

**Long Island Sound Stewardship Work Group Meeting  
January 29, 2008**

**888 Washington Blvd.  
SWRPA Conference Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Stamford, CT**

**MINUTES**

The agenda's stated "desired outcomes" were:

1. Creation of a work plan subcommittee; date for first meeting
2. Agreement on approach for creating the Long Island Sound Stewardship Act (LISSA) Advisory Committee's proposed adaptive management framework[LISSA Section 8(f)]
3. Agreement on general approach for use of this year's appropriation in funding stewardship projects
4. Adoption of recommendations by informal subcommittee on terminology/future revisions of LISSA

By the end of the meeting, the work group had met the above-stated objectives.

Present

Sandy Breslin, Audubon Connecticut  
Al Caccese, Audubon New York  
Chris Cryder, Save the Sound  
Larissa Graham, New York Sea Grant  
Tom Halavik, US FWS  
Louise Harrison, US FWS Liaison to the Long Island Sound Office  
Lisette Henrey, LISCA  
Dave Kozak, CT DEP  
Don Landers, LISCA  
Jeff Main, Westchester County Parks  
Kevin McDonald (by telephone), The Nature Conservancy, Long Island Chapter  
Nancy Seligson, Long Island Sound Study CAC  
Mark Tedesco, US EPA, Long Island Sound Office  
Richard Weisberg, Recreational Fishing Alliance, Norwalk River Watershed Association  
Adam Whelchel, The Nature Conservancy, Connecticut Chapter  
Guest: Art Glowka, "stakeholders"

**1, 2.** Louise welcomed the committee, asked people to introduce themselves, and briefly explained the agenda. Attendees reviewed the agenda. The following changes were made:

*Add new item 11: Creating a technical subcommittee.*

*Old item 11 becomes new item 12; old item 12 becomes new item 13.*

**3, 4.** Al Caccese volunteered to be timekeeper. Adam Whelchel volunteered to take notes.

**5.** The minutes from the work group meeting on November 20, 2007, were approved. Nancy Seligson suggested minutes be product oriented. Dave Kozak said they need to reflect desired outcomes and products.

**6. Update** (Mark Tedesco)

Mark Tedesco provided a budget update. Long Island Sound received \$5 million for 2008 in the omnibus appropriation bill, a significant increase from prior years. Language in the earmark did not specify how the money should be used. However, earlier house and senate appropriation bills did specifically mention the Long Island Sound Stewardship Act. As a result, we should direct some of the increased funding to the stewardship initiative. We want to demonstrate we're moving forward on it.

**Product requested:** Revised work plan for FY08 funding cycle to give the Management Committee a proposal for how to spend money.

**Desired outcome:** The Management Committee can approve spending on stewardship activities.

**7A. Potential funding needs for the stewardship initiative in 2008** (Mark Tedesco)

(a) Establishing the Long Island Sound Stewardship Advisory Committee.

Mark explained that the new advisory committee required under LISSA must be formed according to the requirements of the Federal Advisory Committee Act. Staff in the Long Island Sound Office will carry out the administrative tasks to get this committee formed.

**Product requested:** A new Long Island Sound Stewardship Advisory Committee established according to the LISSA and the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

**Desired outcome:** Established committee fulfills the mandates of the Long Island Sound Stewardship Act.

(b) Creating an adaptive management framework for use by the Advisory Committee.

We need to help fulfill LISSA's requirements to develop explicit, repeatable goals, methods, and criteria for systematic selection of stewardship sites. Such would be applied in an "adaptive management framework" by the Advisory Committee [see LISSA §8(f)].

The LISSA requires use of a repeatable process for identifying stewardship projects. It might be something akin to the Peconic Estuary Program's (PEP) critical lands analysis. We need to figure out how large an effort would be required to create such a framework.

One option might be to create a LISS enhancement grant to fund the work that needs to be done to comply with the Act. The framework would build on the information that provided the basis

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for the 33 inaugural stewardship areas already selected and the good work that went into their selection.

