

**LONG ISLAND SOUND  
STEWARDSHIP INITIATIVE  
PROPOSED LIST OF  
INAUGURAL STEWARDSHIP AREAS –  
PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY & RESPONSE  
AUGUST 2006**



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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Long Island Sound Stewardship Initiative is a public/private effort to identify places with significant biological, scientific, or recreational value throughout the Sound and to develop a strategy to protect and enhance these special places. A program of the Long Island Sound Study, the Stewardship Initiative was formed to implement recommendations of the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan and the 2003 Long Island Sound Agreement relating to Living Resources & Habitat Management.

During the past three years, the Stewardship Initiative workgroup has compiled an inventory and analysis of places with biological, scientific, or recreational values along the Sound's coast. (Draft versions of this inventory were the focus of public forums held in January and February of 2004). In 2005, the Stewardship Initiative workgroup used this inventory and analysis to develop criteria to identify areas with significant recreational and ecological values. Based on these criteria, a total of 32 areas were proposed as inaugural stewardship areas, elevating their visibility and the potential for prioritized funding.

The Stewardship Initiative workgroup hosted six public forums in June 2005 to discuss the Stewardship Initiative and, specifically, to solicit public input on the draft list of proposed inaugural stewardship areas. This report reviews the content of the meetings, summarizes the public response to the Stewardship Initiative and the draft list of inaugural stewardship area list, and provides responses to the public comments received.

## **MEETING LOCATIONS & PUBLICITY**

Meetings were held around the Sound in Connecticut and New York in June 2005, in a variety of easily accessible settings, such as town halls, university facilities, schools and environmental centers. Dates and locations were as follows:

- Norwalk City Hall, Norwalk, CT -- June 13, 2005
- Yale University, New Haven, CT -- June 14, 2005
- East Lyme High School, East Lyme, CT -- June 15, 2005
- New Rochelle City Hall, New Rochelle, NY -- June 20, 2005
- North Hempstead Town Hall, Manhasset, NY -- June 21, 2005
- Stony Brook University, Marine Sciences Research Center, Stony Brook, NY -- June 22, 2005

Publicity efforts included a mailing to individuals who attended past Stewardship Initiative meetings, participants of previous Long Island Sound Citizen's Summit conferences, public agencies (including departments of the environment, planning, water and resources, elected officials), public libraries, special interest groups, and organizations affiliated with Long Island Sound and/or environmental causes. Media releases, calendar listings, and listserv announcements were distributed from different agencies and organizations including the US Environmental Protection Agency – Long Island Sound Office (EPA-LISO), Audubon New York, Save the Sound, and Regional Plan Association (RPA). Personal outreach was coordinated by Stewardship Initiative partners including emails, phone calls and announcements at other public events.

## **PUBLIC MEETING CONTENT**

Each meeting opened with a presentation outlining the goals of the Stewardship Initiative and summarizing the process used to identify the proposed stewardship areas (see Appendix A). After the introduction to the Stewardship Initiative, a presenter familiar with a proposed stewardship area near the meeting location highlighted the ecological and/or recreational importance of the area. The local area highlighted, and presenters, varied from meeting to meeting. These examples were used to illustrate the values that the Stewardship Initiative aims to protect or enhance and to demonstrate the role of the Stewardship Initiative in identifying threats and opportunities affecting these important areas.

The presentation was followed by an opportunity to ask questions about the Initiative and the proposed inaugural stewardship areas, about pending legislation, and to share concerns about areas of local or regional significance. Those in attendance were then invited to view inventory maps illustrating the public access and ecological resources around Long Island Sound and posters highlighting the special features of each proposed stewardship area. Partners from the Stewardship Initiative workgroup assisted with interpretation of these maps and were available to answer questions.

## **MEETING ATTENDANCE & SOLICITATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Attendees were asked to fill out surveys to gauge their understanding of and support for the Stewardship Initiative (see Appendix B). Nomination forms were also provided to allow attendees to nominate other sites for consideration as stewardship areas. Survey and nomination forms were collected at the meetings or via mail. A list of groups and organizations that were represented at each meeting is included in Appendix C.

The following table shows how many people attended the meetings, and how many forms were submitted:

	<u>No. People</u>	<u>No. Surveys</u>	<u>Nomination Forms</u>
Norwalk	19	1	0
New Haven	15	6	1
East Lyme	18	0	0
New Rochelle	18	5	0
N. Hempstead	15	2	0
Stony Brook	18	1	1
Via mail:		4	3

Eleven additional items were submitted, including emails and other communications such as letters and memos nominating a site and/or providing feedback about the Stewardship Initiative. All written comments submitted and completed survey forms are on file at the EPA-LISO.

