

Long Island Sound Study (LISS)
Citizens Advisory and Science and Technical Advisory Committees
Meeting Summary
September 20, 2013
Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY

Welcome, Housekeeping & Logistics

Larry Swanson, *Stony Brook University* and the *NY Science and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) Co-chair*, along with Nancy Seligson, *Supervisor, Town of Mamaroneck* and the *NY Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Co-chair* welcomed the group at 9:15am. A quorum of 30 STAC and CAC members was present.

Larry and Nancy started the meeting stating how the STAC and CAC try to do a joint meeting once a year to share priorities. They both emphasized how this meeting will be helpful in providing valuable input into the revision of the LISS Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) via breakout groups.

Nancy announced that the CAC will be making a trip to Washington DC on September 30th and October 1st to meet with federal legislators and agencies to discuss the FY2015 budget for LIS. Nancy stated that it is good to see people of different interests coming together to represent LIS on these trips to DC. She said that the legislators really like to see researchers and scientists, businesses, and elected officials. She also said that you do not have to come both days, just one is fine. She asked that those interested in joining the DC trip please call her or Curt Johnson, *CT Fund for the Environment and the CT CAC Co-chair*. Sandy Breslin, *Audubon Center at Bend of the River*, will be representing CT Audubon and Sean Mahar, *Audubon New York*, will be representing NY Audubon. A handout was distributed with additional information.

Curt Johnson explained how he prepared a two-pager on the overlap in priorities for the CAC Action Plan and STAC Synthesis book. He stated that these are the priorities that the CAC and STAC agree upon and want to make sure they are included in the CCMP. Charles DeQuillfeldt, *NYSDEC Bureau of Marine Resources*, said that it is difficult to use STAC Synthesis Book for discussion because the STAC has not seen it yet. Jim Latimer, *USEPA*, said that the Synthesis Book is close to being published. Curt said that the two-pager is based on presentations given by the STAC to the CAC over the years.

Presentation: Results of Survey of Stakeholder Perceptions of Long Island Sound

Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning: An ecosystem based approach to conservation and management in LIS. Presented by Christine A. O'Connell, PhD, *Alan Alda Center for Communicating Science, Stony Brook University*, christine.oconnell@stonybrook.edu

Christine presented a PowerPoint that was based upon her dissertation at Stony Brook University. She discussed topics such as ecosystem based management and coastal and marine spatial planning. She also discussed the results of the stakeholder survey that was conducted prior to Hurricane/Super Storm Sandy. She said that the top 5 management issues that people indicated were of concern include: 1. Water quality, 2. Nonpoint source pollution, 3. Habitat loss & coastal development, 4. Point source pollution, and 5. Privatization of waterfront/ lack of public access.

Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) Update

Jim Latimer, *USEPA*, presented a PowerPoint on the CCMP Update process. He discussed the timeline and the CCMP structure (themes, goals, outcomes, objective, strategies, and five-year actions). Jim then prepared the audience for the CCMP Break-out Sessions, where he provided the matrices for all four themes as well as stating the goal of the sessions is to make sure that we are not missing anything from the themes to the strategies. He also asked for each theme to try to identify the top three objectives and strategies.

Mark Tedesco, *USEPA*, also emphasized that we want a CCMP that has a vision for the next twenty years and is durable. Mark said to not focus too much on the five-year actions, but try to think about the bigger picture (from themes to the strategies).

Jim and Mark said that people can provide their input to the CCMP prior to the Partner Review (September 27, 2013).

Break-out Sessions

Break-out sessions were conducted for the four CCMP themes and were moderated by a CCMP Core Team member.

- Theme 1: Waters and Watersheds, moderated by Jason Krumholz, *NOAA*, and Sarah Deonarine, *NYSDEC*
- Theme 2: Habitats and Wildlife, moderated by Georgia Basso, *USFWS*, and Victoria O'Neill, *NEIWPPCC/NYSDEC*
- Theme 3: Sound Communities, moderated by Nancy Seligson, *Town of Mamaroneck* and *NY CAC Co-chair*, and Amy Mandelbaum, *NY Sea Grant*
- Theme 4: Science and Management, moderated by Larry Swanson, *Stony Brook University* and *NY STAC Co-chair*, and Mark Tedesco, *USEPA*

Group Break-out Reporting

Each of the themes reported out on what they discussed during the break-out sessions. Detailed lists of recommendations from each breakout group were collected on flip charts and will be distributed to the theme leads for incorporation into the CCMP matrices. Report out highlights are summarized below.

