

**Management Committee Meeting Notes**  
**Thursday, July 21, 2022**  
**Meeting conducted remotely due to COVID-19**



**Attendees**

Mark Tedesco, EPA LISO  
Cayla Sullivan, EPA LISO  
Esther Nelson, EPA LISO  
Kristen Laccetti, EPA R2  
Melissa Duvall, EPA R2  
Ashley Derosiers, EPA R1  
Mel Coté, EPA R1  
Leah O'Neill, EPA R1  
Bessie Wright, EPA R1  
Casey Abel, EPA R1  
Rick Balla, EPA R2  
Michele Golden, NYSDEC  
Samarra Scantlebury, NYSDEC  
Julia Socrates, NYSDEC  
Mary Arnold, NYSDEC  
Victoria O'Neill,  
NYSDEC/NEIWPC  
Kristin Kraseski,  
NYSDEC/NEIWPC  
Jennifer Street, NYSDOS  
Gary Wikfors, NOAA

Jim Hagy, EPA ORD  
Nancy Seligson, CAC/NY  
Holly Drinkuth, CAC/CT  
Paige Allison Meyer, CCE/CAC  
Brian Thompson, CT DEEP  
Kathleen Knight, CT DEEP  
Harry Yamalis, CT DEEP  
Christopher Bellucci, CT DEEP  
Kevin O'Brien, CT DEEP  
Kelly Streich, CT DEEP  
Erik Bedan, CT DEEP  
Rebecca Shuford, NYSG  
Elizabeth Hornstein, NYSG  
Lillit Genovesi, NYSG  
Sara Powell, NYSG  
Jimena Perez-Viscasillas,  
LISS/NYSG  
Alicia Tyson, CTSG  
Jessica LeClair, CTSG  
Nancy Balcom, CTSG  
Penny Vlahos, STAC/UConn

Mark Parker, CT DEEP  
Paul Stacey, Footprints in the  
Water, LLC  
Richard Friesner, NEIWPC  
Jordan Bishop, NEIWPC  
Beth MacBlane, NEIWPC  
Jim Ammerman, LISS/NEIWPC  
Robert Burg, LISS/NEIWPC  
Danielle Alexander, NYCDEP  
David Lipsky, NYCDEP  
Richard Gunn, Marstel-Day  
Rebecca Rubin, Marstel-Day  
Jessica Aiello, Marstel-Day  
Lee Halterman, Marstel-Day  
Suzanne Paton, USFWS  
Nancy Ferlow, USDA-NRCS  
Jonathan Morrison, USGS  
Todd Randall, USACE-NAE  
Arthur Johnson, MassDEP  
Tim Hunter, CTDEEP

**Introduction:** Mark Tedesco called the meeting to order at approximately 9:00am in Microsoft Teams. There were no changes to the agenda or April 21 meeting notes. He introduced new LISO members, Ashley Derosiers, Melissa Duvall, and Kristen Laccetti. He highlighted that meeting discussions will include the FY22 Work Plan and Budget Overview, planning for the FY23 budget and work plan, and updates on the 2022 Report to Congress, Communication Plan, and Governance Document. The sustainable community report out will be done by the SRC team. He opened the floor for other personnel updates.

- Arthur Johnson: Introduced himself as the monitoring section chief for the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MASS DEP) watershed planning program. He is filling in for Susannah King who has moved to a regional office in Wilmington.
- Erik Bedan: Introduced Tim Hunter as a new member who will be helping with LIS and BIL funds.
- Christopher Bellucci: Mentioned that Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (CTDEEP) is working to onboard new hires within the next few weeks.

**Science and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) Update provided by Penny Vlahos:**

- James Ammerman & Penny Vlahos: Introduced Kamazima Lwiza who was elected NY STAC co-chair. The STAC meeting was held on June 24<sup>th</sup> to discuss how to integrate Environmental Justice (EJ) principles into the STAC. Thanked those who ran break out groups as there was useful discussion. STAC to make serious efforts with DEI and EJ. Many suggestions included mentoring and partnering small universities. Mentioned there will be more EJ details to come next meeting. Had a report from CAC and short report on recently funded projects through regular budget process.

**Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Update provided by Nancy Seligson and Holly Drinkuth:**

- Holly Drinkuth: The CAC met on June 9<sup>th</sup> where the new EPA Region 1 and 2 Regional Administrators attended to discuss the administration's priorities including EJ initiatives, cleaning up pollution, inclusive framework, etc. They noted that LISS is making great EJ progress + setting the bar. CAC members raised

priorities such as the re-authorization of LIS Restoration and Stewardship Act expiring in 2023 and to look at match requirement. SRC presentation shared initial finding from needs assessment and collected feedback on how to go forward. CAC provided lots of feedback and options to facilitate matches with existing organizations. Additionally, she highlighted that CAC went to DC on July 14 to meet with offices of 10 lawmakers but only 3 lawmakers were present. Met with lots of staff as well as Senator Schumer, Blumenthal, and Murphy. She explained that there was a large amount of fairly new staff, so the CAC emphasized how the systemic approach LISS has taken has resulted in great progress. Many CAC members shared their stories about great progress - oyster beds coming back, aquaculture coming back with more jobs, etc. She mentioned Mickey Weiss pulled it together about progress, adapting and continuing forward with new challenges.

- Mark Tedesco: Responded that we appreciate the perspective gained from meeting with staff.
  - Holly Drinkuth: Highlighted that they had a very warm welcome. More people present than anticipated. Staff very new so helpful to hear the stories. The staff was very grateful and interested in hearing priorities and willing to do the work. CAC asked them for \$40 million budget, restoration of LIS Restoration and Stewardship Act and the permanent protection of Plum Island. Added that the Biden administration interested in making Plum Island a national monument. Mentioned that the Plum Island private donor had a representative present. Added that they asked for a fix to the IRS ruling that requires septic update grants to be counted as income. She mentioned they will continue to follow up on all these items.
    - Jim Ammerman: Asked if there has been any response to septic ruling fix
      - Holly Drinkuth: Responded that there are two paths they are considering: Bill requesting IRS to fix it and Senator Schumer is trying to work with Secretary of Agriculture in removing requirement
    - Jim Ammerman: Mentioned the need to think about staff turnover. He explains that Tom Suozzi and Lee Zeldin won't be in congress next year and emphasized the need to think about new caucus chairs.
      - Holly Drinkuth: Responded that they have new co-chairs, Courtney and DeLauro appointed because of impending changes. She emphasized that they are watching to see who is elected
  - Mark Tedesco: Mentioned that the CAC was asked to reconvene for the policy committee and both RAs were supportive. Explained that they will have the executive steering meeting then a policy meeting in fall. He mentioned that they are open to other topic suggestions for these meetings.

#### **CCMP Progress Report to Congress 2020-21 – Cayla Sullivan**

- Cayla Sullivan: Presented on the CCMP Report to Congress update (see attached presentation). Outlined the why, the what and the timeline. in which the final report due in December to Congress. She mentioned that LISO is seeking additional volunteers to review, and to reach out to Nikki Tachiki if you are interested.
  - Mel Cote: Asked what the time frame of the money spent is. Mentioned it seems like more than a 2-year time frame on slide 6.
    - Cayla Sullivan: Responded that the time frame focuses on ongoing projects from FY2020-2021 (i.e., projects could be funded before this period, but are currently progressing the implementation actions in these fiscal years).
    - Mark Tedesco: Explained that we are reporting on what was accomplished during 2020-21 not just how funds were allocated.

- Paul Stacey: Mentioned the need to think about results accountability not just how much money was spent and projects funded but also outcomes. Explained how the annual newsletter from LISS has disconcerting numbers and more explaining is needed about how effective the money is being spent.
  - Mark Tedesco: Responded with added context: Some numbers are just from LIS FF projects. Not all numbers have everything accomplished and not accounting all nitrogen reductions.
  - Paul Stacey: Responded that it looks like money is going up and progress is flattening.

