. Increasing the influence of environmental interests will require an effort to understand that collaborations are motivated by both organizational self-interest and broader public interests. Complex alignments on both issues and organizational needs are critical. To address this concern, a much more deliberate effort is needed to identify the common interests, as well as key issue niches and areas of particular specialization or skills among the environmental organizations. This should also include an assessment of the specific needs of various organizations directly associated with the issue. To have strong collaborations that are sustainable, you must be able to answer the question of what is in it for each individual organization involved. It is also important to understand the

public understanding and support for the issues. In addition, a capacity assessment of what each organization could provide as part of a collaborative effort to address key issues, and where these capacities can be leveraged to identify the most beneficial contribution of those involved is recommended. Finally, Delaware's small size and friendly relationships among political insiders may make regional and national organization collaborations as important, or on some issues, more important, than the internal resources of the local or state organizations.

Conducting these types of assessments may require technical assistance from outside the interest group community to comprehensively frame the issue in a way that both the organizations and the public can understand. This is not a new concept in Delaware. Examples such as those found in "Decisions for Delaware: Sea Grant Looks at the Inland Bays" (Scotto, 1983) and "Protecting Delaware's Natural Heritage: Tools for Biodiversity Protection (Environmental Law Institute, 1999) have taken a comprehensive look at key environmental issues in a way that can be the foundation for building collaborative environmental campaigns. In the initial phases, the resources will likely require that the initial issues of focus are those aligned with larger organizations that may be able to provide resources in return for the added support for their cause. The mutual benefits of these efforts would not only include added effectiveness on addressing the specific issue, but a secondary benefit of better understanding the process of developing collaborations and aligning resources that could be applied to future issue campaigns.

Targeted efforts should be taken to ensure better alignment of environmental organizations and issues. Groups with the capabilities to assist with these efforts should be identified and recruited to begin building local capacity. This expertise may be found in some regional and national groups, or their state chapters, or with groups external to the mainstream environmental interest group such as Delaware Association of Nonprofit Agencies. There may also be merit in building on the relationships developed through the Delaware Environmental Summit and evolving them into more deliberate issue work teams that seek additional training and capacity building assistance.

**Recommendation 2. Training and Capacity Building: Develop and implement training and capacity building efforts.**

There is an overarching need for training and capacity building to improve the effectiveness of Delaware's environmental interest group. This includes advocacy training, issue campaign development training, message development training, fundraising training, and training on approaches to collaboration and collective action. There are many programs available to assist with this, but a concerted effort is needed for their implementation and delivery. This needs to include both the professional staff of working environmental organizations as well as the volunteers from grassroots organizations that engage episodically as leisure activities. A more in-depth needs assessment is recommended to assess the existing capacities and limitations of various groups, as well as those with capacity to help with the delivery of capacity building efforts.

As a starting point, the assessment could review the findings in this study regarding tactics used and preferred by Delaware's environmental organizations; build upon them to add additional tactics, and design a survey to identify training and capacity building needs to have them better utilized. Assistance in survey design may be available as a pro-bono service by a local academic institution, one of the Delaware environmental organizations, or from other sources. It is also possible that this work could be developed into a grant project application that merges the needs assessment with specific training or capacity building efforts. It may even be a project that could receive funds from local groups such as the Greenwatch Institute that administers a modest fund for environmental projects in Delaware.

**Recommendation 3. Become More Inclusive: Promote a more inclusive involvement in environmental policy activities.**

The interest groups need to promote a broader, more inclusive and more consistent involvement in environmental policy activities. This means building stronger relationships among the environmental groups as well as with other groups working on the fringe that have a common interest on specific environmental issues. As can be documented as part of Delaware's Coastal Zone Act development and efforts growing out of Delaware's Environmental Legacy program, broader engagement creates more political will and action demonstrating the value of broader engagement.

Environmental interest groups should consider and develop a list of targeted groups not typically associated with environmental action as their primary mission for priority environmental issues. They should then seek out opportunities to meet and

discuss issues with these groups in both formal and informal venues. It is also important that contacts be identified and communication mechanisms be developed to inform and potentially engage these groups. This may start with efforts as simple as issue targeted e-mail lists or phone lists.

