

**Long Island Sound Study (LISS)  
Citizens Advisory Committee**

**Meeting Summary** June 13, 2013  
Norwalk Maritime Aquarium, 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 18 members was present. Curt started the meeting by introducing Jennifer Herring, *Norwalk Maritime Aquarium*, who welcomed the CAC and introduced them to the Aquarium and several points of interest. Nancy Seligson, *Supervisor, Town of Mamaroneck and NY Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) Co-chair*, acknowledged the recent EPA Region II Environmental Leader Award given to CAC member Jennifer Wilson Pines, *Manhasset Bay Protection Committee*, and thanked Jennifer for her significant dedication and contribution to Long Island Sound, and the CAC.

Washington D.C. Report

Sandy Breslin, *Audubon Connecticut*, reported on a “very exciting series of meetings” in Washington D.C. She delivered two key messages to the CAC: YOU are the power behind what we do; we need more of you to get involved and be a part of the advocacy process. We need *new* people to participate during this extremely difficult budget time. And, Washington needs to hear more constituents more often that LIS is an important issue. Funding for LIS has gone down when money for all other estuary programs has gone up. We really need to focus our efforts.

Discussion ensued about the need for a list of specific multi-year, shovel-ready projects that articulates where money is needed. Eric Swenson, *Hempstead Harbor Protection Committee*, who traveled to DC also, suggested that we need to build relationships with other agencies besides EPA; we have all of our eggs in one basket. It was agreed that the group visiting Washington needs to be more diverse, including mayors, supervisors, representatives of different industries, such as Marine Trades; not just an environmental message. Nancy Seligson reminded everyone that we have lost some elected representatives and to reach out to and work with newly elected officials. Sandy Breslin handed out an Audubon Factsheet “*Support Funding for the Restoration of Long Island Sound*,” which could be used as a template for additional literature. Adrienne Esposito, *Citizens Campaign for the Environment*, also traveled to DC, stated that we have become complacent; it shouldn’t be the same “cast of characters” going to Washington; the CAC’s role is to solicit support. At a time when other NEP’s are maintaining or increasing funding, LIS is losing support. Adrienne reiterated the need for a list of projects that LIS accomplished as well as the next three on the list; CAC needs to demonstrate what they are fighting for.

Mark Tedesco, *EPA LIS Office*, commented that we have the information, it’s just not in a format that’s effective. We need to be able to show that “here are our biggest accomplishments, and here’s where we’re headed.” Chantal Collier, *CT Nature Conservancy*, suggested an annual calendar of events that includes the timeline of the budget process and the congressional calendar, as a way to engage CAC members. Sandy Breslin offered to draft such a calendar. Curt Johnson encouraged workgroups and the CCMP process to be bold in identifying the budget needs, looking ahead 5 years for a comprehensive list of projects and costs to be included in the CCMP. Conversation ensued about the need for information

**Long Island Sound Study (LISS)  
Citizens Advisory Committee**

that “tells a story, or stories” that are understandable to people. Drew Carey, *Coastal Vision*, suggested that it would be good to have the CCMP perspective at any planning meeting to identify projects. Judy Preston, *LISS CT Outreach Coordinator*, was requested to set up a meeting that will decide what products to create for this purpose.

Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) Update

Mark Tedesco gave a brief summary by PowerPoint of the CCMP process to date. The Connecticut Scoping meeting will be held on June 26 in Bridgeport, CT.

Drew Carey stressed the importance of measurable outcomes being developed through the CCMP process: “measurable, broad and specific.” All of the information about the CCMP process is available to CAC members for comments on the LISS website [<http://longislandsoundstudy.net/about/our-mission/updating-the-comprehensive-conservation-and-management-plan/>]. Diane Selditch, *SoundWaters*, suggested that we need to look at protecting LIS as a way of increasing our resiliency; rather than having a separate section on Superstorm Sandy, we should tie this concept into multiple sections of the plan. This also might improve our chances of funding and a way to infuse the “new normal” throughout the document.

