



**Long Island Sound Study
Management Committee Meeting
Housatonic Community College
Thursday, May 11, 2017**

Attendees: Jim Ammerman, NEIWPC; Rick Balla, EPA Region 2; Cassie Bauer, NYSDEC; Robert Burg, NEIWPC; Mel Coté, EPA/NE; Ian Dombroski EPA; Sylvain DeGuise, CT Sea Grant; Peter Francis, CTDEEP; Laura Grieco, NYCDEP; Curt Johnson, CAC/Save the Sound; Chuck Lee, CTDEEP; Judy Yaqin Li May, NOAA; Dawn McReynolds, NYSDEC; Chris Mecozzi, EPA Region 2; Tom Morgart, NRCS; Jonathan Morrison, USGS/CT; Jim O'Donnell, STAC/CT; Leah O'Neill, EPA; Mark Parker, CTDEEP; Kim Roth, NEIWPC; Nancy Seligson, CAC/NY; Mark Tedesco, EPA; Harry Yamalis, CTDEEP;

Additional Attendees from GAO: Susan Iott, Katya Rodriguez, and Michelle Treistman,

Welcome/Introductions/Logistics. Mark Tedesco called the meeting to order at 10:05am. Mark welcomed Chuck Lee as the new CTDEEP Management Committee member and introduced Chris Mecozzi, who will be filling in for Joe Salata at EPA's LISO. Mark also announced that Edna Nolfi, LISS office assistant for past 14 years, is retiring on Friday, May 12th. Due to the doubling of the LISS FY17 budget and the need to walk out of the meeting with a clear direction on what will be funded, Mark suggested to condense the update section of the agenda to allow more time for budget discussions. Final budget decision need to be made at this meeting since the FY17 funds must be obligated by September 30th and work plans need to be submitted by June 1st.

GAO Engagement. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) was asked by the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee to conduct a review of the Long Island Sound Study Program, as well as other estuary programs. The GAO team tasked with reviewing LISS have been meeting with staff from EPA, NY, and CT to find out about the goals of the LISS and what progress has been made since its inception. The GAO will be making more data requests and will talk with all the work groups over the next few months. After they gather all the information they need, the GAO team will write a report and submit it to the Subcommittee. The report should be finalized by February/March 2018.

REPORTS

Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). Nancy Seligson reported that the CAC had a good meeting with the STAC on January 27th as well as an additional meeting on the March 16th. Presentations on the nitrogen strategies were given at the March meeting. CAC members also went down to Washington, DC on April 26th and met with all the LIS caucus co-chairs and other representatives. It was a rather large group and for some of the venues they could not all fit in the same room. So, in some cases they split up into smaller groups to meet with different House and Senate members. The CAC also met with Senators Schumer, Blumenthal, and Murphy.

Everyone was supportive of Long Island Sound and the Restoration Act. It was encouraging to see the Republicans and Democrats working together for LIS protection.

CCMP IA Progress Reports.

Jim Ammerman gave an update on the Water Quality Monitoring work group. Jim reviewed the current water quality monitoring program and the analysis completed in 2014 to find ways to save money. Jim also gave a brief overview of the hypoxia trends in Long Island Sound and the science needs for eutrophication management.

FY2017 Budget Overview. The total anticipated LISS budget for FY17 is \$8.6 million. Mark T handed out a document with a list of potential funding options for the FY17 budget. The options included:

- Increasing the LIS Futures Fund total allotment as well as increasing the individual project cost cap. There was an announcement about increasing the geographic scope of the Futures Fund to the entire watershed for water quality improvement projects (habitat restoration and general education would still be limited to the coastal zone).
- Forward funding LIS staff positions
 - o There was some concern with forward funding too much money and increasing the amount of unliquidated funds
- Providing funds to the states for stewardship acquisitions
 - o CTDEEP requested \$300,000 to repair a foot bridge that connects two pieces of state and municipal property. There were some concerns that this was not an allowable project since it is infrastructure installation, not an acquisition.
 - o CTDEEP also requested \$300,000 to use SLAMM to identify 1-3 projects that have marsh migration potential and can be acquired with future funds.
 - o NYSDEC requested \$685,000 to acquire a 6.8-acre property on Conscience Bay in East Setauket.
 - o NYSDEC also has two properties (1 acre and 2 acres) in Stony Brook for \$400,000 and \$500,000, respectively. All these properties are adjacent to other NYSDEC owned properties.
- Funding the already requested non-base proposals, with the exception of the NPS tracking tool.