A targeted effort is needed to identify and engage environmental justice communities. Various organizations including the Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League, University of Delaware's Center for Community Research and Service, Wilmington Area Planning Council, and the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control could help identify communities potentially dealing with environmental justice issues that could serve as a starting point for potential collaboration discussions. It appears that these issues are more often addressed by community groups that are not directly part of the mainstream environmental interest groups in Delaware.

**Recommendation 4. Embrace New Communication Technology: Capitalize on the benefits of new communications technology.**

Delaware's environmental interest group should fully embrace and utilize emerging communications technology. While most organizations use the web and e-mail, and some are using social media, there is still limited effective use of these tools at the local level. These tools can assist in fundraising, outreach, and mobilization of grassroots advocacy efforts. It is also a technology being embraced by the next generation of potential environmental leaders.

**Recommendation 5. Government Cooperation: Continue to seek out opportunities and be represented on boards, commissions, and advisory committees.**

Environmental organizations should continue to seek out opportunities and be represented on boards, commissions, and advisory groups whenever possible. The utility of this should also be expanded by ensuring that more groups have staff or members serve on committees, and that those serving routinely brief other interested groups. At present, it appears that this activity is limited to a relatively small number of organizations and individual members of these groups.

There have been, and will continue to be times when the relationship between environmental interest groups and government agencies are complementary, supplementary, and/or adversarial (Young, 2006). These changing relationships should be recognized and embraced based on the opportunities and policy context. Regardless of the nature of the relationship at any particular point in time, working together is usually mutually beneficial in the long run. As such, environmental groups should continue to work directly with government even in adversarial times.

Environmental organizations may also consider pressing to establish, or re-establish the past practice of a regular meeting with key government officials such as the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control. This was an effective mechanism for developing mutual respect and understanding between environmental organizations and government in the years following the development of Delaware's Environmental Legacy report. It has great potential in today's era of increasingly complex environmental issues, even if it serves simply to achieve better

access and mutual consideration of ideas with Delaware's environmental agency.

However, it should be noted that to be successful, these officials must want to be better listeners and be open to ideas from others.

Another concept worth consideration would be to press to have Delaware establish an Environmental Advocate position in state government, or to better utilize existing positions such as the DNREC Community Ombudsman to serve in a similar capacity. Numerous states have established staff to support improved relationships between government and communities. This would be particularly useful to meet the common need to better engage environmental justice communities. A good example exists in the nearby Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

**Recommendation 6. Infiltrate Delaware's Political Elite: Take actions to directly participate in Delaware's good ol' boy network and recruit political insiders for environmental initiatives.**

To be more effective, groups must find ways to have their concerns considered by those with the most influence in Delaware. In essence, Delaware's environmental interest groups must find ways to participate more directly in the good ol' boy network of public policy in Delaware.

Environmental groups should urge key members to get more involved in local chambers of commerce, main street programs, church groups and other community events. They should also attend and participate in local town and municipal meetings, as well as civic meetings to ensure environmental issues are considered.

Groups and their members should increase efforts to attend political events and socialize with elected officials to build relationships. In Delaware's political context, relationships and access are critically important. It is important that environmental interest groups have members that build and nurture relationships with Delaware's elected officials and political elite.

Finally, the environmental community should seek opportunities to cultivate members of Delaware's political elite to be environmental champions and recruit political insiders for environmental efforts and campaigns. This will likely have to be issue specific, but may be one of the most powerful tools for having environmental concerns seriously considered by the states policy makers. These individuals have the influence and knowledge about Delaware's policy process that is needed to navigate through the challenging steps of environmental policy development.

**Recommendation 7. Develop a Mentoring Program for Future Leaders:-Team experienced and knowledgeable environmental leaders with new recruits to transfer knowledge and experience.**

Delaware's environmental interest groups have many people with valuable experience, but many of these environmental leaders are aging. In addition, new members and recruits face a considerable learning curve for involvement in environmental policy. This existing knowledge asset should be utilized to expand existing capacities and to develop the next generation of environmental leaders and advocates.

For those with experience, mentoring may help transfer and build relationships of new members of the organizations, as well as build credibility. It also helps generate fresh ideas while re-invigorating long term environmental activists. While competition and the need for trust makes it hard to open up ones contact list of those wielding power behind the scenes, targeted mentoring should occur to ensure continuity of efforts on the time scale for public policy development, to transfer real work knowledge and experience, and to ensure the infusion of new ideas.

