

**Long Island Sound Stewardship Initiative  
Work Group Meeting  
July 29, 2008**

**888 Washington Blvd.  
SWRPA Conference Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Stamford, CT**

**MINUTES**

Present

Sandy Breslin, Audubon Connecticut  
Karen Chytalo, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation  
Patrick Comins, Audubon Connecticut  
Robert Freudenberg, Regional Plan Association  
Tom Halavik, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Louise Harrison, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Lisette Henrey, Long Island Sound Assembly  
Don Landers, Long Island Sound Assembly  
Jeff Main, Westchester County Parks  
Randy Parsons, The Nature Conservancy, LI Chapter  
Mark Tedesco, Long Island Sound Office  
Adam Whelchel, The Nature Conservancy, Connecticut Chapter

(**Bold** numbering below refers to agenda items.)

**1, 2.** Louise welcomed the committee, asked people to introduce themselves, and briefly explained the agenda. Attendees reviewed the agenda. The following changes were made:

*Add* new items **13 & 14:** Updates on Brides Brook, Nissequogue River Action Plan, Important Bird Areas stewardship work .

**3, 4.** Sandy Breslin volunteered to take notes. Don Landers volunteered to be timekeeper.

**5. FY 2008 Budget Request results; need for updated work plan – Mark Tedesco**

The LISS Management Committee approved funding for stewardship acquisitions: \$650,000 each for New York and Connecticut. They also funded approximately \$251,000 for an enhancement grant (funds will go to NEIWPC, who will release an RFP) to develop a systematic site selection process to guide stewardship projects. The proposals approved by the Management Committee were provided to the Stewardship Initiative work group members. Awards will be made by September 30<sup>th</sup>.

The work group now should develop a FY 2009 work plan.

- Highlight the October 2008 to September 2009 activities (example: the enhancement grant)
- Identify a second year of activities, especially if funding will be required
- The work plan will be presented to the Management Committee at their October 2-day meeting

**6. Distribute and review minutes from 4/29/08**

Done. No changes.

**7. Update on LISSA implementation – Federal Advisory Committee - Louise**

Creation of the FACA is on hold for a while.

## **8A. Update on Acquisitions:**

### **8B. Connecticut update – Adam Whelchel**

TNC closed on “Crowley I” parcel last week. Can be transferred to CT DEP. 48.82 acres. Another adjacent grassland parcel also available. Dave Kozak at CT DEP submitted a CELCP grant application, leveraging Crowley I & Crowley II (16 acres) to secure federal funding. This could finish acquisitions on the peninsula.

There was a discussion of memorializing Don Henne at Barn Island with the completion of the Crowley I acquisition. Tomorrow is the anniversary of his death last year. The original 144 acres was Don’s “baby.” Tom Halavik will take the lead on developing a way to commemorate Don’s many contributions. A kiosk or other memorial might be appropriate.

### **8C. New York update – Karen Chytalo**

Will be working on a reimbursement contract with City of Rye for Bird Homestead property. The Pipes Cove property contract will be a model. The Fidao property has a building on it and NYSDEC isn’t interested in having a building. The Diocese property is not a good LIS stewardship site, and there is other funding available for its protection. There is an additional parcel to examine for potential acquisition near Flax Pond. Owner approached DEC. Parking and canoe launching possible there. Approx. 2 acres. Randy Parsons knows of some others in Southold and Mt. Sinai.

Jeff Main - The City of Rye can commit approximately \$300,000. They will co-manage the property with Save the Bird Homestead. Westchester County will help with a natural resources management plan and kayak launch. A link for kayaking planned with Edith Read Sanctuary. A management protocol for the entire stewardship area can be effected with this link and other properties. There will be no limitation on access to Bird even if Rye owns it. There is public parking across the street.

Karen and Jeff will set up a meeting to organize the Bird acquisition effort.

Karen will identify additional potential parcels for New York’s LIS stewardship funding. They will be submitted to the work group and run through the CELCP process, as were the initial nominations. Karen will get the information to Louise by August.

## **9. Site selection criteria & adaptive management framework - Preparation of enhancement grant RFP – Louise**

After the work group receives presentations from Tom Halavik, Randy Parson (TNC – Peconics CLPS), Dave Kozak, and Yuri Gorokhovich, a request for proposals can be developed and released for the enhancement grant awarded to NEIWPC this year. The contractor will develop site selection criteria for our use.

Karen commented that NYSDEC is gathering a lot of information. We may have more information than we think we have. Perhaps we’ll need only about \$51,000 and not \$251,000 for our grant project on site selection criteria. Yuri Gorokhovich did a great job with the small coastal parcels analysis.

## **10A. Inventory and analysis leading to 33 Inaugural Long Island Sound Stewardship Areas – Tom Halavik**

Tom gave an extensive presentation on how US Fish and Wildlife Service developed the ecological inventory for the LI Sound Stewardship Initiative. Various studies already had been done from which information could be drawn (NY Bight, CLPS, South Shore Estuary, LIS, etc.). Came out of earlier effort to create “ecological reserves.” There was extensive consultation with the states and nonprofit organizations.

Tom explained the careful process of identifying key species and habitats for inclusion. There were tiers and rounds of collaborations with experts, refinements of maps, and ground-truthing efforts. Key species were chosen and exemplary habitat types were decided. Parallel to all of this work, Regional Plan Association and Audubon worked on open space and access components of the LIS Stewardship Initiative mapping

From ecological inventory and open space/access work, the high priority areas, threats, and proposed actions were identified. Over 800 sites were found. Finally 32 areas were chosen. Public meetings followed; a 33<sup>rd</sup> site was added.

There were many questions and a discussion followed. The group concluded that the extensive and impressive work leading up to the creation of the 33 stewardship areas has yet to be fully tapped; there is a tremendous amount of information available that can be further developed and made available. It is easily transferable because it is in ArcInfo.

