

Management Committee Meeting Notes
Thursday, April 16, 2020
Meeting conducted remotely due to COVID-19



Attendees:

Mark Tedesco, EPA LISO
Nikki Tachiki, EPA LISO
Leah O'Neill, EPA R1
Mel Cote, EPA R1
Bessie Wright, EPA R1
MaryJo Feuerbach, EPA R1
Richard Balla, EPA R2
Darcy Lonsdale, STAC/NY
Paul Stacey, STAC
Nancy Seligson, CAC/NY
Holly Drinkuth, CAC/CT
Brian Thompson, CTDEEP
Harry Yamalis, CTDEEP
Mark Parker, CTDEEP
Phil Trowbridge, CTDEEP

Casey Personius, NYSDEC
Koon Tang, NYSDEC
Sue Van Patten, NYSDEC
Julia Socrates, NYSDEC/MHP
Nelle D'Aversa, NYSDEC/NEIWPC
Victoria O'Neill, NYSDEC/NEIWPC
Rebecca Shuford, NYSG
Jimena Perez-Viscasillas, NYSG
David Lipsky, NYCDEP
Jayne Beckmann, NYCDEP
Sylvain De Guise, CTSG
Judy Preston, LISS/CTSG
Robert Burg, NEIWPC
Audra Martin, NEIWPC
Jim Ammerman, LISS/NEIWPC

Susan Sullivan, NEIWPC
Evelyn Powers, IEC
Jim O'Donnell, STAC/UCONN
Tracy Brown, SAVE THE SOUND
Suzanne Paton, USFWS
Todd Randall, USACE
Nancy Ferlow, USDA-NRCS
Thomas Morgart, CT NRCS
Jon Morrison, USGS CT
Ron Busciolano, USGS
Don Walder, USGS
Chris Schubert, USGS
Gary Wikfors, NOAA/NMFS

Introduction:

Mark Tedesco called the meeting to order at approximately 9:00 am and introduced everyone present in the Skype Meeting. The outcome of today's meeting should be an agreed upon list of proposals for the FY 2020 budget. The RFPs for Long Island Sound Futures Fund and Research have both been released. No proposed additions or changes to the agenda. No comments on the January (2020) Management Committee notes.

Science and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) Update provided by Jim Ammerman:

- The March 6 STAC Meeting was the last in-person LISS meeting; notes have been distributed for comment. Meeting covered LISS budget priorities, the Research RFP, interaction and cooperation with the CAC, and three technical presentations.
 - The technical presentations were from Janet Barclay, USGS: "Groundwater flow and nitrogen attenuation in aquifers on the north shore of Long Island Sound" Peter Auster, U. Conn. & Mystic Aquarium: "Addressing the Role of Forage Fish in the LIS Ecosystem: Some Food (Prey?) for Thought and Discussion" Hannes Baumann, U. Conn.: "Ocean Acidification in LIS and the impact on Larval Fish"
 - At the meeting Mark Tedesco covered increased funding to LIS as well as current gaps and future areas for potential new investments. Then he overviewed the newly released Long Island Sound Futures Fund Request for Proposals
 - Then Jim Ammerman reviewed the components and led a discussion the LISS Research RFP, which was released by New York and Connecticut Sea Grants on March 16.
 - There was a discussion about the CAC and their engagement in Washington DC. STAC is interested in engaging more with the CAC and selected two STAC Liaisons to attend CAC meetings (Jamie Vaudrey & Kamazima Lwiza).
- Follow-up:
 - Mel Coté: LIS hypoxia is a bigger driver to ocean acidification in LIS, N loading main driver near-shore, large ocean main driver is carbon, is that right?

- Jim Ammerman: The connection is primarily DO in estuaries.
- Jim O'Donnell: For surface waters it is probably carbon, the bottom of water column is DO.
- Paul Stacey: Denitrification releases alkalinity

Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Update provided by Nancy Seligson:

- CAC Meeting took place March 12, 2020 remotely as a ZOOM meeting. Mark reviewed budget with CAC, also reviewed implementation and tracking assessment. The CAC provided comments on the format of the implementation tracking assessment. CAC received comments on importance of communicating. CAC was planning a DC trip to meet with Congressional representatives and their offices but switched to a Zoom meeting. Updates from NY and CT on budgets
- Planning for events, held meetings on 3/24 Gillibrand, Murphy, Lowey, Congressman Himes. Discussions with listed Reps/Senators/Offices of Reps & Senators included CAC recommending increase to \$30 million, legislators seemed to support—easily recognized that was an appropriate level of funding. However, they recognize that a continuing resolution for FY2021 as a possibility now. Thanks to Tracy who helped organize the Zoom meeting. Next Zoom meeting in June.
- Follow-up:
 - Tracy Brown: If there is an infrastructure project it needs to include water projects not just bridges and roads.
 - Nancy Seligson: Legislators supported that.
 - Holly Drinkuth: \$30 million is unlikely, probably will hold at \$21 million.
 - Mel Coté: Pitching RA habitat restoration ideas related to stimulus actions, finding shovel ready projects, what will be the match requirements on these projects?
 - Koon Tang: ID shovel ready wastewater and drinking water projects to send to our Congressional reps.
 - Koon Tang will ask internally if he can share this information with Nancy Seligson.