## **SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS & RESPONSES**

Following is a summary of comments received during the 2005 public meeting process and responses to these comments. These comments provide the basis for adjustments to the proposed

list of stewardship areas and will enhance ongoing and future efforts to communicate with the public about the Stewardship Initiative.

Specific comments provided during the general question and answer period of each meeting or on the surveys are included in Appendices D and E, respectively. Responses are not provided for questions or issues unrelated to the Long Island Sound Stewardship Initiative.

### **1. Stewardship Area Boundaries**

*Many questions or comments concerned the boundaries of the proposed stewardship areas and whether specific properties were “in” or “out”. There were suggestions to extend the boundaries along the watershed and to encompass the headwaters of various tributaries.*

The boundaries of the stewardship areas are not strictly defined. Each area includes one or more “anchor” sites, which are parcel-specific locations that represent the values or features for which that area is being highlighted. The overall stewardship area includes all sites that are physically or ecologically connected to the anchor site(s) and where management action would prove beneficial to the stewardship area.

### **2. Criteria for Selecting Stewardship Areas**

*Several attendees sought clarification on the criteria used to identify the proposed stewardship areas. Questions focused on if there were limits on the number of areas that could be identified and whether factors such as existing local support were considered.*

An iterative process was used to identify the proposed stewardship areas, which were selected because they best represent the range of coastal landscapes, habitats, and coastal resource-based recreation opportunities around the Sound. There were no limits on the number of areas that could be identified through this process.

The first phase consisted of an inventory of the ecological and recreational resources located throughout the Sound. The inventory of coastal recreational resources was led by RPA, and the ecological inventory was conducted by the US Fish & Wildlife Service Coastal Program (USFWS). For the recreational resource inventory, sites were identified within the following categories of coastal recreation: fishing access; sandy beach swimming areas; boating access; outdoor education centers; hunting, camping or wildlife viewing; trails/greenways; recreational shellfishing; and urban/cultural/historic resources. For the ecological inventory, sites were identified according to the categories of ecological significance:

- *Exemplary Sites:* areas that are representative of a natural habitat type or ecosystem typical to the Long Island Sound area and that are in good condition (i.e., not degraded). These sites are to include high species productivity, concentration, and/or areas of unusually high biological diversity.
- *Outstanding Sites:* areas that contain examples of unique or rare habitats or ecosystems (e.g. unditched tidal marshes, secondary dunes). They may either be unique to the Sound or rare in a regional landscape context.

- *Research/Educational Sites*: areas where either baseline research has occurred that is worthy of continuing (e.g., Barn Island with over 50 years of continuous research) or areas that have intrinsic value (e.g. unditched tidal wetlands) for the conduct of long term research.
- *Rare Species Habitat Sites*: areas that provide habitat for a Federal or State-listed threatened or endangered species. They may provide habitat for an assemblage of rare species or for an unusually high concentration of a single rare species.

The next step was to identify the areas around the Sound with the most significant recreational or ecological values. Sites were selected based on the number of ecological or recreational categories that applied and, for recreation sites, the number of patrons served. Additional criteria used to identify the inaugural areas included representation of the Sound’s diverse habitat types and recreational opportunities, the distribution of sites around the Sound, and community support for recognition of the area. Both phases of this process relied heavily on the assistance and professional judgment of natural resource managers and planners with extensive knowledge of the Sound’s ecological and recreational resources and were strengthened by feedback from the public.

### **3. Nominations for Additional Stewardship Areas**

*Attendees proposed that additional sites be included on the inaugural list, including the Long Wharf Preserve in New Haven, Otter Creek in Mamaroneck Harbor, Cold Spring Harbor, Mill Neck, and Flax Pond Salt Marsh. [Note: Flax Pond Salt Marsh is included in the Stony Brook Harbor Stewardship Area and Mill Neck is included in the Oyster Bay Stewardship Area.]*

*Specific concerns were voiced over the exclusion of Hempstead Harbor from the list of proposed inaugural stewardship areas. Many in attendance at the North Hempstead meeting supported the addition of Hempstead Harbor to the list of stewardship areas. These comments were bolstered by numerous letters of support and nomination forms highlighting Hempstead Harbor’s recreational and ecological values.*

After review of the documentation submitted, and in response to overwhelming public support, Hempstead Harbor was added as the 33<sup>rd</sup> proposed stewardship area. No additional areas were added to the proposed list of stewardship areas at this time. However, the Stewardship Initiative workgroup is planning to develop a process for regular reviews of and, if appropriate, updates to the list of stewardship areas. This process will include criteria for evaluating information on potential additions to the list and methodology for soliciting and incorporating feedback from the public.

