

**Long Island Sound Study
Management Committee Meeting Summary
UConn Stamford
Thursday, July 19, 2007**

Introductions. Mark Tedesco called the meeting to order at 10:07 am, requesting attendees to introduce themselves and asking for any changes to the agenda. Tedesco asked that a brief update be added of dissolved oxygen conditions in the Sound from CTDEP and IEC cruises to date. As there were no other changes suggested, Tedesco proceeded with the agenda.

CAC. John Atkin reported on the June 14 CAC meeting. Dr. Marilyn Weigold from Pace University and Dr. Jennifer Mattei from Sacred Heart University presented their recent work on the socio-economic history of the Sound and on horseshoe crabs, respectively. The CAC supported convening a Policy Committee meeting, along with a Governors' meeting in Spring 2008, potentially to sign a Long Island Sound 2008 Agreement. The CAC also sent letters to the Long Island Sound Congressional Caucus supporting EPA funding for the Long Island Sound Stewardship Act. Nancy Seligson distributed a letter signed by Congressmen Chris Shays, Steve Israel and others to EPA Administrator Steve Johnson requesting a \$25 million line item in EPA's 2009 budget request for the Stewardship Act. Seligson reported that the House had passed an earmark to EPA's 2008 budget of \$10 million for Long Island Sound, but that the Senate Interior and Environment committee had only included \$2 million. Seligson indicated that a conference committee to resolve differences between the House and Senate versions of the appropriations bill has not been scheduled as of this meeting date.

STAC. Dr. Charles Yarish reported on the May 16-18 meeting of subject matter experts to develop the LIS environmental data synthesis document. A copy of the volume outline is available upon request. Drs. Yarish, Swanson and Garza are the technical editors of the document, which the steering committee will provide to the editors for commercial press publication. Yarish estimated a development schedule of one to one and a half years [NB: current plans are for a 2 year schedule]. The volume would encompass some 350-400 pages and would address global climate change and its impact on LIS. Yarish also indicated that the editors would be seeking funds from the private sector to provide a copy of the volume to each public and university library in the immediate watershed of LIS. He asked that this be put on the next CAC meeting agenda. It is anticipated that the steering committee will meet again in six months to review progress and provide direction; in the interim, the group is meeting by email and conference calls. Tedesco asked whether there were opportunities for Sea Grants to apply to regional pools of Sea Grant development funds to help support the workshop. It was agreed that follow-up discussion was needed on options for supporting the workshop.

NPS/Watersheds Work Group. Mark Tedesco reported that State Soil Scientist Kip Kolesinskas will replace Walter Smith on the Management Committee. The work group

that Walter led for many years is reorganizing and will be setting up a meeting to refocus its work, and Johanna Hunter will be assisting in this effort.

CT River Work Group. Becky Weidman reported that the work group is overseeing recently begun work using the AGWLF model that has been calibrated to New England to assess the costs and potential N reductions from controls in the Connecticut River. Dr. Barry Evans, Penn State University, is conducting the work. This work is a key element in the overall evaluation of the LIS TMDL and is intended to support the development of proposed nitrogen reduction targets and allocations for discharges to the Connecticut River north of Connecticut. The work group is scheduled to meet on Thursday, July 26.

Stewardship. Mark Tedesco reported that the work group held a conference call this week to discuss definitions in the Stewardship Act as passed last fall. The work group is organizing a meeting for Fall 07. At question is how quickly to establish the Advisory Committee and move forward with the Stewardship program. As of this meeting, no funds have been appropriated to EPA for the Stewardship Act. Funds for 2008 of \$10 million have been included by the House, but only \$2.0 million in the Senate. It is not clear what the final 2008 budget will mean to the program. Tedesco indicated that currently there are two options for managing the committee; the first would be under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), which is fairly proscriptive and resource-intensive; the second would be under Section 320, which is similar to the management conference process. At this time it is not clear which authority will be used, or if action will be taken in the absence of an appropriation.

