

**Long Island Sound Study
Management Committee Meeting Summary
Thursday, July 17, 2003
Stamford, Connecticut**

Mark Tedesco called the meeting to order at 10:10AM, asking attendees to introduce themselves. **(see Attachment 1)** Tedesco asked if there were any changes to the April 10, 2003 meeting notes, or if there were any additions to today's agenda; as no changes were requested, the notes were accepted. Mark Parker asked for time to present highlights of CTDEP's summer water quality monitoring program; and Peter Sattler asked to provide an update on the invasives rapid assessment. Tedesco pointed out that the agenda had been changed to move the Stewardship System presentation up to the first agenda topic. Tedesco then proceeded to that discussion.

1. LIS Stewardship System

Mark Tedesco indicated that the committee had received the final draft of the Long Island Sound Stewardship System strategy in the mail in June. The purpose of today's presentation and discussion was to have a brief summary and overview of the document and the process of how it was developed. The decision for the committee today was whether to authorize release of the strategy for public comment.

Robin Kriesberg reported that the draft LIS stewardship system strategy had been updated to include management committee comments and that the meetings with stakeholders, e.g., marina operators, agricultural agencies, economic development organizations and municipalities had taken place. The stewardship system work group has a contact list of approximately 200 individuals and groups, about 80 of which have been contacted since June 2. These groups have generally had a positive response to the draft document, many issues have been heard. The top three issues were: 1) to tighten up the language and show the relationship of the system to existing programs; 2) make the document more readable, focusing on areas, not sites; and 3) to better address potential public access conflicts.

Rob Pirani reported that about 95 percent of the open space/public access portion of the stewardship system proposal has been converted to GIS data. There are five meetings scheduled in New York and Connecticut later in July and August to review the final assessment and the locations of the areas. About 100 areas are centered around existing parks and recreation facilities. The work group met about ten times to develop and refine the information for open space/public access. Pirani advised the committee that the work group would like to share the draft strategy with other stakeholders through the public meeting process.

Tom Halavik of the US Fish & Wildlife Service presented detailed maps of the ecological component of the strategy **(see Attachment 2)**. The principal steps taken to develop this component were: 1) determine the spatial scope of the study; 2) determine key species and habitat types; 3) map and describe habitats and species; 4) develop and implement criteria for inclusion; and 5) select and map exemplary terrestrial sites. Site criteria include: 1)

exemplary/representative; 2) critical (rare/endangered); 3) unique/outstanding; 4) research/education; 4) management area of concern. The Marine Habitats Working Group is developing a LIS marine habitats map.

Paul Stacey said that he felt the work group and work product had come a long way; however Stacey indicated that his initial understanding of the stewardship system was that it would include stewardship of developed lands. Tedesco responded that the work group had discussed this approach and rejected it as duplicative of existing education and outreach programs dealing with nonpoint source pollution. Lynne Hamjian indicated that it would be advisable to tie the system to the purpose and goals of the Clean Water Act, such as streambed restoration, and include a five-year indicator of success; funding sources to implement the program are also unclear. Lisa Holst commented that the NYSDEC Commissioner had seen the document and approved it for public release. Charles Evans commended the work group for a clearer and much refined document, and applauded their efforts in one area – that of the concept of clusters/areas. There is a great potential to cluster many sites in one area. Dr. Jack Mattice indicated strong support for the system and that progress had been exemplary in a number of areas. His overall reaction was one of fuzziness – there is a lot left to be figured out. The term “reserve” raises red flags, and the group stayed away from using that term, but Mattice indicated that we are talking about reserves. Mattice recommended establishing goals for the system in terms of outcomes expected. The current draft does not connect open space, public access and the ecological sites (terrestrial) with underwater. Mattice indicated that in his opinion, the draft was not ready to be released because of this lack of treatment of the underwater areas. Mattice recommended more stakeholder involvement through meetings in order to get buy-in. Mark Tedesco responded to the discussion by saying that if the committee felt the document was not ready for release, then it should not be released. Don Squires indicated that much technical work had been done by the work group and by FWS to develop and map the significant resources of the Sound, and that this is the information that should be presented to the public to build an educated constituency for the system, instead of presenting a proposal for a strategy to develop a system. The committee agreed to this approach, requesting that the work group develop an outline of material to be presented for committee review prior to initiating the public meetings.