### **4. Identification of Publicly-owned Sites**

*Most of the stewardship areas include anchor sites that are under public ownership, and many questions focused was the value of highlighting sites that are already protected. Concerns were raised that more attention should be paid to privately-owned and unprotected sites, especially those that are vulnerable to development.*

There are two main reasons why most of the proposed stewardship areas have anchor sites that are under public ownership. The first reason is that places such as state parks and National Wildlife Refuges, given their nature as publicly-owned entities, are designed specifically to

provide unparalleled levels of public access or to support significant habitat acreage. The other reason is that the Stewardship Initiative is a completely voluntary program. As a result, private property owners are notified about the identification of their site as a potential stewardship area and are given the option to accept or decline inclusion. Some private owners preferred not to participate in the program. The Stewardship Initiative partners hope that on-the-ground successes with the inaugural areas will serve as models to encourage participation by more private landowners.

In addition, as noted in response to comment #1, the boundaries of the stewardship areas are not strictly defined. Privately owned sites that are physically or ecologically connected to the anchor site(s) are eligible to voluntarily participate in stewardship implementation actions that would prove beneficial to the stewardship area. In this way, privately-owned and unprotected sites are eligible to participate in the Stewardship Initiative.

## **5. Identification of Underwater Areas**

*Questions were raised regarding whether the Sound's underwater areas were included in the Stewardship Initiative.*

At this time, the Stewardship Initiative focuses only on the coastal and near-shore areas of Long Island Sound. While there are significant resources in the Sound's underwater areas, limited data are available regarding these underwater resources. As a result, mapping the Sound's benthic environment and bringing key stakeholders together to discuss stewardship of the Sound's underwater resources are long-term needs.

## **6. Benefits of Identification as a Stewardship Area**

*Questions were asked regarding the benefits of being identified as a stewardship area or anchor site. Additional details were requested on benefits specifically for properties already under public ownership.*

By identifying these important areas, the Stewardship Initiative aims to highlight the Sound's recreational and ecological resources, to raise awareness of the threats to these resources, and to facilitate on-the-ground stewardship actions. The Initiative promotes coordinated resource planning within each stewardship area to develop a network of partners working in concert to address threats and respond to opportunities within each stewardship area. While beneficial to all involved, an additional benefit to publicly-owned properties is that these partnerships can help extend the reach of their management principles beyond the boundaries of their park or reserve. The Stewardship Initiative partners also are available to provide technical assistance to participating landowners and managers. This is a real benefit since successful stewardship actions have to include vital donated elements such as materials, labor, boat transportation, and GIS services, given the limited availability of funding.

Finally, potential funding for stewardship efforts is another benefit of identification as a stewardship area. Possible funding sources include the Long Island Sound Futures Fund, a partnership among the EPA-LISO, the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, and others. Stewardship areas will be given preference for funding to assist with planning, management, acquisition, or public access improvements consistent with the goals and principles of the

Stewardship Initiative. Pooled expertise and matching contributions facilitated through stewardship area partnerships also can increase the competitiveness of applications to other state and federal grant programs. Pending federal legislation would also create a dedicated funding source for stewardship activities.

## **7. Use & Access Decisions**

*Questions on these topics came from two different viewpoints. Some attendees expressed concern that the Stewardship Initiative could be used as a tool to limit dredging projects or to place restrictions on the use of the Sound, while others were hopeful that the Initiative could assist their efforts to limit development and prevent marina expansions in their neighborhoods.*

Identification of a site as an anchor site or inclusion in a stewardship area does not override any existing management requirements or statutory or regulatory dictates. Ownership, as well as use and access decisions, remains in the hands of the property owners or resource managers and are governed by existing local, state and Federal laws and regulations. The Stewardship Initiative is a non-regulatory, voluntary program. As such, the Initiative is not a tool to prevent dredging or restrict access to the Sound.

## **8. Outreach & Communications**

*Several comments focused on improvements to the Long Island Sound Stewardship Initiative's webpage ([www.longislandsoundstudy.net/stewardship](http://www.longislandsoundstudy.net/stewardship)). Recommendations included adding more detailed information about the stewardship areas and making the stewardship area maps available online. Other attendees suggested that more outreach be conducted with non-environmental groups, such as town planning or zoning committees, and that more be done to involve waterfront community stakeholders, such as those in the marine trades industry.*

With guidance from the workgroup, the EPA-LISO is working to update and enhance the Initiative's webpage. Since the public meetings, more detailed information and a map illustrating the stewardship areas have been added to the Initiative's webpage. The resource inventory maps remain accessible through RPA's website ([www.rpa.org/maps/lismaps.html](http://www.rpa.org/maps/lismaps.html)).

Stewardship is built on good information and effective communication. Boating organizations, wildlife watchers, commercial interests, land trusts, watershed associations, research agencies, and school systems are expected to be catalysts and contributors to the dialog. The Stewardship Initiative partners are working to increase communication and outreach to these and other stakeholders. Recent examples include a presentation to the New York State Marine Resources Advisory Committee and a meeting with the Connecticut Marine Trades Association. Reaching out to these groups and increasing stakeholder participation remain priorities for the Stewardship Initiative.