#### **FY2022 Work Plan and Budget Overview – Leah O’Neill**

- Leah O’Neill: Provided overview of conclusions and adjustments. Explained that there were two budget files distributed (Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and non-BIL) prior to the meeting to follow along with. Mentioned that Cayla recently finished the National Estuary Program (NEP) work plan for FY2023. Highlighted that FY2022 was a transition budget year where we focused on existing needs. Explained there are two categories: base for existing work like salaries, FF, water quality and non-base. Mentioned that the budget for existing grantees to request new funds was expanded. Following the management committee recommendations on what to fund EPA put the projects into different funding streams, with this year having multiple funding streams. Both funding channels get funds from CWA 119 and 320. Explained the FY 2022 total funding \$53,909,800, with \$21,909,800 coming from the BIL and over \$32 million from LIS appropriations. Explained that the base budget was thoroughly discussed, and some funding amounts changed due to indirect rate changes and minor budget changes. Mentioned that the remaining funds were given to US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) so an increase will be seen there. Only new item was added, number 16, for EPA Office of Research and Development (ORD) and the expansion of river basin export optimization support tool, which \$72,000 went to. Explained that the PDF is not the final version as small changes come up, but this gives a clear picture of where funds are going. Mentioned non-infrastructure funds are where we have the statutory match is required, CWA 119 funds have a 40% match for implementation work and 5% for education while estuary program funds have a 50% match. Mentioned that CT and NY were able to provide over match for others who could not meet the match and therefore were able to meet our match requirements for the year.
  - Bill Lucey: Asked how we were able to adjust the match and if there is an administrative way to reduce match.
    - Leah O’Neill: Responded that it is a statutory requirement therefore EPA cannot be waived or reduced. Explained that we can get over match and that until the statute is changed EPA cannot do anything about it. Mentioned that each statute has different match requirements and we have been looking into how our match requirement stacks up and that we don’t want to lose flexibility we have but it would be nice to have added flexibilities or reduced match.
- Leah O’Neill: Provided overview of BIL Funds, which LISS received over \$21 million from section 119 and \$909,800 from NEP. Mentioned the match requirement was waived for FY 2022. Explained that most funds went to NY and CT so match was provided by their base awards anyway and we are working under assumption that match will be waived in future years, however not fully approved and there will be more info to come. Mentioned that BIL fund guidance for NEP funds will be released next week and while we get most of our funds from CWA 320 it tends to follow the same format as CWA 119. Explained that this shouldn’t change much for our awards but will possibly see some changes to tracking and reporting. Mentioned that funding for the EJ RFA award is forward funding for a big chunk of funds in first and second year with funds held for future years.

- Mel Cote: Asked about BIL funding for 2022 and why there is both 119 and 320 for FY 2022 but only showing 119 for FY23-24.
  - Leah O'Neill: Responded that the columns for FY23-24 are still there but combined to not overwhelm spreadsheet and it can still be seen in 3A. Explained that some grantees just wanted FY2022 funds vs all and next year multi-year work plans will just need funds added. The 119 funds are holding space in FY 23-24 columns, and we will discuss those grants in future meetings, current plan is just to give an idea of how the distribution might play out.
- Penny Vlahos: Asked if there are MOUs associated with each line item.
  - Leah O'Neill: Responded that MOUs are not traditionally used in LISS. Non-infrastructure funds used for intra-agency agreements did not have to provide match and therefore the agreements closely resemble MOUs.
  - Mark Tedesco: Commented to add that full program work plans are posted online. Detail outputs and outcomes from agreements are there and all agreements have detailed work plans.
- Chris Bellucci: Asked if multiyear project ideas could be done and if the MC will make the decision if project gets funded for multiple years.
  - Leah O'Neill: Responded yes. Gave an example of New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) Division of Water and how they can easily submit for multi-year funding due to project nature where it would be different for projects like dam cleanup where it will take multiple years so management committee would know that when approving the funds. Explained that we can easily approve up to 5 years but +7 years needs higher justification, so it is better to do 2- or 3-year awards then stop and add new grant/funds. Mentioned there is time on the agenda to start thinking about FY23 budget and mentions how some grants included disadvantaged communities which is important because we won't be able to waive match across the program without those aspects.
- Leah O'Neill: Mentioned there were many questions about terms & conditions for Build America By America (BABA). Explained that it is a new law with BIL and applies to all federal funding. Like previous BABA with focus on iron and steel for bigger infrastructure projects but now also applies to stronger infrastructure projects and construction materials like glass. EPA is currently assessing what this means for LISS. Mentioned that EPA Office of Water has applied for waivers that would apply to our program, one is a 6-month waiver, which would delay the implementation, and another is a diminished waiver stating that anything under 250k wouldn't apply. Mentioned that links will be sent out for that and information for public comments. Emphasizes that is very important for state and infrastructure projects to comment during the open comment period so that the waivers will be granted. Mentioned that some grantees are equipped to deal with it without waivers and the Terms&Conditions will be sent out so all are aware of what will apply to you.
  - Mark Tedesco: Responded that he circulated the link to comment for adjustment period to BABA.
  - Bill Lucey: Asked for clarification on if this law is mostly dealing with construction materials.
    - Leah O'Neill: Responded that it is more for infrastructure projects and materials rather than product purchase requirements.
  - Holly Drinkuth: Added that if this is an issue for anyone, please let her or Nancy know so STAC can help.