***Product requested:*** Explicit goals, methods and criteria for systematic selection of stewardship sites that can be applied in an adaptive management framework by the Advisory Committee

***Desired outcome:*** Stewardship activities pursuant to LISSA will be scientifically and legally justifiable.

(c) Stewardship projects.

On-the-ground protection projects—acquisition or supportive of acquisition—can be funded this year through the 2008 appropriation. It will not be possible to fund these via LISSA this year; projects would have to be funded through the regular Long Island Sound program, using existing authorities. Fortunately, our existing spending authorities are fairly broad. Through such projects this year, we should demonstrate the types of things we'd like to do with LISSA in the future. Acquisition would be a powerful way to demonstrate our intent. We need to figure out how best to accomplish this. .

## **7B. Go-Round: Additional ideas/proposals related to (a) establishing the advisory committee and (b) creating an adaptive management framework**

### Round 1

*Kevin McDonald:* Using a multi-track strategy is good; otherwise we're out of time. Developing objective criteria could take at least a year. Advises we use the 33 inaugural areas, hold hearings around the region, and have a consultant objectively evaluate the results.

*Sandy Breslin:* Agree that a multi-track approach is good. We need to talk more about a project. Is it clear from the Management Committee's perspective that there should be a split between restoration activities and stewardship [Answer: No; there need not be.]

*Al Caccese:* It's important to select the Advisory Committee and start the process as soon as possible.

*Nancy Seligson:* This group should be the Advisory Committee. Someone should write down the repeatable process.

*Don Landers:* We should honor the work done by US FWS and collect empirical evidence for site selection.

*Lisette Henrey:* We should emphasize doing projects as soon as possible.

*Jeff Main:* Let's start working; use science to guide us.

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*Dave Kozak:* The search for the perfect will be the enemy of the good this year. Use the 33 areas to quickly poll people in localities to see if projects are ready to go. If asked, we *did* follow the Act.

*Adam Whelchel:* Build on the existing atlas. Leverage projects across the Sound. Use an adaptive management framework.

*Tom Halavik:* Build on the 33 inaugural areas in the atlas. We're already off to a good start with ecological areas—those won't change. Can do an analysis such as was done for the Peconic Estuary Program. We should query existing databases, such as from planning agencies. The maps in this room, prepared by the Southwest Regional Planning Agency, show the kind of information that's available. UConn's CLEAR could be used to help set priorities.

*Art Glowka:* We have the 33 [inaugural] sites. The Long Island Sound Study doesn't listen to the "response" of the Sound. Monitor indicator species. Are they increasing? Decreasing?

## Round 2

*Nancy Seligson:* An adaptive management framework should be done by this group—specifically, by a subcommittee. Emphasize connectedness, so that communities feel drawn in and part of bigger picture. Enhance the visibility of the program.

*Kevin McDonald:* Creating an adaptive management framework is a formidable undertaking. A big firm would be needed. Nassau County is not well organized in this area. With PEP, it took a long time just to do five towns. Not sure we should replicate a strategy that may be too detailed for a landscape of this size. We should form a technical committee and task them with coming up with a proposal.

*Dave Kozak:* Connecticut has been doing this type of analysis and has been working on it for the last three to five years (CLAMS). New York is doing a parcel-level analysis via the LI Sound Futures Fund. To pull this off this year, we can't go through the process we've been talking about here; maybe we could for 2009. We need to short-circuit the process for 2009.

*Adam Whelchel:* We need engagement. We're looking at a lengthy, time-consuming process, but one that would have benefits beyond the stewardship initiative. All projects at all scales need to bridge back to the larger process of the Long Island Sound Study—the big picture of the Sound's health and connecting people to Long Island Sound.

*Sandy Breslin:* Approve of the multi-track approach.

*Don Landers:* Resource agencies should be part of the Advisory Committee. They would be the technical people on the committee.

