

**Long Island Sound Study
Citizens Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary
Thursday, September 16, 2010
Pfizer, Manhattan, NY**

Interactive Discussion: Summer on the Sound

Carol DiPaolo from the Coalition to Save Hempstead Harbor, began the discussion talking about how hot and dry the summer was. In Hempstead Harbor, there were no recorded fish kills. Hypoxia hit the harbor earlier than in years past. Salinity readings were also higher than normal, due to less freshwater input because of the lack of rain. Blue crabs and horseshoe crabs were also very common and the first report of red tide occurred in May, stretching from Cold Spring Harbor, east.

Pat Aiken from Friends of the Bay then continued the discussion noting that the lowest reading of oxygen within bottom water samples this summer in Oyster Bay was at 1.24 mg/L. Higher salinity readings were also found in Oyster Bay due to the lack of rain this summer. This resulted in lower fecal coliform readings and higher temperature readings. Blue crabs, osprey, and fish populations were all up, algal blooms were fewer than in years past with some small blooms occurring in Mill Neck Creek and Cold Spring Harbor, and a manatee was reported swimming in Mill Neck Creek and around the Harbor on Labor Day weekend!

Mark Parker from the CT Department of Environmental Protection (CTDEP) reported on water quality monitoring that the CTDEP conducted over the summer. The hypoxic event, at its worse, stretched for 163mi² this summer and lasted 40 days (for reference, the average number is: 197mi² and 57 days). Mark pointed out the importance of looking at long term trends in addition to the average over years and suggested that the data showed slow improvement over time. He also noted that hypoxic events in the Sound are due to many influences, including nutrients, wind, storms, and mixing. For more on the data collected this summer, visit CTDEP's Web site at: http://www.ct.gov/dep/cwp/view.asp?a=2719&q=325532&depNav_GID=1654

Pete Sattler from Interstate Environmental Commission (IEC) updated CAC members on the sampling conducted in western Long Island Sound (LIS), Raritan Bay, and Hudson River. He reported a high number of floatables and reminded the group that there was no "plan" for floatables in western LIS. IEC also added one new site, Station E12, at the confluence of Eastchester Bay and Hutchinson River. Pete also said that it was a great fishing season and that he was seeing big porgies (scup), fluke (summer flounder), and bluefish.

The group was invited to share their observations over the summer. Many commented on the good fishing that was occurring in the Sound. Adrienne Esposito told the group that a Northport-Huntington Harbor Protection Committee has been started and emphasized the importance of such a committee, particularly due to the high levels of toxic red tide that have been found in those harbors. The group agreed that a presentation on red tide from Chris Golber, a professor at Stony Brook University, would be of interest.

Welcome/Introductions

New York CAC co-chair Nancy Seligson called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM and asked for introductions and roll call of members, 18 CAC members were present by the beginning of business, which is a quorum. Nancy Seligson also thanked Pfizer for hosting the meeting and CAC member, Jim Constatine, for all of his help preparing for the meeting.

Discussion of CAC Priority Letter for the October Management Committee meeting

Adrienne Esposito reminded the group that last year the Policy, Legislative, and Advocacy CAC Subcommittee had met with LIS agencies to determine their priorities in funding for the upcoming year. Based on their recommendations, the Subcommittee put together a letter that was presented to the Long Island Sound Study (LISS) Management Committee. The group would like to do the same this year.

There were no major changes to the letter from last year except that water quality was listed as the first priority and, based on the Management Committee's recommendation, public education and outreach was moved up to 11% of total funding.

As an update, the Subcommittee is asking for \$20 million in allocations from the Restoration Act. Currently, Congress is asking for \$20 mil and the Senate is asking for \$15 mil.

If you have not received a copy of the letter, you can email Sandy Breslin at sbreslin@audubon.org for a copy. The group went through the letter and made suggested changes. The Policy, Legislative, and Advocacy Committee will be making revisions and will be sending it out to the group for approval.

During the conversation, it was also noted that it would be very helpful for CAC members to have the numbers spent on LIS restoration compiled by the LISO that include leveraged amounts from other sources. This more complete number would strengthen their case while talking to elected officials. The LISO will gather this information and send it out to CAC members.

There were a number of language changes to the letter discussed and agreed to by the CAC. Those charged with drafting specific language for insertion into the letter were asked to forward text to Adrienne as soon as possible following the meeting. In addition, there was a lengthy discussion as to whether some percentage of the pie chart should be taken from the Dredging category and moved to the Climate Change category. CAC members discussed what funds could be used for in either case and decided to change the pie chart to 6% Dredging and 5% Climate Change. The Dredging Subcommittee was also tasked with identifying a list of more specific actions and the potential costs associated with them. The list would provide a source of priority needs for funding from multiple sources.

CAC Subcommittee Reports/CAC Updates

Membership- The Membership Subcommittee welcomed new members: Jim Moriarty from the Town of Oyster Bay (replacing Aldona Lawson who has retired), Damon Oscarson from Great Ecology and Environment, Inc (replacing Phoebe McMellon), and Steve Pynn from the Sound School (replacing Dan Synder). Dan Synder has started a new organization, Shoreline Shellfish, LLC and Sound Marine Skills, Inc., and has requested membership to the CAC. The

Membership Committee recommended that he be voted in as a new member and no members were opposed.

