

Long Island Sound Study Habitat Restoration and Stewardship Workgroup Meeting Summary- Summer 2015

Long Island Sound Study Habitat Restoration and Stewardship Workgroups had a joint meeting on August 5, 2015 at the Audubon Connecticut office at Stratford Point in Stratford, CT. At this meeting, members discussed several projects and topics that focus on **sustainable shorelines and resilient communities**.

Dave Kozak (CTDEEP) and Kevin O'Brien (CTDEEP) updated the group on the Sea Level Affecting Marshes Model (SLAMM) project undertaken by LISS, CTDEEP, NYSERDA, and NEIWPCC. They unveiled **two newly developed tools that will allow users to view various sea level rise scenarios, over several time periods, and with various probability**.

Rebecca French (CIRCA-University of Connecticut) introduced the groups to the priorities and projects undertaken by the Connecticut Institute for Resilience & Climate Adaptation. CIRCA intends to **work with municipalities to address issues related to sea level rise**, impacts of waste water treatment plants, precipitation, infrastructure resiliency, coastal and inland flooding, and living shorelines. Specific detail was provided on their efforts with SAFR (State Agencies for Resilience) and their work to design, pilot, and create communities that provide coastal communities with resilient, **natural shorelines and resilient zones** on higher lands that protect infrastructure and have connections to major transportation corridors.

During the latter part of the day, **Jennifer Mattei (Sacred Heart University)** wrapped up our discussion on resilient shorelines by discussing her Long Island Sound Futures Fund Stratford Point Restoration project. Jennifer and her team installed **64 reef balls** at the site in 2014 and have been monitoring the structures for habitat quality (presence or absence of bivalves, snails, barnacles, and fish), sediment accretion, and wave attenuation. Initial results indicate that the site has successfully attracted wildlife, **reduced the wave energy at the site by 30%**, and accumulated sediment on both sides of the reef structure. *Spartina alterniflora* has been planted with students and volunteers on the landward edge of the reef complex to further create habitat and reduce wave energy. Jennifer led the workgroups on two tours of the site (one at a lower tide and one at a high tide) to view the dynamic nature of the site.



A close up view of the reef ball structures at Stratford Point. Newly installed tidal marsh plantings can be seen landward of the reef complex. (photo credit: Judy Preston)



Jennifer Mattei (Sacred Heart University) discusses the history of the Stratford Point site and leads a tour of the living shoreline project area. (photo credit: Amy Mandelbaum)

Presentations and discussion during the day also focused on the necessity to catalogue ecological characteristics of important terrestrial and intertidal sites around Long Island Sound. [Juliana Barrett \(Connecticut Sea Grant\)](#) discussed her project to collect various **ecological data on 120 sites around Long Island** and place it within a newly created database. **Lastly, the group was asked to brainstorm, based on the actions and goals of the newly created Long Island Sound Study Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan, workgroup priorities over the next 1-2 years.** A write-up on the workgroup priorities may be requested from the Management Committee when they hold their in person meeting on October 2015.



Panoramic view of the reef balls and tidal marsh restoration site. (photo credit: Amy Mandelbaum)



A view of the current upland meadow habitat (foreground) and the reef balls and tidal marsh restoration site (background). (photo credit: Georgia Basso)



Workgroup members & presenters. August meeting. Stratford, CT (photo credit: Patrick Comins)

Back row left to right: Georgia Basso (USFWS), Amanda Pachomski (Audubon New York), Juliana Barrett (CT Sea Grant), Judy Preston (CT Sea Grant), Todd Bobowick (NRCS), Dave Kozak (CTDEEP), Mark Johnson (CT DEEP), Tim Wenskus (NYC Parks), Jennifer Mattei (Sacred Heart University), Kevin O'Brien (CTDEEP), Harry Yamalis (CTDEEP).

Front row left to right: Rebecca French (CIRCA), Holly Drinkuth (The Nature Conservancy), Amy Mandelbaum (NY Sea Grant), Vicky O'Neill (NYSDEC), Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe (Audubon Connecticut), Patrick Comins (Audubon Connecticut).

Not pictured but in attendance: Ron Rozsa, Trey Chabot (Sacred Heart University), Lisa Piastuch (Sacred Heart University).