

**Long Island Sound Study
Citizens Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary
Thursday, September 11, 2008
New York City**

Welcome/Introductions

New York CAC co-chair Nancy Seligson called the meeting to order and asked for a moment of silence for those that were killed in the tragic events of September 11, 2001. Seligson then asked for self-introductions and roll call of members. Enough CAC members were present, constituting a quorum. Seligson called for any changes or additions to the meeting agenda. Seligson explained that CT Co-chair John Atkin was not able to attend the meeting. She suggested the group move discussion about Echo Bay, New Rochelle to the beginning of the meeting in order to save time later in the day for discussion about restructuring subcommittees.

Echo Bay Discussion

Nancy Seligson asked the group if they would be willing to send a letter to the City of New Rochelle supporting their Echo Bay project, which involves redeveloping an urban, industrial site to create open space and access. The proposed development also includes retail and housing. Seligson stated that this letter would not support the specific project at Echo Bay, but instead would support the ideas defined in the CCMP, especially concerning land use and development.

Some CAC members supported a general letter of support that was not specific to the Echo Bay project, suggesting that it would increase exposure to LISS and CCMP. Others cautioned the group, stating that even if the CAC did not want to support the specific project, the City may still use the letter for that purpose. Based on the group's comments, Seligson will re-write the letter, making it more general and clearly stating that the CAC supports the goals outlined in the CCMP, not the project. Seligson will email the letter to members of the CAC and ask for comments.

Reports

Seligson called for subcommittee reports; of which there were none.

Management Committee Report

Mark Tedesco reported on the July 17, 2008 Management Committee meeting. To help the committee discuss the refocus of the LISS Habitat Restoration Work Group, the committee received a presentation from the Hudson River Foundation on their ecosystem target characteristics for the NY-NJ Harbor. More discussion on this topic will take place at the October 2008 Management Committee meeting. The group also received a presentation from Jamie Vaudrey, who was given LISS support to conduct a literature review on eelgrass abundance and water quality characteristics. In the future, her results will hopefully be incorporated into water quality standards for both NY and CT. Lastly, the group discussed the 2008 Agreement. Seligson added that she attended the Management Committee meeting and had expressed the CAC's frustration with the delay of signing this agreement due to NY and CT conflicts over the language used in the document for the designation of the eastern Long Island Sound dredged material disposal site.

STAC Report

Mickey Weiss gave a report on the Science and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) meeting that occurred on July 18, 2008. The STAC discussed aspects for future funding, agreeing to keep the RFP open-ended in order to allow researchers to offer innovative ideas to achieving CCMP goals. The STAC also discussed the need for sentinel sites, particularly to collect data about climate change since few long-term data sets exist. Lastly, the STAC continued discussion about the Long Island Sound Synthesis, a summary of the scientific research about Long Island Sound that will be published by Springer. The first draft is due in fall 2008. Seligson commented that this book will be a useful tool and will identify areas where information is lacking.

Presentations***NY/NJ Harbor and Peconic Estuary Programs: Top Priorities and Issues***

Kevin McDonald, the Peconic Estuary Program (PEP) CAC Chair, and Rick Balla, EPA representative for PEP, gave a presentation on the top priorities and issues for PEP CAC members. PEP CAC meetings are held monthly and consist of about 15 core members. Their CAC focuses on policy and funding. Their main priorities are to acquire funding and to change policy at the town or county level. The main issues that CAC members focus on are: agricultural uses and impacts, open space acquisition, eelgrass restoration, and effects of fertilizers and pesticides. Two recent accomplishments of the CAC were passing a Suffolk County fertilizer law (for more information, visit: www.peconicestuary.org/PEPTalk_Spring08.pdf) and an invasive species law that prohibits nurseries in Suffolk and Nassau County to sell invasive plants. McDonald stressed the need for a regional campaign to reduce nitrogen loading and encouraged coordinated discussion in CT and NY legislature.

Carter Craft, the co-chair for the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary Program (HEP) discussed the challenges that HEP faces coordinating among two states, one Port Authority, three airports, and over 400 municipalities. Their CAC meets four times a year and recently has focused on increasing education and advocacy through "Plan NYC," their involvement in combined sewer overflow (CSO) issues, and increasing public access and recreation throughout the harbor. Craft suggested areas for LISS, PEP, and HEP coordination, which included a comprehensive restoration plan, Bond Act issues, environmental infrastructure, and using the transportation bill to increase water quality.

