



# Long Island Sound Study

A Partnership to Restore and Protect the Sound

## MEETING SUMMARY FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND EDUCATION (PIE) WORK GROUP

**August 17, 2016 in-person meeting that included a tour of the Dodge Paddock followed by a meeting at the Mystic Aquarium**

### **Attendance:**

1. **In-person:** Judy Preston (CTSG), Robert Burg (NEIWPC), Harry Yamalis (CTDEEP), Mark Parker (CTDEEP), MaryEllen Mateleska (Mystic Aquarium), Katie Cubina (Mystic Aquarium), Leanne Bloom (Save the Sound)
2. **Over the phone:** Amy Mandelbaum (NYSG), Sheri Jewhurst (EPA LISO), Leah O'Neill (EPA R1), Cassie Bauer (NYSDEC), Jim Ammerman (NEIWPC), Vicky O'Neill (NYSDEC/NEIWPC)

**Dodge Paddock Recap, led by MaryEllen Mateleska:** The Dodge Paddock is a 2.5 acre area in Stonington, CT. The Long Island Sound Futures Fund (LISFF) grant program gave funding to the Mystic Aquarium to work with volunteers to conduct restoration planting with volunteers. CTDEEP and CTSG are also helping this site with *Phragmites* management and ditch restoration. The Mystic Aquarium is also working with the New England Seed Cooperative. Mystic Aquarium conducted a citizen science program for middle school students from Connecticut to Maine, where they followed protocol to collect data on salt marsh health and how it's related to human health. (site visit photos by Judy Preston: <https://goo.gl/photos/GsAxS8Zae7QwKJsz6>)

**Roundtable Discussion, led by Judy Preston:** Each work group member gave a brief overview of what they have been doing related to Long Island Sound public involvement and education.

- Judy Preston, CTSG: Coastal Certificate advanced Master Gardener program; working on native plants availability with CT colleagues.
- Leanne Bloom, Save the Sound: Citizen science program that focuses on Long Island Sound water quality sampling with volunteers; the LIS Report Card will be released in October 2016; working with the Unified Water Study on making volunteer water quality monitoring consistent throughout Long Island Sound.
- MaryEllen Mateleska, Mystic Aquarium: Citizen science with the greater Mystic, CT community; volunteer days in the community; exhibits at aquarium.

- Robert Burg, NEIWPC: Support LISS work groups, especially the Habitat Restoration and Stewardship Work Group in regard to developing a LIS Stewardship Area online map, postcards, and signage.
- Harry Yamalis, CTDEEP: CTDEEP does a lot of work with LIS public involvement and education; CTDEEP has a volunteer coordinator that oversees the monitoring of LIS embayments; helped with the development of the online LIS habitat restoration database; sometimes gives presentations at local schools.
- Mary Parker, CTDEEP: CTDEEP has an Aquatic Resources program and a Boating program that gets people excited about LIS fishing; there are watershed coordinators throughout the state; Steve Gebhardt recently did a radio show on western LIS; environmental education at state parks; sometimes goes into schools to help with LIS Day and to demonstrate the EnviroScope.
- Katie Cubina, Mystic Aquarium: Stewardship and citizen science; formal and informal education around LIS, working with urban centers in CT through their “where the city meets the sea” program for upper elementary students - hands-on lessons using the touch tank, bring students to the shoreline and field trips to the aquarium; professional development workshops for teachers to teach them how to use LIS resources from CTSG; trying to get a new exhibit on LIS at the aquarium; working with UConn on habitat mapping and water quality; “Conservation in Action” lecture series; work with CTDEEP’s Boating program to help improve their boating exhibit; they are open to working with others on exhibits, just need funding; Dr. Peter Auster is their scientist on staff.
- Leah O’Neill, EPA Region 1: EPA provides regional approach; connect with other NEPs and upper watershed states.
- Amy Mandelbaum, NYSG: LIS Mentor Teacher program provides professional development workshops for educators; citizen science program involving middle and high school students doing water quality and biological monitoring at LIS Stewardship Areas; promote volunteerism through Stewardship Days, National Trails Day, and *Volunteer for the Sound* e-newsletter; serve as the Editor of *Sound Update* newsletter; coordinate LISS social media.
- Sheri Jewhurst, EPA Region 2: She primarily works with the Peconic Estuary Program; they have a homeowner rewards program that provides rebates on rain gardens and native plants.
- Vicky O’Neill and Cassie Bauer, NYSDEC: Assist with citizen science projects and volunteer days; NYSDEC has an active education program; I Fish NY program teaches people how to fish; environmental education program produces *Conservationist* magazine; they can serve as liaisons between NYSDEC’s social media and newsletters and LISS.
- Jim Ammerman, NEIWPC: Provide scientific basis for education and outreach.

**Collective Work Group Communications Campaign, led by Leanne Bloom:** Leanne discussed the results of the work group survey and noted that we should work together on a collective campaign. Suggestions for a campaign on marine debris/trash-free waters were given and it was decided to pilot a campaign to coincide with the September 17th International Coastal Cleanup Day.

**Long Island Sound Urban Areas Needs Assessment, led by Amy Mandelbaum:** Amy discussed how an urban areas needs assessment will be conducted in Long Island Sound in spring 2017 and beyond with the goal to encourage groups to be more involved with LISS, either by joining a work group,

committee, or applying for LISFF dollars. She said that suggestions for NY and CT groups to be interviewed should be sent to her to add to the list. Also, anyone interested in assisting with the interview questions or helping with the one-on-one interviews should contact Amy.

**Action Items:**

- The work group developed a collective work group social media campaign strategy for the September 17, 2016 International Coastal Cleanup Day with Leanne Bloom as the lead (note that the group thought that this could be a model for future campaigns as well).
  - Send your photos to be included in the campaign to Leanne.
  - Send your hashtag ideas to be included in the campaign to Leanne.
  - Create a link to get more information - have Save the Sound host a webpage that includes everyone in the work group's logo
  - Send your ideas on how to measure social media to Leanne
  - Send Leanne your organization's social media handles
- Mark Parker will send data on the clean boater pledge with us
- Amy Mandelbaum will send a list of NY and CT groups to be interviewed as part of the urban areas needs assessment to the work group for their review and input.

The meeting adjourned at 2:25pm.

For more information on the Public Involvement and Education Work Group, visit:

<http://longislandsoundstudy.net/about/committees/public-involvement-and-education-work-group/>