### **Future Research**

This study has provided the first comprehensive look at Delaware's Environmental Interest Group. It provides an in-depth look at the social and political context for their activities, their resource capacity, and their approaches to environmental issues. As such, it sets a solid baseline for future study of environmental advocacy in Delaware and beyond. As is often the case, there were many questions that could not be addressed in this study and a number of new questions that arose as part of the analysis. A number of the key topics that merit future study are included below with the hope that they will be considered for future study.

A deliberate study of past episodic events that influenced environmental policy in Delaware in a positive way is needed. This may be a case study analysis and qualitative assessment to determine the key elements they share that ensured success. Was there a crisis, a clear champion, a political insider to navigate the policy process, a well-defined and easily understood issue? Were these events the origin of significant

environmental policy and program advancements or simply the catalyst that brings together a significant amount of incremental work and efforts occurring below the radar over a long period that comes together in these events? Can the common elements be identified and applied to new issues in a deliberate way to improve environmental policy on other issues in the future? A clear understanding of these episodic events, their social and political context, and their common characteristics would significantly improve our knowledge and understanding of effective and ineffective environmental policy advocacy in Delaware.

This study focused on a select and limited group of organizations considered “environmental” groups and their efforts to influence environmental programs and policy at the state level. Environmental efforts may include many other groups, even if it is not their primary activity, and occur at different geographic scales. A more broadly inclusive study would help define the full range of interests involved in environmental policy. The role of these groups is an important issue for future study. Antidotal evidence was found during the qualitative assessment of past episodes of significant environmental policy events indicating that these groups played an important role as part of the broader mobilization and building of political support.

As was clear in a review of the activities related to the passage of the Delaware Coastal Zone Act, and the surge of environmental activity in the early 1990’s, significant environmental policy advancement may well depend upon the involvement of a much more inclusive group than just environmental organizations to be successful.

While we have gained insights into the longevity and resiliency of Delaware's existing environmental groups, this study did not address the origin of these organizations or insights about organizations that may have formed but later merged with others or failed. Additional research on these topics may add important insights into the growth and sustainment of the interest group, carrying capacity in the State for environmental organizations, and some of the problems and factors that could reduce the interest groups viability.

New startup groups may play an important role in recruitment into the environmental interest community and bring new and emerging ideas into what is a mature, or at least well established interest group community. This may be particularly important for long term recruitment and sustainment of memberships and for fundraising. It may also ensure the community evolves with new ideas and emerging issues of local importance. It would help better understand the entrance and recruitment points for organizations.

Several specific groups of interest would be those associated with land use issues. Identifying and characterizing the subsets of groups working to influence land use and urban form at the urban, suburban, and rural locations is of particular interest, as land use affects a wide range of environmental issues.

Another area of interest would be an analysis of the role of all-volunteer grassroots organizations within the political influence system for environmental interest in Delaware. While this study has found them to have limited capacity, the role they play in episodic events, particularly in response to an environmental crisis, may be

critically important. It may also be that with such low operational overhead costs, they can continue to operate long term and be more resistant to the threat of retribution. They may provide a very critical complementary role to the better established and financed organizations with paid professional staff that are often hesitant to take an adversarial position with government agencies.

Associated with a better understanding of all-volunteer organizations and more professional environmental organizations, additional study is needed on the extent and nature of collaborations among organizations, the environmental interests that bring them together, the factors that make collaborations happen, the roles or niches that various groups fill, and the effectiveness of these collaborations to improve our understanding of collective action efforts taken by this interest group.

Future studies are needed to better understand the impact of positive and negative externalities from policies in other states or at the national level that influence Delaware, as well as on the impact of Delaware's environmental interest groups efforts at the county and municipal scale.

While the environmental interest organizations in Delaware use various approaches and tactics, the effectiveness of these approaches has not been evaluated. The reasons for using the various tactics, assessment and measurements of the effectiveness of these under various policy development contexts, and an identification of the players using them would provide useful insights about influencing environmental policy. Additionally, it would be helpful to better evaluate the role of

emerging technology and e-activism, and its positive and negative impacts when applied in the social and political context of Delaware.

Finally, the effect of retributions on the interest group is of great interest. While it is assumed to be a deterrent, it may at times also serve to inspire activist groups, galvanizing their resolve and commitment. Additional study is needed to determine the extent and nature of retribution and whether it is directly associated with advocacy efforts to influence public policy.

