

**Long Island Sound Study
Management Committee
Meeting Summary
April 24, 2008
Stamford, Connecticut**

Welcome/Introductions. Mark Tedesco called the meeting to order at 10:25 am, announcing that some members were delayed by a traffic accident on the Merritt Parkway. Tedesco asked for attendees to introduce themselves, sign the register, and asked for agenda changes or updates, then recognized and welcomed Laura Chan from NEIWPC, who replaced Becky Weidman. Tedesco thanked Becky for her outstanding work with the LISS and the group wished her well in her future endeavors.

CAC Report. John Atkin reported that Nancy Seligson was unable to attend due to a personal matter, so he reported on the March 13 CAC meeting in New York. NYSDEC Deputy Commissioner Jim Tierney attended for Commissioner Grannis, who was very interesting and spoke for about 40 minutes on New York's environmental priorities and how DEC was addressing them. Detailed CAC meeting notes are posted on the LISS website approximately 30 days after the meeting.

STAC Report. Hans Dam reported for Dr. Charles Yarish on the April 4, 2008 STAC meeting, which had been rescheduled from February 22 at Stony Brook University due to inclement weather. Dr. Yarish was re-elected as the Connecticut co-chair for a new two-year term. Two new members were added to the STAC, Dr. Robert Wilson of SBU, and Dr. Adam Whelchel, Director of Conservation Science, of The Nature Conservancy. The STAC discussed and made changes to the LIS Fellows review and selection processes and to their roles and responsibilities. The STAC was briefed on the 2008 budget process and has been asked to review research priorities in anticipation of the issuance of a new request for proposals in late summer or early fall. A conference call was scheduled to discuss the LIS sentinel sites proposal that is being included in the draft LIS 2008 Agreement. A cadre of interested STAC members and others will meet over the next year to choose the sites and establish site criteria. Karen Chytalo suggested that the new LIS Fellows can be assigned to work on the sentinel site development process. Springer Publishing has been selected to publish the LIS synthesis document, which is anticipated for publication in 2010. The STAC will meet again on July 18, rescheduling its June 20 date due to the slip in the meeting schedule to April.

LIS 2008 Budget/Work Plan. Mark Tedesco reviewed the LISS 2008 budget development process, which culminated last year with the October 2007 Management Committee meeting at which FY2008 program and budget priorities were reviewed and agreed upon. The LISO issued its budget call memo on November 26, 2007, requesting proposals by January 11, 2008. Proposals totaling \$3,642,734 were submitted and the Implementation Team met on March 25, 2008 to review the proposals and request revisions in preparation for the April 24 Management Committee meeting. Revised proposals were submitted by April 9 and Committee members received the draft budget

package on April 16, 2008. Tedesco indicated that the amount of funding available, \$5,500,750 in FY2008 was a significant increase over FY2007, where the budget was \$1.7 million. In a House Report, Congress indicated that the LIS funding should be used to implement both the Long Island Sound and Stewardship Acts. This budget requests \$1.3 million for priority stewardship acquisitions to help satisfy that expectation for the stewardship initiative. Proposals had been submitted for all areas except the sentinel site project, which was still under development by a small team of interested STAC and Committee members and staff, but the Committee was being asked to reserve funding for this purpose, which is an action item in the draft LIS 2008 Agreement. Tedesco said he would review each of the budget proposals, and that Committee members should ask any questions or provide comments, suggestions of objections as he proceeded with the review. At the end of the process the Committee would be asked for its consensus approval of the budget as proposed, revised or agreed upon during the meeting. The Committee approved the budget as presented, with the following changes: NYSDEC was reduced by \$50,000 in personnel costs pending its analysis of carryover funding availability; and a floor request for \$20,000 in funding for USGS work on research-related matters was tabled. Tedesco indicated that the fiduciary reserve would be used to cover revised indirect costs or other last minute items discovered during grant application preparation. LISS partners receiving funding should prepare and submit their application packages to either the Region 1 or Region 2 grants management office by May 30 in order to ensure awards by October 1. EPA staff will work with partners in preparing new or amended assistance packages by the due date.

