



**Long Island Sound Study
Management Committee Meeting
Housatonic Community College
Thursday, October 20, 2016**

Welcome/Introductions/Logistics. Joe Salata, acting for Mark Tedesco, called the meeting to order at 10:05am. Joe asked for any proposed agenda changes. Nancy Ferlow requested adding an update on the LIS Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). Salata noted that the ferry was back on a three boat schedule and the departure time for today was 3:00pm.

Members/alternates in attendance: Charles Dequillfeldt, NYSDEC for Dawn McReynolds; Jim O'Donnell, STAC/CT; Richard Friesner, NEIWPC for Ron Poltak; Bill Wise, NY Sea Grant; Rob Hust, CTDEEP; Joe Salata, EPA for Mark Tedesco; Leah O'Neill, EPA for Mel Coté; Nancy Ferlow, USDA/NRCS; Gary Wikfors, NOAA; Nancy Seligson, CAC/NY; Peter Francis, CTDEEP; Sylvain DeGuise, CT Sea Grant; Rick Balla, EPA Region 2; Laura Grieco, NYCDEP for James Mueller; Sandy Breslin, CAC/CT

Others in Attendance: Jim Ammerman, NEIWPC; Cassie Bauer, NYSDEC; Robert Burg, NEIWPC; Kim Roth, NEIWPC; Mark Parker, CTDEEP; Harry Yamalis, CTDEEP; Chuck Lee, CTDEEP; Evelyn Powers, NEIWPC/IEC

Announcements. No announcements

REPORTS

Science and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC). Jim O'Donnell reported that the Coastal Hypoxia Research Proposal (CHRP) submitted jointly by UConn and SBU was not approved for funding by NOAA. The proposal was extensively reviewed and there were certain budget restrictions this year; Jim Ammerman has the reviews if anyone wants to see them. The Principal Investigators still have to find out what projects were funded in this round and the hope is that there is more money in the program next year. One positive from this process was formation of a bi-state team that developed the proposal.

Comments:

- Rob Hust asked if there was going to be a formal re-gathering of the development team and if there was Plan B. Jim O'Donnell agreed that the development team needed to have a postmortem discussion. Jim said we should have an RFP that can evaluate alternatives.

Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). Nancy Seligson reported that the CAC met on September 8th and spent most of the meeting crafting a 2017 priority letter to the Management Committee, which Nancy handed out to the group. The priorities in the letter were listed according to the four Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) themes. Nancy reviewed each of the recommended priorities stated in the letter and asked that these priorities be discussed and considered when talking about the budget. Nancy also mentioned that there is still ongoing discussion of the letter by the CAC so they might be sending the

Management Committee a slightly amended letter in the future. An electronic copy of the final letter will be sent out to the Management Committee via the EPA Long Island Sound Office (LISO).

Comments on the Blue Plan priority

- Bill Wise asked if the CAC was in contact with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) regarding the Blue Plan points addressed in the letter. Sandy mentioned that TNC is very active in the CAC and the language in the letter was approved by TNC.
- Sylvain DeGuise mentioned that the subcommittee to the Blue Plan has been working for a couple years and is a bi-state group, of which he is a member; however, the effort is not supported financially, it is leveraging existing funding. The CAC consensus was that the Blue Plan was a bi-state effort and it would provide a regional benefit, so it is an appropriate issue to bring forward to the Management Committee.
- Robert Burg said TNC is going to be holding a forum on the Blue Plan at the Maritime Aquarium in Norwalk on November 16.
- Joe Salata asked about the Blue Plan timeline – Sylvain indicated it is four years, and it is nearing year two at this time.

Other Comments

- Leah O'Neill suggested adding the CCMP implementation actions (IAs) into the letter to correspond to the priorities; Nancy Seligson agreed to do this and resend the letter to the EPA LISO.
- Bill Wise - The research RFP will be released in 2018. Is it the CAC recommendation to have ocean acidification in the RFP? Nancy Seligson replied in the affirmative.
- Laura Grieco had a question about the date of Sept 17 under developing nitrogen targets. This date is based on the timelines that DEC vetted. The CAC just wants DEC to stick to their timelines.

