

**Long Island Sound Study
Management Committee
Meeting Summary
July 17, 2008
Stamford, Connecticut**

Welcome/Introductions. Mark Tedesco called the meeting to order in the Schreiber Reading Room at UConn Stamford at 10:20am, noting that some New York members had not yet arrived due to a traffic situation, but were expected shortly. After member, staff and attendee introductions, Tedesco asked if there were any changes or additions to the agenda. Updates on the red tides and jellyfish were requested, and an update on IEC's sampling results to date was requested. Tedesco indicated that he would move the habitat restoration team discussion until after the presentations to better inform that discussion.

CAC Report. John Atkin reported on the CAC's June 12 meeting at UConn Stamford, noting that Commissioner Gina McCarthy was the guest speaker. Com. McCarthy strongly endorsed the draft Long Island Sound 2008 Agreement, and indicated that she was ready to sign it. Atkin reported that the CAC discussed a proposal to restructure its subcommittees to better reflect current issues and priorities. The CAC named a small volunteer group to meet and develop a proposal that would be considered at the September 11 CAC meeting. Nancy Seligson indicated that the existing subcommittees were not functioning very well, and that the feeling of the group is that members should participate on existing LISS work groups or teams, and only a few key subcommittees would be formed to support CAC work, such as policy/legislative, communications and membership. Larissa Graham and Mark Parker, as the lead LISS public outreach coordinators, would assist the CAC in this effort. Atkin reported that Norwalk public works director Hal Alvord presented their recent demonstration project placing filters in storm sewer drains. The project was very successful in preventing some 20 tons of sediment from entering Norwalk Harbor, as well as filtering out toxic contaminants.

STAC Report. Drs. Charles Yarish and Larry Swanson reported on the STAC, which was scheduled to meet on Friday, July 18 at UConn Stamford. The STAC will be considering the priority areas for the fall request for proposals (RFP) for LISS research. The STAC has received the summary of ongoing and completed research work, and will select the next areas to be included for research in the RFP. Dr. Yarish reported that *Alexandrium*, a dinoflagellate species that is toxic, had been found in the Sound. This species is usually found in high nitrogen environments. *Alexandrium* produce paralytic shellfish poisoning toxins, which are harmful to humans if consumed. New York had closed several thousand acres of shellfish beds on Long Island in response to infected samples.

CT River Work Group Report. Laura Chan reported for the Connecticut River work group. A new TMDL writing team has been formed to support technical needs in the revision of the nitrogen TMDL. The team meets biweekly via conference call. At a question from Robert Funicello from Westchester County concerning membership on the

team, Lynne Hamjian indicated that the team was composed of the regulating agencies, and it would not be appropriate to include the regulated community in this group. There will be opportunity for public comment on the revised TMDL.

Stewardship Initiative. Louise Harrison reported that the Stewardship work group had met and has a meeting scheduled for July 29 in Stamford. The Long Island chapter of The Nature Conservancy will make a presentation on their Critical Lands Protection Strategy to identify open space protection priorities for Peconic Bay. A similar effort will be undertaken for Long Island Sound under an Enhancement Grant. The group will be working with the contractor to be selected for the CCMP Enhancements project to develop a methodology for prioritizing sites for management. Regarding the funds set aside for acquisition, the work group had reviewed three properties in New York, but one area did not look promising for a number of reasons. The work group will continue to evaluate options for open space acquisition to demonstrate Stewardship Initiative concepts. EPA is also working on formulation of the advisory committee called for under the Stewardship Act. This would be a formal federal advisory committee under the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

Local Government Work Group Proposal. Mark Tedesco presented a draft proposal to form a local government work group of the LISS in response to Westchester County's request for membership on the Management Committee. The Implementation Team discussed this proposal at its June 4 meeting. At its January 2008 meeting, the Management Committee had tasked the team to discuss and develop a proposal for consideration at its July meeting. Tedesco distributed the proposal to the Committee and briefly reviewed its key points. The work group would be responsible for better assessing the sources and pathways of local, non-POTW nitrogen loads to LIS; documenting attainment of reduction targets for these sources through structural and non-structural BMPs; supporting development of a system of credits for reductions in excess of reduction requirements that can be incorporated into trading programs; and providing input on technical issues relating to TMDL development and implementation. Westchester County would be asked to co-chair the group, which would be responsible for developing a biennial work plan as other LISS work groups. Participation would be strictly voluntary and membership would not have to be balanced by state or organization.

Tedesco opened the floor for discussion of the proposal. Dr. Swanson said that he thought the proposal was too narrow in focus, that authority resides in localities and that he would be reluctant to impose added county-wide requirements as any result from the work group. Nancy Seligson raised the issue, which the CAC had raised in the past over the formation of a local government work group, of how this work group would affect the CAC, which has a number of local government members, including Westchester County, Nassau County and several municipal agencies in Connecticut. An option might be to offer membership in the new work group to current CAC local government members, but it would reduce the CAC's broad-based membership representation. Several other committee members raised other concerns, such as coordinating this work group with other LISS work groups and teams, and the agendas of the Management Committee,

STAC and CAC, and the resources necessary to support the work group, including staff time. To move this matter forward, Mark Tedesco proposed to expand the charge of the work group to focus on broader issues. Tedesco agreed to revise the proposal and asked committee members to provide any comments to him for incorporation into a revised draft that he would circulate to the committee prior to the October meeting. Committee members should email their comments to Tedesco by August 15.