Draft LIS 2008 Agreement. Mark Tedesco summarized progress to date on the development of the LIS 2008 Agreement, which was transmitted to the Committee on April 16 for review. The Committee had been briefed on progress toward LIS 2003 Agreement actions at its October 2007 meeting, and agreed on priority areas for the draft 2008 Agreement. Guidance was developed and a small team was formed to work on the Agreement. The Agreement Team met several times in person and by conference call to develop the final draft for presentation to the Committee at this meeting. This draft Agreement has been vetted with the CAC and STAC, as well as those involved in carrying out the principal actions, and is the result of negotiated consensus among the affected parties. Tedesco opened the floor to comments on the draft Agreement. Nancy Seligson said that she was disappointed that the action item on LIS watershed signs had been taken out of the Agreement. This was done because of differences in NY and CT regulations and new Homeland Security directives on signage on US Interstate highways. The signage examples most often cited are the signs on I-95 in Maryland denoting the Chesapeake Bay watershed, and the Hudson River estuary signs. Both of these examples were done prior to the new regulatory constraints, and would not be approved today. NYDOT had agreed that it could put up its standard green/white *Entering LIS Watershed* signs at the LIS boundaries on state highways at no cost, since LIS was one of twelve pre-approved state watersheds for signage. Mark Parker explained that while CTDEP and CTDOT had initially reacted positively to LIS watershed signs using the LIS license plate as a background, the initial installation work and ongoing maintenance costs would have had to been borne by CTDEP, and its resources are just not sufficient for this task. In addition, the Governor has recently instituted a policy of fewer signs on the state's

highways. The A-Team had agreed that with these constraints, the signage proposal was not worthy of a governor-level agreement, but that the parties would continue to work towards improved watershed signage for LIS. Other comments or suggestions included: clarifying action item 7 to refer to ‘agencies regulating on-site’ wastewater systems that will take the action attributed to the ‘states’ instead; changing the date to 2013 from 2014 in action item 8 to be consistent with a prior agreement to this effect; adding a bi-state strategy to action item 13 regarding sentinel sites, and clarify that these could be existing sites; including ‘other water quality stressors’ to action item 15 regarding research on the impacts of nitrogen on degradation of habitats; clarifying that action item 26 regarding student learning experiences means students in the NY and CT LIS watershed; and including ‘other agencies as appropriate’ in action item 29 concerning partnerships. The A-Team will make the suggested revisions to the Agreement and re-circulate it to the Committee. The states still need to obtain dates for a potential signing ceremony with the Governors. CTDEP will take the lead since the meeting is scheduled in Connecticut.

LIS Presentation. *Remote Sensing Projects & Prospects for Long Island Sound.* Drs. Emily Wilson, James Hurd, Jr., Julianna Barrett and Chet Arnold of UConn’s Center for Land-use Education And Research (CLEAR) presented their work on CLEAR projects related to riparian areas, watershed management, nonpoint source pollution and sea level rise. The presentation focused particularly on LIS 2003 Agreement actions to identify the amount of impervious surfaces in the watershed; to characterize the scope and rate of tidal wetland losses in the Sound; and to assess the amount of riparian forest buffer in the watershed. These projects were LISS-initiated, with the goal of influencing, through watershed planning efforts, adoption of limits on new impervious surface creation in the watershed and to encourage preservation or restoration of riparian stream buffers. For a copy of the PowerPoint™ presentation slides, please contact the LISO or UConn CLEAR.

Updates. Due to the late meeting start and lack of time, the updates period was tabled and Mark Tedesco proceeded to the public comment period.

Sound Ideas. Mark Tedesco recognized Art Glowka, who questioned the size of plankton in Long Island Sound as being inadequate to support fish. Glowka stressed that the Sound is clearer but still has hypoxia; there are no flounder, blackfish or mummichogs. Glowka stated that ‘This is what the guys on the water are saying, “In nature, currency is food.” Tedesco thanked Mr. Glowka for his comments and adjourned the meeting.