

Long Island Sound Study (LISS)
Citizens Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary
Dec 13, 2012
UConn Stamford, CT

Welcome, Housekeeping & Logistics

Curt Johnson, CT Fund for the Environment and the CT Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) Co-chair, welcomed the group at 9:40am. A quorum of 26 members was present. Curt started the meeting by introducing two potential new members.

Membership vote: MWH Americas Inc. and Town of Huntington

MWH Americas Inc., a large engineering firm submitted a membership request letter a few months ago. Boyd McDonald will be MWH's representative Meagan Heslin, the alternate. The CAC Membership Committee reviewed MWH Americas' letter and recommended them for membership. Nancy Seligson, NY CAC Co-chair and Supervisor for the Town of Mamaroneck, reminded the CAC of its by-laws governing conflict of interest and the need for all members to abide by them. For example, members need to disclose any financial interest related to a Long Island Sound issue being discussed by the CAC. Nancy made the motion to accept MWH Americas as a member. The motion was seconded and the CAC members present voted unanimously to accept it. Curt thanked Meghan for coming and welcomed MWH Americas to the CAC.

Next, Nancy explained to the group that Don McKay who previously represented Protection of LI's Groundwater on the CAC would like to represent the Town of Huntington since the other group is no longer active. The Town of Huntington submitted a letter to the CAC Membership Committee and, after reviewing the letter, the Committee recommended the Town of Huntington as a member. Nancy made the motion to accept the Town of Huntington as a member, Curt seconded the motion, and the CAC members voted unanimously. Nancy thanked Don for continuing his membership with the CAC.

Thank you's

Curt and Nancy thanked Al Caccese who is retiring from Audubon NY. Both co-chairs have worked with Al for many years and said that they would be sad to see him go. Nancy thanked Al for his support and enthusiasm for the CAC and said that his efforts have been so important to the CAC's success. Nancy also said that Al's generosity throughout the years was greatly appreciated and that his good-humor made him a pleasure to work with. Curt and Nancy presented Al with a gift and card. Al thanked the group for all of their hard work as well and said that it was a pleasure to work with everyone. Al also told the group that Sean Maher will be the Audubon New York representative to the CAC. Curt and Nancy also told the group that Larissa Graham, LISS NY Outreach Coordinator with NY Sea Grant would be leaving her position mid-January to move to Mississippi. They thanked Larissa for her dedication to and hard work for the CAC.

Hurricane Sandy's Impacts on the Sound

The group then turned their discussion to the impacts of Superstorm Sandy specifically related to the CAC priority letter to the Management Committee related to the upcoming budget. Curt referred to the documents he emailed from John Mullaney at USGS who received FEMA funds to compare the storm surges of Sandy to the 1938 hurricane.

Nancy started the conversation by saying that Superstorm Sandy may be a game changer in the world's outlook on climate change and adaptation. The Town of Mamaroneck was hit hard by the storm. Seventy percent of residents were without power, 70 roads were closed, and many trees came down with the winds of the storm. Nancy said that the storm changed landscape and possibly the way the area will drain in the future. There were many homes that had water damage from flooding and she saw lots of debris in the water, such as parts of houses, docks, and even a deer. Nancy expressed concerns about toxics, pathogens and other contaminants discharged from oil tanks, sewage treatment plants, and other sources.

Brian Thompson with the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CTDEEP) said that the impacts of the storm could have been worse if the storm had not turned west. Hurricane Irene had significant impacts but more wave energy than flooding. Superstorm Sandy, however, brought more flooding than Irene because of storm surge and the damage was more widespread. Brian said that people are starting to think about how areas are managed and that this is going to be a busy year for legislative issues. Hearings were being held about the damages from Hurricane Irene and a Legislative Task Force is already compiling recommendations. Since Hurricane Irene hit the CT coast, CTDEEP has been advocating moving infrastructure back from the water and elevating buildings in areas with substantial damage. In areas where there have been repeated losses, people now want to move. FEMA toured damage areas and discussed changing rules such as the national flood insurance program and moving infrastructure away from vulnerable areas. Insurance rates are also predicted to increase and may provide some financial and market-driven solutions to rebuilding. There has also been lots of activity at the federal level for a Bill to provide supplemental funding for areas in CT, NY, NJ, RI, DE that were impacted by Superstorm Sandy. These states were asked to provide input about funding needs, including habitats and sand movement, in order to respond to impacts from the storm. Some of this funding could be used to protect habitats and public areas.

