

**Long Island Sound Study
Citizens Advisory Committee**

Meeting Summary

Thursday, March 8, 2012

Morrison Foerster, Law Firm, New York, NY

Welcome, Housekeeping & Logistics

Nancy Seligson, Supervisor, Town of Mamaroneck and NY CAC Co-chair and Curt Johnson, CT Co-chair, from Save the Sound welcomed the group to NYC and called the meeting to order at 10AM. They started the meeting by thanking Peter Dopsch, partner at Morrison Foerster, for allowing the group to use their conference room and for generously supplying breakfast and lunch for the group. They also welcomed Chantal Collier, the new Long Island Sound Program Director with The Nature Conservancy (TNC). Seventeen CAC members were present, comprising a quorum.

Short Updates

Science and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) meeting- Seligson updated the group on the Feb 10th STAC meeting. Jim O'Donnell from the University of Connecticut was elected as the CT Co-chair, replacing Carmela Cuomo from University of New Haven. Seligson expressed her support for STAC efforts to organize and coordinate its efforts to strengthen science support for Long Island Sound of the STAC.

During the STAC meeting, researchers presented findings and results from projects that were funded in 2008 with Long Island Sound Study (LISS) funds; summaries can be found at: <http://longislandsoundstudy.net/research-monitoring/lis-research-grant-program/project-descriptions/>. Nancy gave a brief summary of the projects. Dan Natchez from Daniel S. Natchez & Assoc. commented that it is important for research money to be used wisely and that researchers should be required to include management suggestions and/or recommendations for next steps. Marty Garrell from Adelphi University commented that often the "next step" is for more research because a lot of data is needed to adapt or mitigate management topics.

Johnson and Seligson suggested having a joint meeting with the STAC in June to get a longer summary of the Synthesis book. The meeting would consist of an hour-long CAC meeting and then a joint meeting for the remainder of the day. The CAC meeting is scheduled for June 14th at the Maritime Aquarium and the STAC meeting is scheduled for June 15th in Stamford, so perhaps the two meetings could be combined.

The co-chairs also suggested that the CAC and STAC, perhaps only the co-chairs of each Committee, meet in August or September to set priorities for the next budget cycle.

Finally, Seligson asked if any CAC members would like to be a liaison to the STAC since the current members cannot attend all of the meetings. If you are interested, please contact Seligson at nancy18B@aol.com or Johnson at cjohnson@cfenv.org.

Management Committee meeting- Mark Tedesco from the USEPA provided a short update on the Management Committee meeting held on January 26th. The FY12 budget has been set for \$4.559 million.

At the meeting, the Management Committee discussed the update plans for the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) which will be revised by 2014. Seligson reminded members that volunteers are needed for the various Work Groups to set priorities for the revised CCMP.

The Long Island Sound Futures Fund (LISFF) RFP is now available:

<http://longislandsoundstudy.net/about/grants/lis-futures-fund/> and applications are due April 9th.

Johnson congratulated the group for their hard work on the Sound Vision process, highlighting that many of the priorities from the Sound Vision plan were included in the RFP.

The Management Committee also expressed concern for the need of an updated “value” of the Sound. A committee has been formed to discuss the topic and develop a proposal to move forward.

Lastly, at the Management Committee meeting, Sharon Marino from USFWS told the group that a database of coastal islands is being developed. It is scheduled to be completed this year and will be used to prioritize these areas.

400th Anniversary- Diane Selditch from SoundWaters gave an update about the 400th Anniversary of Adrien Block's exploration of LIS which will occur in 2014. SoundWaters is planning to organize a sailing celebration. Selditch met with Don Ritter who is restoring the Onrust and he is interesting in sailing through the Sound on his way out to Block Island. Selditch mentioned that the group might coordinate other vessels around the Sound to sail at the same time. Pat Aitken from Friends of the Bay suggested that Selditch contact the Waterfront Center in Oyster Bay and also see if the Sea Scouts (a division of the Boy Scouts) might be interested in participating.

While she had the floor, Selditch also told the group that SoundWaters was looking for groups to partner with for a LISFF grant that they had received to conduct public engagement sails. If you are interesting in helping to advertise or partner on the event, contact Selditch at dianne@soundwaters.org.

Long Island Sound: Prospects for an Urban Sea (Synthesis Book)

Jim Latimer, USEPA with the RI office, planned to give a summary of the Synthesis book, but could not attend the CAC meeting, so Tedesco presented a summary of the Synthesis book. The authors of the various chapters have been working on the book for more than four years and it is expected to be completed at the end of the year 2012. Once completed, it will complement the CAC and LISS Sound Vision plans and the CCMP.

The 400-page book consists of six technical chapters: social history, geology, physical oceanography, geochemistry, pollutants, biology and ecology, and one chapter summarizing the management of the Sound. Tedesco summarized and provided highlights for each of the chapters.