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## Appendix A

### List of Delaware Environmental Organizations

Organization Name	Web Site	Year of Formation
7 & 40 Alliance		1996
Academy of Natural Sciences Of Philadelphia	<a href="http://www.ansp.org">www.ansp.org</a>	1812
American Littoral Society/Delaware Riverkeepers Network	<a href="http://www.delawareriverkeeper.org">www.delawareriverkeeper.org</a>	1961 (2009 DRN)
American Rivers	<a href="http://www.americanrivers.org">www.americanrivers.org</a>	1974
Appoquinimink River Association	<a href="http://www.apporiver.org">www.apporiver.org</a>	2004
Association of State Floodplain Managers, Inc.	<a href="http://www.floods.org">www.floods.org</a>	1988
Association of State Wetland Managers, Inc.	<a href="http://aswm.org">aswm.org</a>	1983
Bear-Glasgow Council of Civic Organizations	<a href="http://www.bearglasgowcouncil.org/">www.bearglasgowcouncil.org/</a>	1980
Brandywine Conservancy, Inc.	<a href="http://www.brandywinemuseum.org">www.brandywinemuseum.org</a>	1967
Christina Conservancy, Inc.		1983
Citizens Coalition, Inc.	<a href="http://www.citizenscoalition.net">www.citizenscoalition.net</a>	1994
Citizens for Clean Power		2002
Civic League for NCC	<a href="http://civicleagueforncc.org">http://civicleagueforncc.org</a>	1962

Claymont Community Coalition		2002
Clean Air Council	<a href="http://www.cleanair.org">www.cleanair.org</a>	1983
Clean Ocean Action	<a href="http://www.cleanoceanaction.org">www.cleanoceanaction.org</a>	1984
Clean Water Action	<a href="http://www.cleanwateraction.org">www.cleanwateraction.org</a>	1971
Coalition for Natural Stream Valleys		1973
Conservation Fund A Nonprofit Corporation (Total)	<a href="http://www.conservationfund.org">www.conservationfund.org</a>	1985
Council of Civic Organizations of Brandywine Hundred	<a href="http://www.ccobh.com">www.ccobh.com</a>	1950
Defenders of Wildlife	<a href="http://www.defenders.org">www.defenders.org</a>	1947
Delaware Audubon Society, Inc.	<a href="http://www.delawareaudubon.org">www.delawareaudubon.org</a>	1977
Delaware Bass Federation (DBF) Chapter		1970
Delaware Center for Horticulture, Inc.	<a href="http://www.dehort.org">www.dehort.org</a>	1977
Delaware Center for the Inland Bays	<a href="http://www.inlandbays.org/">http://www.inlandbays.org/</a>	1994
Delaware Chapter of the Sierra Club- Southern Delaware Group	<a href="http://delaware.sierraclub.org">delaware.sierraclub.org</a>	1982? (1970's)
Delaware City Environmental Coalition	<a href="http://www.greendelcity.org">www.greendelcity.org</a>	2010
Delaware Environmental Alliance for Senior Involvement		1996
DELAWARE GREENWAYS INC	<a href="http://www.delawaregreenways.org">www.delawaregreenways.org</a>	1989
Delaware Invasive Species Council, Inc.	<a href="http://www.delawareinvasives.net">www.delawareinvasives.net</a>	1999
Delaware Mobile Surf Fisherman, Inc.	<a href="http://www.dmsclub.org">www.dmsclub.org</a>	
Delaware Native Plant Society	<a href="http://www.delawarenativeplants.org">www.delawarenativeplants.org</a>	2001
Delaware Nature Society, Inc.	<a href="http://www.delawarenaturesociety.org/">www.delawarenaturesociety.org/</a>	1964
Delaware Wild Lands, Inc.	<a href="http://delawarewildlands.org">delawarewildlands.org</a>	1961
Delmarva Ornithological Society	<a href="http://www.dosbirds.org">www.dosbirds.org</a>	1963