## **9. Long Island Sound Stewardship Act**

*Additional questions were asked regarding the Long Island Sound Stewardship Act of 2005, the legislation that has been introduced in Congress. Specific questions pertained to whether or not the legislation included underwater areas and whether areas not on the list of stewardship areas would be eligible for funding.*

The Long Island Sound Stewardship Act is still pending action in Congress. The current version of the bill, reintroduced in April 2006, limits stewardship activities to land areas only. Stewardship sites, and sites that are physically or ecologically connected to stewardship sites, are eligible for funding through the grant program established by the bill.

#### **STEWARDSHIP INITIATIVE SURVEY**

The results of the Stewardship Initiative Survey indicated a positive response concerning the participants' understanding of the goals and objectives of the Initiative and its value as a tool for protecting ecological and recreational sites around the Sound. Details regarding responses received are included in Appendix E.

Threats to the initial areas that were cited ranged from excessive signage on some properties to the constant pressure for development along the water's edge. Groundwater contamination from industrial sites and combined sewer overflows also were mentioned at specific sites.

The survey responses indicated that the greatest values the Long Island Sound Stewardship Initiative can offer are to facilitate the sharing of data and to provide funding for on-the-ground stewardship efforts.

## **APPENDIX A: PRESENTATION SUMMARY**

The Long Island Sound Study's Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP), approved in 1994, identified six priority issues that warranted special attention: low dissolved oxygen (hypoxia); toxic contamination; pathogen contamination; floatable debris; living resources and habitat management; and land use and development. Recommendations included in the living resources and habitat management section of the CCMP and in the 2003 Long Island Sound Agreement were that the Long Island Sound Study identify places with significant biological, scientific and recreational value throughout Long Island Sound and develop a strategy to protect and enhance these special places. The Long Island Sound Stewardship Initiative, a public/private partnership, was developed to address these recommendations.

The goals of Stewardship Initiative are to preserve natural areas, improve recreation and public access opportunities, protect important habitats, and promote efforts to plan for multiple uses. The Initiative strives to meet these goals by educating the public, developing partnerships and targeting funds for improved stewardship.

The Stewardship Initiative is guided by a strategy that was approved by the Long Island Sound Study Management Committee in October 2004. The strategy outlines a process for developing the Stewardship Initiative: 1) conduct a comprehensive resource inventory; 2) identify the high priority areas; 3) identify threats and stewardship opportunities at the priority areas; and 4) implement on-the-ground stewardship actions. A feedback loop will take new information gained from the process to review and update the list of priority areas. The Long Island Sound Study Stewardship Initiative workgroup is overseeing the implementation of this strategy.

Over the last three years, a comprehensive resource inventory of the Sound's ecological and recreational resources was conducted. Technical support was provided by the Regional Plan Association and the US Fish and Wildlife Service Coastal Program. Through the inventory process, and with significant input from a large number of stakeholders and the general public, the Stewardship Initiative workgroup identified more than 800 public access, open space and ecologically significant sites. The public meetings held in 2004 were designed to insure that all of the important sites which would contribute to the goals of the Initiative had been identified.

Since the 2004 meetings, resource professionals from federal agencies, the states, local municipalities, as well as other members of the workgroup, used the inventory to identify the high priority areas around the Sound. Thirty-two areas (17 in Connecticut and 15 in New York) were deemed to meet the designated stewardship criteria for high priority areas. Each recommended area focuses on a publicly-owned site, referred to as the "anchor site", but provides opportunities for other partners to opt in to this voluntary program. The purpose of this meeting is to get input on threats and stewardship opportunities at these areas and to hear if there are additional areas that should be considered for inclusion.

Over the next year, the Stewardship Initiative work group will begin implementing on-the-ground stewardship actions at the Inaugural Stewardship Areas. On-the-ground implementation will involve a range of potential stewardship tools including:

- Land conservation agreements
- Land & habitat management
- Site monitoring & planning
- Management plan implementation
- Land acquisition
- Public access improvements

Workgroup members are also interested in helping local communities improve stewardship by sharing data and providing a link to technical support and assistance.

There are many grant programs that provide funding for stewardship actions. One program that highlights stewardship as a priority for funding is the Long Island Sound Futures Fund, which is a partnership between the Long Island Sound Study and the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation. The Long Island Sound Stewardship Act of 2005, which has been introduced in both houses of Congress, is another potential source of funding for stewardship projects. This bill would authorize up to \$25 million annually to fund stewardship activities. Federal grant awards would require a minimum of 25 percent local share.

Additional information regarding the Stewardship Initiative is available at [www.longislandsoundstudy.net/stewardship](http://www.longislandsoundstudy.net/stewardship).

