



Long Island Sound Study

A Partnership to Restore and Protect the Sound

Meeting Summary for the Public Involvement and Education (PIE) Work Group

January 25, 2017 teleconference meeting

Participants: Cassie Bauer, NYSDEC; Andrew Benson, TNC-CT; Leanne Bloom, Save the Sound; Katie Cubina, Mystic Aquarium; MaryEllen Mateleska, Mystic Aquarium; Vicky O'Neill, NYSDEC/NEIWPC; Mark Parker, CTDEEP; Harry Yamalis, CTDEEP

Work Group Co-Chairs (LISS Communications Team): Robert Burg, NEIWPC; Amy Mandelbaum, NY Sea Grant; Judy Preston, CT Sea Grant

Brief updates of interest to the group

- **Judy Preston** discussed her coastal access project to highlight small coastal sites of ecological and social value, such as the Dodge Paddock Preserve in Stonington, CT. Places to include trails, greenways, viewsheds; sites where it is possible to experience some aspect of the Sound and its environs. Judy plans to catalogue and write selective profiles of these sites, but she is not sure yet what media platform to use. Robert suggested that some of these profiles could be highlighted in a *Sound Update* newsletter issue. Andrew suggested creating a story map similar to one TNC uses to highlight TNC preserves in Connecticut.
- **Amy Mandelbaum** said she was working on a new issue of *Sound Update* newsletter on on-site wastewater treatment systems (including septic systems). Amy has several examples of projects to highlight in NY, but only so far one in CT. She asked the work group members if they knew of any CT projects. Mark suggested highlighting a new project to hire a contractor to conduct inventory and assessment of onsite wastewater treatment systems in coastal areas, estimate effluent nitrogen loading from OWTS, and evaluate and identify alternative structural and non-structural management options to achieve nitrogen reduction and water quality goals.
- **Robert Burg** mentioned the work being done by the LISS Communications Team, TNC, and others to develop a Niantic Bay lawn care behavior change campaign.
- **Vicky O'Neill** mentioned that DEC (with Vicky and Cassie Bauer) is offering workshops with Seatuck Environmental Association, NY Sea Grant (Amy Mandelbaum), and Peconic Estuary Program in March 2017 to teach citizens to conduct volunteer monitoring projects to count alewife populations in rivers and streams on Long Island. She said that the program is growing in popularity with dozens of residents attending and then volunteering each year. Vicky noted that the volunteers are even finding alewife populations in streams where the DEC did not know alewives inhabited.
- **Katie Cubina** said that she recently attended an [Ocean Plastics Pollution Summit](#) at the Monterey Aquarium where there was a discussion to develop a national campaign to influence behavior change on reducing plastic waste in local waterbodies and oceans. She is looking forward to bringing the campaign to LIS. She also said that the Aquarium will begin work this year to create a new Long Island Sound exhibit, scheduled to open in 2018.
- **MaryEllen Mateleska** said that she is working to expand education and outreach activities with Clean Up Sound and Harbors (CUSH) for water quality monitoring around Stonington Harbor.

- **Leanne Bloom** mentioned the success of Save the Sound's workshop to teach volunteers the standard operating procedures for local water quality monitoring programs that are collaborating with the Unified Water Study for Long Island Sound.

Populating the work group contact list

Judy requested participants to check and make any needed corrections to the PIE member list, and to include social media contact information to facilitate work group communication, particularly for our planned social media campaign in the coming year. The draft list will be sent out with the meeting notes.

Building awareness through a social media campaign

Judy recapped a discussion at the June 2016 PIE meeting to identify a topic for a Long Island Sound social media campaign. The potential topics were: Osprey (linking them to healthy fish populations); Whales and seals; Gardeners (sustainable landscapes for clean water: native plants, buffers, habitat gardening, lawn alternatives); habitat restoration; and hypoxia. She also added two other ideas as possible topics: plastics pollution and celebrating projects such as Futures Fund projects around the Sound.

The work group reached a consensus to collaborate on a Long Island Sound campaign to influence behaviors to reduce plastic waste (to complement the national campaign discussed by Katie). The work group agreed to brainstorm ideas for messaging that would be used as a #hashtag message for social media use. Judy said that the work group should email her ideas that she will collect and share with the work group before our March meeting. Robert said that he would see if LISS's art director can create a graphic for the campaign; Amy suggested it should be an infographic. Vicky suggested having a webinar speaker series on plastics to highlight projects in our area. The work group agreed that the March 29, 2017 meeting would be devoted to focusing on developing a strategy for the campaign and to begin considering what kind of posts will be created. We tentatively agreed that social media posts would start in the summer and would continue into the fall to coincide with the International Coastal Cleanup.

Other business

The work group agreed that it would contribute information on a Long Island Sound Study events page for public activities occurring at or around Long Island Sound stewardship sites that occur during National Trails Day/Connecticut Trails Day weekend (June 3-4, 2017). Robert said he will soon send out a spreadsheet asking for PIE members to add their information.

Robert also talked briefly about a science teachers' webinar that he held last week on climate change, attended by 20 teachers.

The June 28, 2017 PIE work group meeting will be held in NY. Please send your meeting location ideas to the work group co-chairs.

Next meeting

March 29, 2017 by phone; 10:30am to noon.

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

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