CCMP Progress Reports. Joe Salata mentioned that abstracts from each of the work groups that are not presenting today were sent out to the Management Committee electronically. The last Management Committee meeting was the first time we had most of the workgroups submit written abstracts and any groups that needed input from the Management Committee did a brief presentation. The same format was used for this meeting and two workgroups (Habitat Restoration and Stewardship and Reporting) presented at the meeting. Joe mentioned that there is work that is happening outside of the workgroups, but it hasn't been decided how or if there should be updates to the Management Committee on those yet. Nancy Seligson suggested that there should be an open question period on the agenda for Committee members to ask about the content of the work group abstracts. There was a general consensus that this was a good idea.

Action: An agenda topic for Qs&As for the work group abstracts will be added to future agendas.

Comments about the format or the workgroup abstracts

- Sandy Breslin had a question about the impervious cover and Leah suggested that we discuss the option to fund UConn CLEAR to do the New York side at the January Management Committee meeting. **Action:** This issue will be discussed by the Implementation Team among other budget impact issues.

- Connecticut is doing embayment outreach and package from NEMO and Nancy Seligson wanted to know if this can be shared with NY. **Action:** CTDEEP will share the package.
- Nancy Seligson asked about progress on a non-point tracking tool. **Action:** NYSDEC and CTDEEP have set up a meeting to discuss how to address the tracking tool questions. The issue will be further discussed by the states and EPA along with the nitrogen planning efforts.

Habitats & Wildlife.

Harry Yamalis gave a presentation on the Habitat Restoration and Stewardship Work Group (HRSWG). At the October 2015 MC meeting the workgroup was charged with a project to come up with a list of priority habitat restoration and protection goals/parameters. There are separate definitions for protection and restoration (see presentation for goals of protection and goals of restoration).

The HRSWG wants the Management Committee to confirm the intent of the Oct 2015 directive, endorse or redirect the work group efforts, and offer guidance on whether or not this effort should be expanded to include the identification of habitat management goals, and, if so, how it might differ from restoration and protection goals. They want confirmation that this can be useful.

Comments

- Nancy Seligson asked that the list of goals be sent to the Management Committee so they can make a recommendation. **Action:** This will be discussed at the December I Team meeting.
- Sandy Breslin asked if the workgroup discussed some kind of rating system that could be used to pick and choose the priorities. How do these relate with the IAs that the Management Committee approved last year? Harry said that they covered pretty much all the workgroup's IAs with these goals.
- How comfortable is the work group with these goals? Harry said they have had two meetings in person and several email and phone discussions so they are pretty comfortable.
- Leah O'Neill suggested that the list be emailed to the Management Committee with a timeline for a response and comments. **Action:** This topic will be put on the agenda for the December I-team meeting.
- Lynn Dwyer mentioned that if it is going to be translated into the LISFF, it would be good to have it in the habitat restoration guidance. Send any guidance that the Management Committee feels comfortable with to Lynn by early January. **Action:** This items needs further discussion with the EPA Project Officer on the NFWF award. The RFP has been simplified based on recommendations in the evaluation done several years ago.

Reporting. Mark Parker gave a presentation on the reporting workgroup recommendations. The ad hoc reports work group was formed out of the Oct 2015 MC meeting. The group was charged with streamlining reporting requirements, minimizing workloads, and meeting mandatory reporting needs. The group looked at all the reporting the LISS puts out over the years. Some is required, such as NEPORT, semi-annual progress reports, program updates. Some reporting is voluntary, including: eSound, Sound Health, Protection and Progress, and LIS indicators. The workgroup came up with three primary recommendations:

1. Report CCMP implementation progress based on Ecosystem Targets via the LISS website and produce printed summary report every two years.

2. Discontinue eSound, Sound Health, and Protection & Progress in favor of a new CCMP biennial report summarized from the LISS website.
3. Track IA progress every 5 years through I-team.

