

**Long Island Sound Study
Citizens Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary
Thursday, June 8, 2011
UConn campus, Stamford, CT**

Welcome, Housekeeping & Logistics

Curt Johnson, the CT CAC Co-chair and Nancy Seligson, the NY Co-chair welcomed the group to CT and called the meeting to order at 9:45AM. Sixteen CAC members were present but many were on their way, stuck in traffic. The final count of CAC members was twenty-two, which is a quorum.

Mark Tedesco gave a report from the Management Committee meeting and on the Long Island Sound Study (LISS) budget. Expectations were that the budget would be \$3.6 million (the President's budget request) but it is actually \$5.9 million! Although this funding level is less than what was received last year (\$7.8 million), everyone was very pleased with this year's funding level. Key overall funding items include:

- \$500,000 going to NY and CT Sea Grant,
- \$1.5 million for the Long Island Sound (LIS) Futures Fund,
- \$375,000 for enhancement projects including support for Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) technical work and phase 2 of the embayment monitoring work,
- \$675,000 to CT and NY for Stewardship acquisitions,
- continued support for the water quality monitoring conducted by CTDEP,
- \$108,956 to UCONN CLEAR for phase 2 remote sensing of land cover indicators, and
- continued funding of all LISS ongoing base programs.

Johnson mentioned that he and Seligson advocated for the additional funding go to the LIS Futures Fund on behalf of the CAC.

Sandy Breslin from CT Audubon gave an update from the State of CT political perspective. She informed the group that the state has a new Governor and Administration. LIS was given \$90 million in state funding, which is the highest level of funding to date. The state also created a voluntary habitat restoration account to which money could be raised or given. This account is an expansion to the CT License Plate fund that is currently used to fund restoration, education, and research projects.

Adrienne Esposito with Citizens Campaign for the Environment reported on new happenings in NY state. NY also has a new Governor and NYSDEC Commissioner. Esposito suggested that a group of NY CAC members should meet with the Commissioner to talk with him about LIS. Esposito also told members of the exciting news that on June 1st, 2,500 acres of shellfish beds were opened in Hempstead Harbor after being closed for over 35 years. On opening day, 55 boats were out in the harbor, harvesting from the open beds and pulling up lots of healthy clams. Pat Aitken from Friends of the Bay also told the group that a Watershed Action Plan has been created for Oyster Bay. She said it was a very successful process, with lots of great partners, and that they would appreciate any feedback that CAC members would have on the document.

Esposito reported that Northport and Huntington Harbors are experiencing the highest levels of red tide in the northeast and the nation. Dr. Gobler of Stony Brook University has been funded by LISS to conduct this work. Stony Brook University and NYSDEC has now received a new NOAA grant to research and monitor red tide throughout the state. CAC members also thought this might be a good topic for the Habitat Restoration Work Group to focus on.

Johnson gave an overview of the Sound Vision report which would serve as a long-term document for revising the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan and the Action Agenda which would serve as a short-term (2 year) plan for the Sound. The suggestion of an Action Agenda came from a meeting of the newly-formed Executive Steering Committee which is comprised of the states and EPA. Specifically, Jim Tierney, NYSDEC Assistant Commissioner, suggested the idea of an Action Agenda based on products that he had seen from other programs. Seligson told the CAC they would also review a public summary document that would be used to convey the Action Agenda to the public and tell them how they could get involved. Johnson also reminded the group that the general ideas of the Sound Vision report and Action Agenda had been approved at the last meeting.

Resolution 1: Review and vote on CAC Action Agenda

Johnson introduced the topic by reminding CAC members that this document would be an internal background document for CAC members and was not written for the public. It has already gone through many edits, including removing the item about the commercial fishing license in NY State.

Dan Natchez from Daniel S. Natchez & Associates suggested that “vegetated buffers” on item 2i could be misconstrued and, in some places, vegetated buffers may not work due to sea level rise and storms. Marty Garrell from Adelphi University suggested that the word “vegetated” be removed. The group voted and no one opposed.