LIS 2020 Work Plan and Budget – Mark Tedesco

- Mark Tedesco, Overview: \$21.6 M available, base requests do not get reviewed at MC meetings (EPA works with those grantees), enhancement list gets reviewed. Base program budget is about \$10 M and this leaves \$11.6 M for enhancement proposals. The total submitted enhancement package is \$12.7 M; we need to find a way to reduce the request by not funding or reducing the size of the request.
- Mel Coté: What was the base funding in FY2019?
- Leah O'Neill: Roughly \$8.1 M; increase was mostly in the LIS Futures Fund and research funding
- Mark Tedesco: This year's enhancements may alter the base expectations for future years, I will point out when that could happen during the discussion.
- Mark Tedesco: We now have 30 proposals; one low-cost proposal has been added since the Jan. meeting (#30 - see packet for details). The I Team put together a list of options (don't fund, reduce funding, postpone funding). #8 the only project not recommended to fund.

- Koon Tang: If the \$300,000 proposal #8 is not funded, we need an additional \$800,000 savings.
- Leah O'Neill: The Excel spreadsheet that was distributed in advance of the meeting has the most updated numbers and we'll be using that during this discussion to finalize the MC funding recommendations. We are not looking to get down to the last dollar today since some indirect rate changes and other modifications may arise before the final budgets are submitted to Grants.gov. We need a little wiggle room in case of unexpected events. We cannot fund any actions until we have confirmed the aggregate match to cover our statutory requirements. If any base or enhancement proposals cannot cover their full required match they must notify EPA. All public outreach funding and activities must be flagged and documented separately to take advantage of the reduced match rate for those activities.
- Mark Tedesco: The final project budget numbers often change due to modified indirect cost rates or projects that seem viable become unviable. If that happens where would the funding go? Need to set priorities for unfunded proposals. #19 Rainbow Dam Fish lift: dependent on a bonding measure that hasn't yet passed, if this weren't funded today we would be able to fund everything else.
- Phil Trowbridge: The Rainbow Dam fish lift project is a top priority, want to see this funded today, especially hopeful given the stimulus funding, we could say yes now and if it doesn't work out we could shift funding to other projects--same for sea floor mapping project.
- Mark Tedesco: Could fund #19 at \$500,000 for FY2020 and fund same in FY2021, similar situation for #5 solute transport project and #22 sea floor mapping project. With those three projects partially funded we could fund everything.
- Leah O'Neill: We can partial fund projects, but we don't want to tie up too much of next year's funded in obligations from this year, but also don't want too much in unliquidated funds left on the table this year.
- Sylvain De Guise: Could you give a summary of how prioritization and concern flagging happened? Mark Tedesco responded that for proposal #4 EPA would need a new IA with USGS, we couldn't incorporate into an existing IA (administrative burden for EPA); some aspects of the proposal is concerned with local WQ, is it a temporary fix for a gap in funding of their local WQ monitoring program or would it be an addition to the base funding.
- Phil Trowbridge: We had great batch of proposals, Koon and I were asked to think about the larger projects to see if they could be phased. Fundamentally, all these projects are good, funding is the issue.
- Mark Tedesco: I concur with the way Phil described that, this is more akin to having great scenes may go on the cutting room floor because of the time limit, what is less critical? There are no critical flaws in these projects.
- Koon Tang: If we spread funding for these three projects (#5, #19, #22) we could fund everything, including the stormwater manual back on the list. There are concerns about it being a state-wide project
- Mark Tedesco, OPTION: #5, #19, #22 split funding between FY2020 and FY2021 and we could add back 8. Aso, #4 and #23 are 2-year proposals currently only showing funding for one year. We could also fully fund those fairly small projects. Fully funding both #4 and #23 would be

another \$125,000 - we'd have just under \$200,000 for #8 if NYSDEC is able to adjust the proposal