ACTION ITEM: The Stewardship System work group will develop an outline of material to be presented and a schedule of public meetings for committee review.

2. STAC Report

As neither STAC co-chair was able to attend the meeting, Mark Tedesco reported that he will send a draft RFP to the STAC for review and comment, and that it will be distributed in August. **[NB: The research and LIS Fellows RFPs were released on August 18, 2003; see Attachment 3 for press release.]**

3. Nutrients Work Group

Mark Tedesco reported that the contract with Hydroqual had been signed. The work is proceeding on tasks to evaluate water quality conditions resulting from a range of management scenarios, and to compare them to predictions made by LIS 3.0. This work will support the five-year TMDL reevaluation. Tedesco invited any members wishing to participate in the process to let him know of their interest. The work group will meet again in New York City in August.

4. Habitat Work Group

Lisa Holst reported that the work group met on Monday, July 14 in Stamford. Lori Benoit announced that she is leaving CTDEP and the LISS program as habitat coordinator to pursue her PhD at Stony Brook University. CTDEP staff will take up the work load, but the position is not expected to be filled any time soon. Holst reported that the team is continuing work on the technical document; a shellfish subgroup is to be developed. The team will collaborate with the STAC and invasives groups.

5. Connecticut River Work Group

Paul Stacey introduced Laura Blake of NEIWPC, who is coordinating the work group. Blake reported that New Hampshire, Vermont and Massachusetts do not require ambient monitoring for nutrients in their permits. Nutrients are not perceived to be a problem in these watersheds, however, they have an impact on the Sound. The SPARROW model shows no nitrogen attenuation; however USGS is looking into this lack of attenuation more closely.

6. NYC Nitrogen Management Program

Mark Klein reported that New York City is moving ahead with its nitrogen control program, but has proposed changes to the administrative consent order signed by NYSDEC and NYC in April 2002. He stated that NYC is still committed to meeting the 10-year numbers but believes that additional testing and evaluations of new technologies is warranted. NYCDEP has proposed moving forward with the full scale BNR upgrade at Hunts Point, but using lower cost approaches at the other upper East River facilities, while concurrently testing alternative and evaluating plant performance. NYCDEP and NYSDEC have met to discuss changes to the consent order. NYSDEC has asked for more information on the proposed construction and evaluation program before they will consider changes to the consent order. Jim Mueller suggested that the other New York counties should give updates on their progress with nitrogen control at future meetings.

7. 2004 LISS Budget & Work Plan Proposed Changes

Mark Tedesco distributed proposed changes to the LISS annual budget and work plan development processes. (See Attachment 4) Tedesco asked the committee to endorse the concept of a base program, enhancements projects, research program, and implementation grants as the basic elements of the LISS budget. In addition, work groups would develop two-year work plans for review by the committee. The work plans would provide details on any ongoing work, and projected need into the next year for budget formulation purposes. Finally, a new grant program would be developed and administered by a grantee to be selected through a competitive RFP process. This grant program would be patterned after the Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants Program, administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Tedesco handed out drafts of the proposal formats for the enhancements projects and base program, work plan development guidance, and the LISS 2004 strategic priorities. Charles Evans asked how we get STAC input on priorities and overall workplan and budget decisions. Betsey Wingfield commented that our priorities are to meet the 2003 Agreement actions. The list of "strategic priorities" should be characterized as workplan tasks to achieve the 2003 Agreement and not an addition to them. The LISO will develop the draft RFP, which will be submitted to the Federal Register for publication in the fall.

8. Sound Ideas Public Comments

Art Glowka remarked that it was interesting to keep hearing about stewardship systems and SPARROWs, but we forget about the "critters." As for the effect of the East River on LIS, there is little effect, in his opinion. Glowka said it warms his heart to hear about the proposal with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, as they are a good and reputable organization.

9. Updates

Due to time constraints, verbal updates were not given.

10. Wrap Up & October Agenda Items

The next management committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 16, 2003 in Stamford. Management Committee members should provide suggestions for agenda topics to the LISO by September 22. There being no other business, Tedesco adjourned the meeting at 3:30PM.

List of Attachments

1. List of Attendees
2. Stewardship System Ecological Component
3. LISS RFP Press Release, August 15, 2003
4. LISS 2004 Budget/Work Plan Proposed Changes