

**Long Island Sound Study  
Citizens Advisory Committee**  
Meeting Summary  
Thursday, December 8, 2011  
UConn campus, Stamford, CT

Meeting began at 9:30 am.

**Residential Fertilizer Use and Water Quality; Opportunities for regional CAC collaboration**

Judy Preston, LISS CT Outreach Coordinator, presented a PowerPoint program that was originally given to a joint meeting of regional CAC chairs and EPA Region 1 staff in November about residential lawn fertilizer use and coastal water quality. The joint CAC meeting was looking for potential collaborative projects for NEP programs in the northeast, including Puerto Rico. The program outlined the historic roots of the American lawn, the extent of turf grass in the country, associated environmental issues, including pesticide usage, and recommended solutions. Regional fertilizer regulations were highlighted, including the nation's most restrictive ordinance, enacted in 2011, for Pinellas County, Florida, that prohibits the use of fertilizers containing nitrogen and phosphorus during the summer months. Elements of successful collaborations were also discussed. This included work being done in Tampa Bay, FL, and the 2008 New England Turf Project. The NE Turf Project involved individuals from all five land grant colleges and Extension offices to employ social marketing, outreach and science-based information to affect the use of lawn fertilizers and pesticides in communities throughout New England. Discussion after the presentation included questions about what portion of the existing nutrient load into LIS is coming from residential landscaping (vs. atmospheric), and the importance of working with lawn care businesses. Long-term studies of slow release fertilizer are needed to better understand nutrient build-up in the soil that can ultimately impact water resources.

**Welcome, Housekeeping & Logistics**

CT Co-chair Curt Johnson welcomed CAC members. Introductions included Mark Tedesco, Long Island Sound Study Director, welcoming Georgia Basso, the new Fish and Wildlife Service Liaison to the Long Island Sound Study, who will be working out of the EPA Stamford office. Holly Drinkuth, TNC Outreach Director, attended the meeting on behalf of the newly appointed TNC LIS Director, Chantal Collier, who was unable to attend but looking forward to participating in the CAC.

**Short Updates:**

**The LIS Citizen's Summit** was held in Bridgeport and attended by approximately 125 people; many CAC members were there. Attendees divided into workgroups to identify their highest priorities from the LIS Action Agenda. The results were very similar to the CAC results: protecting habitat, restoring habitat, outreach and education, coastal and marine planning, partnering with tourism development, green infrastructure jobs, stormwater, eliminating CSO's and supporting citizen

monitoring. A separate workgroup of NY/CT elected officials also came up with many similar topics.

**NRCS Priority Watershed update:** A letter was sent by the CAC to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) requesting designation of the LIS watershed as a “priority watershed” (similar to the Chesapeake); this designation would provide access to additional staff and dollar resources for nonpoint source pollution remediation. The initial response to the letter was positive. Future updates are expected.

**Management Committee Meeting.** Mark Tedesco reported on the effort to update the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) for LIS by 2014. The update will lay out the vision for action for the next decade or more. The first plan was completed in 1994; this revision will include climate change and other important issues that have emerged over the past 18 years. The new plan will likely focus on the big picture, be a smaller document and have less specific steps; it will tap into practical expertise that did not exist in the early 90’s when the process was just starting. Sound Vision work will provide a good framework. Nancy Seligson, NY CAC Co-Chair, reminded everyone that the CAC had an important impact on the CCMP in 1994. Then CAC Co-chair, David Miller of Audubon NY, ran Listen to the Sound, a public hearing campaign that created a public record of interest in LIS. It was a grand public input effort. Members of the CAC and Save the Sound (then Long Island Sound Taskforce) participated in every public meeting regarding the CCMP to strengthen the language of the document. The CAC role in updating the CCMP is critical and unique.

David Miller (Ecology and Environment, Inc.) urged that as the process is unfolds, public engagement needs to be at all levels. Curt concurred, stating the importance of concrete long and short-term goals.

**STAC meeting.** Nancy Seligson reported that Jim Latimer, US EPA Research Lab and STAC member, is doing a great job coordinating the LIS Science Synthesis book, which is expected to be completed in the next few months. Curt Johnson suggested that the CAC invite Jim to the March CAC meeting to talk about this project. Curt also reported that the STAC would like to coordinate with the CAC in providing science and research input related to budget priorities as an addition to what the CAC presents to the Management Committee in the fall. The CAC will coordinate this in Sept/Oct.

Claire Graven, from the Stonington, CT, citizen’s group CUSH (Clean Up Stonington Harbor) presented their water quality monitoring program to the STAC. It was good for the STAC to see a *citizen’s* group doing quality water monitoring. The STAC had strong feelings that it should only be done by “professionals”. Nancy suggested that the CAC invite a member of CUSH to join the CAC.

**Nominating Committee Report.** Abbie Coderre, Saybrook Point Inn Marina Manager and nominating committee chair, presented the slate of Curt Johnson,

Nancy Seligson and Marty Garrell for CT Co-Chair, NY Co-Chair and Secretary, respectively. The CAC bylaws require a 30-day notice period. Electronic voting will be offered to the CAC, via the Internet, the week of December 19-23 on this slate of officers, in keeping with By-Law requirements. Curt thanked Abbie and the nominating committee for their work.