Delmarva Low Impact Tourism Experiences	<a href="http://www.delmarvalite.org">www.delmarvalite.org</a>	1999
Ducks Unlimited, Inc.	<a href="http://www.ducks.org">www.ducks.org</a>	1937
Ecological Research & Development Group, Inc.	<a href="http://www.horseshoecrab.org">www.horseshoecrab.org</a>	1995
Friends of Bombay Hook	<a href="http://www.friendsofbombayhook.org">www.friendsofbombayhook.org</a>	1990
Friends of Lums Pond, Inc.	<a href="http://www.destateparks.com/park/lums-pond/friends.asp">http://www.destateparks.com/park/lums-pond/friends.asp</a>	2003
Friends of Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge, Inc.	<a href="http://www.friendsofprimehook.com">www.friendsofprimehook.com</a>	1999
Friends of the Nanticoke River	<a href="http://www.friendsofthenanticoke.org">www.friendsofthenanticoke.org</a>	2010
Friends of White Clay Creek State Park	<a href="http://www.whiteclayfriends.org/">www.whiteclayfriends.org/</a>	1998
Greater Hockessin Area Development Association	<a href="http://ghadaonline.com/">http://ghadaonline.com/</a>	1962
Green Delaware	<a href="http://greendel.org">greendel.org</a>	1995
Greenwatch Institute		1995
Kent County Conservancy, Inc.	<a href="http://www.kentcountyconservancy.org">www.kentcountyconservancy.org</a>	
League of Women Voters of DE	<a href="http://de.lwv.org">http://de.lwv.org</a>	1920
Mid-Atlantic Environmental Law Center, Inc.	<a href="http://www.maelc.org">www.maelc.org</a>	2000
Milltown-Limestone Civic Alliance		2001
Mt. Cuba Center	<a href="http://www.mtcubacenter.org">www.mtcubacenter.org</a>	
Naamans Creek Watershed Association		1998
Nanticoke Watershed Alliance	<a href="http://www.nanticokeriver.org">www.nanticokeriver.org</a>	1996
Nanticoke Watershed Preservation Group		2004
National Wildlife Federation	<a href="http://www.nwf.org">www.nwf.org</a>	1936
Nature Conservancy, Inc.	<a href="http://www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/delaware/">www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/delaware/</a>	1951
Oceana	<a href="http://na.oceana.org">http://na.oceana.org</a>	2001

Partnership for the Delaware Estuary, Inc.	Delawareestuary.org	1996
Pike Creek Valley Civic League		2003
Quality Deer Management Association - Delaware	<a href="http://www.qdma.com/membership/branch-directory/delaware-branches/">www.qdma.com/membership/branch-directory/delaware-branches/</a>	2002
Red Clay Valley Association	<a href="http://www.redclayvalley.org/">www.redclayvalley.org/</a>	1952
Save Our Lakes Alliance	<a href="http://www.sola3.org">www.sola3.org</a>	2005
Sierra Club	<a href="http://www.sierraclub.org">www.sierraclub.org</a>	1892
Southern NCC Alliance	<a href="http://www.sncca.org">www.sncca.org</a>	1997
Surfrider Foundation	<a href="http://www.surfrider.org/delaware/index.htm">www.surfrider.org/delaware/index.htm</a>	1984
Sussex Land Foundation, Inc.	SCLANDTRUST.ORG	2001
The Chesapeake Bay Foundation	<a href="http://www.cbf.org">www.cbf.org</a>	1967
The White Clay Watershed Association	<a href="http://home.ccil.org/~wcwa/index.html">http://home.ccil.org/~wcwa/index.html</a>	1965
Tri-State Bird Rescue and Research, Inc.	<a href="http://www.tristatebird.org">www.tristatebird.org</a>	1977
Urban Environmental Center		1992
White Clay Fly Fishers, Inc	<a href="http://www.whiteclayflyfishers.org">www.whiteclayflyfishers.org</a>	1969

## **Appendix B**

### **Survey of Environmental and Natural Resource Organizations in Delaware**

#### Survey Description, Purpose, and Informed Consent of Participants

Thank you for taking the time to help us learn about your organizations efforts to influence environmental policy in the State of Delaware.

This survey is being conducted to provide information about environmental organizations and the activities and actions they take to influence environmental policy in the State of Delaware. The research project seeks to analyze and better understand environmental advocacy in the State of Delaware. This online survey tool is one of several techniques being used to collect information as part of this research project. The survey will take approximately 30-45 minutes to complete.

Prior to completing this survey, please review Question 1, informed consent, carefully. It will require you to choose to participate in this survey and provide you assurances for confidentiality for your responses.

#### 1. Informed Consent Form

The University of Delaware is conducting research regarding local natural resource conservation and environmental advocacy by examining the environmental organization operating in the State of Delaware and their role in the Public Policy process. This study is being conducted by David Carter, a graduate student in the School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy as part of his master's thesis.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the role of formal and informal environmental organizations as advocates for environmental policy and action affecting the natural and environmental resources of the State.

