

# CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## OF THE LONG ISLAND SOUND STUDY

Thursday, March 14, 2013  
Morrison Foerster, Law Firm  
1290 Avenue of the Americas (between 51<sup>st</sup> and 52<sup>nd</sup> Street), New York, NY

**Welcome, Housekeeping & Logistics**, Nancy Seligson, New York Co-Chair, CAC  
Meeting called to order: 9:32 am. Twenty-seven CAC members in attendance: quorum attained. Seligson mentioned that she recently went to New Orleans, LA to share the Sound Vision and CAC model at the Association for the Sciences of Limnology and Oceanography (ASLO) Conference in February, 2013.

### **Presentation: Impacts of Hurricane Sandy on Coastal Habitats and Opportunities for Recovery Projects.**

**American Littoral Society**, Tim Dillingham, Executive Director

Tim explained the process of doing the analysis to identify sites for federal funding. Information was gathered by telephone from interviews with natural resource managers and NGOs (LISS Habitat Work Group). He used geospatial change analysis and photo analysis available through Rutgers geospatial center, CRSSA. Sixty-five of beach dune systems sustained moderate to high impacts. Importantly, this geospatial analysis indicates that Long Island Sound coastal resources were as substantially impacted as the entire region outside of the worst impacted section of NJ shore. Tim emphasized that there should be a tri-state policy/political response. Region wide storm impacts include: inlet modification, dune and beach erosion, lowered elevations, inundation of tidal marsh and impacts to prey communities, maritime forests, new and "moved" habitat, debris and wrack lines, sewage, oil and industrial contamination, disturbance of forest canopy, vulnerability leading to "knee-jerk" rebuilding actions. The good news is strong evidence of success and value of natural coastal features responding well to storm that provided mitigation and protection to the built community. The bad news little recognition of the creation of new habitat through natural storm response processes. The rush to rebuild may negatively impact these areas and miss opportunities to restore habitat.

Assessment created a fairly detailed inventory of impacted sites, a base data set in the geospatial analysis, and a set of priority recommendations from professionals. There are opportunities to integrate this information into the response framework (FEMA, Congressional Supplemental Funding).

### **LISS Habitat Workgroup Summary Recommendations**

- Coordinated Tri-state restoration response
- Develop stewardship protocols
- Integrate coastal habitat planning, restoration and enhancements into flood protection investment decisions
- Flood-proof pollution sources
- Blend grey and green infrastructure

**Discussion:** Very real potential for conflict between people and birds as result of new dune habitat created by storm and potential lack of resources to provide protective fencing and signage. Further complications include how "new land" will be regulated which will be different for CT and NY. CAC co-chairs suggested that the ALS/NFWF report should be sent to the NY Governor's office and other agencies.

**Presentation: Federal Disaster Recovery Coordination; Implementing the National Disaster Recovery Framework in New York**, Philip Sweeney, EPA Region 2, NY City Watershed Oversight Program, on assignment to the FEMA New York joint field office for Sandy Recovery. Phil explained the basic outline of the Disaster Recovery Framework with the Primary Recovery Support Functions and the Federal Agencies that will implement them.

# CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## OF THE LONG ISLAND SOUND STUDY

- Community Planning and Capacity Building, DHS/FEMA
- Economic, Commerce Dept.
- Health and Social Services, Dept. of HHS
- Housing, HUD
- Infrastructure Systems, US Army Corps of Engineers
- Natural and Cultural Resources, Dept. of the Interior, NOAA

The draft recovery support document will be out in approximately six weeks. It will detail natural and cultural resources such as beaches and dunes, ecosystem recovery, resilient waterfront recovery, marine debris, coastal resiliency.

**Discussion:** There is concern that the Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) has not historically been very involved with the LISS, and LIS falls within two EPA regions and two USACE regions. The USACE recovery effort has a separate office in New Jersey, and a separate office in New York, but no office as yet in Connecticut. LIS could fall through the cracks. NY USGS coastal geologist *Cheryl Hapke* is working on beach and dune issues and should be a good resource. The CAC inquired when a more detailed report with projects by site will be available. There was no definitive answer. USACE is currently doing emergency beach work on Staten Island. The hope is that science can be brought to coastal resilience. The CAC/LISS will be notified when the report is released and it should be on the FEMA website.