- Theme 1: Waters and Watersheds, Jason Krumholz, *NOAA*
Jason said that his group discussed how the wording in their sections needs to be more direct and bold. He said that we need to be clear about reaching 20 year objectives. Jason also said that cross-references between the themes needs to be establish to strengthen the objectives and strategies. He said that their group's top three priorities are: 1. Reduction of point and nonpoint source pollutants; 2. Understanding regional climate change impacts; and 3. Understanding the drivers of water quality issues via research (reduce area of hypoxia by control and understanding impacts of contributing factors to hypoxia).

- Theme 2: Habitats and Wildlife, Georgia Basso, *USFWS*
Georgia said that their group looked at the four outcomes and saw where there were overlaps and what needed to be written better. She said that their group discussed how habitats and wildlife live and work in a dynamic system that is always changing, so we need to allow change to occur. She also indicated how their group indicated that they need to focus more time on working and restoring small green spaces in urban areas to improve habitat connectivity as well as strengthening our education and outreach. She said that their group needs to work on defining invasive species. The group also indicated a need to incorporate recreational use and access of LIS for fisheries. She said that their group's top three priorities are: 1. Monitoring and land protection; 2. Resiliency; and 3. Engaging the public.
- Theme 3: Sound Communities, Nancy Seligson, *Town of Mamaroneck* and *NY CAC Co-chair*
Nancy said that their group identified approximately 16 broad strategies that need to be incorporated into the Sound Communities section of the CCMP. Due to time constraints, this group was not able to identify their top three priorities.
- Theme 4: Science and Management, Larry Swanson, *Stony Brook University* and *NY STAC Co-chair*
Larry said that their group discussed how to incorporate Coastal Marine Spatial Planning (CMSP) into this section of the CCMP even if LISS does not enforce it. He also said that their group would like to incorporate citizen monitoring. He also emphasized that there needs to be a strong linkage between science and translating it to management (he suggested that Theme 1/ Waters and Watersheds should meet with Theme 4/Science and Management). He said that their group's top three priorities are: 1. Adaptive management framework; 2. Enhance research portfolio; and 3. Maintain and enhance assessment programs.

Discussion and Consensus

Jim Latimer, *USEPA*, facilitated a discussion of the CCMP among the audience.

Jim O'Donnell, *UConn* and *CT STAC Co-chair*, asked how do you choose if something will be included in the CCMP? Jim Latimer, *USEPA*, said that the CCMP Core Team uses general consensus and most ideas are incorporated.

Charlie Yarish, *UConn*, suggested that we make the CCMP a readable, living document that gets right to the point. He said that you can put the longer explanations in the appendix. Jim Latimer, *USEPA*, said that report will be 100 pages or less, and at the end, there will be a 100+ appendix. He also indicated that the document will be on the web and will be easy to navigate.

Georgia Basso, *USFWS*, asked if there was a plan for overlap among the sections, i.e., education and water quality and monitoring. Jim Latimer, *USEPA*, said that things that are specific to the theme should be housed there. However, cross-connections between the themes needs to happen and will be done with the consultant in Phase II.

Maureen Dolan Murphy, *Citizens Campaign for the Environment*, asked that if the document is 100 pages, will there be an executive summary? Jim Latimer, *USEPA*, said that there will be a 4-5 page handout for the public to be distributed.

A discussion of bold vs. cautious/safe language in the CCMP arose. Curt Johnson, *CT Fund for the Environment and CT CAC Co-Chair*, asked if we should incorporate bold or cautious/safe language in the CCMP? He asked if we should we boldly step forward? Jim Latimer, *USEPA*, said that we should establish ecosystem condition goals and management goals. He said that maybe it would be best to have a qualitative “vision” of what we would like to see. Mark Tedesco, *USEPA*, said that we talked about ecosystem targets and that we have a list already prepared that we did not share today. He explained how Puget Sound came up with 21 ecosystem characteristics using public values and opinions. Mark said that it would be a great follow-up target for the CAC and STAC to present the targets and have an in-depth discussion. He also said that it is a complex issue, as we need to set ambitious goals, but have the ability to measure progress toward meeting them.