Habitat Restoration Team. Mark Tedesco reported for Louise Harrison, but offered the floor to Ron Rozsa and Karen Chytalo to supplement his report if necessary. The team reached agreement on the functionality of the habitat restoration data base, which was an item in last year's budget, and NEIWPC is ready to proceed on a development contract. The team met with the Nature Conservancy concerning mapping the historic distribution of shellfish reefs in LIS. Molluscan shellfish reefs are one of the priority habitats being focused on and the Restoration Team is drafting a chapter for the habitat restoration manual. Understanding historic occurrences is key to establishing restoration objectives.. There was some discussion of the term shellfish 'reefs' as it applies to the Sound; Ron Rozsa indicated that the team is using the standard definition of reef, until a specific definition can be crafted for the Sound.

Massachusetts Request for Membership. Mark Tedesco referred to the April 25, 2007 letter from Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) Commissioner Arleen O'Donnell, in which the MassDEP requests membership on the LISS Management Committee. Tedesco distributed information on the Chesapeake Bay program organization that compared it with the LISS management conference structure. Concerns had been expressed regarding MassDEP's request and how their membership might affect the program. The Chesapeake Bay program includes New York as a member of its Implementation Committee, although New York is not a signatory agency to the Chesapeake Bay Agreement. Tedesco explained that the Implementation Committee is similar in function to the LIS Management Committee, and that the CB program has

developed a water quality Memorandum of Understanding with states both signatory to the Agreement, as well as those that contribute to the watershed, but are not signatories to the Agreement. Tedesco indicated that the LISS could develop a similar MOU with MassDEP to address any concerns with how involved MassDEP might become in program matters, including budget decisions. Tedesco also reviewed the handout material regarding Section 320 of the Clean Water Act, which defines members of a management conference, and the estuarine zone. Tedesco indicated that there was enough uncertainty in the definitions as to leave room for reasonable interpretation either way of the MassDEP situation. Tedesco proposed that the concept of MassDEP membership is that groups affected by program requirements should be included around the table, and certainly MassDEP staff have been at the table through the Connecticut River work group. The committee then discussed the request by MassDEP, raising such issues as whether membership should be limited to nutrients/sediment reduction; whether any other committee members had limits to their membership; any budget and resource implications of membership; the benefits to the program of membership, including expanded scientific and technical support as well as political support; impacts of other bi-state watersheds, e.g., Housatonic; meeting logistical issues, and implications for New Hampshire and Vermont. After discussion, the Committee agreed to approve MassDEP's request for membership, unencumbered by any limits. Mark Tedesco said he would sign a letter to MassDEP welcoming their participation on the Management Committee.

Policy Committee/Governors Meeting. Mark Tedesco referred to the proposal included with the meeting package outlining a Spring 2008 Policy Committee/Governors meeting. The purposes of the meeting would be to discuss progress in implementing the 38 action items in the LIS 2003 Agreement, and update that Agreement for the next five-year period beginning in 2008. Discussions for the 2008 Agreement update would take place at the October Management Committee meeting, with a final draft for approval at the January 2008 meeting. An April or May Policy Committee meeting would be planned, possibly during Earth Week in April or Long Island Sound Day in May. Because the last Policy Committee meeting was in New York at the John Jay House, this meeting would be planned for Connecticut. Tedesco then asked for nominations for a small group to plan the revisions to the 2003 Agreement. Karen Chytalo for NYSDEC, Brian Thompson for CTDEP, and John Atkin and Nancy Seligson for the CAC the STAC co-chairs and Johanna Hunter agreed to participate. Mark Tedesco indicated that the work groups would also be charged to review the Agreement and recommend areas for updating, and that members not present would be afforded the opportunity to participate on the group.

October Management Committee Meeting. Mark Tedesco handed out a proposed approach to developing the October 17-18 Management Committee meeting agenda. Tedesco reviewed the handout, which detailed the proposals for the meeting, including feedback on the 2003 Agreement; climate change impacts and future implications for LIS management; CT River work; and, 2008 program and funding priorities. An outside facilitator will be considered for the meeting. One issue related to climate change is the implication for current and future tidal wetland restoration goals. A presentation on tidal wetlands restoration and progress towards the 2008 and 2011 goals will be given, as well as an update on the status of wetlands losses and diebacks. Ron Rozsa suggested

expanding the session to include other climate change impacts, and referred to a recent report by the Union of Concerned Scientists on climate change impacts for the New England region. It was also agreed that the summary of research and monitoring needs that was presented at last years meeting be updated. This would also be a good starting point for discussion of updating the LIS 2003 Agreement. Charlie Yarish suggested that Dr. Scott Nixon from URI would be an excellent addition to discuss some of the results form the recent Narragansett Bay synthesis.