### **[Lunch Break]**

Discussion:

SWRPA had new open space inventory maps. We should contact regional planning agencies to see what inventories they have.

We should invite RPA to report on their open space and access inventory done for the LIS Stewardship Initiative. Rob Freudenberg said he'll try to pull together the information; people involved in it no longer work at RPA.

### **11A. Peconic Estuary Program's Critical Lands Protection Strategy (CLPS)**

Randy Parsons explained the Peconic Estuary Program's CLPS in the context of our developing needs and projected uses of inventory data. A science-based prioritization was developed, using a size and proximity filter. Group came up with criteria and funded implementation – EPA, TNC, US FWS, towns, NYSDEC, citizens. Randy takes the strategy that resulted out to the townships, County and NOAA: "We agree on NEP, the CCMP, and our strategy (CLPS) – now it's time to implement and protect these properties." The strategy is considered a tool for getting acquisitions identified and funded.

Need good information on ownership and status of properties. Assessment info is available at Suffolk County. Get info into a GIS shape file: owner, address, vacation residence, ranking under CPS, occurrence on which open space acquisition lists, etc.

Full fee acquisition considered the #1 tool. Clustering, native vegetation protection, PDRs, and TDRs also were considered, in diminishing importance/utility, after that.

Strategy includes maps and prioritized lists. Randy explained the prioritizing criteria used by CLPS and some of the limitations he's found over time in the system. He engaged in a discussion with the group about the kinds of information available in Connecticut. Don Landers and Lisette Henrey commented on their experiences seeking parcel data from Connecticut towns. Don did so with only four towns, yet it was a major undertaking. Lisette offered that Greenwich has a huge GIS department.

The work group previously had received the CLPS report digitally (copies were available at the meeting), so Randy focused on helping the work group determine what elements of CLPS might be applicable to our needs.

**12. Date selection, presentations, and topics for August meeting (including work plan).**

August 13<sup>th</sup> was chosen for the next meeting, which also will be in Stamford. Dave Kozak will present Connecticut's Coastal Land Assessment Methodology (CLAM) and Yuri Gorokhovich will present his recent work on New York's Small Coastal Parcels Analysis.

**13. [added by work group at meeting]**

Tom Halavik – Brides Brook is a consistent alewife run, second only to the Connecticut River (up to 80,000 fish, even in worst years; 200,000 possible). Runs through Rocky Neck State Park. A design to open a channel that also will help 50+ acres of wetlands (becoming *Phragmites australis* dominated) is underway. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and US FWS are contributing \$225,000 and \$50,000, respectively. Project is being fast-tracked; must be built by next September.

**14. [added by work group at meeting]**

Rob Freudenberg – The Nissequogue River Stewardship Action Plan is out for public review. It has 110 recommendations developed by the steering committee. The Environmental Threats Analysis for five stewardship areas also is complete. Louise will email the documents out to the LIS Stewardship Initiative work group.

**15. [added by work group at meeting]**

Patrick Comins - Working on three conservation planning projects via National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grants: Connecticut College Arboretum and Manacoke Island; Light House Point; Long Beach/Pleasure Beach. Examining potential stewardship sites. Already at phase 2 for two of them.

**16. [added by work group at meeting]**

Jeff Main – Brought the group up to date on Manursing Lake.

**17. [added by work group at meeting]**

Sandy Breslin – Brought the group up to date on Long Beach/Pleasure Beach. There is a complex political struggle taking place in Stratford that appears to be party-driven. In Bridgeport, need more time to deal effectively with stakeholders and avoid instant polarization. Many involved: TNC, Trust for Public Land, Connecticut Audubon, Soundkeeper, Citizens Campaign for the Environment, Save the Sound.

**See Attachment A – Agenda for July 29, 2008, meeting**

**ATTACHMENT A****Long Island Sound Stewardship Work Group Meeting**

Tuesday, July 29, 2008

10 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

South Western Regional Planning Agency Conference Room

Stamford Government Center

888 Washington Blvd, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

Stamford, CT

**AGENDA**

Item	Topic	Leader(s)	Time Frame (min.)	✓
1	Welcome and introductions	Louise Harrison	3	
2	Review agenda	All	2	
3	Select timekeeper	All (please volunteer)	<1	
4	Select note-taker (to help draft the minutes)	All (please volunteer)	<1	
5	FY 2008 Budget Request results; need for updated work plan	Mark	10	
6	Distribute and review minutes from 4/29/08	All	10	
7	Update on LISSA implementation – Federal Advisory Committee	Louise	2	
8A	Update on Acquisitions	Louise	3	
8B	- Connecticut update	Adam Whelchel, TNC	5	
8C	- New York update	Karen Chytalo, NYS DEC	5	
8D	- Discussion; celebrations; next steps	All	15	
9	Site selection criteria & adaptive management framework- Preparation of enhancement grant RFP – What we need to do	Louise	5	
10 A	Inventory and analysis leading to 33 Inaugural Long Island Sound Stewardship Areas	Tom Halavik, US FWS	35	
10B	- Q & A	All	10	
10C	- Discussion	All	15	
Noon	LUNCH BREAK – Cafeteria and outdoor dining available on the 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor	All	60	
11A	Peconic Estuary Program's Critical Lands Protection Strategy (CLPS)	Randy Parsons, TNC	45	
11B	- Q & A	All	15	
	- Discussion	All	25	
12	Date selection, presentations, and topics for August meeting (including work plan).	Louise, All	5	
	Adjourn <i>Thanks for coming!</i>			

**An additional meeting of the Stewardship Initiative work group will be scheduled for August** (time and place to be announced).

Next already scheduled 2008 meeting date: **October 28, 2008**