



**Long Island Sound Study
Citizens Advisory Committee Thursday, December 14, 2017
Housatonic Community College, Bridgeport, CT.
Meeting Summary**

Welcome

Nancy Seligson, New York CAC Co-Chair, welcomed participants and established that a quorum was present. Nancy requested that name tent cards be used in the future at CAC meetings.

New members/representatives:

Meagan Fastuca, Dept. of Planning & Environmental Protection, Town of North Hempstead

Heather Johnson, Executive Director, Friends of the Bay

Dr. Molly Jacobs, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, alt. rep. for Project Oceanology

Guests:

Cindy Krezel, New York Community Bank Foundation, LISFC member

Bill Lucey, Long Island Soundkeeper (CFE/STS)

Nomination of CT Co-Chair

Ballot: Holly Drinkuth, The Nature Conservancy; Denise Savageau, Greenwich Conservation Commission

Members were reminded that there is one vote per CAC member organization. Paper ballots were handed out and tallied. Write in votes: Rivers Alliance, Earth Place/Harbor Watch, Project Oceanology, and there was one abstention. The final tally revealed a very close race, with Holly Drinkuth becoming the new CAC co-Chair for CT. Nancy and Holly will look at the CAC membership including getting marine businesses back on the CAC .

Update from the Last Meeting

CAC Letter to the Management Committee: Nancy presented the October 18 CAC letter to the LISS Management Committee with the message loud and clear that funding is



critical to collect water quality data in LIS embayments, and that this is a priority in the CCMP. The CAC has played and could continue to play a very important role focusing on embayments for the LIS Conference.

I-Team Meeting: Nancy explained the structure and role of the LISS Implementation Team. The I-Team creates the agendas for the Management Committee, and is a forum for agency employees to support further the CCMP. At the last I-Team meeting, Robert Burg, NEIWPC, presented the new efforts at messaging, web tracking and reporting for the ecosystem targets identified in the CCMP. It's vitally important to track our priorities, efforts and accomplishments to implement the CCMP. Robert requested CAC feedback on informational products and data interpretation. Also, , aligned CAC messaging and communication strategies are needed for advocacy and implementation. Nancy noted that the I-Team is looking at how to improve reporting about target progress and is looking at what other estuaries are doing.

The EPA Nitrogen Strategy webinar, for those who were not able to participate in the original broadcast, is available at: <http://longislandsoundstudy.net/issues-actions/water-quality/nitrogen-strategy/> Nancy encouraged those interested to sign up for email notices of updates from the link provided. Mark Tedesco, LISS EPA office, reported that he was pleased with the turnout for the webinar and that the work is now at the stage of developing nitrogen thresholds.

STAC Meeting

No representatives from the CAC attended the STAC meeting, but Sound Keeper Bill Lucey (STS) did attend the STAC meeting and provided a brief update. Bioextraction was the primary theme of the meeting, and it was concluded that there are mixed results, with no perfect solutions to the variety of efforts throughout the Sound. Bioextraction efforts are working well in Greenwich, but not everywhere. The big takaway was that bioextraction is not a cure-all. There are huge permitting issues and roadblocks to expanding aquaculture. Denise Savageau commented that there are not a lot of direct discharges (mostly non-sewered along coast) except in Greenwich and Stamford, where there is good removal (90%) from bioextraction efforts. Greenwich is looking at possibly expanding beds in areas where there are known problems.



Bill reported that NY Governor Cuomo provided \$10M for shellfish hatcheries on the North and South Shore of Long Island, to which Adrienne Esposito (Citizens Campaign) added that there is not the same effort in CT. NYDEC is leading the effort in New York. Dave Miller suggested that at the September meeting we have a presentation on this. Denise referred to the NOAA report on bioextraction that is on the Greenwich website. Mark Tedesco reported that there is funding for a Bioextraction position for LIS in the budget.

Interviews have been completed for the Bioextraction position. Once hired, the bioextraction coordinator should be invited to a CAC meeting. Nancy suggested that perhaps the CAC needs a new STAC representative. Sarah Crosby has expressed interested in attending (on maternity leave now).