Chantal Collier from The Nature Conservancy said that the Senate Bill related to the impacts of Superstorm Sandy was released yesterday and reflects the House Bill. The Bill would provide funding to organizations such as NOAA, which would get \$360 million to assess the risk of flooding, assist with creating coastal communities that are more resilient, and stabilizing and restoring ecosystems. US Fish and Wildlife Service would get \$400 million to mitigate flooding by enhancing natural systems, and USEPA which would get \$600 million for clean water revolving funds to improve drinking and wastewater systems. The goal is to pass the Bill before the holidays. There could be resistance in House as there was some talk about wanting to split the Bill into two funding cycles.

Curt reported that Sean Maher, NY Audubon and CAC Policy Subcommittee member, will draft a letter from the CAC supporting the concepts in the Senate Bill. Curt said that the letter would be sent out to the CAC with a 24-hour turn around comment period. Sandy McDonald from the Darien Advisory Committee said that communities need to be able to get ready for the boating season. Right now, there are many groups that need assistance but are not eligible for FEMA funds because those are for homeowners' disasters. Curt suggested that this point be included in the CAC letter. CAC member Dan Natchez said that the CAC should either write one letter for both the state level and federal level, or write two separate letters. Grant Westerson from the CT Marine Trades Association said that two weeks after the storm he went to a National Marine Trades Association meeting and none of the members from NY or NJ were there. Everyone asked how CT fared and Grant told them that they had dodged a bullet. He has been on some calls to set up disaster funds for CT but has refused because he'd rather the funds be sent to NJ where people lost everything. In NJ, 65,000 boats were lost and many of the marinas that were destroyed won't be rebuilt. Grant also said that it was important that recovery efforts don't neglect businesses since they support the local economy. He also said that we haven't learned from history (i.e., Hurricane Irene) and that most people in CT have not seen a hurricane only tropical storms and nor'easters.

Cesare Manfredi, Federated Conservationists of Westchester County, mentioned that it would be interesting to see how the impacts of Superstorm Sandy will affect hypoxia. In past years, research has shown that hypoxia was due to the lack of storms and other times it has occurred because of storms. He also mentioned that NY is in desperate need of upgrading its flood plain maps since they are outdated and many municipalities are in flood-prone areas but, because it is not shown on the map, they cannot get subsidies.

Carol DiPaolo, Coalition to Save Hempstead Harbor, said that we should be sure to include a lot of what was being discussed in the revision process for the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan. She said that the focus of the impacts of Superstorm Sandy have been on people, but what about the impacts of sewage treatment plants that went offline during the storm? She also said that elevating infrastructure when rebuilding is not enough (for example, in Long Beach, NY, 8,000 cars "floated away"). Adrienne Esposito, Citizens Campaign for the Environment, said that a quarter million cars on LI and in NYC were flooded. Carol also said that on the North Shore of Long Island a high number of trees came down and asked if there was a plan for replanting. She also expressed the importance of watching for those that are abusing FEMA funds.

Jennifer Wilson-Pines, Manhasset Bay Protection Committee, said that Nassau County has been "panic-logging" and cutting trees throughout the County as well as in preserves. Pat Aitken from Friends of the Bay said that less tree canopy could cause warmer streams and less bird habitat at preserves and in other areas as well. She mentioned that she was very concerned about this and has been talking with Audubon about birds and habitats.

Dave Miller from Ecology and Environment, Inc. reminded the group that with every crisis there is an opportunity. Superstorm Sandy, and the federal disaster response to the entire region, might mean that more money will be available to the Sound than ever before. These funds can be used to redefine our

coastline, LISS can focus the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan on habitat restoration and rebuilding and creating a natural system. He reported that the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary Program and Mayor Bloomberg were thinking this way. In order to seize the opportunity, CAC members need to be working with decision makers close to the disaster response. Marty Garrell, Adelphi University, suggested that the CAC needed to get people working together in planning to protect people and restore habitats. He also suggested that at the next CAC meeting, the group have a presentation from Malcolm Bowman from the Stony Brook Storm Surge group.