## APPENDIX B: STEWARDSHIP INITIATIVE SURVEY



### Stewardship Initiative Survey

1. Based on this meeting and other available information, I now have a clear idea of the goals and objectives of the Stewardship Initiative.

**Strongly agree**      **Agree**      **Disagree**      **Strongly disagree**

If you disagree or strongly disagree, what needs further explanation or support?

2. The Stewardship Initiative is a valuable tool for protecting ecological and recreational sites around Long Island Sound.

**Strongly agree**      **Agree**      **Disagree**      **Strongly disagree**

If you disagree or strongly disagree, why do you believe the Initiative will be ineffective?

3. Regarding the proposed inaugural areas, are there any additional features or values that should be highlighted? If so, please describe which area and what additional features/values should be highlighted.

4. Are you aware of any threats to or stewardship opportunities at any of the proposed inaugural areas? If so, please describe which area and what threats/opportunities exist.

5. Are there any other sites that should be considered for inclusion in the Stewardship Initiative in addition to the existing inventory list? If so, please use the Site Nomination Form to propose a site for inclusion.

6. How can the Long Island Sound Stewardship Initiative be most helpful in fostering stewardship?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Sharing data and successful stewardship techniques
- \_\_\_\_\_ Directly funding priority stewardship projects
- \_\_\_\_\_ Facilitating access to other funding sources
- \_\_\_\_\_ Linking groups to available technical support and assistance
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

6. Do you have any additional suggestions, concerns or ideas regarding the Stewardship Initiative?

7. How did you hear about this meeting?

PLEASE RETURN SURVEY

PLACE IN MARKED BOX AT REGISTRATION TABLE

OR MAIL IT TO:

Save the Sound  
18 Reynolds Street  
Norwalk, CT 06855

Thank you!

## **APPENDIX C: GROUPS & ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED AT THE PUBLIC MEETINGS**

### **Norwalk:**

East Norwalk Neighborhood Association  
Congressman Shay's Office  
Norwalk River Watershed Initiative  
Southwest Conservation District  
Audubon CT  
The Hour (press)  
Calf Island Conservancy, Inc.  
The Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk  
Save the Sound  
Audubon New York  
Town of Darien and Long Island Sound Study Citizens Advisory Committee  
Connecticut Fund for the Environment  
Norwalk Harbor Management Commission  
The Nature Conservancy  
Norwalk Shellfish Commission  
Norwalk River Watershed Association  
Regional Plan Association  
Mayor Alex A. Knopp, City of Norwalk  
US Environmental Protection Agency  
US Fish & Wildlife Service Coastal Program

### **New Haven:**

Branford Park and Recreation  
Branford Land Trust  
CT Department of Environmental Protection  
New Haven Land Trust  
City of New Haven Delegate, Long Island Sound Assembly  
Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies  
Connecticut Fund for the Environment  
Audubon CT  
Naugatuck Valley Audubon Society  
Trust for Public Land  
Regional Plan Association  
Save the Sound  
US Fish & Wildlife Service Coastal Program  
Yale Center for Coastal and Watershed Systems

### **East Lyme:**

Save the Rivers/Save the Hills  
E. Lyme Harbor Management/Shellfish  
Long Island Sound Council and Assembly  
Save the Sound

Congresswoman Nancy Johnson's office  
CT DEP/Long Island Sound Study  
Audubon CT  
East Lyme Water Front  
Essex Island Marina  
Spicer's Marina  
Regional Plan Association  
Friends of Oswego Hills  
West Farms Land Trust  
Waterford High School  
Oak Grove Association  
The Day (press)  
State Representative Ed Jutila  
CT DEP/Boating  
US Fish & Wildlife Service Coastal Program

**New Rochelle:**

Audubon New York  
Regional Plan Association  
Rep. Nita Lowey's office  
Westchester County  
Bronx River Sound Shore Audubon  
Friends of Marshlands  
NY State Department of Environmental Conservation  
NY Sea Grant/Long Island Sound Office  
New Rochelle residents  
City Island Chamber of Commerce  
The Oceanics Schools, Inc.  
Town of Mamaroneck  
Long Island Sound Study Citizens Advisory Committee  
US Fish & Wildlife Service Coastal Program

**North Hempstead:**

Audubon New York  
Regional Plan Association  
NY Sea Grant/Long Island Sound Office  
NY State Department of Environmental Conservation  
US Fish & Wildlife Service – Long Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex  
Hempstead Harbor Protection Committee  
Town of North Hempstead  
Citizens Campaign for Environment  
Aqua Quest Publications  
NYC Trout Unlimited  
Fishers Island Conservancy  
Friends of the Bay  
NY State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation

Long Island Sound Study Citizens Advisory Committee  
Manhasset Bay Protection Committee  
North Shore Audubon  
Assemb. Di Napoli's office  
Coalition to Save Hempstead Harbor  
US Fish & Wildlife Service Coastal Program