This research will utilize both an online survey administered to a sample population of approximately seventy two (72) organizations and then structured interviews with a subset of these organizations. These groups have been identified through numerous national directories, web searches, rosters of environmental organizations attending or cosponsoring various environmental events, State of Delaware Public Integrity Commission lobbying registration lists, and consultation with environmental organization representatives active in the State of Delaware.

The online survey is being conducted to provide information about environmental organizations and the activities and actions they take to influence

environmental policy in the State of Delaware. It will include questions on general background information, interaction with government agencies, and organizational capacity.

A subset of those organizations completing the online survey will be selected to participate in a structured interview based on a review of existing IRS form 990 data and/or survey data results. Organizations identified as being an affiliate of a larger national or regional organization carrying out work in Delaware or as a local organization that devotes significant resources to advocacy in Delaware will be interviewed. The purpose of these interviews will be to determine the reasons used to justify resource allocations, how effective organization representatives believe these efforts are in Delaware, and to collect information about perceived needs for strengthening advocacy in Delaware.

You have been chosen from the list of environmental or natural resource conservation organizations with activity in the state of Delaware to participate in the study. Participation in the study will require answering questions from a survey and will take approximately 45 minutes of your time. If selected for a structured interview, it will take approximately 30-60 additional minutes of your time.

Your answers will be kept confidential and your responses will not be linked to you personally. Names will be coded to a unique identifier and stored in a separate file. The data will be stored for three years as required by the University of Delaware's Human Subjects Review Board. The thesis is expected to be written, defended, and completed no later than June of 2011. The identifying information will be destroyed upon successful completion and approval of the master's thesis to ensure confidentiality.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You can refuse to answer any question or to stop the interview at any time.

If you have questions about the project you may contact David Carter at (302) 376-5711 or by e-mail at Davidctr@udel.edu.

If you have questions regarding your rights as a participant, you may contact the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, University of Delaware at (302) 831-2137.

By answering yes below, you agree to participate in the online survey part of this study.

#### General Background Information about the Organization

2. Please provide the name of your organization.
3. Please provide the name of the person completing this survey on behalf of your organization.
4. Please indicate which of the following best describes your position or role in the organization.
  - Executive Director 14.8%

- President 39.3%
- Officer 4.9%
- Committee Chair 3.3%
- Government Affairs Representative 1.6%
- Spokesperson 3.3%
- Member 0%
- Other (please specify) 32.8%

5. What year was the organization founded?

6. Does the organization have IRS Not for Profit designation? If yes, what type?

- No IRS designation 98%
- 501(c)(3) 77%
- 501(c)(4) 3.3%
- 501(c)(5) 1.6%
- 501(c)(7) 0%
- 527 0%
- Other 3.3%
- Don't Know 4.9%
- 

7. What geographic area does your organization's work or activities cover?

- State of Delaware 47.5%
- Multiples States in the Delaware Region 31.1%
- New Castle County 26.2%
- Watershed Area 26.2%
- Other (please specify) 18.0%
- United States 14.8%
- Sussex County 14.8%
- Kent County 9.8%
- International 6.6%

8. Please use the scale below to indicate whether you consider your organization primarily a traditional conservation (careful management and use of natural resources) organization or an environmental (protection of environmental resources) organization?

Average Rating = 4.2

9. What conservation and/or environmental issues are the primary focus or mission critical issues for your organization? (Please select all that apply.)

- Clean Water 73.8%
- Land Use and Development 65.6%
- Wetlands 62.3%
- Land conservation 55.7%
- Rivers 54.1%
- Wildlife 47.5%
- Sustainable Resources 45.9%
- Clean Air 41.0%
- Wildlife Areas 41.0%
- Global Warming/Climate Change 39.3%
- Forest 37.7%
- Biodiversity 32.8%
- Recycling 32.8%
- Urban Environmental Issues 32.8%
- Chemical and Toxic Waste 31.1%
- Agriculture 31.1%
- Parks 31.1%
- Energy 29.5%
- Brownfields 29.5%
- Oceans and Marine Life 27.9%
- Endangered Species 26.2%
- Nuclear Waste/Nuclear Power 13.1%
- Other (please specify) 32.8%

10. Please use the scale below to indicate your organizations concern for each of the environmental issues listed below.

- Air Quality 5.2
- Flooding 5.2
- Toxic Waste 5.3
- Sea Level Rise 5.5
- Climate Change 5.6
- Loss of forest habitat 5.8
- Declining fish and wildlife populations 5.9
- Loss of marsh or wetlands 6.1
- Water Pollution 6.2

11. In some cases, contact with those in government comes about at the initiative of the policymakers themselves.

How often on average would you say that people in government approach the executive director, president, staff, or members of the board of directors to discuss matters of mutual interest?