David Miller, *Ecology and Environment*, discussed the Sound Communities section of the CCMP: we are going to need energy to make this process successful. Actions are where the “rubber meets the road” -- we need to align all to get to actions that we want to work on. Sound Communities has historically been about outreach and education; now it is about how not to repeat the mistakes of the past. Sound Communities is about resiliency, sustainability planning – we don’t have a framework for this. We need to push the Sound Communities section to accommodate these, including LID. We need to get the right people at the table (the governors); the Great Lakes program is chaired by Lisa Jackson, the chief of NRCS, and high-level Army Corps representatives. We need to design our advocacy to tap into other funding sources. The LISS and the LIS office doesn’t clean up LIS; it coordinates. Actions are being done by all the other agencies. We need to link green infrastructure and low interest loans to LIS accomplishments. Public outreach needs to be a joint responsibility.

Maureen Dolan-Murphy, *Citizens Campaign for the Environment*, commented that the first scoping meeting, held in New York, was a huge disappointment. It was poorly attended, attended by the wrong people, and the process didn’t work. Others commented that it was not at a good time (traffic), although acknowledged there are challenges to any meeting time. It is why we need a public outreach team for the CCMP – to ensure outreach from many people and groups. Curt Johnson weighed in with the suggestion that the Sound Communities section needs to empower communities, engage environmental leaders to generate critical policy, develop public outreach, define projects, and get more agencies to the table. Curt also suggested that at the October Management meeting the workgroups could report out on their 5-year goals and project needs. Sandy Breslin remarked that coastal Connecticut Congressional lawmakers would be happy to host a meeting designed to get at what actions are needed in their regions to protect LIS, from which a list could be generated. David Miller commented that it’s citizens who help drive the legislative agenda. It was suggested that LISS doesn’t

**Long Island Sound Study (LISS)  
Citizens Advisory Committee**

need to host all the meetings for the CCMP process. Summer is a good time to get people while they are out enjoying the Sound.

Curt suggested that last year hypoxia and the dead zone, as well as beach closures, occurred in late August, and these two things are huge motivators and should be capitalized upon. Marty Garrell, *Adelphi University*, warned that it's possible to have our message backfire: we've been working for this many years and still have not solved these problems. There needs to be urgency, and a sense that this is unacceptable, to motivate people; also must be sure to point out success stories. Chantal Collier commented that we need better communication internally to get the correct messaging out there, including coordination and materials. Jennifer Herring offered to post information on the Aquarium's website.

Discussion covered observations and suggestions for the scoping meetings. Mark Tedesco reminded everyone that the picture was not as bleak as perhaps what was being suggested: the first CCMP didn't even have scoping meetings. This is being looked at as a way to get early feedback – the scoping meetings are not intended to be the only, or key, means of getting input. We have a lot of work to do; we should double the amount of time that we think it will take. The core group for the CCMP has done a lot, and we have the summer and fall to develop the outreach strategy. Drew Carey commented that the Sound Vision process didn't have public outreach; we need to reach outside CAC and seek and engage under-represented groups. It is very difficult to motivate people to come to meetings; it's a process, not a crisis. Scoping meetings are at the early state of the process. David Miller offered that what we need in the next 12 months is an engagement strategy: messages, materials, contacts, etc. Historically outreach was done before the document was created (Sound Vision). Curt Johnson suggested that a small brochure like what was generated for Sound Vision could be duplicated for the CCMP process, using the four program areas to engage the public. With a July to December timeframe, we need to nail down where and when meetings will be. Mark Tedesco reminded all that there is no need to reinvent the wheel; go back and cite the 1994 CCMP; with the exception of Climate Change, LID, bioextraction, etc., there is not much that is new. It was suggested that a list of specific projects proposed over a three to five year (action/implementation plan) and their cost could be added as an appendix to the CCMP.

Curt wrapped up by saying that, in Drew Carey's defense, scoping meetings were not even in the contract for the CCMP work; Drew Carey pushed for them. Good feedback from the CAC; important to keep in mind "what do you want the next ten years of the Sound to look like?"

Presentation: Nutrients and Estuaries "Too Much of a Good Thing", Gary Wikfors, NOAA

**Pollutant nitrogen ↔ nutritional protein: the symmetrical, alliterative poetry of bioextraction.** Presented by Gary H. Wikfors, NOAA, NMFS, Northeast Fisheries Science Center, 212 Rogers Avenue, Milford, CT 06460 USA. [Gary.Wikfors@noaa.gov](mailto:Gary.Wikfors@noaa.gov).