**Stony Brook:**

Audubon New York  
Regional Plan Association  
NYS Parks  
Trout Unlimited  
Town of Smithtown Planning  
Marine Sciences Research Center, Stony Brook University  
NY State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation  
Friends of Flax Pond  
NY Sea Grant  
NY Sea Grant/Long Island Sound Office  
Resident  
NY State Department of Environmental Conservation  
Student – Stony Brook  
Consultant  
Three Village Community Trust  
Suffolk County Parks  
US Fish & Wildlife Service Coastal Program

## **APPENDIX D: MEETING DETAILS & PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**Norwalk, Monday, June 13, 2005**

**Attendance: 19**

### **Norwalk questions:**

1. How many acres is Sherwood Island?
2. How far up the Norwalk Harbor could we extend a Stewardship system?
3. To what extent does US Fish and Wildlife Service allow recreational use of its properties?
4. It is said that the Stewardship Initiative is about protecting recreational uses – but there are none for some sites.
5. Is Shea Island included?

### **Areas of concern:**

Stewardship initiative would exclude certain activities at certain sites

Dredging

Stormwater runoff

Balancing multiple uses

**New Haven, Tuesday, June 14, 2005**

**Attendance: 15**

### **New Haven questions:**

1. Were aquatic sites nominated? And if so, what were the criteria for choosing?
2. What about degradation of eel grass beds that no longer exist?
3. There should be two discrete programs; one that examines environmental impacts and the other to look at recreation. Once humans are in equation, environment loses out every time.
4. Hope there will be outreach coordinated to increase people's awareness of all resources in the State – not just those we are hearing about because they are exemplary or made it onto the list.

### **Areas of concern/interest:**

Development in West Haven

Eel grass

Aquatic habitats

**East Lyme, Wednesday, June 15, 2005**

**Attendance: 18**

### **East Lyme questions:**

1. Why will there be no (State) public hearing about Bluff Point?
2. Sounds like DEP's work is being cut – with no more staff added in future – what can we do about this?

3. HR307 includes language of underwater areas. I asked Mark Tedesco last if underwater areas would be included and he said “no”. Not clear of what you’re saying today.
4. Goes back to baseline of trust. You alluded earlier about partners (Audubon, Save the Sound, Regional Planning Authority). These partnerships have no credibility. The real waterfront stakeholders are not part of this. They’re opposed to this – we don’t know enough about what these groups want to do. Let’s continue with people who are already doing a good job. Why are we putting on a new layer of government. There’s no partnership.
5. Last year we couldn’t debate the merits of this project; told it wasn’t a forum; we were gagged. This isn’t a partnership with waterfront property owners.
6. We need to change the legislation – what can you tell me about this?
7. Legislation – what if we changed language – to enhance underwater area for shellfish and if people were involved this would happen.
8. It has been exclusionary from the beginning. If we’d been invited since the inception maybe it would be different. When you sell stewardship as protecting areas – who are you saving this from? They’re already all protected. They call it what it is – you’re looking for more funds to enhance. You can’t protect it from development.
9. Recreation is on map; in our mind recreation is boating not hiking.
10. No one wanted to save ducks or are concerned about open access; we want to get to the water – no one is objecting to these – more ocean open the better. Be careful of creating new layers of government.
11. What’s with Watts Island?
12. Oyster Bay, as an example, is a designated area. What is the benefit of it being chosen as a designated area, beyond potential funding, for this additional layer of government?

**Areas of concern/interest:**

Concerns about access and use

Dredging

Balancing multiple uses

Access to ocean

Being included in dialogue; being heard; being part of partnership

Lack of trust of some of the existing partners

Waterfront community felt they were not part of process

Others; not part of partnership – it’s not too late to become engaged – encouraged folks to get involved.

**New Rochelle City Hall, June 20, 2005**

**Attendance: 18**

**New Rochelle questions:**

1. Why doesn’t the pier at the Rye Playland get more use?
2. Areas should be expanded in consideration of migratory bird stopovers.
3. Why aren’t the private clubs in Mamaroneck and other municipalities encouraged to participate?
4. Is Otter Creek, TNC’s property, included?
5. County Exec. Spano supports the Initiative and asked for help regarding David’s Island.

6. There are many pockets of municipally owned property that have no stewardship occurring.
7. Install piers around the Sound and get people from place to place by ferry
8. There is a plan to put in a ferry at David's Island which should be expanded to NYC and elsewhere around the Sound
9. Pump out stations for boaters should be coordinated and people should be educated about their locations.

**Areas of concern:**

In some instances sites aren't large enough to cover all of the contingencies, especially in regard to migratory birds

Municipal and private holdings on the Sound should be encouraged into the Stewardship Initiative.

Not enough pump out stations around the Sound.