1. The social history chapter covers the past 500 years of social and economic changes.
2. The geology chapter makes a connection about how the geology of the Sound ties into the current environmental conditions such as circulation and mixing and how these factors might change with climate change and sea level rise.
3. The physical oceanography chapter highlights the effects that wind and temperature have on stratification and how this information can be used to create more accurate management models.
4. The geochemical chapter focuses on the chemical changes in the sediment, chemical fluxes, and cycles, and how these factors change by basin.
5. The pollutant chapter focuses on the magnitudes, sources, and effects of different pollutants, the historical records, and current hot spots of pollutants.
6. The biology and ecology chapter focuses on habitats, flora, plankton, deep water benthos, fish, shellfish, and wildlife, and also examines cross-cutting topics such as the effects of hypoxia, climate change, and invasive species on the biology and ecology of the Sound.
7. The management chapter, which is not completed yet, will focus on how each of the technical chapters link to management. Tedesco mentioned that all chapters were being reviewed by national experts, outside of LISS.

Carole DiPaolo from Coalition to Save Hempstead Harbor pointed out that new parameters for coastal development are missing from the book and the need for these could be included in the summary or management section. Johnson also pointed out that the book did not seem to cover much about bacteria or human health concerns.

Tedesco thanked Latimer for all of his assistance with the Synthesis book. For the complete presentation, please email Larissa Graham, LISS Outreach Coordinator with NY Sea Grant at ljl85@cornell.edu.

CAC Discussion: Synthesis Book and Sound Vision, Planning for the Sound

Johnson asked the group if there was interest in having a joint meeting with the STAC and the group was enthusiastic about the idea.

Garrell asked if there was going to be a third document that would pull the Sound Vision report and the Synthesis book together. Johnson said that the two documents will serve as the basis for the CCMP revision. Seligson agreed and said that the CCMP will serve as a vehicle to bring both documents together in a functional way.

Johnson asked the group if it would be useful to check in with the STAC in June to set priorities so that CAC members could use this information when they meet with elected officials. Adrienne Esposito with Citizens Campaign for the Environment suggested that the CAC meet with the STAC on an annual basis in order to set an agenda each year.

Johnson also started a conversation about getting funding for municipal members. Seligson mentioned that many municipalities had a negative feeling about the mandate to reduce pollutants because funding is not available for projects. She said that monetary assistance is the “sell” that could get these organizations to see the mandate in a more positive light. Eric Swenson with Hempstead Harbor Protection Committee said that some communities are mandated to reduce their sources of pathogens by 95% to attain Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). These projects are not eligible for LISFF grants because funding cannot be used for projects that relate to permitting issues. Joel Ziev from the Town of North Hempstead said that there needs to be a way to deal with the issue instead of working “around” it and that, if an issue is important enough to be mandated, it should also be important enough to fund.

The group also discussed the CCMP update process and discussed that the science must be understood in order to relate it to policy. Tedesco said that the Sound Vision report and Synthesis will serve as the foundation for the plan.

Natchez brought up the concern about using funding for more desirable uses than research. He said that public access points are limited or not economically viable because of the lack of dredging. He also thought that there should be more emphasis placed on watershed management and upland influence. He asked if the group could have a presentation from TNC about their coastal resilience tool because, perhaps not perfect, it is “visionary”.

Collier asked if Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning (CMSP) would be included in the Synthesis book since it is an important tool to avoid user conflict and prioritize ecological uses. Tedesco replied that the topic would not be covered in the technical chapters but would be included in the management chapter. He also mentioned that the Sound Cable Fund Work Group had completed their Work Plan. One project that will be conducted with the \$7 million will be to fund sea floor mapping pilot project.

CAC Committee Reports and Updates

LISS Accountability and Tracking- Sarah Deonarine from the NYSDEC and Mark Parker from the CTDEEP gave an update of LISS accomplishments between 2009 and 2011. Over the three years, \$5.2 million was awarded through the LISFF--30% for habitat restoration projects, 21% for nonpoint source projects, 21% for public involvement projects, 10% for stewardship projects, 9% for fish passage projects, and 3% for water quality monitoring projects. For all projects, not just LISFF, 408 acres of habitat were restored and 1825 acres of land were preserved (Point source loads have decreased significantly over the past years and have leveled off during the past two years, mainly due to plants going “offline” during upgrades. NY will probably not meet the TMDL goals by 2014 due to challenges in NYC and Westchester County so those areas have been given an extension until 2017.

Deonarine and Parker also showed the most recent map of hypoxic events in the Sound, and spoke briefly about the patch of hypoxia in Smithtown Bay which Parker said preliminary research results suggest is due to a gyre that affects circulation. They also talked briefly about shellfish bed closures. 2500 acres were opened last year in Hempstead Harbor, NY, but 6350 acres were downgraded off Madison, CT. Other highlights include: all of Long Island Sound waters being designated a no discharge

zone, the RFP for sentinel monitoring projects has been released, and the CT License plate fund has funded \$4 mil in grants during this time period.

