

6/19/2015 STAC Meeting Notes

In Attendance: Larry Swanson (Chair), Jason Krumholz, Penny Howell, Victoria O'Neil, Charles deQuillfeldt, Anne McElroy, Mark Tedesco, Cassie Bauer, Gillian Stewart, Amy Mandelbaum, John Connolly, Robert Wilson, Kely Streich, Jim Latimer, Nancy Seligson, Brett Branco, Charlie Yarish, Anthony Dvarskas, Georgia Basso, Robin Jaxhi (IEC), Hans Dam

Swanson: New member introduction- John Connolly from Anchor QEA.

Mark Tedesco Budget Notes: 2015= "Gap Year" to focus on CCMP implementation. Monitoring/research/LISFF level funded. NOAA interagency agreement discontinued. Further discussion of a lead scientist position at October Management Committee Meeting. FY 16 also looks to potentially be level funded.

Nancy Seligson, CAC update : Joint meeting discussion in the fall. **Tentative date selected for Thursday September 17, tentative location Bridgeport CT.** Primary topic of discussion for this joint meeting is report cards. Will we carry on and who will carry them on. How to communicate grades/thresholds. CAC also discussed DC lobbying trip, and is making progress on bipartisan legislation to protect LIS. Discussion also about fish kills/turtle kills in CT and Peconic estuaries. Tremendous year for menhaden = more dead menhaden. Several issues though. Oxygen related kills in Peconic and other smaller predation and/or suspected viral kills in CT embayments.

Caroline Donovan/Bill Dennison (by phone) Report Card Discussion: Report cards were issued. Some discussion of grades being too high/low, particularly in the embayments. It's important to remember and communicate that the present report card is a water quality grade, it doesn't include bather safety/bacteria, or in many cases fish (highly interannually variable) and we need to do our best to communicate that. The STAC also reviewed and discussed the website, and made a few suggestions to clarify the presentation of data (e.g. to specify the season used for each indicator metric) and create links to the methods document (which has yet to be uploaded. At the last minute before the Report Card release, EPA requested their name be withdrawn from the report card effort due to concern over the appearance of funding advocacy efforts. Hopefully, this will be resolved shortly.

Dredge Material Management Plan and Sentinel Monitoring discussion tabled due to illness in the O'Donnell Family. Get well soon Jim and Jen.

CCMP update, Jim Latimer: The CCMP is in galley form, both in terms of the main document, and the executive/public summary. It includes 129 actions across 4 themes, and 21 specific quantitative ecosystem targets. EPA region 1 and 2 and the state of CT have signed off, but we're still waiting on sign off from the state of New York.

Tidal Wetlands Quality Analysis, Georgia Basso (powerpoint attached): Georgia briefed the STAC on the methods for selecting indicators, and cutpoints for habitat quality assessment in general, and tidal wetlands analysis in specific. In general, the quality of tidal wetlands improves from west to east, from

poor condition, to moderate. Overall acreage of tidal wetlands is approximately stable since the 1970's though still well below the pre-industrialized baseline. Small percentage gains in CT have been balanced by substantial percentage losses in the (smaller) NY portion of the study area.

Marsh Migration Analysis, Chris Elphick (by phone, powerpoint attached): Dr. Elphick examined a wide range of potential indicators of marsh migration, testing hypotheses that canopy edge is moving inland, tree mortality is higher at forest edge, tree growth is slower at canopy edge, and marsh vegetation is commonly found in forest understory. These hypotheses would be considered to be evidence of marsh migration. The research showed very little evidence of marsh migration in the sampled plots.

Factors Influencing Marsh Migration, Shimon Anisfeld (powerpoint attached): Dr. Anisfeld is actively investigating factors which might influence marsh migration rates by looking at proxy factors in upland transects. His research indicates that factors such as slope and shading may have a substantial impact on migration rates.

Water Quality Monitoring Workshop, Krumholz (powerpoint attached): The water quality monitoring and modeling workshop is July 14&15 in Avery Point Connecticut. Registration is open at <http://neiwppc.org/LISWQworkshop/>. Early Bird registration ends July 2. Attached is a powerpoint of key questions for the sessions. Please add/subtract/comment on these preliminary driving questions to Jason Krumholz (jason.krumholz@noaa.gov) by COB Tuesday June 30. Your input is greatly appreciated

New Agenda Items: Thursday 17th September Joint STAC/CAC meeting Probably Bridgeport HCC. Continue with planned November 20 STAC meeting Joint meeting agenda items: Review of monitoring meeting. Report card discussion Funders collaborative, funding for next year, workshop on communicating the data, long term "home for the report card"

Other topics for discussion: Audubon Shore Birds analysis, Blue Plan passage, Nutrient Bioextraction, Acidification/pH discussion