Region 2 Joint CAC meeting- CAC members were encouraged to attend the joint CAC meeting on October 5th. Judith Enck, the EPA Region 2 Administer, called the meeting for CACs to discuss how they can work together. This meeting will take place from 10am-3pm in Conference Rm 27A at the EPA Reg 2 office at 290 Broadway in NYC. You must contact Bob Nyman to let him know if you will attend (Nyman.Robert@epamail.epa.gov or 212.637.3809).

Plum Island Tour- So far, 18 CAC members have signed up for the Plum Island Tour. The group discussed who they might invite to fill the remaining positions and planned to invite Senators, EPA Region 1 Staff, and others. The group also mentioned it would be helpful to have 4 or 5 talking points so, if we are joined by the Press, all CAC members would be on the same page. For those attending the trip, you must be at the CT site by 7:15AM and the NY site by 7:30AM (this includes an extra ½ for “check in”). Judy Preston, CT Sea Grant, will send out more information to those attending the trip the week before.

LISS Science and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC)- Mickey Weiss from Project Oceanology reported that the STAC had a very productive and informative conversation about dissolved oxygen and nitrogen at the last meeting. They received presentations from various researchers and then had a discussion of where to go from there. Mickey suggested that the CAC invite STAC member to present on dissolved oxygen and nitrogen at a future CAC meeting.

Policy, Legislative, and Advocacy Subcommittee- The Subcommittee thanked everyone for their team effort and for being so productive. The Subcommittee updated CAC members about the reauthorization of the Long Island Sound Restoration Act. All CAC member organizations were encouraged to take action to encourage elected officials to pass the Reauthorization as well as be sure to send thank you’s. The Subcommittee has also been trying to get the Senate and House bills to align. House bill includes “big ticket items” and packaging the Reauthorization with a Public Lands Bill to try to get more support. The Subcommittee is also pushing to get language on marine spatial planning and Plum Island into both bills.

Curt Johnson, the CT CAC Co-chair from CT Fund for the Environment suggested that individual signatures from CAC members be included with all CAC letters. The group discussed and decided that the current list of member organizations was sufficient.

Sandy Breslin also mentioned that the Subcommittee would be going on a 1-day retreat on Oct 19th in Port Jefferson. If you would like more details, contact her at sbreslin@audubon.org.

Tracking and Accountability Subcommittee- This Subcommittee asked if the LISO could send them a pie chart of how last year’s funds were spent before the Management Committee so they could ensure that funding was being allocated appropriately.

Sound Vision Project

All CAC members are encouraged to attend at least one of the following workshops:
Protect and Restore Water Quality: Oct 4th, 9:30-1pm

Protect and Restore Wildlife Biodiversity: Oct 4th, 1:30-5pm

Assure Public Access and Acquire Open Space AND Foster and Maintain Navigability and Multiple Uses of Public Waters: Oct 7th, 9:30-1pm

Protect and Restore Vital Habitats AND Maintain Healthy Watersheds: Oct 7th, 1:30-5pm

Workshops will take place at the CT Fund for the Environment's building or you can participate via phone and Webinar. Each session will cover tracking and education opportunities. There will also be an additional session on education, once each of these sessions is held. Stakeholders will also be invited to participate in the workshops, so if you know of any that you think should be involved, please email their contact information to Leah Schmalz at lschmalz@savethesound.org. Lastly, please email Leah if you have not already signed up to take part in a session.

Updates/Announcements

Curt Johnson announced that there will be a celebration on September 27 of the ARRA-funded project to remove the abandoned cottages on Long Beach, hosted by US Fish and Wildlife Service. If you would like to attend, email Curt at cjohnson@cfenv.org and he will send you more details.

Sarah Deonarine from NY State Department of Environmental Conservation reported on the status of NY's No Discharge Zone (NDZ). All of the documents have been submitted to EPA and are being reviewed. If approved, the NDZ will go into affect immediately for recreational vessels and commercial vessels will have 3 years until they must comply.

Larissa Graham from NY Sea Grant alerted CAC members that the most recent issue of Sound Update that focuses on oil spill was now online:

<http://longislandsoundstudy.net/2010/08/summer-2010-issue-oil-spills%E2%80%94common-even-in-the-sound/> If you would like copies to distribute to the public, please email Larissa at lfg85@cornell.edu.

Sandy Breslin alerted the group that CT's ban on pesticide application started on July 1st. If anyone is interested, Grassroots Environmental will be holding trainings, free for municipal staff. If you'd like more information, please contact Sandy at sbreslin@audubon.org.

Other Business/June Agenda Items

CAC members suggested a presentation on red tide from Chris Golber, a professor at Stony Brook University and/or a presentation on dissolved oxygen and nitrogen from STAC member at the next meeting. The next CAC meeting is scheduled for Dec 9th in Stamford, CT. The meeting adjourned at 2:30PM.