**North Hempstead Town Hall, June 21, 2005**

**Attendance: 18**

**North Hempstead questions:**

1. How do you get an area designated as a National Wildlife Refuge?
2. Is there a limit to the number of Stewardship site that can be designated?
3. What criteria/process did you use to identify sites?
4. Hempstead Harbor should be included as it meets all the criteria – is considered part of an Audubon Important Bird Area. It was recently awarded \$75k for site improvements
5. On the website where the stewardship sites are listed, can you click on each site and get more info on each site? Will website include recreational access information?
6. When accessing the map of sites online, to find Manhasset Bay, Hempstead, you had to click on New York City – This is bad, as Manhasset Bay is not in NYC!
7. Hempstead Harbor was nominated in the last round, why do we have to nominate it again?
8. Do whatever you can to get Hempstead Harbor listed
9. What are the benefits of being designated?
10. How will the funds flow from the Long Island Sound Stewardship Act, will it go to the groups involved in the initiative or directly to the projects?
11. Can an area receive funding if it is not listed as a priority site?
12. What is the time frame for future nominations?
13. Oyster Bay was listed by Defenders of Wildlife as an Important National Wildlife Refuge, and is currently under development pressure.
14. On criteria, there should be included an analysis of areas with existing support and infrastructure (friends groups, protection committees, local government entities)
15. Is there more extensive information available on each site?

**Areas of concern/interest:**

Hempstead Harbor should be designated as a stewardship site – multiple suggestions from various attendees

Need Comprehensive Website

Need more detailed ranking criteria, so one can see why a site, like Hempstead Harbor, did not get nominated

Expand criteria to include analysis of areas with existing community support and infrastructure.

**Endeavor Hall, Stony Brook University, June 15, 2005**

**Attendance: 15**

**Stony Brook questions:**

1. At Long Beach on Stony Brook Harbor, the town of Smithtown is proposing to increase the number of “Slips” in the harbor to expand the marina. How does this initiative help protect this area from Smithtown’s proposal?
2. How does the Stewardship Initiative relate to the LIS Stewardship Act?
3. Does the Act provide for comprehensive management planning?
4. On the Stony Brook harbor proposal, the marina proposal will lead to degradation of water quality, and in no way will this new development improve habitat and water quality.

**Areas of concern/interest:**

Stony Brook Harbor Marina Expansion

Comprehensive Management Planning

Protecting water quality and underwater habitats

## APPENDIX E: SURVEY RESPONSES

The survey, contained in Appendix B, included 7 questions, the first two of which asked for rankings. The remaining questions were qualitative, requiring a written response, and these responses are included below as well.

### Stewardship Initiative Survey

*1. Based on this meeting and other available information, I now have a clear idea of the goals and objectives of the Stewardship Initiative.*

**Strongly agree = 5    Agree = 11    Disagree = 1    Strongly disagree = 1**

*If you disagree or strongly disagree, what needs further explanation or support?*

#### **Mail:**

- Not sure what the Stewardship Initiative does except identify areas already protected areas.

#### **New Haven:**

- Funding and future amendments which might be proposed that could affect the initial goal.
- Needs concrete benchmarks, not just “partnering”.
- Possibly use more examples of criteria used to choose different sites, use more detail on sites close to hearing location.

#### **New Rochelle:**

- Referencing the process of providing stewardship needs clarity.
- I really do not understand how LISS operates or how it can help.

*2. The Stewardship Initiative is a valuable tool for protecting ecological and recreational sites around Long Island Sound.*

**Strongly agree = 9    Agree = 10    Disagree = 2    Strongly disagree = 1**

*If you disagree or strongly disagree, why do you believe the Initiative will be ineffective?*

#### **Norwalk:**

- A major sponsor is USFWS – USFWS discourages or prohibits recreation. (except hunting and fishing)

#### **Mail:**

1) No one understands it.; 2) The priority shouldn't be to highlight protected areas, but areas currently at risk of development.

#### **New Haven:**

- Depends on who is allowed to enjoy or study the protected site. There would need to be a wide range of citizens and groups represented in the goal.

**New Rochelle:**

- No clue.

*3. Regarding the proposed inaugural areas, are there any additional features or values that should be highlighted? If so, please describe which area and what additional features/values should be highlighted.*

**Norwalk:**

- No.

**New Haven:**

- For Quinnipiac River, New Haven - Hemingway Creek (east side) and Quinn meadows (east side) and Quinnipiac River Park (west side) and Dover Beach park (west side)
- It would be valuable to combine coastal and forest areas to enable animals inhabiting coastal forests to thrive.