Maureen Dolan-Murphy from Citizens Campaign for the Environment suggested that “Stewardship” be added to item 1a to read: “Restoration and Stewardship Act”. The group voted and no one opposed.

Grant Westerson from CT Marine Trades Association suggested that “and boat” be removed from item 1c. After much discussion, the group decided to have the item read: “trailer and boat registration contribution programs”. The group voted and no one opposed.

Ceasar Manfredi from Federated Conservation of Westchester County suggested to include “including dry weather discharges” on item 2d. The group voted and no one opposed.

Tanya Court from The Business Council of Fairfield County suggested adding “Consider a private or public infrastructure bank.” to item 1d, under a new bullet, iv. The group voted and no one opposed.

William Evanzia from J. B. E. Associates began discussion about 1c about the fish license plate. The group suggested that the language read: “marine resource protection including the Sound”. The group voted and no one opposed.

Breslin had a few grammatical changes and asked that CT Audubon be added to items 3a-i, 3b-v, and 4b. She also suggested changing the language of 3b, under a new bullet, v to read: "Improve urban habitats for birds, wildlife, and people in the coastal communities." The group voted and no one opposed.

Manfredi suggested the NY State Attorney General could be added to item 3c-i.

Esposito asked that "CT" be removed from item 1d-ii. There was much discussion over this change. The group voted: 17 voted yes and 3 opposed. The group also voted on removing "less than 28". The group voted: 7 voted yes, 11 opposed, 2 abstained.

Natchez suggested adding a bullet g under item 4 stating "Seek to protect and expand the marine-dependent working waterfront as well as other public access to Long Island Sound." The group voted: 19 voted yes and 1 abstained.

Jennifer Wilson-Pines from the Manhasset Bay Protection Committee suggested an item be added to fund the ground-truthing of pathogen removal of polluted runoff sources since all of the embayments on Long Island are being required to enforce pathogen TMDLs. The group suggested that "Fund research to identify sources and cost-effective techniques for controlling nonpoint source pathogens, focused on Long Island Sound embayments." be added to 2f. The group voted: 2 voted no.

Mickey Weiss from Project Oceanology asked that Project O be listed to 3d.

The group then voted on the Resolution. The vote was unanimous: 22 yes, 0 no, 0 abstained.

Action Agenda Public Summary Review and Approval

Bart Robbett, communication consultant from Robbett Advocacy Media, presented a brief overview of the findings from the two focus groups that were held to determine how the public would respond to the draft CAC Action Agenda. These focus group members were selected from the public. They were screened to have a college degree, and have some relationship to LIS, so many were somewhat aware of environmental issues. They found that many of the individuals wanted to support the Sound and did not want federal or state funding to the Sound to stop. However, focus group members were strongly opposed to paying more to help protect and restore the Sound. The group also showed low confidence in government but would support a non-profit leading an effort to protect the Sound, if the nonprofit was well-established and had a good track record. The focus group findings also showed that residents were very connected to their "area" of the Sound and that the Sound did not have a larger regional identity. If you would like to see the full report from the focus group work, please email Leah Schmalz from Save the Sound at lschmalz@savethesound.org.

Schmalz led a discussion on what CAC members thought about the public document for the CAC Action Agenda. There were some concerns with the photo on the cover and Schmalz suggested that if anyone had other photos they send them to her close of business the next day.

Many CAC members, including Garrell and Breslin felt that the “What’s the problem” page and “Protecting Clean Water” sections conveyed a “gloom and doom” message. Also, many stated that it needed more about all of the progress that had already been made to protect and restore the Sound.

Court suggested that more photos be included of activities that everyone could partake in, such as picnicking on the beach.

Eric Swenson from the Hempstead Harbor Protection Committee suggested that the term “problem” be replaced with something more positive and suggested text be added to show that the actions that partners have taken are paying off.

Sarah Deonarine from NYSDEC suggested that the LISS logo and funding source be added to the document.