*Al Caccese:* The technical team to come up with the adaptive management framework should be the core team from the earlier stewardship atlas work

*Richard Weisberg:* The statute defines who should be on the Advisory Committee.

*Mark Tedesco:* In April we'll need to convince the LI Sound Study's Management Committee to spend on (a) an adaptive management framework and on (b) two stewardship projects specifically for 2008.

For the adaptive management framework, could be a GIS effort. Need this group to develop a concept or theme, describe what we want to accomplish, and ask for a specific amount of funding. You could examine PEP's work as a model, looking at their data layers, etc., and develop something.

*Sandy Breslin:* We need a technical subgroup to define the problem, assess what we have, what we need, and find out how much money is needed.

*Richard Weisberg:* [Speaks against using consultants.] Using the collective expertise of program personnel, could we put together something on our own?

*Jeff Main:* Are individual stewardship areas capable of doing this on their own?

*Mark Tedesco:* Sure—more detailed information is available locally. What makes sense in Rye may not make sense in Setauket. Yet how to compare between Rye and Setauket?

*Al Caccese:* Include the resource organizations in developing the framework.

*Kevin McDonald:* Tom Halavik and others are needed for criteria development. Establish the criteria, then meet with the planners: What's available? See then how much time and money are needed.

## **7C. Consensus**

**Decision:** The group will establish a technical subcommittee to decide on criteria, determine what data are available, what information gaps exist, and how to proceed.

## **8A. Ideas for possible 2008 stewardship projects**

*Mark Tedesco:* The group might consider proposing two projects—one in Connecticut and one in New York.

*Tom Halavik:* The Coastal Wetland grants are coming up. At Peconic Estuary Program meeting last week, someone had suggested the Baiting Hollow Boy Scout Camp.

There are restoration projects going; we could consider migratory corridors projects.

*Louise Harrison:* The Oyster Bay National Wildlife Refuge—which is in one of the 33 inaugural stewardship areas—is celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, yet it still does not have any land access (it is entirely an underwater refuge). Parcels have been identified in and

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around the Refuge for the Nassau County environmental Bond Act and the Oyster Bay SEA Fund.

***Product requested:*** Proposal for 2008 funding of stewardship sites/activities.

***Desired outcome:*** Based on previous stewardship initiative work group inventory and analysis, Long Island Sound resources will gain protection through 2008 stewardship activities, demonstrating commitment to the goals of LISSA and inspiring future funding.

### **8B. Go-Round: Ideas for possible 2008 stewardship projects**

*Kevin McDonald:* This was brought up briefly at PEP. Money will be needed for planning—for organizing and for mapping. Suffolk County was paid \$0.5 million for mapping the parcels in the Peconics, alone. Suggests we set aside money for administration, money for mapping, and money for entrepreneurial habitat restoration efforts vs. acquisition, given the cost of coastal land.

*Dave Kozak:* It's difficult to get the level of detail needed or specific projects today. Propose that via email we send back and forth lists of projects and say how the projects meeting the general criteria of the Act. Add in: location, timeline, the project's ripeness, demonstration that the project can be pulled off (letter of intent, appraisal...). For restoration projects, show that the design and engineering are ready.

Send a list of projects by email to Louise Harrison (Harrison.louise@epa.gov), then come up with ideas for project readiness.

*Richard Weisberg:* Projects or sites? The Act says "qualified applicants" come up with ideas for sites.

*Mark Tedesco:* For now, put aside the Act. We still can fund projects. We need to use a mechanism for funding that can be done quickly, such as an existing cooperative agreement.

*Richard Weisberg:* We have 33 inaugural areas.