Menhaden meeting

Judy Preston (LISS/CTSG) provided an update from Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe (CT Audubon) on the results of a meeting over the summer concerning the management of menhaden. "Menhaden harvesting is regulated and the regulation has resulted in increased numbers of fish in LIS and other areas. Menhaden are an important food source for a variety of birds, marine mammals, and large fish species. The regulation, and subsequent increase, of the species is likely why we are seeing things like whales in LIS and larger numbers of marine birds than just 10 years ago. Currently single species management models are used to set the regulations. Ecological reference point models that take into account the species importance as a food source for so many other marine animals are in the works, but will not be completed until at least 2019." At the board meeting of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the commission voted for the development of the ecological reference points models while continuing to use the single species management until the new models are completed. For more information go to: <http://fissues.org/with-menhaden-heres-what-went-down/>. Bill commented that the decision process is not transparent; the concern is that the catch will continue to be increased. The 2012 cap on menhaden catch resulted in tremendous LIS abundance. There was a lot of political pressure at this meeting. Although there is a



spring and fall fish trawl conducted by CTDEEP, it is not designed to accurately assess schooling menhaden populations.

STS report on NY event. Tracy Brown reported on an event that was held in New York City as an opportunity to thank NYC rate payers and NYCDEP for actions to meet its 58.5% reduction target. Overall nitrogen reductions are shrinking the area of hypoxia in Long Island Sound. There is more to be done, however, and the fishable/swimmable goal of the Clean Water Act will not be attained with just these reductions. NYC has six wastewater treatment (WWT) plants subject to the nitrogen TMDL. The event highlighted the need for further improvements and that the City use a more integrated approach.

The New York City Council held a public hearing with robust public participation; the Council is engaged, and this is hopeful. A recommendation was made that the CAC sign-on to a letter to support the three requests made in the STS report [<https://globenewswire.com/news-release/2017/11/16/1194424/0/en/How-Healthy-Are-New-York-Area-Waters-Save-the-Sound-Releases-Nitrogen-Report-for-East-River-and-Long-Island-Sound.html>] at the city council meeting on Dec 13,2017. This was seconded by Dave Miller. The resolution passed unanimously.

Budget Update

Mark Tedesco, EPA LIS Office, provided a PowerPoint presentation on the final 2017 LISS Work Plan and Budget. This covered the increase in 2017 funding and how that increase was used (what stayed the same and what changed from the prior year). He also highlighted some of the proposals for consideration for 2018 funding relating to embayment monitoring. These include:

- How to invest in embayment monitoring to support nitrogen management;
- How to support community monitoring for pathogens, and
- How to invest in ongoing monitoring enhancements.

Horseshoe Crabs Status

Professor Jennifer Mattei, Sacred Heart University, provided an indepth report on her work through Project Limulus to track the population ecology of the Horseshoe Crab in



LIS and provide large scale management recommendations. Research efforts have spanned over fifteen years, and document threats that include harvest for bait, bycatch, and predation. Her conclusions stated that LIS has a “Low density and aging population with low recruitment and a population reproducing below its maximum rate” and that “Juvenile horseshoe crabs living in an urban estuary that is hot, sour, breathless and toxic, stresses their development and reduces their food resources, thus lowering their survival.” Her solutions included coastal habitat restoration using the Living Shoreline Concept, and to set up Marine Protected Areas in urban estuaries (such as LIS) – areas that are completely protected from any type of harvest and where natural resources can replenish themselves.

Policy Committee Update

Adrienne Esposito, Citizen’s Campaign for the Environment and co-chair of the CAC Policy Committee, reported that Tracy Brown, Save the Sound, is the new co-chair for the Policy Committee. Adrienne provided an update on the trip to Washington, DC that included, among many others, Cindy Krezel from the LIS Funders collaborative, who came to the CAC meeting. The CAC and group spoke with representatives about passing the LIS Restoration and Stewardship Act, increasing the State Revolving Loan Funds, maintaining, or better yet, increasing the LISS budget and the effort to Save Plum Island. It was a very successful day, and good feedback was received. This year has seen support for Plum Island, especially from NY Senator Gilibrand as well as at the Bi-State Congressional LIS conference at the Merchant Marine Academy.

Both state DEEP and DEC commissioners attended, as well as CT Governor Malloy. The conference was hosted by Congressmembers Suozzi, DeLauro and Zeldin. Congressman Suozzi pressed all the participants to name the most important issue for LIS, and everyone responded "nitrogen". . Dave Miller complimented both Adrienne and Nancy on their great job steering the congressional panel. Approximately 120 people attended the conference. Participants signed a document that declared a reaffirmation of their commitment to Long Island Sound.