Adrienne Esposito discussed marine debris caused by Superstorm Sandy and its effects on habitats, beaches, and waters. She asked the group who will clean it up? Caesar Manfredi asked if the EPA skimmer boats could be used. Mark Tedesco, Director of the EPA Long Island Sound Office said that the skimmer boats were designed for typical floating debris and would not be appropriate for large debris left on land or wetlands. Brian Thompson did add that there was a CT state program for some removal.

Larissa Graham from NY Sea Grant gave an update on behalf of Sarah Deonarine from NYSDEC about the impacts of Superstorm Sandy (details at: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/public/76659.html>). Larissa also told the group that the storm had washed out a berm and two culverts that were restricting flow to Sunken Meadow Creek in Kings Park, NY. With the breach in the berm, tidal flow has been restored which is predicted to remove invasive species in the upstream area and also allow fish passage. Curt noted that Save the Sound is assisting NY State Parks to complete engineering and permitting to make this tidal restoration a permanent part of the park infrastructure by building a bridge as opposed to replacing the crossing with the berm and undersized culverts. Mark Parker, CT DEEP, said that the state called all of the sewage treatment plants the Friday before Superstorm Sandy in order to prepare them. Each of the sewage treatment plants were given preparation sheets and during the storm 30 plants lost power but went on emergency power and only five of the 82 plants discharged into the Sound. Mark said that the state learned from Hurricane Irene and other storms. Mark also gave an overview of some of the damage that CT parks endured including some breaches, damage to the Niantic boardwalk and Sherwood State Park 9-11 Memorial.

Dianne Selditch, Sound waters, said that their building, which is located in Cove Island Park in Stamford, CT, had some flooding in the basement and that a lot of the sand from the beach got pushed onto land. She asked if the city needs to test sand before returning it to the beach area. Brian Thompson said that is not necessary as long as there is no debris or other visible contamination of the sand.

The topic of how groups will monitor the effects of Superstorm Sandy was also discussed. Mark Tedesco reminded the group that eelgrass monitoring in progress will provide some before and after characterization. Carol DiPaolo also reminded the group about NOAA's Mussel Watch program with sites around the Sound. Due to budget shortfalls, NOAA could no longer collect mussels but LISS stepped up to coordinate collection efforts by a number of groups around the Sound. Carol asked if this could be used to determine contamination due to Superstorm Sandy.

Sandy Breslin, CT Audubon, brought up the effects of the storm on bird habitat, mentioning that in some cases new habitat had been created for beach-nesting birds. She also mentioned that the Audubon

Alliance had great success protecting least terns last year because they were able to deploy people on beaches to keep visitors from trampling nests. Now, since the beach profile has changed, they are not sure where birds will be and they will need more volunteers early in the season to help with monitoring. Sandy also mentioned that the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation was conducting a Rapid Assessment of the physical impacts of Superstorm Sandy, which is expected to be completed in mid-January.

Mickey Weiss, Project Oceanology, told the group about some interesting crab monitoring results. They have been setting traps every two weeks in three estuaries in CT, and before Superstorm Sandy blue crabs were found only in the upper third portion of the estuary and spider crabs and green crabs were found in the lower third of the estuary. After the storm, spider and green crabs moved up to the upper third part of the estuary. Cesare Manfredi mentioned that one-time events, such as storms, usually do not affect marine life populations unless they occur during the larvae season- then the population may be wiped out.

Georgia Basso, US Fish and Wildlife Service liaison to the LISS, gave the group an update on the LISS Habitat Restoration Work Group meeting that had taken place the week before. Thirty members were present and discussed the habitat-related effects of Sandy. The observations of members supported that the natural habitats fared well (wetlands worked, dunes rolled back) but the group did have some concerns about the effects of wrack mats, which could cause vegetation dieback, and invasive rooting. In addition, many large trees fell down in NYC, which could allow invasives to move in because of the breaks in canopy. There were also many concerns about water quality, habitat loss for roseate terns, eelgrass burial from erosion, and habitat breaches that could cause an increase of motorboat traffic and potential change in ownership of some areas. Georgia also mentioned that The Nature Conservancy is looking at the value of natural shorelines and requesting photos and stories of areas that fared well. For a full summary of the meeting, visit: <http://longislandsoundstudy.net/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/Habitat-Restoration-Workgroup-Winter-Meeting-Summary-website-update.pdf>.