**Stretch Break at 10:14am****Planning for FY2023 Budget and Work Plan Discussion- Leah O'Neill/Mark Tedesco**

- Mark Tedesco: Highlighted that for match waiver continuation all programs need to develop a plan on how to meet Justice 40 requirements, it is not a requirement to meet it in the first year but a plan on how we will make progress is needed. Not every program needs to meet requirement but in aggregate. Explained that we should be at 37% with FY22 infrastructure awards, which is a conservative estimate and will likely be higher. Mentioned the need to document how to maintain or expand on it in future years.
  - David Lipsky: Asked if the definition of disadvantage is based on state or federal.
    - Mark Tedesco: Responded that we should use federal definitions. Mentioned it is not fully clear and we could use both if we would like but start with the federal definition.
- Leah O'Neill: Explained that existing grantees need to assess their needs for future funding due to multi-year projects so we can better assess the unallocated part of the budget. Mentions that a work plan request sent out to work groups to figure out their needs and path forward as well and that the Mentioned how the SharePoint tracking tool helps see where our funding is going and where we're starting to meet our ecosystem targets as well as gaps and pieces. Emphasized the need to layer how everything ties into environmental justice and meeting and exceeding our justice40 goals by layering it into existing and future work. Mentions we should expand into communities we haven't before, and the additional staff gives an opportunity to plan and look to the future with the bigger picture in FY23.
- Mark Tedesco: Reiterated that we have asked work groups for work plans to emphasize next step needs. Mentioned we will kick off planning process in October 19-20<sup>th</sup> meeting in Port Jefferson at the Danford's Hotel. Emphasized that it will be in person only, not hybrid, and to make sure you have a representative to attend if you cannot. Explains that FY22 funding will carry forward for infrastructure so planning for FY23 should be more constrained. Base programs will carry over for subsequent years as well.
  - Rebecca Shuford: Commented on Justice40 and the struggle with disadvantaged communities' definition stating that it puts the burden on communities themselves. Asked if we should we try to come up with more inclusive appropriate terms.
    - Mark Tedesco: Responded that the term EPA has used is overburdened and underserved. It is worth a conversation.
    - Leah O'Neill: Added that it is a good reminder about how we use these words.
    - Bessie Wright: Responded that the EJ workgroup has talked about different terms. Explained that official terms we put into funding and grants must meet what EPA is using which is currently underserved communities. Mentioned that as we move forward, we will find we can be flexible with terms we use with the communities and what is appropriate.
  - Holly Drinkuth: Commented on FY23 planning and meeting in October and how it would be helpful to know how we can go about the meeting and be prepared. Asked what it will look like in terms of anticipated spending, etc. Mentioned we should be intentional with projects we choose to help meet ecosystem targets.
    - Mark Tedesco: Responded that work group work plans and a summary of our forecast for next year's funds will be provided. Explained that we will look to confirm we are we on the right track for infrastructure funding as well as look to see if there are missing pieces in the SRC work group work plan from the last in person meeting. Will touch on communication plan and governance plan as well and ideas of what else needs to be discussed are welcomed.

