

LISS HRI Meeting Minutes – November 16, 2011, Bridgeport, CT - 10:30am to 2:30pm

In Attendance

David Carey – CT Dept of Ag-Aquaculture
Mark Johnson – CTDEEP-Fisheries
Mark Parker – CTDEEP
Ron Rozsa – CTDEP-OLISP, retired
Mark Tedesco – EPA-LISO

Tim Visal – The Sound School
Tim Wenskus – NYC Parks/Natural Resources
Harry Yamalis – CTDEEP-OLISP
Heather Young – NYS DEC

Dialed-in

Sarah Deonarine – NYSDEC
Dawn McReynolds – NYSDEC
unidentified lurker(s)

- Presentation on Estuarine Shell Habitat – Tim Visal
 - proposed for new habitat type under HRI
 - habitat for blue crab megalopa, YOY-flounder, *Mercenaria*, *Mya*, more (but not necessarily for oysters)

Shell hash has been discussed by HRI before and it was determined that it would become part of the Shellfish Reef chapter (if/when the document is written)

Shell hash research possibly done by Peter Auster and/or Ralph Lewis at UConn; this may help elucidate whether or not these shell mounds move around, if they are temporary (how temporary), etc.

Eventually determined that creation of a mound of shell hash would be considered an enhancement

Action Agenda Items

- Action Agenda item #1 – expansion of the HRI to protect, enhance, and restore habitat; enhancements not eligible thru all funding sources, but eligible thru LISFF. These kinds of proposals would have to be carefully scrutinized to evaluate worthiness and amount of impact to existing resources (case-by-case basis).
- Habitat Restoration Plan
 - begin with designing a web-based nomination form for creating a more accurate and useful list of “potential” habitat restoration projects
 - create a Top 10 list (or more, as appropriate) for each state, representing the highest priority restoration sites
 - if HRI expands to include enhancement, would this become the Habitat Restoration and Enhancement Plan?
 - do we want to target a ratio of TW acres to Coastal Forest acres, Coastal Grassland, etc, based on how it was back in the 1950s (for example). The Tampa Bay (??) program drafted their HR Plan in this manner, focused on ratio of mangrove acres to other habitat acres as they existed in the 1950s.
 - continue to try to promote restoration of terrestrial habitats such as Coastal Grassland and Coastal Forest
 - keep trying to get CTDEEP-Wildlife and Forestry staff involved
 - high priority CG and CF areas possibly in need of restoration exist in the Menunketesuck / Salt Meadow Unit of the McKinney Refuge. Harry will speak to Juliana Barrett about this site and add it to the existing list of high priority restoration projects (try to get cost estimate and time frame for completion)
- Shellfish Restoration Plan
 - Members still in attendance discussed the problems with the development of the Shellfish Reef Restoration Plan/Chapter. Shellfish Reefs is one of the original 12 priority habitat types identified by the group for restoration, and therefore the development of a technical chapter has been included in previous workplans. Several attempts have been made, but success has been elusive for a variety of reasons, including NY and CT

state policy and regulatory issues (note: key members who could factually describe these issues were not in attendance). It was decided that these issues need to be elucidated and documented so that the workgroup could review them and determine if it is still appropriate to keep this item in the workplan, and whether Shellfish Reefs should remain a priority habitat. It was suggested that the new USFWS liaison or the NOAA liaison, if hired, could take on this effort.

- convene a meeting of interested parties (pro and con) to try to come to an agreement and either move forward or walk away from the shellfish restoration chapter and anything related to it until policies are more amenable to implementation. A shellfish restoration plan would need to deal forthrightly with the issues and recommend research and evaluation work to resolve scientific, technical or policy questions. For example:

- are unharvested oyster reefs risky? What are the risks? Who says so? Who says otherwise? Opinion or based on research? Research to the contrary? What research or pilot studies can be performed to better inform the debate?
- we do not yet have a mechanism for drafting this plan, but we have a concept for it
 - who will write it? It was suggested that the new USFWS liaison be the lead on getting the two states together, or the NOAA liaison if hired.

Workplan requests

- The Management Committee has requested that a proposal from the habitat restoration work group to improve the habitat database be developed for funding consideration. Harry will take the lead on its development. The Management Committee also requested that NYSDEC develop proposals on Marsh Migration Modeling and coastal erosion hazard mapping. These proposals will be considered for FY2012 LISS funding.

- Merger of HRI and Stewardship Committee

- LIS Stewardship Act purposely omits intertidal and subtidal areas
- Ron Rozsa will circulate what he had previously drafted as a Habitat Restoration Team work plan as a starting point for the existing mission of the HRT. Harry and Heather will use that to develop a broader mission statement and circulate it to the HRT and Stewardship Initiative work group for comment and consideration on whether merged work groups make sense. Currently, the HRI's 'purpose' as stated on the LISS website is:

“The Habitat Restoration Work Group is responsible for planning, coordinating and implementing restoration of the twelve priority habitat types as outlined in the LISS Habitat Restoration Strategy adopted by the Policy Committee in 1998.”

(see <http://longislandsoundstudy.net/about/committees/habitat-restoration-work-group/>)

- plan a phone call to determine the “what-ifs” if we are to combine

- Misc Announcements

- new USFWS liaison to LISS starts on Dec 5 (Georgia...something).
- Society for Ecological Restoration (www.ser.org) Mid-Atlantic Chapter, along with NYC Parks are hosting a restoration conference March 23-24, 2012, at Brooklyn College in NYC (in collaboration with the New England Chapter). Abstracts are due January 13, and see http://www.ser.org/midatl/events_announcements.asp for more details.
- LISS starting up an email list dedicated toward habitat restoration grant announcement and related info
- The LIS Action Agenda includes a commitment to revise the CCMP by 2014. A special meeting of the LISS Implementation Team will be held on Dec 1, 2011 to scope out the effort and present recommendations to the Management Committee at its Jan 26, 2012 meeting. The HRT will need to be involved in elements relating to its work.