



# Long Island Sound Study

A Partnership to Restore and Protect the Sound

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

**JUNE 10, 2016 by teleconference and webinar**

Attendance:

James Ammerman, NEIWPC/LISS

Cassandra Bauer, NYSDEC/LISS

Leanne Bloom, Save the Sound (NY)/Connecticut Fund for the Environment

Robert Burg, NEIWPC/LISS

Katie Cubina, Mystic Aquarium

George Hoffman, Setauket Harbor Task Force

Amy Mandelbaum, NY Sea Grant/LISS

MaryEllen Mateleska, Mystic Aquarium

Judy Preston, CT Sea Grant/LISS

The call started a few minutes after 10:30am. Judy Preston welcomed the group.

She then went through the PIE work group questionnaire results and led a group discussion. The PIE work group questionnaire showed that the group is interested in social media, community-based social marketing, and outreach.

The questionnaire also identified the hurdles regarding working with scientists. Jim Ammerman explained how there are generational differences, as now younger scientists are more involved with outreach that can help communicate projects to the public. Jim also explained how funding outreach products and programs is an issue for scientists as there are huge audiences and limited resources.

George Hoffman explained how there is too much information on water quality by various agencies and it has a tendency to overwhelm people. Judy suggested a “one-stop shop” to get your water quality information. Leanne Bloom agreed with George by saying that people do not know the issues, and they are more interested if they can swim in the water and if there are any whale sightings. Leanne also said that people are more willing to help with small-scale problems, not necessarily big problems like combined sewer overflows (CSOs). Judy suggested tying it back to osprey.



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Leanne asked the Mystic Aquarium what they do to get people interested in Long Island Sound. Katie Cubina said that there is a lot of information and competing issues, but they do their best to showcase success stories and give people an option to act and help with on-the-ground projects like salt marsh planting days, water quality monitoring, marine mammal strandings and releases, etc. Katie also said that she typically explains concepts at a 5<sup>th</sup> grade level and then either scales it up or down based on the audience.

Judy mentioned that she is working with Master Gardeners to inspire them to make a difference for sustainable land care by doing what they enjoy (i.e., gardening).

Judy and Leanne both expressed interest in having the work group make a larger impact together by working on consistent messaging. Judy said that there are local and regional messages that may vary from embayment to embayment.

George also expressed a concern that the local government doesn't know what the Long Island Sound Study (LISS) is. George suggested forming a speaker's bureau to let local officials know about LISS and the new Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP). Leanne said that she routinely talks with her local officials. George, Leanne, and Judy suggested that making connections with local officials will help to show the officials where they can receive funding for conservation activities. Leanne also suggested highlighting pro-business solutions that will get elected officials excited.

Robert Burg suggested that we talk about citizen science. Jim talked briefly about the Buzzards Bay citizen science monitoring efforts in Massachusetts and how their 22 years of data was used for a peer-reviewed scientific journal article. Leanne talked briefly about Save the Sound's efforts with the LIS Report Card and their volunteer training in citizen science. MaryEllen Mateleska then explained how the Mystic Aquarium did a summer on the marsh citizen science project with high school students. MaryEllen said that the students spent a whole day collecting data at the marsh and that the data has since been verified by a local scientist and posted on a website. She also said that that they had a virtual celebration to showcase their work and to keep them interested.

Judy asked the group if there is a role for print publications. George said that having print publications gives you credibility. Katie said that people like print publications, so they use both print and web-based publications. Leanne said that she prefers web-based publications, as print is expensive and slow.



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The meeting concluded with Robert suggesting that the next meeting be held in person in August. MaryEllen invited the work group to have its next meeting at the Mystic Aquarium as well as their field site in Barn Island, Stonington where they their conduct citizen science projects with students.

Amy Mandelbaum said that she will work with Leanne Bloom to create a questionnaire to determine what topic(s) the work group would like to work on for a collective campaign.

The meeting ended around 11:40am.

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

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