- Never 19%
- 1-2 times/month 36%
- 3-4 times/month 10%
- 5-9 times/month 3%
- 10 or more times/month 16%
- Don't Know 16%
- Comments

12. A variety of means of communicating and interacting with those in government are listed below. Please use the following scale to indicate how frequently, if at all, your organization engages in these activities.

- Lobbying on a proposed bill policy 3.43
- Discussing obtaining grants or contracts 3.44
- Interacting socially with government officials. 3.73
- Releasing research reports 3.78
- Testifying at hearings 3.83
- Responding to requests for information 4.29
- Encouraging members contact policymakers 4.29
- Meeting with government officials 4.53
- Working in a planning or advisory group 4.64
- Other

13. Thinking generally about those in government that your organization deals with, please select the description below that typically describes those official's attitudes.

- Not really interested in hearing our views. 5%
- Sometimes interested in what we have to say. 20%
- Usually interested in what we have to say. 45%
- Interested in what we have to say and interested in actively working with us to achieve a common goal. 25%
- Don't Know 5%

14. Please use the following scale to indicate whether each of the following is a useful approach to influence environmental policy in Delaware.

- Talk to elected public officials 5.62

- Promote grassroots advocacy 5.48
- Telephone elected officials 5.46
- Write letters to elected officials 5.38
- Support or oppose regulations 5.24
- Testify at hearings 5.2
- Tracking legislation 5.04
- Draft legislation 4.67
- Sponsor a candidate forum 4.44
- Having a registered lobbyist 4.29
- Endorse candidate for public office 3.93
- Hold Rallies and Protest events 3.33

15. Please use the scale below to indicate the impact you think your organizations voice has on public officials. (No Impact - Some Impact - Strong Impact)

Average Rating = 4.2

16. Does your organization have one or more persons who have responsibility for government relations or public policy?

- Yes 54.1%
- No 42.6%
- Don't Know 3.3%

17. Please check any of the positions listed below that have responsibility for government relations or public policy?

- Executive Director 48.6%
- Staff Member 31.4%
- Volunteer 22.9%
- Board Member 48.6%
- Board Committee 25.7%
- Lobbyist or other outside professional on retainer. 11.4%
- Other (Please Specify) 28.6%

18. Has anyone in your organization experienced the following negative responses from Government Officials or agencies as a result of advocacy actions? (Please choose all that apply).

- Reduced access to public officials 23%
- Efforts to limit your access to public records. 16%

- An effort to marginalize (limit or exclude) your organization from the public policy process. 23%
- Reduction in grant funding or loss of a contract. 2%
- Negative or derogatory accusations about your organization or an advocate working on behalf of your organization. 20%
- Have never experienced any negative responses. 43%
- Other (Please Specify) 29%

#### Organization Size, Resources, and Capacity

19. Approximately how much is your organizations annual operating budget? (Rough Estimates are perfectly fine – no need to consult your organizations records for a precise answer).

- No annual budget. 13.6%
- \$1 - \$5,000 18.6%
- \$5,001 - \$25,000 25.4%
- \$25,001 - \$100,000 10.2%
- \$100,001 - \$1,000,000 10.2%
- \$1,000,000 - \$5,000,000 13.6%
- Greater than \$5,000,000 8.5%
- Comments

20. What are the sources of your organizations annual income? (Rough Estimates are perfectly fine – indicate percentage from a range 0-100%).