Non-base proposals, FY2017 (Proposer)	
a. EPA Nitrogen Contract for Option Period Phase 2 (EPA)	\$290,439
b. NY Impervious Surface Update (UConn CLEAR)	\$55,740
c. Nonpoint Source.stormwater tracking tool (WEWG/NEIWPC)	\$153,162
d. Western LIS monitoring (IEC)	\$81,245
e. Bioextraction Coordinator (NYSDEC)	\$300,249
h. Behavior Change (NEIWPC)	\$20,000
Total non-base request=	\$900,835

- o There were questions on the long-term maintenance of the tool and there may be an opportunity to build on the work being done on LINAP as that will need to have some sort of tracking.
- Funding an enhanced eutrophication model and data calibration (partnering with other entities, like NYC).

- Laura Grieco (NYCDEP) set up a meeting for May 16th to define to the scope. Laura explained that the process to procure something like this may take a long time. The solicitation phase would begin by January 2018, an RFP would be released by July 1st, 2018, and the award phase could take 18 months (the award would be issued in January 2020). This effort would be broken up into 4 tasks – water quality (20%), hydrodynamic model (30%), graphical user interface (10%), and calibration of the model (40%). The total cost is estimated at \$6-10 million and it would take 2-3 years to complete. If the NYC award process would take too long, there is also an option to fund this effort through a different mechanism, such as NY/CT Sea Grants.
- Funding GIS needs and support

Mark asked if the Management Committee had any other suggestions for FY17 funding.

- Sylvain requested \$200,000 for the CT Blue Plan to add to the engagement effort and mapping products.
- Sylvain also suggested adding money to the Research fund as there continues to be high quality proposals that don't get funding because of lack of money.
- Nancy added that the CAC supports an increase in the LIS Futures Fund, funding for the LIS Blue Plan, and suggested a dredging beneficial reuse pilot of some kind (possibly funded through the Futures Fund).
- Curt requested that the LISS think about investing in the embayment study work that Save the Sound has been organizing by funding a portal that will allow people to compare data between embayments (possibly funded through the Futures Fund)
- GIS opportunities - NRCS needs bathymetry to move their mapping progress forward.
- Chuck Lee from CTDEEP requested funding Development of Sampling Methodology and Tools to assess Embayment Health in Long Island Sound. (Cost \$800K) This project would involve developing the data collection methodology to build a biological assessment tool using benthic macro-invertebrates and would complement Save the Sound's Unified Water Study and embayment Health Report Card indicators.

Continuation of budget discussion after lunch:

Recommendations for FY17 funding:

Activity	Amount	Notes
Submitted Base Proposals	\$4,261,985	
Submitted non-base proposals	\$747,673	Except the NPS tracking tool
LIS Futures Fund	Increase by \$1 million	
Forward Fund Staff	~ \$600,00	
Blue Plan proposal	\$200,000	
Stewardship acquisitions	\$685,000	NYDEC Conscience Bay property
Eutrophication modeling	\$1.1 million	Fund through NYC or NY/CT Sea Grants (potentially add another \$425,000 to this from research request in base budget)

SLAMM analysis	Likely <\$100,000	Support phase 1 of CTDEEP SLAMM analysis to identify future acquisitions
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Discussion of Recommendations:

- There was a discussion about increasing the Futures Fund even more than the suggested \$1 million and potentially adding specific language for dredging/beneficial reuse projects. It was also suggested to increase the cap for the planning project to \$150,000. The CAC is interested in monitoring support and wants to make sure that they are eligible under the Futures Fund. Pathogen analysis is of interest to the embayment monitoring groups, so it was suggested to include pathogens in the Futures Fund.
- There was a discussion about using the SLAMM tool to identify future acquisition projects. It was recommended that this should be a two-step process. The first step is to use SLAMM to identify and prioritize land that should be protected for marsh migration throughout the entire watershed. The second step is to work with landowners to acquire the priority properties. It was suggested to give some support to CTDEEP in the FY17 budget for staff time to run the SLAMM model and identify projects for future funding.

EPA will work with each of the base grantees to finalize their FY2017 amounts and sufficient staff to complete proposed projects, up to 1-year of forward-funding. EPA is still waiting to receive the final funding from headquarters and the final amount may adjust somewhat. Once the appropriations have been finalized and the money is in the regions we will work with the grantees on final applications.

EPA noted that the funding requirements for these funds are consistent with previous years and we will have the same limitations, such as match requirement for these grants is 1:1 and if we can't meet match with the above recommended grants, we will have to adjust what we fund accordingly.

Mark Tedesco adjourned the meeting at 2:35pm.
