

LISS HRI Meeting Minutes – July 16, 2008, Bridgeport, CT 11:00am to 3:00pm

Note: This meeting was moved from Long Island, NY to Bridgeport, CT due to out-of-state travel restrictions ordered by the governor of CT for state employees.

Eelgrass – the 3rd round of the LIS eelgrass aerial survey was funded by LISS in 2008, and the flight will most likely take place in 2009.

LISS Website – add links to TPL’s website for additional info on land acquisitions (www.tpl.org)

- add Google map for restoration projects
- add a link to the habitat restoration database
- make stand along project summaries downloadable; these will include links to photos, documents, etc

LISFF & DO Fund – suggest to members of the CT tidal wetlands and riverine migratory corridors teams that they begin their proposal / application process now, and apply in 2009. This will help to get things started for some restoration sites listed as “potential” and will keep things moving along for the stalled in-progress sites.

- review the list of potential sites, and keep an eye out for additional sites that are degraded and may be in need of habitat restoration
- surveys by ecologists and researchers, etc, are relatively inexpensive, compared to feasibility studies and design projects
- it was suggested that this list of sites and the surveys should expand beyond just habitat restoration and include other activities such as monitoring, enhancements, management plans, etc.

Habitat Restoration Map / Poster – Harry will update this with CT sites, and will include the coastal forest project at the McKinney Refuge

Sentinel Monitoring Sites Database – the second meeting is tentatively scheduled for Aug or Sept 2008.

- Scientists have been asked to enter their monitoring data into this database on the web.
- the link to this database is <http://lisicos.uconn.edu/DEP/sentinel/viewfile.php>. You must type in ‘guest’ for the user name and password to be granted viewer-only access

Riverine Migratory Corridors – meet with Steve Gephard to help determine the total number of all restorable river miles in Connecticut. Recent discussions through email since the meeting demonstrate how complex and potentially misleading this figure could be. For example, there may be a stretch of river that is technically restorable, but not likely to happen until commercial buildings or residences are first removed. There may be a large discrepancy between the total number restorable, and the number of miles where restoration is actually feasible. Furthermore, culverts and dams with fish passage structures already on them are still considered obstructions, as not all fish are able to get past them.

Barrier Beaches – perform a similar analysis of total number of barrier beaches in LIS that can be restored. This analysis will likely encounter some of the same problems as the RMC analysis.

- Calculating total restorable acres for coastal forests and coastal grasslands will be tougher, although The Nature Conservancy may be able to help out with the grasslands.

Expansion of the HRI’s goals – Mark Tedesco distributed a handout that summarized the Hudson-Raritan Estuary definition of habitat restoration and related activities, and a short discussion followed.

- Ron passed along Bill Niering’s warning about tinkering with natural systems: proceed cautiously as man’s track record with changing the natural environment is not very good.

- Louise stated that even restoration projects can be disturbances, then asked if anyone is monitoring the long-term ecosystem effects of restoration projects; example: what might be the cumulative effect of multiple fish passage projects over time on a single migratory corridor -- when can the system handle the next project after the last one was completed?

Database – LISS Intern Erika Wunderlich gave a short presentation on how the linked Google Map will work with the habitat restoration database. Also involved with the creation of the linked Google Map were Larissa Graham and Heather Young.

- The habitat restoration database is about 50% to 75% completed. A working test version is available on the web and the database team has been entering data and testing the features. This is has been moving along slowly from our end due to high workloads, time out of the office, etc.

The database team includes Harry, Heather, Ron, Lisa, Tom, Louise, Larissa, and Kevin O'Brien from CTDEP.

Harry will contact Juliana Barrett for information on coastal grassland restoration in Old Saybrook, and will add this project to the database.

Next Meeting Date

November 19, 2008

Meeting dates for 2009 will be selected soon

In Attendance

Juliana Barrett – CT Sea Grant

David Carey – CT Bureau of Aquaculture

Chris Cryder – Save the Sound

Sarah Deonarine - NYSDEC

Larissa Graham – NY Sea Grant

Louise Harrison – USFWS LISO

Mark Johnson – CT DEP Inland Fisheries Division

Nicole Maher – NY TNC

Sharon Marino – USFWS SNEP

Ron Rozsa – CTDEP-OLISP

Victoria Ruzicka – NYC Parks/Natural Resources

Mark Tedesco – EPA-LISO

Sue Tuxbury – NOAA/NMFS

Adam Whelchel - CT TNC

Erika Wunderlich – LISS Intern

Harry Yamalis – CTDEP-OLISP

Heather Young - NYS DEC