NY Governor Cuomo is proposing coastal land buyouts on Staten Island and Coney Island, not Long Island. The question of how these lands will be restored once bought out, and if hazard mitigation plans will be incorporated into this process was asked. The Governor's office is working on this and trying to secure large areas of land by buying out entire communities (a municipally driven process). Community reconstruction zone plans are part of the Governor's proposal. There was concern that the density of redevelopment is not being addressed. The national flood insurance program is encouraging building up. Technical assistance is focusing on multiple best practices for different types of buildings. The Federal government is not taking leadership role on this, but deferring to states/municipalities. Sewage treatment considerations are being covered under the infrastructure system. There is \$500 million provided to EPA available for wastewater treatment for NY and NJ. A mix of green and gray infrastructure solutions is recommended.

There was discussion about USFWS funding and the status of the Stewart B. McKinney Refuge under the current language. The refuge would not be eligible for funding under the current language.

### **LISS Citizens Summit 2013**

Curt Johnson, CAC Co Chair, Connecticut, announced that the LIS Citizens Summit Conference would be held on April 26, 2013, at Iona College in New Rochelle, NY.

<http://www.facebook.com/events/515066698537236/>. The focus of the conference is Storm Sandy recovery and preparation for the new "normal" weather.

### **Superstorm Sandy Emergency Response/Federal Appropriation**

Sandy Supplemental Funding Bill. As Phil Sweeney explained, there are various funding agencies for damage, reconstruction, mitigation, and building resiliency due to Storm Sandy. The Army Corps of Engineers and the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) are key agencies with which to work. The Army Corp of Engineers is focusing on critical coastal infrastructure and commercial properties. In addition, the Army Corps is working on rapid assessments of hard infrastructure (gates, groins, etc.), as well as natural infrastructure. In other parts of the country, such as the Great Lakes, the Corps is key to restoration, work on invasive species, etc. The LISS should create a new relationship with the Corps. The complication of LIS being in two Corps districts is difficult. All agreed it is important to engage the Corps. The

# CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## OF THE LONG ISLAND SOUND STUDY

Jamaica Bay restoration was cited as a good example of Corp work in the LIS area. The Corps will have long term nearly three billion dollars to provide shoreline resiliency work from the Delaware Bay through Long Island Sound. It was suggested that the LISS work with the NY/NJ HEP and the Peconic Estuary Program to form a strong and consistent voice for Corps work in the region and to ensure that already existing plans for restoration, mitigation, and adaptation are implemented. The CAC may want to work with NY DOT to combine habitat restoration with projects that the Corp already plans to do. The CAC should highlight examples of needed and successful restoration projects in the region.

An *ad hoc* Sandy CAC committee (Cesare, Chantal, David, Sean, Phil, Jennifer, Eric with the CAC Co-Chairs) was formed to take up the task of preparing "one pagers" of prospective resiliency projects that will be ready to go in the ground in LIS once funding becomes available. The CAC agreed to write a letter to the Corps with the ALS information and with lists of projects that should be included in the Corps' Sandy work.

**Comprehensive Conservation & Management Plan (CCMP) Update**, Mark Tedesco, Director EPA Long Island Sound Office, provided an update on the CCMP revision process. The new document will be more like Sound Vision with boarder goals and themes. This is an opportunity to re-energize the base and incorporate elements that were not a part of the discussion 20 years ago, such as climate change. There is a tight timeframe: by the end of 2013 the first draft will be done, with the final document completed by the end of 2014. It will be a retrospective and prospective analysis, with quantifiable goals. A contractor, *WaterVision*, is on board. Public comment will be used as a building block for the plan, using the Sound Vision process. The CAC requested having a representative on the Core CCMP Revision team. Nancy Seligson nominated David Miller of Ecology and Environment, and past NY CAC Co-Chair, as the CAC's rep. David did a great job engaging the public the first time around through Listen to the Sound, and strengthening the original CCMP. Cesare Manfredi (Federated Conservationists of Westchester County) seconded the nomination. There was unanimous support from the CAC. David accepted and thanked Nancy and the CAC.