- Leah O’Neill: Responded to Vicki’s question in the chat that they haven’t yet chosen facilitators but plan to.
- Paul Stacey: Proposed LISS do a rethink about where we are headed. Emphasized the need to focus on ecosystem health which acts a domino to all other goals. Suggested everyone read the Governance Plan intro and see what we promise to do but haven’t been doing. Mentioned the President’s America the Beautiful Plan sets the tone for landscape issues, climate change etc. and brings it all together – something LISS has lacked. Need to connect watershed.

#### **Communications Plan – Robert Burg**

- Robert Burg: Introduced the communications plan and how the current project started about one year ago. Mentions it was challenging to take the existing communication and education plans and translate them to be relevant to the 2020s but were able to take it to next step. It is now a detailed work plan on how to communicate to partners and communities to better tell the story of the LISS success and instill the need of stewardship from the community.
- Jessica Aiello: Presented on the plan and mentions that outreach and engagement are also very important in addition to communication. Establishes a framework for LISS staff, partners, and stakeholders for communication, outreach, and engagement. The methodology included two phases: the research phase and the plan development phase. The 4 key themes of the plan were tied to the CCMP goals. Key part of this plan is enhancing collaboration. Matrix is heart of the plan, which outlines the 5 goals of the plan. The implementation section provides roadmap to organizational structure. Gave an overview of 5 goals and the action plans for each. Explained resource recommendations for each of the goals.
- Robert Burg: Added that research identified that we are under resourced with communication efforts. Outreach efforts have investments in water quality, habitat, and education, mostly through the futures fund program.
- Richard Gunn: Mentioned the strong distinction between outreach and communication work – quite important that LISS work on telling the story of the partnership as well as outreach.
- Kamazima: Mentioned there should be more specific messaging for younger people and should be clearly stated that young people are a target group. Added that it is important to get young people involved early.
  - Jessica Aiello: Responded that this came up a lot during research and that the plan outlines the need for messaging for each age group/audience how the message will need to be tailored.
- Nancy Balcom: Emphasized that a lot of great science is not being communicated and shared. Suggests that full time employees with this job function would enable LISS to get more of this done.
- Dave Lipsky: Asked if the plan should also look to leverage ongoing education work with nearby estuaries, specifically with schools. Explains that Westchester County and the south shore of LI focus more on estuaries like the Hudson River and Peconic estuary. Also mentions that we are at a disadvantage for outreach if we do not link up with other programs.
  - Richard Gunn: Responded that having unified message is very important but we will need to make sure it does not under resource the communication part. Important to keep outreach and communication portions separate.
  - Robert Burg: Mentioned the need to address the identity of LIS in the years ahead.
  - Rebecca Rubin: Mentioned she agrees about the need to look beyond LISS outreach to forge connections which will be implemented.
  - David Lipsky: Mentioned the need to define the different types of communities and governance structures. Villages and small municipalities can sponsor outreach in their communities better.



- Mark Tedesco: Responded that there is a group that meets regularly about nutrients on Long Island – talk regularly about how to create campaign about fertilizer and making it a connection to other programs. Mentioned we don't work in a vacuum and communication will be more effective if we create partnerships.
- Alicia Tyson: Echoed Nancy. Mentioned the need to reach other communities like Spanish speaking communities and described importance, pointing out that these communities are not homogenous. Explained that we need to be clear about overlap for new roles and integrate EJ at foundational level. Mentioned we need to make sure we are not overburdening communities with multiple of the same surveys, contact, etc.
  - Rebecca Rubin: Need integration and without dedicated resource it is everybody and nobody's responsibility. Dedicated piece will alleviate that.
  - Lee Halterman: Added that the implementation of goals three and four address this concern, that collaboration should be carried through the community through outreach and engagement.
- Mark Tedesco: Thanked the communication team for stimulating discussion. Asked if Robert has received the completed outreach and engagement plan. Mentioned it is up to us to decide what parts to act on which will be discussed further in October as well as how we are deploying existing resources. Highlighted that communication will not be successful if the program and program staff do not contribute. Mentioned the rebranding of LISS and changing the name in the future which would need to be discussed before the October meeting to determine what needs to be done in preparation.
- Robert Burg: Thanked team and engagement of committee and looking forward to years ahead.