LIS Research Presentation. Dr. Martha Gilmore, Wesleyan University presented her LISS-funded research on the applicability and effectiveness of remote sensing of coastal marshes to identify and differentiate among species, including invasive plants. Contact the LISO for a copy of Dr. Gilmore's presentation.

Docks and Piers Work Shop. Brian Thompson reported that CTDEP held a well-attended workshop on regulations governing docks and piers in CT waters. The workshop was an open forum discussion attended by federal, state and local regulators, local municipal representatives, consultants, and lawyers. The discussions centered on clear definitions of reasonable access, the public trust doctrine; and the need for clearer standards for dock construction and what is allowable.

LIS Futures Fund/DO Fund Projects. Kate Brown and Lynn Dwyer reviewed the projects approved by the respective governing bodies of the DO Fund and LISFF for 2007. Seven LIS projects totaling nearly \$1.0 million from the DO Fund and \$1.475 million in matching funds will benefit Sound habitat restoration and water quality. A total of 24 projects funded at \$917,650 by the LISFF with more than \$1.68 million in match will improve habitat, control invasives, assist in stewardship and planning and educate and conserve key species in 2007. Seven small grant projects, with five in CT and two in NY will provide educational opportunities for school children, engage communities through estuary day events, and improve stewardship.

2007 LISS Grant Update. Joe Salata reported that all but one of the agencies approved for 2007 LIS funding have submitted their grant applications to the appropriate EPA regional offices. The project officers are working with the grantees to finalize work plans and have funding recommendations approved for award by September 30, 2007. This is important, as the Agency has been under constraints to ensure that funds are obligated and awarded in a timely fashion.

Summer 2007 WQ Surveys. Mark Tedesco asked Peter Sattler and Mark Parker to provide brief updates on the results of summer water quality surveys to date. Sattler reported that data collections and general observations for the 2007 summer water quality surveys under way since June show a lack of hypoxia. Weekly data collected by IEC shows only 3 bottom readings from 21 stations during week "4" to show dissolved oxygen values below 3 ppm: Manhasset Bay and Hempstead Harbor. Surface waters are still cool with a Delta T ranging from 3 to 5 degrees C. Fishing for striped bass, bluefish and scup are strong in Western LIS. Brown alga blooms are regular. Samples collected

on July 10 by Westchester County Health Dept. confirms these findings for Hudson Park, New Rochelle and Eastchester Bay, Bronx.

EPA Water Quality Memo. Mark Tedesco distributed a June 2007 memorandum from Ben Grumbles, EPA Assistant Administrator for Water, calling for coordination and cooperation among agencies and organizations on EPA's efforts to improve water quality and the effectiveness of those federally-funded programs.

Public Comments. Mark Tedesco recognized Art Glowka, who spoke about his concerns with the LISS CCMP efforts that focus on nitrogen reduction. Glowka referred to a July 15, 2007 article in the Stamford Advocate concerning observed changes over 20 years of ongoing efforts to address water quality issues in the Sound. Tedesco recognized Roger Frate, president of the western Long Island Sound lobstermen's association, who expressed concerns about the use of pesticides and new reports of dead lobsters in the Sound. Kate Brown of CTDEP again asked Mr. Frate to contact CTDEP immediately concerning any dead or dying lobsters caught in traps so that they might be properly cataloged and analyzed. Tedesco recognized Dr. Lance Stewart of UConn, who was concerned about pesticides and emerging contaminants and their potential or actual impacts on lobsters and other aquatic life in the Sound. Tedesco thanked the public speakers for their comments.

As there was no further business or announcements, Mark Tedesco adjourned the meeting at 2:45pm. The next Management Committee meeting is October 17-18, 2007 in Port Jefferson.
