

**Long Island Sound Study
Management Committee Meeting Notes
Thursday, January 26, 2012
UConn Stamford Campus**

Welcome/Introductions/Logistics. Mark Tedesco called the meeting to order at 10:07am and asked for self-introductions of attendees. Tedesco introduced Georgia Basso, the new US Fish & Wildlife Service liaison to the Long Island Sound Study who came on board on December 5. Tedesco asked if there were any adjustments to the agenda; as none were offered he proceeded to the next order of business.

Sound Ideas. Tedesco opened the floor to public comments, recognizing Art Glowka who introduced himself as a stakeholder. Glowka said that there were no more lobsters in the Sound and that the fishery had dropped off since 1999. He indicated that the oystermen have seen an early spring bloom. Tedesco thanked Mr. Glowka for his comments.

STAC Report. Dr. Carmela Cuomo reported on the results of the November 18, 2011 meeting of the Science and Technical Advisory Committee held at the University of New Haven. Dr. Cuomo reported that the Citizens Advisory Committee spoke with the STAC and gave a detailed presentation on their scientific issues and concerns, giving STAC member much to think about. Four grantees had been selected in the last round of LISS research grants and they presented the status of their work at the meeting, which will assist the STAC in formulating future research priorities.

CAC Report. Nancy Seligson reported on the December 8, 2011 Citizens Advisory Committee meeting held at UConn Stamford. The CAC plans to reach out to the Long Island Sound Caucus for the 2013 budget process, and had a letter developed and signed by a number on Congressional members that was submitted to EPA and OMB in October 2011. The CAC is also developing a letter to the Natural Resource Conservation Service to support inclusion of Long Island Sound as a priority watershed. Judy Preston presented material on landscape preservation and green/organic methodologies, which was very well received.

CCMP Revision. Mark Tedesco presented and facilitated discussion of the proposed revision to the LISS 1994 Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (see attached). There is no established EPA guidance on the process to revise CCMPs. Most of those that have been revised have used a variety of methodologies and formats for the revision process, and EPA has accepted all of the revised plans. The overall LIS plan would be to bring LISS partners and stakeholders together to update the CCMP by the end of 2014. Current partners with actions in the old plan would be asked to review and update their commitments; all would be asked to identify new action items for possible inclusion in the plan. Dr. Jim Latimer volunteered to facilitate the overall effort, to guide and keep it on track over the revision work plan period, with support from Leah O'Neill and Joe Salata. LISS partners, work groups and teams would be responsible for subject areas of the plan, vetting changes and brokering new areas for inclusion in the revision. As this would require substantial effort, some current activities would have to be delayed or foregone, such as an issue of Sound Health or Protection and Progress. NEIWPC would assist with layout, printing and production of the draft and final products in place of one or both of these publications using Base program funding budgeted for these products instead. Management

Committee members discussed several issues, including the draft timeline, potential need for funding for the effort, fiscal year vs calendar year timing, issues to be covered by the revision, e.g., overall management structures to implement actions, organization of LIS work groups and teams to address new/revised implementation actions, relationship to SoundVision and Action Agenda and action plan leads. After discussion, it was generally agreed that the proposal presented would be used as a basis for action, subject to evolving change as further planning progressed. Jim Latimer would take the facilitation lead beginning in the June-July time frame when the environmental data synthesis volume work is nearly completed.

2012 Budget Process & Work Plan Priorities. Mark Tedesco asked Joe Salata to briefly review the status of the FY2012 budget appropriation. Salata indicated that the overall Planning Target for the program was \$2,962,000 contained in the President's Budget Request for Long Island Sound, a \$1,000,000 increase to that level approved by Congress, and \$597,000 in the President's Budget for the National Estuary Program's share to Long Island Sound. The total 2012 LIS budget available is \$4,559,000. Reviewing the budget process, Salata said that the LISO provided guidance for development of the FY2012 LISS base budget in EPA's November 1, 2011 call memo, requesting base program budget proposals and any new proposals by December 23, 2011. The memo provided an overall LISS Planning Target for base program grantees. The budget request was to be based on ongoing LISS priorities as reflected in the CCMP and LIS Action Agenda, and considering priorities identified at the October 2011 Management Committee meeting. The Base program budget assumes ongoing support for core LISS-funded staff and work plan activities, [communications; WQ monitoring; habitat restoration] including costs for fringe benefits, travel, training, equipment, supplies and agency indirect costs where applicable. Normal increases for inflation, negotiated indirect rates, and personnel, (e.g., quality step/longevity increases) costs are assumed in the Base budget. In addition, LISS Base program funding is allocated for separate competitive funding announcements for the Scientific Research Grants program, the LIS Futures Fund program, CCMP Enhancements projects, and LIS Stewardship Initiative projects, subject to availability of overall EPA appropriations.