#### **Governance Plan – Casey Abel**

- Casey Abel: Presented on updated Governance Plan. Touched on the need for the plan – it details what we do. Must be consistent with CWA 119. Explained the structure of the program will change over time to adapt to what we do and therefore so will document. Explained the structure of the document and edits that were made based on comments – some suggestions were not implemented but we are keeping them in mind. Highlighted that decision making has changed to a unanimous or consensus-based approach. She mentioned the updated timeline and the plan to be slated for approval at the October MC meeting. Further comment should be sent via email and should be sent ASAP but will be accepted until September 30<sup>th</sup>.
  - Chris Bellucci: Mentioned the need to think about how to keep MC website current since it needs to be constantly updated and gave the example of the outdated committee members list on the website.
    - Mark Tedesco: Agreed and mentioned that committee members change and we don't want to include information that will change frequently in the document, but we need to pay attention to the website.
  - Holly Drinkuth: Mentioned that when CAC did bylaws they adopted operation guidelines that gave the CAC the ability to update the bylaws as necessary without a vote which could be something to consider.
    - Mark Tedesco: Responded that the document makes mention of the CAC bylaws without reiterating them.
- Mark Tedesco: Mentioned that comments will be accepted until Sept. 30<sup>th</sup> and the final document will be presented at the October meeting.
- Paul Stacey: Mentioned the section on MC roles and operations should have a section for public input that both allows and limits it.
  - Holly Drinkuth: Agreed on the idea.
  - Mark Tedesco: Asked Casey to make note of this and agreed.

**Sustainable and Resilient Communities Outreach Report Out – SRC Team**

- Alicia Tyson: Presented on Needs Assessment overview: to listen to concerns and threats, what are communities doing, what challenges are being faced and how the SRC team can help. Gave overview of scope of work.
- Elizabeth Hornstein: Gave an update on connecting with Suffolk County groups and organizations. Bluff erosion was the most frequent challenge that came up. Gave overview of needs which included connecting with experts and increased regional collaboration. Learned that there are lots of existing plans and identified projects, such as watershed restoration plans. Also gave an update for Nassau County. Challenges there included frequent flooding, coastal erosion, lack of resources/capacity and marine debris. Identified many opportunities for collaboration with several different partners such as Oyster Bay and Cold Spring Harbor protection committees.
- Sarah Powell: Gave an update on Westchester County challenges, needs and opportunities from connecting with organizations and volunteer groups. Challenges they faced were flooding, limited capacity and funding and how to identify needs. Noted opportunities to address these challenges through watershed planning efforts, updating municipal and county-wide codes and projects to address flooding.
- Alicia Tyson: Gave an update on Western and Eastern Connecticut challenges, needs and opportunities. Western Connecticut is facing challenges of funding, expertise, and staff capacity. There are opportunities for model code sharing and projects are in development. There is a need to help communities understand the resources available to them. Eastern Connecticut is facing coastal erosion, poor water quality, limited resources and access and knowledge of funding opportunities. There are many opportunities to assist with the momentum building across sectors and attending community events among others.
  - Paul Stacey: Mentioned that we are reacting to problems from climate change and the need to focus on fixing ecosystem health. Gave advice on how to tackle challenges.

**Updates**

- Bessie Wright: Explained how the EJ RFA addresses multiple needs presented by the SRC team and will be a federal and technical support program. Mentioned the posting closes September 12<sup>th</sup> and how we are hoping for local applications. Mentioned the Futures Fund had 100 applications for this year and \$10.56 million worth of projects will be funded. Explained that the pool of applicants is very competitive group and funding decisions will be difficult. Very forward thinking from applicants.
- Mark Tedesco: Mentioned that he is under discussion with NEP and NY harbor program to help host the tech transfer meeting in fall 2024. It will be tentatively held in the Stony Brook area. More updates will follow.

**Next Meeting & Adjournment – Mark Tedesco**

- Meeting was adjourned at 12:30pm.
- Next meeting: October 19-20<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at Danford's Hotel in Port Jefferson