Tim Visel from the Sound School also gave a report of the damages to their campus. The cafeteria on campus had waves in the building and many of the buildings that were built in the 1930s were severely flooded. However, the Anderson building, which was built 10 feet above the high tide level, had no damage.

Joel Ziev said that this storm was a huge opportunity to prevent this from happening again and that the CAC needed to turn to more global and broader thinking about what the Sound shoreline should look like 50 years from now. Curt Johnson said that most areas around the Sound have been armored in CT and that the beaches are pushed back during storms but have no source of sediment to replace sand that washes away. He suggested that the group discuss shoreline dynamics. He also mentioned that dredged materials are often thought of as a waste product but, instead, the group should think of it as a resource to restore beaches and tidal wetlands. Dave Miller said that there were many examples of restoration projects along the Louisiana coast where dredged material is used for restoration.

Next steps: CAC Action Items Related to Hurricane Sandy

The group then turned discussions to the two projects that were included in last year's letter to Management Committee:

Dredging

Curt Johnson reminded the group that in September 2012 the CAC sent a letter to the Management Committee including a recommendation that funding be prioritized toward re-examining the science and management of dredge windows. For the past three years, the CAC has placed the topic of developing sustainable dredge management as a top priority for funding. Based on this input, the Management Committee last October recommended that a funding proposal be developed for this effort. An ad-hoc working group composed of DEC, DEEP, CAC members, STAC representatives, NY Sea Grant and marine trades representatives held a conference call in late November to discuss this issue and review the work that was produced in NY last year on this topic. Out of this discussion, Save the Sound has taken the lead in drafting a funding proposal to look at dredge windows and determine beneficial use of dredge spoil in the Sound to augment natural systems that provide coastline resiliency (dunes, beaches, tidal marsh habitat). Curt passed around the proposal for the group to review. The majority of the funding would go to a consultant and Save the Sound would oversee project. Nancy Seligson said that there was some concern from the STAC related to dredge windows and disposal. Grant Westerson supported this approach, noting the importance of dredge windows and that dredged material is different throughout the Sound. In some areas sediment is large-grain sand, which will not hold contaminants, while in other areas there are lots of contaminants.

Citizen Embayment Monitoring

Jamie Alonzo, Director of Education at the Maritime Aquarium, gave an overview of the LISS-funded project to explore the development a network of monitoring groups to collect data on water quality within the Sound's embayments. Citizen based monitoring has been a top CAC priority item, and one that members have advocated for over the past few years. Phase 1 of the project is in process to determine data needs and requirements of end-users, identify established monitoring groups; and develop a model for a QAPP that will be easy to adopt. The Aquarium and other partners including Citizens Campaign for the Environment, Save the Sound and UConn are working together on this project. If you know of a group that is monitoring water quality around the Sound, please contact Jamie at jalonzo@maritimeaquarium.org. Jamie also mentioned that stakeholder regional meetings would be held over the next few weeks and encouraged CAC members to attend. During the meetings, they will look at "model" frameworks (such as Buzzards Bay and Morro Bay) for data collection, focusing on benefits and challenges, incentives, functionality, and developing a vision for Phase 2 of the project which will involve a centralized database, increased communications, better collaboration.

Curt Johnson said that the next step for this project will be developing a proposal for implementation of embayment-wide monitoring – a long time high priority topic for the CAC. Jamie Alonzo told the group that other groups that have coordinated embayment monitoring programs have full time staff to coordinate and oversee the monitoring. Eric Swenson from the Hempstead Harbor Protection

Committee said that the CAC needed to be notified as soon as info is available for timing and amount of funds available for Phase 2 of this project so they can be sure to apply for the funding. He also stressed the importance that funding needed to be available in order to continue monitoring and was concerned that funds would no longer be available through NFWF LIS Futures Fund. Mark Tedesco responded by saying that the group was trying to look at the big picture and accomplish monitoring over the long term to maximize utility of data and provide long-term support.