Rachel Gruzen with Great Ecology and Environments suggested that the document should start out with an overview of what the CAC is, does, and who it is made up of to give folks some context.

The group voted on accepting the document pending that Schmalz will make the suggested changes and, specifically, work to make the language more positive. The group voted: no one opposed or abstained.

Resolution 2: Review and vote on Sound Vision Strategic Plan

CAC members suggested the following changes to the document:

1. PCW Action Step 1 and 5 and PWC1.3: Add SSOs to paragraphs where CSOs are mentioned. Passed unanimously.
2. Page 8: Add “point source” to heading. Passed unanimously.
3. PCW2.2 and PCW6.1: Change language to read: “stormwater performance standards...” Passed unanimously.
4. PWC2.5: Change language to read: “Develop, implement, and enforce Long Island Sound...” Passed unanimously. An amendment was later proposed: “Advocate implementation and enforcement of Long Island Sound protective model stormwater ordinances that...” Passed unanimously.
5. Add PCW2.10: Fund research to identify sources and cost-effective techniques for nonpoint source pathogen reduction in Long Island Sound embayments” Passed unanimously.
6. PCW5: Move the sentence: “The challenge is particularly...” up to the paragraph, above, about CSOs.
7. CSP2.3: Change to read: “Explore continuing opportunities to support the long-term sustainability of marine fisheries resources.” Passed unanimously.
8. BCW2.1: Change language to read: BCW2.1: Create a challenge grant to seed social marketing efforts and work with the Communications committee of the LISS to craft a major social marketing campaign designed to market a clean sound and how we can protect it. Passed unanimously.

9. BCW 3.4: Support protection and expansion of the marine-dependent working waterfront as well as other public access to Long Island Sound. Passed unanimously.
10. BCW6: Change language to read: “Dredged material that is removed from navigational channels and marinas can be used for...” and “The reuse of dredged material may require some...” Both changes passed unanimously.
11. ELIS2.2: Change to read: “Develop and implement a framework...” Passed unanimously.

Johnson reminded the group that this document would be used for internal, CAC use. The Resolution passed unanimously.

100-year status of LIS Fisheries

Tim Visel from the Sound School gave a presentation about the various publications that are available to document how fisheries have changed over the last 100 years due to changes in climate and weather. He is working on a proposal to conduct another census of fish populations around the Sound. Most of the documents that he has gathered are available on the Sound School’s Web site at: <http://www.soundschool.com/directory.html>. Some of the publications that Visel mentioned in his talk are not on the Web yet but he would be happy to send them to anyone that contacts him (tim.visel@new-haven.k12.ct.us).

Nominating Subcommittee

Johnson looked for CAC members to be part of a Nominating Subcommittee to elect the new Co-chairs and Secretary in Dec. This task will only take about an hour of your time and be conducted through conference calls. Abbie Coderre from Saybrook Point Inn and Spa offered to serve on the Subcommittee. Johnson said he will be recruiting addition members through email.

Policy Subcommittee

Breslin reminded the group that the authorization of the LIS Restoration Act is renewed every 5 years, with the last authorization from 2005-2010. This past year LISRA was wrapped up in a larger Bill that included authorizations for other geographic programs. It was not reauthorized. The Policy Committee would like to send out support letters for the reauthorization. They will send a draft out to CAC members for comments before sending it out to elected officials on behalf of the CAC.

Updates/Announcements

Save the Sound will be conducting summer sails using a grant they received from the NY Community Trust. The SoundWaters Schooner will be used for the sail activities will take place in the afternoon to evening, including many educational activities and a Press event. The dates so far are as follows: Mamaroneck, NY- Aug 1, Port Jefferson, NY- Aug 8, Bridgeport, CT- Aug 15, Mystic, CT- Aug 27, and Port Washington, NY- Aug 30. Events will also take place in Greenport and Old Saybrook, CT; dates to be announced. Save the Sound will email this information out to the group once the details are confirmed.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30PM.