NYC Combined Sewer Overflow and Sewage Treatment Plants Upgrades and Progress

Elio Paradis, from NYC DEP, discussed the organization's efforts to upgrade Sewage Treatment Plants (STP) and Combined Sewage Overflows (CSO) to decrease the amount of nitrogen released and decrease wet weather overflow events. Currently, NYC has 450 CSO outfalls that release about 30 billion of gallons of overflow a year from wet weather events. Half of this outflow is sent to open water and the other half is sent to tributaries. To solve this problem, NYC DEC is building extra holding tanks to reduce overflow of untreated sewage, expanding treatment plants, and increasing source control (e.g., installing best management practices and collecting floatables). Paradis explained various upgrades throughout NYC, including three plants that are located on the East River in the LIS watershed. These include a \$48 million upgrade to the Hutchinson River plant, a \$75 million upgrade to the Westchester Creek plant,

and a \$57.8 million project to the Bronx River plant. Overall, upgrades throughout NYC are estimated to cost \$8.77 billion and will reduce wet weather overflow events from 30 billion gallons to 17 billion gallons. For a copy of the slide presentation, contact the EPA Long Island Sound Office.

LISS Program Update

CAC Subcommittee Proposal and Discussion

Due to limited resources and member involvement in CAC subcommittee meetings, it had been proposed that CAC subcommittees be restructured. A volunteer group of CAC members and LISS staff met via conference call to discuss reorganizing the subcommittees on Thursday, July 10. The group recommended that current CAC Subcommittees be dissolved, and instead, CAC members join existing LISS Work Groups. This proposal was distributed with the meeting notes and at the meeting. Currently LISS Work Groups include the Stewardship Initiative, Communications, Nonpoint Source Pollution, CT River, Nutrients, and Habitat Restoration (a list of descriptions of LISS Work Groups was distributed to the group). LISS Work Groups consist mostly of LISS staff; however, a few CAC members already serve on some groups (e.g., Stewardship Initiative Work Group). Since the existing LISS Work Groups do not cover all issues that the CAC may want to focus on (e.g., advocacy), CAC Subcommittees could be formed to focus on other issues. The proposed CAC subcommittees are: Policy and Legislature, Accountability and Tracking, and Advocacy and Local Government.

Most members agreed that individual CAC members should serve on LISS Work Groups. This would increase communication between CAC members and others in the Work Group and would allow CAC members to bring the “CAC perspective” to the Work Groups. Other members were concerned as to how certain issues, such as dredging and public access, would fit into the current LISS Work Groups. Some suggested that these subjects could fit into the new, proposed CAC Subcommittees (e.g., dredging would fit within the Policy Subcommittee) or currently-existing LISS Work Groups (e.g., public access ties into the Stewardship Initiative). Adding an Ad Hoc Subcommittee was also discussed in order to address issues that do not fit within one of the proposed CAC Subcommittees.

The group agreed that the proposed CAC Subcommittees would be useful, but decided that Advocacy should be grouped with Policy, not Local Government. Therefore, the suggested CAC Subcommittees include: Policy and Advocacy, Accountability and Tracking, and Local Government. It was also suggested that every member of the CAC be required to serve on a Work Group or CAC Subcommittee. No CAC subcommittee would be formed without a specific chair or cochair to lead the group.

Other Business

Suggestions for agenda items for the December meeting included an update on the Indicators Report. Margie Purnell, Carol DiPaolo, and Dianne Selditch agreed to serve on the nominating committee to elect officers for next year. Seligson also reminded members that the Secretary position is still vacant. If anyone is interested in serving as the CAC Secretary, you can contact Seligson at nancy18b@aol.com or submit your name to the nominating committee. Lastly,

Seligson notified the group that Mark Parker, whose job of CT DEP LIS Coordinator is to help the CAC, could not attend the CAC meeting due to CT DEP travel restrictions. Seligson will write a letter to the Commissioner, and copy the Governor to express the CAC's frustration.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45pm.