Four other general recommendations

1. Address current reporting gaps
2. Reduce the amount of printed material
3. Continue publication of Sound Update and other outreach materials.
4. Encouraged the use of social media

The ad hoc reports work group has completed its tasks of making recommendations to the Management Committee and is now asking that the workgroup be dismantled. The I-team and other workgroup will take on the task of following through with these recommendations.

The Management Committee agreed to the above recommendations and to decommissioning the ad hoc reports work group. See presentation and final report for more information.

Comments

- Nancy Seligson thought that the 5 year timeline might be too long. Leah responded that the work group struggled with this and thought that it would be tough to report on 139 IAs annually. Rob Hust mentioned that the I-team should do a quick check annually, and then do a big report every 5 years.
- Sylvain DeGuise suggested that every project be required to report what IA they are covering on the front end. Joe responded that EPA is asking that everyone list the IAs they are covering in their work plans, but there are projects that are not funded by LISS, so the question is will we still have to track IAs those projects are covering.
- Jim O'Donnell asked if these reports are for the public or technical reports for the agencies. Leah said that the reports workgroup focused on CCMP implementation reporting and reporting on progress and streamlining. There is another workgroup (communications workgroup) that focuses on the public outreach products.
- Lynn Dwyer suggested consulting an evaluation professional about how to structure this exercise to get out the metrics and the goals that were outlined in the presentation.

Water Quality Monitoring work group update. Since there was no written abstract on the Water Quality Monitoring work group, Jim Ammerman gave a quick verbal update to the group. The work group has been meeting regularly and the meeting minutes can be found on the LISS webpage (<http://longislandsoundstudy.net/about/committees/water-quality-monitoring-work-group/>). Jim also mentioned that he has been speaking at several seminars about LISS over the past few months. Evelyn Powers mentioned that the combined report with IEC and CTDEEP is in progress. The first joint report will summarize the 2016 monitoring season. They would welcome any input from the Management Committee. Jim O'Donnell said that they are also integrating the data from the IEC cruises onto LISICOS.

Nitrogen Reduction Efforts. Leah O'Neill announced that the Long Island Sound Task Order to support the EPA Nitrogen Reduction Strategy has been awarded to Tetra Tech (on 9/28), and she distributed a copy of the final performance work statement. This performance work statement was developed to assist EPA in establishing nitrogen loading thresholds and allowable loads for western LIS point source discharges, large riverine systems and select coastal embayments. The

Base Period was funded using the \$379,000 from the 2016 LISS budget, but they are about \$29,000 short. There is some funding left from the fiduciary reserve but a small amount of money will have to be taken from the 2017 LISS budget to completely fund the Base Period. Option one in the PWS is not currently funded. This PWS was written last April/May, so there were some changes. For example page 3 says they will convene a technical advisory committee- this will still take place, but it is not going to have a consensus or an advisory role. It will be a technical stakeholder group.

There was a kickoff meeting on October 12th. The current schedule is based on the submittal of the Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP). Once the contractor submits the QAPP and it is approved the timeline will begin. There will be some communication with CTDEEP and DEC to have unification of these efforts. EPA anticipates providing quarterly updates at the LIS Management Committee meetings, as well as forming a Technical Stakeholder Group that will receive updates on technical progress and provide their individual viewpoint or identify information EPA or their contractor may have missed, but will not collectively advise EPA.

Comments

- Nancy Seligson had a concern that none of the New York embayments in the Primary Tier Watershed Groupings were in Western LIS. Leah O'Neill mentioned that there is some flexibility to switch some embayments, but the state of New York would have to make that recommendation.
- There was a comment on how much it would cost to fund Option 1. Leah indicated that Option 1 would require an additional \$290,000.

2017 Budget & Work Plan Process. Joe Salata mentioned that EPA is on a Continuing Resolution (CR) until December 9th, which is \$4.5 million. The Lame Duck Congress may extend the CR or pass the budget or take no action. At this time, EPA will only be asking for base proposal requests.

