

**Long Island Sound Study
Citizens Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary
Thursday, March 10, 2011
IEC, NYC, NY**

Welcome, Housekeeping & Logistics

Nancy Seligson, the NY CAC Co-chair, welcomed the group to NY and called the meeting to order at 9:30AM. Twenty-one CAC members were present, which is a quorum. Nancy reported that Jon Kachmar was leaving The Nature Conservancy (TNC), which would be a great loss for the CAC, and that TNC would be designating a new representative soon. Nancy also informed the group that Louise Harrison, the US Fish and Wildlife Service Liaison to LISS, 4-year term would be coming to an end this month. To thank Louise for all of her hard work, Nancy read a Proclamation, on behalf of the CAC and declared March 10th, 2011 “Louise Harrison Day”.

Sound Vision and CAC LIS Action Agenda Discussion

Curt Johnson, the CT CAC Co-chair, explained the goals for the day. The CAC would discuss two documents: the Sound Vision Report, which would serve as a 5-10 year plan for the protect and restoration of Long Island Sound and the CAC LIS Action Agenda, which would serve as a 1-2 year plan and was specifically requested by the LISS Executive Committee.

Drew Cary, from Coastal Vision, LLC, who was hired to lead the Sound Vision project, gave an overview of the discussion process. CAC members would review and prioritize the results of the Sound Vision project to date, prioritize strategies to accomplish the goals outlined in the document, and review outreach strategies for publicizing the final Sound Vision document. Once the group agrees on the outline, a committee will be formed to write the Sound Vision document.

The initial framework showed all the information collected at the various Sound Vision meetings in seven focus areas, with various topics under each area. The seven focus areas were divided into three themes: Healthy Watersheds, Habitats and Wildlife, and Economics. Every section has desired results, barriers/threats to achieving those results, and strategies to overcome those barriers/threats. During the day’s session, Drew wanted the group to prioritize the strategies and results.

CAC members took 20 minutes to review the document on their own and then Drew opened the floor for general questions and comments. Carol DiPaolo, with Coalition to Save Hempstead Harbor, commented that the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) seemed clearer than this document. It listed specific priorities, some of which may have changed over the years. For example, toxic contamination such as medical waste is not included in the Sound Vision outline, but needs to be addressed. She also stated that the three themes are very clear, but the Sound Vision report should also have clear priorities.

Cesare Manfredi from the Federated Conservationists of Westchester County asked that the formation of watershed districts be added as an outreach strategy.

Bill Cavers from Darien Advisory Committee/Coastal Waters asked what audience the document was meant for and what the extent of the document was. Curt explained that at the Oct Management Committee meeting, the Committee asked that the CCMP be revised by 2014. LISS planned to consider the recommendations in the Sound Vision report as a starting point for this revision process. Also, since the CAC is such a diverse group of individuals, the Sound Vision report will serve as a source of common goals for the group.

Dianne Selditch from SoundWaters asked that additional educational groups be added to the document since, in many places, only one example was given.

Adrienne Esposito, from Citizens Campaign for the Environment, stressed the importance of determining nutrient loading in embayments, specifically configuring nutrient loading budgets for each embayment and increasing septic system upgrades and management.

Joel Ziev, from the Town of North Hempstead, said that educating landowners should be included in the document, including those upstream or upbay.

Al Caccese, from Audubon New York, suggested adding specific language for advocacy strategies to help recruit new, passionate advocates for Long Island Sound.

Sandy Breslin, with Audubon Connecticut, asked that the wording in the intro be revised so that it started with creating a healthy ecosystem and then described a “working waterfront”.

Pat Aiken, from Friends of the Bay, agreed that nutrient loading language should be included, specifically stressing the importance of determining the source of nitrogen so managers know where to focus their efforts. Pat also asked for the word “cultivate” to be replaced with “restore” throughout the document and that baymen were included in the list of those that outreach efforts would be focused.

Jennifer Herring from The Maritime Aquarium, asked that biodiversity monitoring be listed in addition to water quality monitoring. And, on that note, Cesare Manfredi also asked that river and stream monitoring be included as well.