Dave suggested a November trip to Washington DC to focus on clean waters. Upon request, Adrienne will send a copy of the LIS pledge to the CAC to share with students/parents.



Mark Tedesco suggested that the CAC meet with Peter Lopez, the new Region 2 EPA Regional Administrator. He is a former assemblyman and familiar with the issues from Superstorm Sandy and Puerto Rico. The next CAC meeting is scheduled for March 15th; Mark will see if he is available. The CAC agreed to be flexible on the meeting date to accommodate the RA's schedule.

The name of the Region I Regional Administrator is Alexandra Dapolito Dunn; see <https://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/about-administrator-epas-new-england-region-region-1> for details.

Ecosystem Indicators Targets:

LISS and Robert Burg requested input from CAC on what level of LIS restoration and CCMP tracking is needed from the public perspective. Mark Tedesco provided a PowerPoint presentation that addressed how the LISS will track and report on progress toward reaching the goals of the 2015 CCMP. Mark shared new information on ecosystem targets on the LISS website (not live yet), and stated that we need more than just targets – we need input on other tracking and reporting tools. The tracking needs to be sustainable, informative and synthetic (and make sense of the big picture). The effort will require consideration of the GAO findings, and can be informed by other estuary program reporting efforts, such as the San Francisco Estuary Program: <http://www.sfestuary.org/progress-tracking/>. CAC feedback would be very helpful for developing this information. CAC members are encouraged to share their thoughts about the level of detail and method of presentation. The development is still in the discussion phase.

CAC Suggestions and Comments:

- Tracy Brown commented that San Francisco Bay program's information is fantastic.
- Nancy Seligson agreed that we must measure progress of action items, AND
- We must communicate how those actions have improved Long Island Sound. We need to answer how the accomplished actions translate into restoration of LIS.
- Mark suggested that it would be possible to show “success stories”, as the San Francisco website does.



- Lou Burch, Citizens Campaign, thought that it would be important to show what our members care about.
- Carol DiPaulo, Hemstead Harbor, wanted to know if people will be able to go from the CCMP information to other places on the website to see more about the progress. Yes, although we don't want too many pages associated with one action.
- It was agreed that the impact of progress made should also be included.
- Will someone be able to get a synopsis of progress per action? We will need to keep it simple but also provide enough information.
- Topics should stay within the CCMP themes, e.g. Hypoxia into clean waters theme.
- The challenge is to make information meaningful and helpful without getting bogged down in minutiae.
- Once the website information is ready, it will be sent out to the CAC.
- Nancy Seligson commented that the CAC has an important role to play in this. The people working on this are "in the weeds" – we need to be sure that the general public understands it.
- Robert Burg, LISS/NEIWPC, said that there will be references to electronic/paper reports made available through the website.
- Holly Drinkuth, TNC, stated that it will be important to collect information from many groups in a meaningful way.

NY Co-chair Election in 2018

The NY CAC co-chair election will be held at the end of 2018. Dave Miller agreed to serve on the CAC NY co-chair nominating committee.

Updates

Nancy Seligson asked the CAC what topics the committee would like to see in upcoming agendas? . Suggestions included:

- Suffolk County, NY successes, esp. related to septic upgrades and local codes



- An update on CT Blue Plan (TNC and Sea Grant)
- Permitting issues (aquaculture, wetlands permitting, differences CT/NY)
- Water Q datasets – a lot out there; how to data share. How to get it to “comparative” data? (Unified Water Study is working toward this)
- Climate Change LIS – where are we? (ask Jim O’Donnell)
- SLAMM II update (Dave Kozak)
- A LIS bi-state legislative conference
- Update on marsh conditions
- Updates from all LISS working groups
- The Sustainable CT Program (modeled from NJ) Municipality level work
- Update on Sustainable Landscaping and Coastal Certificate program
- Valuation study of recreation (EPA Narragansett Bay), incl. economics (earth economics institute)

Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:00.

Next CAC Meeting: Was tentatively scheduled for March 15, 2018 in New York City dependent on EPA Region 2 Regional Administrator Peter Lopez's availability. **Currently scheduled for Thursday March 22, 2018 at EPA offices in NYC.**