There is a reauthorization bill on the table, which would extend the LISS for another 5 years and would include actions that would effectively help the program, like reducing the match to 60:40 from 50:50. It would require a new biennial report too. The status of the reauthorization bill is unknown. Also, the House EPA appropriations bill has \$10 million for LISS. If these bills pass, we can look at other projects to fund.

Comments

- IEC water quality monitoring has been an enhancement grant in the past, maybe we should discuss whether this should be considered a base funding request. It was suggested that the water quality monitoring work group discuss this further and make recommendations to the Management Committee as to whether it should be a base proposal.

UPDATES

LIS Futures Fund 2016. Lynn Dwyer gave an update on the 2016 LIS Futures Fund (LISFF). This year the LISFF RFP was adjusted to reflect the 2015 revisions in the CCMP. The LISFF

received 57 applications this year, which is an average number compared to past years. Over \$3 million was requested for the \$1.2 million available funding. The 2016 LISFF is funding 25 grants this year with \$1.2 million and \$1.29 million in match. There are four small grants, totaling \$34,000; eight CCMP-themed waters/watersheds grants, totaling \$546,000; five habitat/wildlife-themed grants, totaling \$400,000; and eight sustainable/communities-themed grants, totaling \$260,000. The organizations that received the grants include: 13 NGOs, 5 universities/museums/aquariums, and 3 municipalities. These grants will restore 27 acres, educate and engage 397,000 people, and treat 1 million gallons of pollution. In addition, 9 projects will be serving Environmental Justice (EJ) communities.

The LISFF 2016 notification letters were sent out and after the program and administrative review is complete, the contracts will begin. The grant announcement will take place on November 14th from 10am-12pm at the Mamaroneck Town Center, courtesy of Nancy Seligson, the chief elected official of the Town of Mamaroneck and New York CAC co-chair.

Comments:

- Jim O'Donnell mentioned that projects in Connecticut can apply to the Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptability ([CIRCA](#)) for matching funds for Green Infrastructure demonstration projects and living shoreline projects. The CIRCA RFP is released 4 times a year. CIRCA has \$200,000 a year for matching funds and can provide up to 20 percent of the funds for a project.
- Rick Balla mentioned that EPA provided money for an Urban Waters Ambassador position for the Bronx and Harlem River.

LIS Report Card. Sandy Breslin reported that LIS 2016 Report Card event took place on October 6. This year's report card focused on the main stem of LIS as opposed to inclusion of the embayments last time. The report card graded on a gradient with the Western Narrows receiving an F and the Eastern Sound receiving an A-. Save the Sound did active outreach at the management level to make them aware of the content of the report card. Overall, the feedback was very positive and there were over 200 news articles that went out about the report card. From now on, the report card will be updated every two years, sources of funding being available.

Dredging site designation status. Leah O'Neill reported that it is anticipated that the final rule to designate the eastern disposal site will be published on October 28. See <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-establishes-eastern-long-island-sound-site-disposal-dredged-sediment>

LIS RCPP. During the first year of the LIS RCPP (2014/2015), LIS and the 6 states surrounding LIS received \$10 million. Currently, nine applications for parcels in New England are under review. Contracts are in progress for the Soil Health part of the program. Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire have RFPs rolled out. There will be an application that will roll out every year for 3 years and each Conservation District will run its own application period. The program is designed to fund the farmers.

Other. Rob Hust mentioned that the CT Marine Vessel Pumpout program reached the one million gallon per year threshold. All the harbors are covered except one portion that doesn't have many boats.

Nancy Seligson announced that Town of Mamaroneck that was designated as a Climate Smart Community by NYSDEC. It is the 9th community to be so-designated in the state. Nancy said that the process to apply for and receive the designation was very complex. Joe Salata asked if there was a premium attached to the designation and Nancy indicated that the town received a nice certificate. See the NYSDEC Climate Smart homepage at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/energy/56876.html>

Adjournment. There being no other business, Joe Salata adjourned the meeting at 2:30pm.