Bill Cavers noted that the three themes were broad and lacked energy and that the group may consider rewriting them to stress impact.

Tim Visel, from the Sound School, encouraged the writing team to make sure the language in the document was positive in order to instill hope because user groups are in need of some good news.

Dawn McReynolds, from NYSDEC, asked that the language “promoting... bioextraction” be changed since studies were still ongoing as to whether this method is effective. She also asked that other habitat restoration methods be included in the document in addition to opening fish passages.

Jennifer Wilson-Pines, from the Manhasset Bay Protection Committee, stated that integrated species management needed to be included in the document since there is a strong need for a move toward ecosystem-based management. She also requested that language about food webs be included.

Grant Westerson, from CT Marine Trades Association, said that he was very pleased with the document, overall, and was happy to see language about jobs and human interactions. Curt Johnson agreed with this and said that the NYSDEC, CTDEP, and EPA did not mandate the human aspect of management so it is important to keep this in the document.

Jennifer Herring disagreed with Bill Cavers earlier comment and said that she liked the themes that were used in the document because they connected people with the Sound.

Various other CAC members made comments to the specific language of the document. All CAC members were asked to send additional comments to Leah Schmalz at Save the Sound. Curt Johnson asked for a general sense of the group as to how they felt about the Sound Vision outline. Everyone agreed that it was a good start. The final Sound Vision report will be voted on at the June meeting. Curt Johnson asked for volunteers to help with writing the document. Marty Garrel from Adelphi University, Dianne Selditch, Jennifer Herring, Sandy Breslin, Pat Aiken, and Jennifer Wilson-Pines all agreed to help write the final report.

The group then moved on to reviewing the CAC LIS Action Agenda. Nancy Seligson explained that this document would be used in two ways: it would be submitted to the LISS Executive Committee at the April Management Committee meeting and would also serve as the opening introduction to the Sound Vision report.

Many CAC members had comments to the specific language in the document. Larissa Graham from NY Sea Grant and Judy Preston from CT Sea Grant, LISS Outreach Coordinators, made the changes that CAC members suggested using Track Changes in Word and sent them to Leah Schmalz. More general comments included: Adrienne Esposito asked that David's Island be included in the document. Marty Garrell suggested that public donations could serve as another resource of revenue to LISS during hard financial times. Many were concerned with this suggestion as they felt that LISS would need much more funding than public donations could provide and that it could lead to absolving the state and federal governments from their responsibility. Lastly, Tim Visel stated his support for the 100-yr study to look at fish populations. Other biologists in the group agreed.

Mark Tedesco discussed an Action Agenda that LISS was creating in parallel to the CAC's Action Agenda. Larissa Graham emailed this document out to the CAC before the meeting; please send any comments directly to Mark Tedesco.

Waterfront Metropolitan Alliance and the Harbor Coalition

Roland Lewis from the Waterfront Metropolitan Alliance (WMA) and the CAC Co-chair for the NY/NJ Harbor Estuary Program (HEP) presented on the Harbor Funding Coalition. This Coalition, comprised of 10 organizations, has formed a Steering Committee that is advocating for more funds for NYC. The group is requesting more than the \$800,000 that HEP currently

gets from the National Estuary Program in order to improve the waterfront. Their next steps are setting goals, obtaining staff, drafting legislation at the city, state, and federal level, stirring up enthusiasm, developing a work plan, and submitting proposals for additional funding. As a grassroots group with a unified message, the Coalition hopes to create community organization and a Harbor Act to increase funding.

CAC Subcommittee/LIS Work Group Reports

Sandy Breslin reported for the Policy, Legislative, and Advocacy Subcommittee. She told the group that the Federal budget continuing resolution expired on March 8th but was extended until March 18th. The group is now working on funding for FY11 (Oct 11-Sept 12) and FY12 (Oct 12-Sept 13) as well as Reauthorization of the LIS Act in FY12. Most importantly, they urged CAC members to watch their emails and be sure to call their elected officials!

The Tracking and Accountability Subcommittee had no report.