**2012 Work Plan and Budget Cycle.** Mark Tedesco reported that although the LISS received \$5.8M last year and applied \$1.2M to the Futures Fund, it is not expected that the amount received this year will be the same. Discussion ensued as to how to handle the LISFF allocation for the March RFP deadline. David Miller suggested creating two grant categories: small @ \$100k cap and large @ 500K cap, so that there is flexibility to accomplish what the LISS needs to do. Mark reported that NFWF is hiring a contractor to evaluate the Futures Fund; many of these issues will be addressed through that assessment.

**Policy, Legislation and Advocacy Committee Update.** Al Caccese, Audubon New York, gave an overview of the recent CAC trip to Washington on November 16<sup>th</sup>. There was a lot of activity; people broke up into multiple groups and managed to visit the entire CT and many of NY legislative offices. There was a three point agenda: LISS re-authorization, getting appropriations at the right level (no less than last year), and State Clean Water Revolving Fund. NY Senator Gillibrand will present the bill with a letter of support with over 40 signatories. NY Congressman Bishop will support the re-authorization bill if the Senate passes it. Many agreed that this is a “tough Congress” and the CAC needs to reach out to their representatives and keep on it, especially with letters of support.

## **CAC Committee Reports/Updates**

**Membership Committee.** Nancy Seligson referred to the CAC membership request from MWH Americas, Inc. to appoint their representative, Boyd McDonald, who attended the last meeting. It was agreed that more information is needed about the MWH Company. Discussion ensued about other possible CAC representatives, including a marine trades person from NY, possibly a bay man (although their schedules may make it difficult), and a shell fishing representative. Tessa Getchis, from CT Sea Grant works with shell fishermen and was suggested as a possibility, or she may know of others to suggest.

David Miller announced his company’s *Project Earth School*, a worldwide initiative where children (k-12) can post their environmental projects, using Google translate. [www.projectearth.net](http://www.projectearth.net) This project started with 100 projects, and is now involved with over 1000 projects in 78 countries.

**Tracking and Accountability Committee.** There is a need to better track investments in LIS. Models exist to track state and federal investments. The Chesapeake has created a model, as has the Great Lakes program and Puget Sound.

An update of investments tracking here in LIS will be put on the CAC March meeting agenda and provided through LISS staff.

**Policy and Legislation:** More letters to LIS Representatives and to President Obama are needed to increase the LISS appropriation. It was suggested that the Futures Fund could help municipalities advance inMS4 work, but it was noted that federal funds cannot be used to support permit activities.. Creativity will need to be used. Green infrastructure is appropriate.

**Dredge Ad Hoc Committee:** Joel Ziev, Town of North Hempstead, reported that the Army Corp of Engineers (ACE) meetings are not easily accessible and seem to be pre-determined; the process is not productive. ACE has done a lot of research on beneficial re-use, but it involves increasing costs and he worries they are not reviewing it seriously as part of this process. Fundamental changes are needed in DEP/DEC and the Corp. Recreational dredging is still not really on the table. Most dredging on the east coast is for beach replenishment, but LIS does not have beach quality sand (a lot of clay). Need to work with ACE to allow small projects to piggyback on ACE large projects. A regional dredge material plan is needed. A consortium approach might work best. It is unclear if CAC could provide support in this arena. A 15 – 20 minute discussion of this topic will be put on the next CAC agenda for March.

**LIS Seaweed Bioextraction. Presentation by Dr. Charlie Yarish, UConn, Stamford.** Dr. Yarish presented an overview of his current efforts at seaweed poly-culture; growing organisms at different trophic levels to harvest nutrients. This is not a new idea. He cited work being done in Eastport Maine, where red seaweed (Nori) cultivation is being combined with a salmon operation, using integrated multi-trophic aquaculture, wherein biological processes are used to extract excess nutrients with both seaweed and shellfish. This approach created hundreds of jobs in Maine.

LIS can benefit from this low-tech, balanced ecosystem approach. A 2009 conference at UConn highlighted the pilot study, a collaborative, multi agency effort. Two LIS locations were used: off Fairfield CT and the Bronx River (Hunts Point.) The Hunts Point site also used ribbed mussels, and worked with a local NGO, *Rocking the Boat*, to get urban kids involved.

The project employed the cultivation of a summer species, the red seaweed *Gracilaria*, and sugar kelp, or brown seaweed, a winter species. Local students support the project by doing related field projects that include measurements of water quality, temperature, salinity and turbidity. A CPTV documentary was made: [www.cptv2.org/allthingsct/episode/slavin-rock-west-haven](http://www.cptv2.org/allthingsct/episode/slavin-rock-west-haven).

Through the pilot project, seaweed plants have been harvested, dried, stored, and are being assayed for content. Bioharvesting removes nitrogen to improve water quality and they are currently looking at quantification of the dollar value of

nitrogen harvested for ecosystem nitrogen credits. Other applications of the harvested seaweed include sea vegetables, bio-fuels, other culinary uses, and the creation of animal feed and high quality fertilizer. There are already markets for all of these products. The bioextraction sites also create habitat that attract fish and phyto-plankton. Tim Dowding, Dr. Yarish's business partner, is investigating the economic viability of bioextraction, creating a business model and quantifying the dollar value of growing seaweed and harvesting nitrogen.

**Other Business:** none reported

**March Agenda Suggestions:** Invite Jim Latimer (STAC) to provide information on the synthesis book. Discussion on dredge management (15 – 20 minutes). Update on tracking investments.

**Adjourn:** Meeting adjourned at 2:30 pm.