- Ron Busciolano: About #4, two-year stop-gap proposal until we find some longer-term local funding for the gage moving forward.
- Mel Coté: I support update of stormwater guidance.
- Mark Tedesco gave a summary of #30 with Jon Morrison providing further elaboration.
- Mark Tedesco provided an overview of the Management Committee recommendations.
- Leah O'Neill: If there are any remaining funds, would the Management Committee prefer they go to #8 or to one of the projects that would be split between FY2020 and FY2021?
- Koon Tang and Phil Trowbridge: Consistent with priorities it should go into one of the split projects.
- Vicky O'Neil, about #23: CT-focused proposal, but could there be some including of NY in the discussion and planning because it's something we would want to move into NY, as well.
- Brian Thompson: Yeah, we could make that happen, but will be more weighted to CT but we could incorporate some of NY, maybe pilot projects in both states, funds permitting
- Mark Tedesco: EPA will finalize the MC FY20 funding recommendations and provide guidance to applicants on final amounts, Each applicant should work with their EPA Project Officer to finalize their award packages and submit them to Grants.gov ASAP as a quick turn-around time is needed.

2015 CCMP Tracking and Reporting – Nikki Tachiki

- Mark Tedesco: Overview, required to report progress to Congress
- Nicole Tachiki: LISS plans to report 2015 progress to Congress that monitors progress made towards meeting CCMP. Assess 2015 IA and complete 2020 update
- See PowerPoint presentation for details of this section.
- Mel Coté: Did the STAC review?
- Nicole Tachiki: Jim Ammerman reviewed it but not all the STAC members reviewed the spreadsheet.
- Koon Tang: Will the reports to Congress capture cumulative progress or focus on progress made during a two-year time frame?
- Nicole Tachiki: We haven't made decisions on the actual content of the report to Congress yet. We do plan to highlight certain projects during the reporting timeframe to show work that has been accomplished.
- Mark Tedesco: The 2020 report will be unique because it will be a 5-year assessment of CCMP implementation. The future format of the report might change into something online that is regularly updated. The format of future reports may change based on what the 2020 CCMP is going to look like. We want regular updates for implementation online and readily available.
- Nicole Tachiki: Input on what actions should be included in 2020 CCMP, see PowerPoint presentation. Currently accepting input. Which actions in the Sustainable and Resilient

Communities theme should be broader or more specific for 2020? Please send EPA specific recommended language. It would be most helpful if you send comments by email. General comments are good for today's discussion.

- Paul Stacey: It might be better to look at IAs categorically: Monitoring & Assessment, Research/Applied Research, Management Implementation--quantifiable ecosystem level restoration, not just managing hypoxia...
- Mark Tedesco, Reporting: assessing program outputs (action level)—did we do what we said would be done; did those outputs result in outcomes we said we would achieve? We are not limiting reporting to IAs, we want to look at ecosystem outcomes, big picture is important.
- Mark Tedesco emphasized that we have a near-final assessment of 2015 CCMP implementation—comments will help us finalize that assessment. We need to close this portion of the work. As part of the review, people are providing input into 2020 CCMP IAs. Finalize 2015 assessment in June to begin developing the report to Congress. Draft final 2020 IA list will be presented at the July meeting.
- Phil Trowbridge: Thanks Nikki for great work on complicated spreadsheet.
- Nicole Tachiki: Thanks to everyone for contributing.

Updates:

- Mark Tedesco: RFPs are out, thanks to everyone for working with local partners to find more proposals for LISFF
- Mark Tedesco: Science needs posted on website, Jim Ammerman took lead.
- Victoria O'Neil: LIS Tidal Wetlands Loss Workshop originally planned for June 2020 has been postponed. In person meeting will be likely in Spring 2021.
- Mark Tedesco: SRC workgroup, more formal meeting structure starting next year, focus on SRC actions
- Robert Berg: Community Based Social Marketing workshop also has been postponed. An online workshop is being considered for fall 2020.
- Nancy Ferlow: NRCS State and National Conservation Innovation Grants are open for work with farmers and Forest landowners.
- Jim Ammerman: Science Needs link on LISS website:
<https://longislandsoundstudy.net/2020/03/science-needs-comprehensive-summary/>
- Paul Stacey: What's going on with the Nutrient Management Strategy?
- Mark Tedesco and Leah O'Neill: Under the EPA Long Island Sound Nitrogen Strategy, EPA is working closely with its contractor, Tetra Tech, to revise the analytical methods used to develop nitrogen targets for Long Island Sound based on the comments received through the external technical review and public comments. In response, Tetra Tech is revisiting certain assumptions and conducting supplemental analysis to further improve the work's technical basis and methodology. EPA and Tetra Tech will revise the contract deliverables, documenting responses to all comments. EPA expects a draft of the revised deliverables in the beginning of May and

will work to schedule a webinar with the Technical Stakeholder Group midsummer to review the changes before distributing to the public.

- Phil Trowbridge: Restore America's Estuaries Conference is scheduled for October in Narragansett, RI. Three specific LIS sessions have been proposed.

Next Meeting & Adjournment – Mark Tedesco

- Meeting was adjourned at 12:15 pm.