- Membership Dues 50
- Individual Donors 44
- Government (Any Level) 35
- Corporate Contributions 35
- Income from Services provided to clients or others 29
- Fundraising Events 39
- Other 24
- Comments

21. How many staff does your organization employ?

- No staff employed 59.3%
- 1-3 staff employed 10.2%
- 4-6 staff employed 6.8%
- 7-9 staff employed 5.1%
- 10 or more staff employed 18.6%

- Other (please specify)

22. If your organization employs staff, what type of staff position(s) or job duties do you employ?

- Executive Director 18
- Support Staff 17
- Development/Fundraising Staff 13
- Scientist 10
- Policy Staff 10
- Volunteer Coordinator 10
- Education Staff 9
- Government Relations Staff 7
- Associate Director 6
- Lobbyist 1
- Other \* 14

23. If your organization has a membership, about how many people are members?

- no members 7.1%
- 1-50 members 19.6%
- 51-100 members 7.1%
- 101-250 members 23.2%
- 251-5000 members 26.8%
- more than 5000 members 16.1%

24. If your organization has a membership, is that membership comprised of any of the following?

- Individuals (Please estimate number of individual members) 87.5%
- Other nonprofits (Please estimate number of all organizations that are members) 25.0%
- Government Agencies 8.9%
- Corporations or businesses 23.2%
- No membership 5.4%
- Other (please specify) 16.1%

25. How many volunteers work for your organization?

- No volunteers 3.4%
- 0 - 10 volunteers 27.1%
- 11 - 25 volunteers 22.0%

- 26 - 100 volunteers 33.9%
- 101 - 250 volunteers 3.4%
- more than 250 volunteers 10.2%
- Comment

26. If your organization has volunteers, what type of volunteer work duties do they perform?

- Board of Directors 71.9%
- Officers 57.9%
- Support Staff 26.3%
- Development/Fundraising Staff 28.1%
- Scientist 19.3%
- Policy Staff 10.5%
- Volunteer Coordinator 21.1%
- Web Master 24.6%
- Education Staff 28.1%
- Government Relations Staff 7.0%
- Lobbyist 7.0%
- Other (please specify) 42.1%

27. About how many times does your organization work together with other organizations on key issues in a year?

- Never 10%
- 1-3 times 31%
- 4-6 time 14%
- 7-9times 5%
- 10 times or more 41%
- If you do work with other organizations or coalitions, please list the organizations below.

28. Does your organization use any of the following tools in your advocacy efforts?

- E-mail 19.6%
- Blast E-mail 10.7%
- Website 28.6%
- Discussion Lists (list serves) 1.8%
- Newsgroups 0.0%
- Other (please specify) 39.3%

29. Does your organization use any of the following tools in your advocacy effort?

- Social Networking Site (like Facebook or MySpace) 67%
- a Blog 40%
- Twitter 27%
- Videosharing 17%
- Picture Sharing 23%
- Social Bookmarking 3%
- Podcasting 7%
- Other (please specify) 23%

30. Does your organization specifically devote resources to environmental advocacy?

- Yes 37.3%
- No 57.6%
- Don't Know 5.1%

If yes, please describe the resources provided and the amount of funding, staff time, or volunteer time devoted to environmental advocacy.

31. Does your organization specifically devote resources to environmental lobbying of elected officials?

- Yes 22.0%
- No 76.3%
- Don't Know 1.7%

If yes, please describe the resources provided and the amount of funding, staff time, or volunteer time devoted to lobbying of elected officials.

32. If your organization had more resources, would they use some of them to lobby or influence environmental policy in Delaware?

- Yes 37.9%
- No 31.0%
- Don't Know 31.0%
- Other (please specify)

This completes the survey. Thank you for taking the time to help us learn more about Natural Resource and Environmental Organizations in Delaware.

Thank you.

**Appendix C**  
**Human Subjects Review Approval Letter**



RESEARCH OFFICE

210 Hulihan Hall  
University of Delaware  
Newark, Delaware 19716-1551  
Ph: 302/831-2136  
Fax: 302/831-2828

DATE: July 11, 2011

TO: David Carter  
FROM: University of Delaware IRB

STUDY TITLE: [183485-2] Master's Thesis: Environmental Advocacy in the State of Delaware

SUBMISSION TYPE: Continuing Review/Progress Report

ACTION: APPROVED  
APPROVAL DATE: July 11, 2011  
EXPIRATION DATE: August 11, 2012  
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # 7

Thank you for your submission of Continuing Review/Progress Report materials for this research study. The University of Delaware IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a study design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the study and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the study via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this office prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported to this office. Please use the appropriate adverse event forms for this procedure. All sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

Please report all NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this study to this office.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years.

Based on the risks, this project requires Continuing Review by this office on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate renewal forms for this procedure.