*Abstract:* The inert gas diatomic nitrogen constitutes 70% of the earth's atmosphere. In all living cells, nitrogen constitutes 16% of proteins, both structural and enzymatic. Recently, however, nitrogen has

## Long Island Sound Study (LISS) Citizens Advisory Committee

acquired a sinister reputation as a pollutant causing environmental degradation in coastal seas. We have demonized this essential element by over-fertilizing industrial agriculture and by concentrating human waste streams in coastal cities that use estuaries as convenient waste dumps. The so-called eutrophication of coastal seas, however, can be viewed as an opportunity; there is potentially useful primary productivity going to waste. At a time when large investments are being made to cultivate microalgae for biofuel, we also are spending billions to prevent microalgae from growing in natural waters. Capturing the primary productivity of eutrophic coastal ecosystems would return the nitrogen in coastal seas to its rightful status as a precious resource.

Nutrient bioextraction is a technology to recover and recycle *pollutant* nitrogen into useful *protein* nitrogen for human food or animal feed. Cultivation of macroalgae that absorb dissolved nitrogen directly and molluscan shellfish that efficiently separate phytoplankton from the vast quantities of water in which they grow – a feat un-matched by any man-made machine -- for the main purpose of removing nutrients, especially nitrogen, from eutrophic waters is just beginning. Attention to toxic contaminants obviously is necessary for many applications, but with proper controls, nutrient bioextraction has the potential to address three problems simultaneously: eutrophication, the need for microalgal biomass to supplement agricultural plant production, and the harvest of fish to feed fish.

Gary Wikfors presented an entertaining and informative PowerPoint motivated by the increasing public perception that nitrogen is a “pollutant” in LIS, to which he presented abundant information to explain that “nitrogen is not a pollutant unless its effects are undesirable.”

### Updates

#### Community Embayment Monitoring, Jamie Alonzo

Jamie Alonzo, *Norwalk Maritime Aquarium*, provided an update on progress on the Community Embayment Monitoring grant, funded through the LIS Futures Fund program. Feedback from end-users has been garnered through meetings and surveys. The QUAP template is being worked on. The key element of the project is feedback via survey monkey [<https://surveymonkey.com/s/37X6X6J>]; a draft framework will be generated from this information. A final report will be ready by the end of July.

#### 2013 LISS Work Plan and Budget

Mark Tedesco provided a handout and overview of the budget.

### Plum Island

Curt Johnson reported that the town of Southold, NY is actively considering a 620-acre conservation zone on Plum Island. The EIS will be out in the next 2 – 4 weeks; it is likely that this will not cite the need to consider conservation at the site.

**Long Island Sound Study (LISS)  
Citizens Advisory Committee**

State Legislative Update/LIS Funding

The LIS caucus is up and running in Hartford; this is making a huge difference. \$997 million CWA funding available for clean water (this is huge). Curt acknowledged TNC's David Sutherland's significant contribution lobbying on topics including coastal resiliency, clean marinas and dredging. Other legislative activities include a provision that will make CT dam owners responsible for the inspection and maintenance of dams; this will likely lead to dams being taken down in the state. The use of larval insecticides in coastal counties will now be prohibited, regulated by the DEEP.

Habitat Restoration Workgroup Update (Georgia Basso)

Georgia Basso, *Fish and Wildlife Liaison to the Long Island Sound Study*, provided a brief update on the Habitat/Stewardship Workgroup. She displayed the new Stewardship Sites Initiative informational postcard, designed to help advertise the locations and opportunities at LIS Stewardship Sites that are open to the general public around the Sound. National Trails Day was also held on June 1-2 in CT – the largest event of its kind in the country – included three events/hikes lead at Stewardship sites. The latest meeting of the Habitat workgroup was held at a 90-acre grassland restoration in New York City. The Schoolyard Habitat Program worked with five pilot schools this year; there were three unveiling events this past week. The program will be moving to New Haven and partnering with Connecticut Audubon.

Curt Johnson wrapped up the meeting with the sobering information that not a single project from the Chesapeake to Salem, MA, was funded through NOAA/RAE (restoration funding) this year. It may be time to look to the US Fish and Wildlife Service for partnerships, and funding.

A reminder that the next CAC meeting will be a joint STAC/CAC meeting in September in New York. Jennifer Herring suggested that Jennifer Mattei, from Sacred Heart University/Project Limulus, be invited to speak.

The meeting adjourned at 2:25pm.

2013 CAC meetings will be held on September 12 (NY), and December 12 (CT). For meeting minutes and other information, visit <http://longislandsoundstudy.net/about/committees/citizens-advisory-committee/>