### **8C. Consensus on general approach for uses of this year's appropriation in funding stewardship projects.**

Look within the 33 inaugural areas for projects/sites. Use these quick and broad criteria:

- Within one of the 33 inaugural stewardship areas
- Can be done this year
- Should be ripe ("fruit flies hovering over it" –MT)
- Project can build on past conservation investments
- Proposed project can provide a match up to 50%
- Can be funded through an existing interagency agreement (such as via US FWS) or agreement with one of the states (New York or Connecticut)

Please include:

- Time frame for project completion
- Project cost
- Statement of the project's anticipated benefits

Email the information to Louise Harrison at [harrison.louise@epa.gov](mailto:harrison.louise@epa.gov).

Louise will send out an email to the entire stewardship initiative work group asking for such project ideas.

*Al Caccese:* Important to tie it to the process done already. One is ready to go in Rye. More in eastern Long Island—Plum Island and Orient Point. RPA may know of some in the Nissequogue River watershed.

*Mark Tedesco:* We'll have to use existing authorities, agreements, and partnerships this year, or else we'll have to compete it through a very well-defined process. Look for on-the-ground projects, not additional studies.

### **9C. Need for a work plan subcommittee.**

Louise Harrison explained that this work group needs to amend its work plan for submission to the Implementation Team and ultimately to the Management Committee. It would mesh with the technical subcommittee and provide the rationale for the funding requests. She asked members of the SI work group to volunteer to help re-craft the document.

Sandy Breslin volunteered to help create a work plan template, into which more specific information (on the adaptive management framework and the proposed 2008 projects) could be inserted, as it becomes available in next couple of months. Dave Kozak and Adam Whelchel volunteered to work on it as well. Karen Chytalo was "volunteered" by members of the group to sit on this subcommittee, too. Louise Harrison should chair the subcommittee.

***Product requested:*** Stewardship initiative work plan for carrying out the stewardship initiative and LISSA that includes funding needs.

***Desired outcome:*** Stewardship initiative activities are clearly prescribed and funded.

### **10A, 10B. "Definitions" subcommittee results, discussion.**

The work group voted to approve the document, "Conference Call Notes/Results," dated July 17, 2007, by the Informal Subcommittee on Terminology and Future Revisions of the Long Island Sound Stewardship Act, *with the following exception:* LISSA §8(f) "ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT" would *not* be suggested by this group for deletion in a possible future revision of the Act.

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The document presents agreement by members of the subcommittee on working definitions or mutual understandings of terms in LISSA, suggested changes to the definitions section of LISSA, items in the Act suggested for future revisions, and suggested work group meeting agenda items.

Members of the subcommittee: Sandy Breslin, Louise Harrison, Tom Halavik, Dave Kozak, Kevin McDonald, Mark Tedesco, and Richard Weisberg. Don Henne participated in a January 2007 meeting of the subcommittee.

### **11. Creating a technical subcommittee.**

The work group decided the following should be represented on a new technical subcommittee:

CT DEP

NYS DEC

The Nature Conservancy (Adam Whelchel and Marci Bortman)

UConn (CLEAR, Chet Arnold)

US FWS (Tom Halavik, Louise Harrison)

Audubon CT (Patrick Comins; provisional—based on availability and time frames)

Louise Harrison should coordinate the work of the subcommittee.

By March 7, 2008, Louise will email the results of the technical subcommittee's work to all its members for comment.

By March 12, 2008, on behalf of the technical subcommittee, Louise will email the results to the Stewardship Initiative work group for review and comment.

After the SI work group has time to respond, Louise will plug the recommendations into the SI work plan for final editing.

The work plan then will go to the LISS Management Committee for funding \$1 million.

Louise will set up the first date for a meeting of the technical subcommittee.

***Product requested:*** The group will draft a proposal for how to create an adaptive management framework for inclusion in the work plan submitted to the LISS Management Committee.

***Desired outcome:*** The LISS Management committee will fund the creation of the framework needed by the Stewardship Advisory Committee for selecting stewardship sites and activities.

**12. The next meeting of the Stewardship Initiative work group is April 29, 2008 (time and place to be announced).**

**13. The meeting adjourned at 12 noon.**