Tedesco briefly reviewed the FY2011 recommended vs actual 2011 funds distribution, noting that the amounts were fairly consistent, with valid explanations for differences. Tedesco then proceeded to present the Base+ project requests that were previously provided to the Committee, briefly discussing each proposal on the handout sheet (attached). The Committee members basically agreed with the proposals and made a number of suggestions for modifications or requested clarification of some of the proposals. Several members raised the idea of conducting an economic study similar to the Delaware estuary, and this was endorsed by the Committee as a new proposal. Several members volunteered to meet to develop a cost proposal, including Leah O'Neill, Jim Latimer, Sylvain DeGuise, Curt Johnson, Carmela Cuomo and Robert Hust.

The Committee supported the proposal not to fund any LISS stewardship acquisitions in 2012, but to complete acquisitions currently underway with prior year funding. This will allow the states to obligate and draw down remaining significant balances encumbered for stewardship acquisitions and reassess future areas for possible funding. In addition it will allow the LISS to show some significant impact of the 23 percent reduction from the 2011 enacted budget level.

The Committee also supported the proposal to reduce the Futures Fund and Research Grants proposed budget by 23 percent from 2011 for similar reasons. However, should Base+ funding be available, it would be used to pay back into these programs to the extent feasible.

The Implementation Team will follow up with individual project leads to obtain the required information. EPA will work with Base program grantees to ensure that their 2012 requests are as tight as possible and are consistent with their projected unliquidated obligation balances. The following Base+ proposals require follow-up:

- **Coastal erosion hazard mapping in NY.** NYSDEC should provide a detailed explanation of the need for this project, how costs might be reduced under a demo program, and whether there is strong likelihood that this project will be picked up for full implementation by non-LISS funding sources.
- **LIS Economic Analysis.** A small group of volunteers including; Leah O'Neill, Mark Tedesco, Jim Latimer, Sylvain DeGuise, Carmela Cuomo and Sarah Deonarine will develop a proposal for an economic valuation tool for LIS.
- **Water quality monitoring enhancements.** Jim O'Donnell will provide additional information on projected out-year costs for each element of the request for funding.
- **Synthesize current sentinel monitoring data/Sentinel Monitoring Implementation.** The sentinel monitoring work group will provide additional information on this budget request, including its relationship to the Amherst grant program, the current sentinel effort and its implication for future funding obligation by the LISS.

The Implementation Team meets on March 14 to review the proposals and make its recommendations to funding for the Management Committee's April 19 meeting. The Committee will then make its final recommendations for funding to EPA and the LIS NEP work plan will be due to EPA HQ by June 1. Grant applications will be due during that time frame also, but a deadline has not yet been established.

Updates/Announcements.

LIS CCMP Tracking System. Joe Salata reported that the LIS tracking system work is nearing completion of Phase I. There is an on-line beta site that the team has been working with the contractor on and it is nearly ready for activation. The contractor, SAIC, is developing an on-line Help function and will conduct a webinar to train users when the site is migrated to an EPA sever. Salata is working with EPA HQ on possible locations for the server.

LIS Seafloor Mapping. Brian Thompson reported that the seafloor mapping RFP is proceeding and that several areas will be included for potential mapping.

Plum Island. Sharon Marino reported that GSA is handling the Plum Island situation. There is strong pull in Congress to relocate the facilities to the western states. There are more than 200 local jobs at stake at this facility. The draft Environmental Impact Statement is out for public comment and alternative uses are being sought; the USFWS is a cooperating agency in the review.

LIS Synthesis Book. Jim Latimer reported that all chapters have been submitted in draft and are being reviewed. Publication of the final book is expected in the Fall.

Dredging Windows. Jim Ammerman reported that the dredging work group met in New York City at the end of November, and a report on that meeting is due to be vetted at a date not yet

established. Ammerman will keep members informed of any developments, as dredging on the South Shore is urgent.

There being no other business brought before the Committee, Mark Tedesco thanked everyone for their time and adjourned the meeting at 3:00pm.