Sandy Breslin, *Audubon Center at Bent of the River*, said that if we want to get money from the lawmakers, we need to be ambitious with our goals. We need to connect back to ecosystem targets.

Jim O’Donnell, *UConn and CT STAC Co-chair*, said that we have been trying to achieve bold goals over the past 20 years. We can show that we achieved these goals. Jim Latimer, *USEPA*, said that the TMDL is very specific. Jim O’Donnell, *UConn and CT STAC Co-chair*, said that we need some additional research for when we update TMDL.

Maureen Dolan Murphy, *Citizens Campaign for the Environment*, said that we need to have bold goals and we need to showcase what we have done through reporting. We need to report out on all accomplishments, not just three things.

Georgia Basso, *USFWS*, talked about numbers that have meaning for habitat restoration. She said that we need numbers that show how far we are at reaching our goals and we need to show the relative progress (e.g., we are 50% through to achieving our goal). We also need to show the trends and indicators across other National Estuary Programs. Jim Latimer, *USEPA*, said that we have the freedom to choose how we want to want to portray our numbers in the CCMP.

Charlie Yarish, *UConn*, asked about the LIS Report Card. Jim Latimer, *USEPA*, said that it is already included in section 3-3c.

Larry Swanson, *Stony Brook University and NY STAC Co-chair*, asked if the LIS is better than what is was 20 years ago? Jim Latimer, *USEPA*, said that yes, there is better water clarity and not as many beach closings in the Western Sound.

Carol DiPaolo, *Coalition to Save Hempstead Harbor*, asked what do people want to hear about. Can they eat, swim, or fish? Yes! But there is always more work to do and protect what we have. She said that we need to rephrase our words in the CCMP in a bold manner to describe a vision of what we want the Sound to look like. Curt Johnson, *CT Fund for the Environment and CT CAC Co-Chair*, said that beach closures from the 1970s compared to now are getting better. However, over the past 10 years, there is an increase in beach closures. People care if the beaches are open.

Johan Varekamp, *Wesleyan University*, said that we are doing a poor job in telling people what climate change is. He said that carbon dioxide is the new legacy contaminant and that we have to live with it. He said that we need to plan and adapt as sea level rises and cities need to realize this. Jim Latimer, *USEPA*, said that climate change education is incorporated in the CCMP Theme 3: Sound Communities.

Charlie Yarish, *UConn*, asked if the online version of CCMP can be linked to the chapters in the “Urban Sea” Synthesis Book.

Jim Latimer, *USEPA*, said that time is still available for your input. If you have other comments, please send them along to Jim or send to contact@watervisionllc.com

Larry Swanson, *Stony Brook University* and *NY STAC Co-chair*, talked about the topic of beach closures – why are they increasing? Because we are monitoring more or is there more precipitation? This issue came up with NY Bight – NY state has the appearance of having cleaner beaches because they monitor less (compared to NJ). Charlie DeQuillfeldt, *NYSDEC*, said that the EPA criteria for beach closures have changed over the years and criteria are different from county to county. All of these issues are complex. Jason Krumholz, *NOAA*, said that these might be administrative closures. Eric Swenson, *Hempstead Harbor Protection Committee*, said that we should do more rapid testing (not 3 day test to get results). This is included in the CCMP Theme 1: Waters and Watersheds.

Next Steps, Follow Up & Wrap Up

The STAC plans to have their next meeting in CT on November 8th. The CAC plans to have their next meeting in CT on December 12th.

Nancy Seligson, *Town of Mamaroneck* and *NY CAC Co-chair*, reminded the group that she would like to get more people to come with CAC to Washington DC. Jim O’Donnell, *UConn* and *CT STAC Co-chair*, plans to go. Sandy Breslin, *Audubon Center at Bent of the River*, said that we are light with CT representation. She emphasized that we need broad representation and to recognize that your voices are important.

Mark Tedesco ended the meeting by thanking the audience and stating how today’s CCMP discussion will help provide direct feedback to CCMP Core Team.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:30pm.

For additional information on the CAC, visit:

<http://longislandsoundstudy.net/about/committees/citizens-advisory-committee/>

For additional information on the STAC, visit:

<http://longislandsoundstudy.net/about/committees/science-technical-advisory-committee/>