**Mail:**

- Additional emphasis should be placed on Cold Spring Harbor. The complex should be described as the Oyster Bay-Mill Neck-Cold Spring Harbor complex. My attached comments, slightly revised following the 6/21 forum, includes 7 features that I believe should be highlighted. [statement on file in EPA—Long Island Sound Office]
- Most “special areas” are special because they are protected from development. Areas that are not developed (are there any not protected?) or lightly developed should be targeted for protection. The low-lying fruit has been picked – it’s time to work on the more difficult (e.g. expensive) sites that need protection.
- Hempstead Harbor [Nomination form and supporting materials on file in EPA—Long Island Sound Office]
- Headwater areas of tributaries – wetland areas such as Hauppauge Springs, a 40 acre wetland area at the headwaters of the Nissequogue River above Blydenburga Lake in Hauppauge.

**New Rochelle:**

- Public access levels should be defined and itemized (present and future).
- Linking all areas together.
- Fishing piers and ferry access at Orchard Beach.

**North Hempstead:**

- Alley Pond. This area contains the last above ground spring creek within the New York City boundaries.
- Credit should be given to areas that have existing partnerships working on watershed protection.

*4. Are you aware of any threats to or stewardship opportunities at any of the proposed inaugural areas? If so, please describe which area and what threats/opportunities exist.*

**Norwalk:**

- The immense number of signs on FWS islands are an eyesore and inconsistent with this initiative.

**New Haven:**

- Quinnipiac River – Growth in lower area of commercial/manufacturing and residential pressure along river with building, parking lots and pollution.
- Not aware of any.
- Nothing that you don't know about.

**Mail:**

- My comments address the threats and stewardship opportunities. [Kyle Rabin, ED, Friends of the Bay statement is on file at the EPA—Long Island Sound Office]
- Most of these areas could use more help, but I don't think they are the most endangered sites on the Sound.
- Hauppauge Springs – groundwater contamination from nearby industrial park (DEC Disposal Site # 1-52-162).
- Alley Creek – a storm water over flow (CSO) polluting the tidal section of Alley Creek.
- Mill River – development of Mill pond overlook (Oyster Bay).

**New Rochelle:**

- Davids Island, until it becomes County parkland is threatened with development.

*5. Are there any other sites that should be considered for inclusion in the Stewardship Initiative in addition to the existing inventory list? If so, please use the Site Nomination Form to propose a site for inclusion.*

**Norwalk:**

- No

**New Haven:**

- Long Wharf Preserve, New Haven.

**New Rochelle:**

- Otter Creek in Mamaroneck Harbor owned by the Nature Conservancy.
- Flax Pond Saltmarsh

**Mail:**

- Hempstead Harbor [Nomination form and supporting materials on file in EPA—Long Island Sound Office]

**North Hempstead:**

- Yes. Hempstead Harbor.

*6. How can the Long Island Sound Stewardship Initiative be most helpful in fostering stewardship?*

9 – Sharing data and successful stewardship techniques

10 – Directly funding priority stewardship projects

7 – Facilitating access to other funding sources [note one person \*'d this ]

8 – Linking groups to available technical support and assistance

4 – Other

- Encouraging public access [Norwalk]
- Setting goals that are based on ecological values. If goals are not met, what are the consequences? Is there accountability?
- Help municipalities appreciate sensitive way to use their water resources (New Rochelle)
- Outreach to clubs to treat water resources with sensitivity (New Rochelle).
- Set objective standards for areas to be nominated in the Stewardship Initiative.

**Someone ranked them (mail) – these are not included in the above tallies.**

4 – Sharing data

2 – Directly funding

3 – Facilitating

5 – Linking groups

1 – Other

- Working with local towns to educate their town committees (planning and zoning) on methods to protect shore and wetlands areas from intense development, increasing public access, improving sewage treatment (including local septic systems).

6. *Do you have any additional suggestions, concerns or ideas regarding the Stewardship Initiative?*

**Norwalk:**

- Yes

**Mail:**

- The public forums have been preaching to the converted. Perhaps you should clarify the message (What does the LI Sound Stewardship Initiative mean to the person on the street?) and then take the program to the non-environmental groups – like a Chamber of Commerce.
- Keep me informed as you go forward: Myron H. Blumenfeld.

**New Haven:**

- About development around these sites – are there efforts to use the Coastal Zone Management Act to change zoning so that there is increased protection?

**New Rochelle:**

- Give small areas to local stewardship like the clean and green program. This will help maintain new plantings etc. where people normally would like to help but don't have the authority and are afraid they might get in trouble.

7. *How did you hear about this meeting?*

- Via email and LISS CAC meeting.
- Email (from Robin, from Save the Sound, and others)
- Located at workplace. Publicity could have been better.
- Mailing.
- Save the Sound flyer.
- Copy of press release.

- Karen Chytalo – DEC
- Through Audubon.
- Kyle Rabin – Friends of the Bay. Oyster Bay.
- Dave Thompson – past president “Art Flick” (Suffolk County) Chapter of Trout Unlimited