Grant Westerson and Joel Ziev reported for the Dredging Ad Hoc Subcommittee. Grant commented about the shifting biological priorities that restrict dredging windows in LIS and shrink the opportunities for dredging to be done. This has reduced the number of people doing dredging because they cannot make enough money to make it feasible. Grant proposed that the Dredge Ad Hoc Subcommittee conduct a study (involving evaluating existing information and applying to the LIS Futures Fund), and to bring this idea to the Management Committee in April. Curt Johnson stated that both he and Nancy consider this a priority, and unless they hear otherwise, they will say so at the Management Committee meeting.

Larissa Graham reported on behalf of Heather Young, LISS Habitat Restoration Coordinator with NYSDEC. The Habitat Restoration Initiative Work Group will be working on a Habitat Restoration Plan over the next few months. This Plan will include a section of potential habitat restoration sites and the Work Group is looking for suggestions from the CAC. A reminder will be sent out before the next meeting to remind CAC members to come prepared with your ideas for potential sites in your area.

Louise Harrison reported for the Stewardship Initiative Work Group. Since Louise's position is ending, Dave Kozak from CTDEP has agreed to take the lead for the Work Group until the next USFWS-LISS Liaison is hired. At their last meeting, the Work Group brainstormed Action Agenda items and will be prioritizing them. Louise also suggested that the GIS tool that the Work Group has been working on to prioritize future Stewardship Areas be presented at a future CAC meeting. The CTDEP recently acquired Crowley II property, near Barn Island. The Group was hoping to also purchase the Davis property in the same area with LISS funding but the purchase fell through. The Group has six areas that they are considering using the funding to obtain.

Sarah Deonarine from NYSDEC reported for the NPS and Watersheds Work Group. This Group submitted their Action Items for the LIS Action Agenda. The Group is also reviewing regional residential fertilizer laws, including the recently passed law in CT that prohibits municipal restrictions, and considering development of guidance on residential fertilizer applications.

Larissa Graham reported on behalf of the Communications Work Group. If you are interested in distributing copies of Sound Health to the public, please email Larissa at ljg85@cornell.edu. Larissa also asked for feedback on the next issue of LISS's newsletter, Sound Update, which will focus on LISS Priorities. Specifically, she needs CAC members to send her any additional "Accomplishments" and "Next Steps" for each of the topics. This document was also emailed out to CAC members before (and after) the meeting.

Updates/Announcements

Mark Tedesco told the group that there was no update on the budget. LISS is focusing on review of base program workplans (core staff, water quality monitoring, research, and implementation), with considering to a limited set of enhancements: support for embayment monitoring, a GIS gap analysis, a 2010 land cover trends update, and dredging. The LISS Management Committee will vote on the budget at the April meeting.

Curt Johnson handed out copies of the Embayment Monitoring proposal for feedback. Pete Sattler, from Interstate Environmental Commission drafted up the proposal with help from a Work Group, which included Jennifer Wilson-Pines, Pat Aitken, Eric Swenson from the Hempstead Harbor Protection Committee, and Carol DiPaolo. There were some concerns about the proposal, specifically from those CAC members that had reviewed the proposal. Pete Sattler told the group that he had already drafted a list of concerns and comments from the CAC that would be presented to the Management Committee with the proposal.

Larissa Graham reported on the next CAC field trip which will be to Jamaica Bay to see the marsh restoration which was done, in part, using dredged spoil. Currently, the trip is tentatively scheduled for April. Larissa Graham will send out details to the group soon.

Nancy Seligson reported on the Science and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) meeting that was held in February. She praised Jim Latimer from USEPA who has been pushing the STAC members to finish the Synthesis book on Long Island Sound. During the meeting, each chapter was reported on and many had made progress. She also reported on the Research Grant topics that will be funded in 2011 which are listed on the LISS Website at <http://longislandsoundstudy.net/research-monitoring/lis-research-grant-program/2010-research-project-descriptions>.

Curt Johnson said that there was no update on Plum Island. A draft Environmental Impact Statement or Scoping document has not been released. Louise Harrison told the group that the USFWS was looking into starting an Islands Initiative but the USFWS has not determined if it is a priority yet.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30PM.