**Discussion:** How do we get input from the entire CAC for the process? David recommended having the contractor facilitate a full afternoon session at a future CAC meeting. It was suggested that the Sound Vision document be used as a base and for the CAC to wait to see if they want to do additional outreach beyond this. It was suggested that the CAC be able to comment on all sections of the CCMP.

**CAC Dredge Windows Proposal**, Curt Johnson reported that in February, 2013, CT Fund for the Environment (CFE) agreed to put a proposal together. The purpose of the proposal is to address environmental issues associated with dredging windows as they currently exist. Curt is awaiting final comments from DEC/DEEP on the \$75,000 request. Curt will also seek final input from the DEC, DEEC and EPA Region I, including Mel Cote (EPA Region 1) on the proposal.

**Discussion:** The component of the proposal dealing with beneficial reuse was deleted based on recommendations from DEC and DEEP. The CAC agreed that the primary focus of the proposal should be on dredge windows, not reuse at this time (the objective should be one project done right rather than two done partially). It was suggested that there might be money for Hurricane Sandy recovery available for dredging.

### **LISS Budget update**

Mark Tedesco reported that the federal LISS budget remains unknown due to the national budget situation. The budget will probably be between \$3.5 million to \$4.5 million (cutting \$500,000 from base or adding \$500,000 to base). It was noted at the recent Implementation Team meeting that many agencies decreased their budget requests. Nancy and Curt argued to not use the LIS Futures Fund as an accordion fund and contract it according to the budget decreases, but adopt

# CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## OF THE LONG ISLAND SOUND STUDY

a tiered approach to funding that identifies categories of funding for available monies. NYS DEC requested funding for an MS4 engineer position again. Mark reported that I-Team budget meeting was a good session, but not an easy discussion. There are tough choices to make as fewer things are going to be funded.

**Discussion:** The CAC highlighted the importance of looking at the Congressional intent for LIS money. Congress wants to see action on the ground, including restoration.

### **CAC Committee reports/Updates**

Policy, Legislative & Advocacy CAC Policy Committee

Sandy Breslin (Audubon Connecticut) and Sean Mahar (Audubon New York) (by phone) reported that the CAC Policy committee continues to work on increasing funding to LIS, which is hard work. CAC representatives will be visiting Washington this spring, working on the reauthorization of the Long Island Sound Restoration and Stewardship bills and increased appropriations for our geographic program. The plan is for a one-day lobby day in Washington for May, 2013, with small teams going to various members. Possible dates were presented (May 16-17 or May 22-23). Senator Gillibrand is interested in introducing the bill again this year. There is hope for a continuing resolution budget that would keep funding at FY12 levels. The President's FY14 budget is expected in April and will determine what level funding to ask for. There is great hope that with former CT DEP Commissioner Gina McCarthy nominated to head the EPA that the LIS will benefit from her familiarity and understanding of the issues associated with Long Island Sound.

The Policy Committee has a lot of work ahead. There will be standing Policy Committee calls on the third Wednesday of every month from 11 – 12:00.

### **GIS Project Needs Assessment**

Graham Hayes, LISS GIS project consultant, gave a brief update of his work and project. He will be surveying the CAC to provide input to LISS GIS needs (he offered to provide GIS education services to teach non-users). Graham is looking how to employ GIS to help LISS in multiple ways. GIS can be a scientifically sound and visual tool to help in answering questions.

### **Announcements**

Nancy Seligson introduced Bob Brinkman, Director of Sustainable Studies at Hofstra University, as a possible new CAC member

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 pm.

Future 2013 CAC meetings will be held on June 13 (CT), September 12 (NY), and December 12 (CT). For meeting minutes and other information, visit:

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