Hudson River Foundation Ecosystem Restoration. Mark Tedesco welcomed and introduced Jim Lodge of the Hudson River Foundation, who presented the Foundation's work to develop criteria for restoration of the New York Harbor/Hudson River complex. The Foundation held a workshop in October 2005 that established 23 target ecosystem characteristics (TEC). Four fundamental assumptions were: the ecosystem is human dominated and will remain a human shaped landscape; the ecosystem has been irreversibly changed in almost all its properties; the ecosystem is dynamic; and science and technology can make clear and valuable enhancements. The objective was to develop a mosaic of habitats that provide society with new and increased benefits from the estuary environment. Each TEC specifies: Target Justification, Technical Merit, Policy and Management Relevance, Necessary Implementation Information, and Measures of Performance. A copy of the technical guidance document for establishing an ecosystem restoration plan is posted on the HRF website: <http://www.hudsonriver.org>. A final report is expected by August 2008. Tedesco thanked Lodge for his presentation, and opened the floor to questions. For a copy of the presentation slides, contact the Long Island Sound Office.

October 2-day Management Committee Meeting Proposal. Mark Tedesco presented the proposed agenda for this year's two-day Management Committee meeting in October. The original dates planned were October 15-16. However, the Restore America's Estuaries Conference is that week in Rhode Island and may result in some attendance conflicts. Tedesco asked for confirmation that the Committee wished to hold a two-day session, proposing an optional one-day meeting. The Committee agreed to hold a two-day session focusing on implementation of the new 2008 Agreement action items, and the organizational capacity to support attainment of those actions. October 7-8 in Port Jefferson, NY was suggested as the dates/location (Note: these dates were confirmed after the meeting) Tedesco confirmed that Jeff Lape, director of the Chesapeake Bay program office, was available to present his work in reorganizing the Bay program to meet its goals and objectives. There was another recommendation to include an update on the EPA Climate Ready Estuaries Program, and on climate change in general. The Committee agreed to form a small core group to plan the meeting. Volunteers should contact Tedesco.

Habitat Restoration Team. Heather Young and Louise Harrison presented a proposal to expand or enhance the mission of the current habitat restoration team. The focus of the team efforts over the years has been on restoration of critical habitats; however, with new emerging areas such as climate change, invasives and resulting changes to the ecosystem, the team is considering changes to its focus to better address these areas. The Management Committee will consider any changes in the work group charge, along with

any other changes in the Management Conference workgroups or advisory committees at its October meeting.

Eelgrass: Progress & Next Steps. Jamie Vaudrey of UConn's Department of Marine Sciences presented her work on the development of restoration standards for eelgrass in Long Island Sound. Due to its unique characteristics, the report recommends that a lower light extinction coefficient (Kd) be used as a criteria, as compared to Chesapeake Bay. Based on her work, the following recommendations obtain: Use a Kd of 0.7/m to develop maps of potential eelgrass habitat, based on current water clarity and desired or historic water clarity; determine the current % loss of seagrass, relative to restoration target, currently 100% for most of the embayments; target N-loads to around 50 kg N ha⁻¹ estuary y⁻¹; continue to monitor the areal distribution of eelgrass, especially maximum depth limits; and continue to collect data on the water quality of small embayments. Recommendations for future work include: develop maps of suitable eelgrass habitat (depth, current, sediment); deploy light meters in embayments to monitor changes in the light field; expand the review of sites to additional embayments in CT and New England in general – test the relationship between % loss and N-Load; work with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to develop benthic maps of estuaries relevant to eelgrass (% organics, sulfides, etc.); and compare the C:N in various eelgrass beds throughout LIS. Copies of the presentation slides may be obtained from the LISO on request.

Karen Chytalo described the New York State Seagrass Task Force, which is budgeted at approximately \$500,000. On July 26th 2006, then Governor Pataki enacted Chapter 404 of the Laws of 2006, establishing a Seagrass Task Force within NYSDEC. The NYS Seagrass Task Force consists of five voting members and ten non-voting members and is charged with developing and presenting a seagrass management plan and recommendations to the Governor and state officials by December 31, 2008. Voting members of the task force are Chytalo for NYSDEC, Gary Lawton for NYSPRHP, George Stafford for NYSDOS, David Conover, SBU, and Marci Bortman of The Nature Conservancy. The Task Force has met monthly since January 2008. Their website is: http://counties.cce.cornell.edu/suffolk/habitat_restoration/seagrassli/conservation/managers/seagrass_taskforce.html.

Mark Tedesco mentioned that copies of a methodology developed by the state of New Hampshire to apply eelgrass criteria within the state's water quality standards program was available for comment. Paul Stacey noted that the next steps for LIS are similar to those of New Hampshire. There was discussion on how to move forward on this for LIS. Ron Rozsa noted that CTDEP has an eelgrass habitat team, and volunteered to have that team coordinate with NY to develop a methodology to apply the criteria to both states water quality standards program.

Sharon Marino of USFWS reported that the USFWS over flights in 2006 had found additional eelgrass beds in LIS; however, she cautioned that the difference from the 2004 findings may be due to anomalies in the data collection methodologies rather than real increase in eelgrass beds. Ron Rozsa added that overall there has been an increase in

offshore eelgrass beds and a decrease in inshore beds. The LISS has approved funding in 2008 to continue the triennial over flights and ground-truthing efforts of the USFWS. Flights should begin in spring 2009.

Updates/Floor Announcements. Due to the late start and lack of time Mark Tedesco tabled updates from the floor.

Sound Ideas. Mark Tedesco opened the floor to public participation, recognizing Art Glowka, a Stamford shellfish commissioner. Glowka commented that living marine resources are never discussed in this forum, that he and other stakeholders are working on issues affecting the Sound; lady slippers are all over the place, and there are no fish because the plankton are too small. Tedesco thanked him for his comments and closed the meeting at 2:45pm.