Maureen Dolan-Murphy, Citizens Campaign for the Environment, suggested that funding for monitoring efforts be incorporated into base funding, and not a competitive process. Mark Tedesco said that this would be a challenge in times where state and federal funding will continue to decline but said that the group needed to move to a model that will ensure that the data is used and that we will be getting the most out of local community efforts. Mark Tedesco also reminded the group that Region 1 and 2 of EPA are big supporters of community monitoring. Jaime Vaudrey from UConn (and one of the partners of the embayment monitoring project) was asked to serve on the STAC. Jaime and Milan Keser from Millstone Nuclear Power Plant both strongly support community-based monitoring and have made this clear at the STAC meetings. The STAC and research community have benefited from water quality data from CTDEEP and the Interstate Environmental Commission, and there is interest for the community-based data to be just as useful.

FY13 Budget Update

Mark Tedesco reviewed the annual budget process. The LISS Work Groups Work Plans are due in Sept, the CAC and STAC are asked for input in Oct, the Management Committee discusses its funding priorities at the Oct meeting, base funding requests are submitted in Dec, the Management Committee discusses the budget in January and makes final decisions in April. Mark also showed the group the pie charts of 2012 CAC Priorities and 2012 Actual funded projects and stated that the two were relatively close—more was spent on climate-related projects than the CAC had requested and less was spent on stewardship-related projects than the CAC requested. Mark told the group that the predicted funding for FY13 was \$3.5 million unless there is a continuing resolution, then funding would might stay at the FY12 level of \$4.5 million.

Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP)

CCMP Revision Process

Mark Parker gave a presentation about the revision process of the CCMP. The updated CCMP will include “new” concepts such as ecosystem-based monitoring, climate change, coastal and marine spatial planning, low impact development, emerging contaminants, community-based social marketing, under-represented groups, and bioextraction. The revised CCMP will also have streamlined and updated action items with clearly defined outcomes. It will recognize process and accomplishments under the 1994 CCMP, and emphasize the big picture goals, objectives, and actions over the next 20 years. The revised CCMP will use the LISS Action Agenda themes and also involve the upper basin states. The Core Team has issued an RFP to hire a contractor, which will help with the revision process by writing, collecting ideas from Work Groups and Advisory Committees, and holding public meetings to collect input with the

goal of having the revision process completed by Sept 30, 2014. The Core Team has selected a consultant for the project and expects that the consultant will be working to gather input in early 2013 and from the CAC at the March meeting.

Dave Miller reminded the group of the enormous amount of work it will take to pull the revised CCMP together, referencing the 1990 effort, Listen to the Sound. He suggested that two or three members of CAC be added to the Core Team in order to help with public input or that the CAC create its own 18-mth Work Group to specifically focus on the CCMP revision. Mark Parker told the group that the STAC also had asked to be involved on the Core Team. Curt Johnson agreed that there should be CAC involvement and representation, especially with the amount of work that went into Sound Vision project. Mark Tedesco said that the consultant will help to facilitate the process but will be relying on the expertise of LISS partners and staff to make the effort successful.

CCMP Tracking using eSound

Mark Parker gave a presentation on the CCMP Tracking system, eSound. The system, which is housed on the EPA server, is now set up but the database will only be accessible for those LISS partners that are going to be entering accomplishments. Mark Parker gave an overview of sections and told the group that the output that will be on the LISS Web site for all to view and will be in table format and updated on a yearly basis. Mark Tedesco also pointed out that once the CCMP is revised, the database will need to be updated to align with the new categories.

UConn Center for Land Use Education & Research (CLEAR)

Judy Preston, LISS Outreach Coordinator with CT Sea Grant, gave an overview of CLEAR's Long Island Sound's Changing Landscape, which shows the changes in landscape throughout the Sound watershed from 1985 to 2010. This interactive Web site provides information for a number of different purposes including impervious cover maps for watersheds, which can be an indicator of development pressure. You can use the Web site to explore sub-watersheds and hydrologic units, which watersheds are developing most rapidly, land cover types such as turf grass, forest, wetland, agricultural fields, within each of the subwatersheds, and development over time. This Web site will be live soon and can be viewed at: <http://clear.uconn.edu/projects/landscapeLIS/index.htm>.