Deonarine also gave the group a preview of the new tracking system that EPA funded to track the activities of LISS-funded partners. The system should be online by Jan 2013, but currently there are issues with finding a server for the tracking tool which could cost about \$30,000 a year. The tracking system is divided by each CCMP area and provides highlights and goals for each area.

For the complete presentation, please email Graham at ljj85@cornell.edu.

Dredging Subcommittee- Ziev, who has been acting as the CAC representative for the Dredged Material Management Plan (DMMP), expressed his frustration with the meetings he has attended. Esposito was also present at some of the meetings and expressed similar concerns. about the meetings. The Corps has asked Ziev to identify and score various criteria for the use of dredged spoil but did not feel as though he could do this on behalf of the CAC since there are varying opinions among the group. He offered that the Corps meet with the CAC but they have not expressed interest in this offer. Ziev also commented that the Corps is supposed to conduct 30 interviews with stakeholders and, to date, has only conducted two. Grant Westerson from the CT Marine Trades Association commented that the Corps was told to create a process for stakeholder feedback but they are doing it in a manner that is very difficult for stakeholders to participate.attend the meetings.

Ziev referred to a successful example of disposing of dredged materials that occurred in Mamaroneck where spoil from recreational dredging was shipped to an upland disposal processing center with material from a larger, Corps project. He stressed that regional partnerships can help reduce the cost of disposal.

Johnson asked if Ziev would be willing to create a letter on behalf of the CAC that can be sent to the Corps. Swenson and Esposito offered to help with the letter as well. The letter will be sent out to the CAC for comments before it is sent to the Corps. Johnson also suggested that the upcoming Thames River project could serve as a good re-use project. He asked Parker to talk with staff at the CTDEEP to see if this would be possible.

LISS FY12 Budget- Tedesco gave the group an update on the budget for FY12. The LISS will be receiving \$2.962 million from the LIS Restoration Act and \$598,800 through the National Estuary Program funding. Tedesco said that preliminary proposals for base funding have come in around \$3.3 million, so some of the proposed "base plus" projects will not be funded. Tedesco also mentioned that that the areas in which funding in 2011 closely followed the was spent last year was very close to what the Management Committee recommendations for the amounts of money to spend in voted on, except each except that more money was spent on stewardship acquisition.

Policy, Legislative, and Advocacy- Sean Maher from Audubon New York presented on behalf of the Policy Subcommittee. He said that LISS will receive 25% less funding from last year and 60% less funding from two years ago. The President has suggested a 20% cut to the Clean Water Act funding which could decrease the amount of funding that is available for sewage treatment plant upgrades. The

subcommittee will be circulating a “Dear Colleague” and a “sign-on” letter for Congress to encourage them to restore funding to previous levels. The subcommittee is also working to get encouraging congressional members to sign on to a letter to designate LIS a special area of concentration within the Natural Resources Conservation Service, part of the Dept. of Agriculture. This could open up other sources of funding for LIS. to have Natural Resources Defense Council list Long Island Sound as a priority area. Maher also mentioned that Sandy Breslin from CT Audubon and other CAC members were working on creating a bi-state legislative caucus for Long Island Sound.

Esposito added that Citizens Campaign for the Environment had sent a letter to members of the House to ask for more funding. She will circulate this letter to the CAC. She also told the group about the “Sewage Pollution Right to Know” bill that will force the CTDEEP and NYSDEC to inform the public about sewage overflows. The NYSDEC has put up a bit of resistance to this but the CTDEEP is creating an online GIS map that will show overflows.

Maher informed the group that the Subcommittee will be traveling to DC to talk with elected officials in May (date TBD). If anyone would like to join them, contact Maher at smahar@audubon.org or Breslin at sbreslin@audubon.org.

Maureen Dolan Murphy from Citizens Campaign for the Environment suggested that the group might want to send out letters sooner and also work with EPA to highlight successes. Tedesco agreed and also suggested that the group invite other elected officials to the Sound to highlight successes.

Other Business/June Agenda Suggestion

Georgia Basso, the new USFWS Liaison to the Long Island Sound Study, updated the group on a few meeting dates that had changed. The Stewardship Work Group meeting will be held on April 17th and the Habitat Restoration Work Group meeting will be held on April 25th, both in CT.

Seligson also gave an update on the CAC election results. Seligson, Johnson, and Garrell were all re-elected to their positions.

The next meeting is scheduled for June 14th at the Maritime Aquarium in Norwalk, CT but this date is subject to change might change depending on whether the group will hold a joint meeting with the CAC and STAC.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30PM.