Updates

CAC Policy, Legislative, & Advocacy Committee

Sandy Breslin gave an update on the FY13 and 14 Appropriations. The Policy Committee will be working with lawmakers after the New Year to bump up FY13 funding which will be agreed upon in March. The President's budget used to be the floor from which to progress but now is thought of as a "ceiling" by some lawmakers. Other estuary program's budgets have increased and the group thinks the same should occur for the Sound. This Committee is in constant communications with elected officials and Sean Maher was just in DC last week to support increases in funding.

Curt Johnson reminded the group about the sign-on letter that will be sent to the Atlantic State Marine Fishery Council to eliminate menhaden catch. Today was the deadline for Congressionals to sign on to the letter but DeLauro, Hines, and Murphy has yet to sign on.

Communications

Larissa Graham, LISS NY Outreach Coordinator with NY Sea Grant told the group about a few projects the Communications Team had been working on. Sound Update, LISS newsletter, is now available: http://longislandsoundstudy.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/ToxPath2012_for-Web.pdf and Sound Health is also available: <http://longislandsoundstudy.net/2012/11/sound-health-2012/>. Sound Health features a fun, new feature "Ask Dr. K" where readers can send an e-mail to Jason Krumholz, a marine scientist working as NOAA liaison to the EPA Long Island Sound Office. The Communications Team is always looking for help in extending the reach of the publications, so if you would like copies to pass out to your stakeholders, please contact the LISO at info@longislandsoundstudy.net.

The Communications Team has also been working on Web pages for each of the Stewardship Areas to highlight the ecological importance and recreational opportunities of each of the sites. We are looking for experts for each of these sites to review the content so, if you are interested, please contact Robert Burg (Burg.Robert@epamail.epa.gov) or Larissa (lig85@cornell.edu). These Web pages will be launched in early 2013 and, if there is interest, a presentation could be given at the March CAC meeting.

Lastly, Larissa gave an update on Phase I of the Social Marketing project to change residential behavior related to lawn care that NY Sea Grant is working on. A workshop was held on Dec 10th to collect ideas with input from water quality experts, state extension staff, and local non-profits. The group discussed potential behaviors to focus the project, audiences to target, and communities to conduct the focus groups to identify barriers that are preventing and/or benefits to encourage behavior change.

Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)

Mark Tedesco gave CAC members an update about the TMDL. He said that there was much excitement about progress of nitrogen removal until Hurricane Sandy struck which resulted in a dip in progress for the months of Nov and Dec. However, there is expected to be more progress to reaching the goals as additional upgrades go online. As part of the TMDL work group, each state is conducting a statewide evaluation of nonpoint source control programs to identify data gaps and make recommendations for improvements. The work group is continuing to discuss revision of the TMDL, while also discussing implementation of the current TMDL.

Long Island Sound Islands

Leah Schmalz from Save the Sound gave an update about Little Gull and Plum Islands. Little Gull Island was sold by GSA to the highest bidder. Fred Plum is the new owner of the island, despite the \$160,000 that the New London Maritime Society raised to try and purchase the island. There have been some brief conversations with Mr. Plum during which he said he is open to partnerships and having the Island lighthouse be open to the public. Public meetings were also held regarding the 840-acre Plum Island

over the past few months. The public comment period is now closed and the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is expected by winter. Groups have been encouraging taking the time to evaluate the habitats of the island but this is unlikely to happen. EPA, USFWS, DEC, are all on record supporting the ecological importance of this island. Once the final EIS is out then there could be a round of appeals.

Future meetings

Ideas for topics to be discussed during the March CAC meeting include a presentation and discussion to gather input from the CAC about the CCMP revision process, a presentation about the new LISS Stewardship Area Web pages, and a presentation about Superstorm Sandy by Malcolm Bowman from the Stony Brook Storm Surge Team.

The meeting adjourned at 2:25pm.

2013 CAC meetings will be held on March 14 (NY), 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/>