



**Long Island Sound Study
Management Committee Meeting Notes
Housatonic Community College
Thursday, April 19th, 2018**

Attendees: Jim Ammerman, NEIWPC; Rick Balla, EPA Region 2; Cassie Bauer, NYSDEC; Tracy Brown, Save the Sound; Robert Burg, NEIWPC; Mel Coté, EPA/NE; Nelle D’Aevrsa, NEIWPC/NYSDEC; Sylvain DeGuise, CT Sea Grant; Holly Drinkuth, TNC; Nancy Ferlow, NRCS, Peter Francis, CTDEEP; Richard Friesner, NEIWPC; Chuck Lee, CTDEEP; Dave Lipsky, NYCDEP; Bill Lucey, Save the Sound; Dawn McReynolds, NYSDEC; Tom Morgart USDA/NRCS/CT; Jonathan Morrison, USGS/CT; Jim O’Donnell, UConn; Leah O’Neill, EPA; Mark Parker, CTDEEP; Robin Parker, EPA HQ; Evelyn Powers, IEC; Richard Friesner, NEIWPC; Nancy Seligson, CAC/NY; Mark Tedesco, EPA; Harry Yamalis, CTDEEP; Gary Wikfors, NOAA Fish; Anna Weshner-Dunning, NY Sea Grant; Bill Wise, NY Sea Grant; Lori Mathieu, CTDPH; Judy Preston, CT Sea Grant.

Welcome/Introductions/Logistics. Mark Tedesco called the meeting to order at 9:45am. Mark welcomed Nelle D’Aversa, the new Bioextraction Coordinator, and Robin Parker, EPA HQ, to the meeting. There were no comments on the January Management Committee meeting notes or additions to the agenda.

REPORTS

Science and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC).

Jim Ammerman provided the STAC update. The STAC met at Avery Point on February 23, 2018. The three principal investigators (Wally Fulweiler, Craig Tobias, and Mark Altabet) from the 2015 round of LISS research proposals presented on their work related to benthic-pelagic coupling. These three projects were given a NCTE until end of September 2018. After their presentations, there was a general discussion relating to the major issues of nitrogen, sediments, and hypoxia in the Sound. Other presentations included an update on the NERACCOS nutrient observatory from Tom Shyka, the 2017 LIS eelgrass survey results from Suzanne Paton and Mike Bradley, the CT National Estuarine Research Reserve selection process from Kevin O’Brien, and an update on the LIS Report Card by Jamie Vaudrey and Peter Linderoth. All of the [STAC meeting summaries](#) are available on the LISS website.

Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC).

Nancy Seligson provided the CAC update. The CAC met on April 9th at EPA Region 2 building. Pete Lopez, EPA Regional Administrator, joined the meeting to talk about his experiences/background and listen to the issues that are of importance to CAC members. The CAC also reviewed a survey that was distributed to CAC members. As a result of the survey, the CAC decided it was important to expand their membership to marine trades organizations. Robert Burg gave an update on the ecosystem target webpages and the LISS Social Media Campaign on marine debris. Many CAC members participated in the social media campaign last year and plan to do so again this year. Koon Tang and Lorraine Holdridge, from NYSDEC’s Division of Water, attended the meeting and gave an update on LINAP and Tracy Brown gave

an update on the LISS report card. The next report card will be using dissolved inorganic carbon (DIC) instead of nitrogen and should be released in September. The policy committee wants to organize a trip to Washington in September. The CAC also plans to reach out and thank the legislators for the increase in funding to Long Island Sound this year. Adrienne Esposito reported good news to the group about the new plastic bag fee in Suffolk County. Based on survey results, 60-80% of residents now bring their bag, up from 5%. The CAC would also like to encourage an executive steering committee meeting for LIS in the near future.

CCMP IA PROGRESS REPORTS

Work group summaries were sent out to the Management Committee members prior to the meeting. There were no comments.

CCMP Tracking & Reporting updates

Robert Burg gave an update on the new ecosystem targets webpages that went live on March 26. The webpages are divided by the CCMP themes: <http://longislandsoundstudy.net/research-monitoring/liss-ecosystem-targets-and-supporting-indicators/>. There are also separate categories for climate change and other supporting indicators. The CCMP webpage was also updated and Robert is working on adding success stories to these pages. The GAO has been reviewing these pages and are still in the process of giving us their final report. LISS staff will use the GAO report to help further track the ecosystem targets and indicators.

There was a discussion about the metrics used to track the number of people looking at each of these webpages as tracking metrics is important to help secure funding. There are certain times of the year (ex: around the LISFF RPF release data) when the communications team notices more visitors to the webpages, but overall, more people look at the LISS social media posts than the website.

Other Communication team updates:

- Currently, the Sound Update “Year in Review” and a LIS fact sheet are being drafted by the communications team.
- Judy Preston developed two LISS posters for LISS meetings and tabling events. There are three sets of posters which will be housed at the LISO, CT Sea Grant, and NY Sea Grant offices. The cost was \$189 per poster.

Implementation: Futures Fund RFP

The 2018 LIS Futures Fund RFP was announced on March 15th. Proposals will be accepted through May 10th. Lynn Dwyer held an applicant webinar and two in-person workshops in Massachusetts and Vermont reaching over 100 interested applicants.

Nitrogen Strategy Updates

EPA Nitrogen Strategy

Leah O’Neill provided an update on the EPA Nitrogen Strategy. EPA is putting final touches on the response to technical comments and hopes to send it out to technical stakeholder group soon. The new EPA Regional Administrators have been heavily involved in this effort. At the last LISS Management Committee meeting the Committee approved \$30,000 in funding for a

technical review and EPA is currently proposing additional funds Phase 2, which would include more public engagement, and would allow EPA to further address gaps and technical comments that were received from the workgroup. One gap from this study was a lack of monitoring in the Connecticut River. So, EPA conducted monitoring in 2017 and will continue monitoring in 2018. The current contract with Tetra Tech has expired, but EPA is continuing collaboration with NYSDEC and CTDEEP.

There was a request to send the final report from the 2018 CT River monitoring to the Management Committee.

LINAP

Dawn McReynolds provided an update on work being done through the Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan. NYSDEC continues to work with Nassau and Suffolk counties on onsite septic system improvements. Suffolk County has approved a few advanced onsite treatment systems and is still looking at addition technologies. NYSDEC is also working with Suffolk County on subwatershed planning and developing indicators and endpoints. There will be a LINAP update, with presentations from NYSDEC, LIRPC, and Nassau and Suffolk Counties, on May 8th from 1:00pm-5:00pm at the Brookhaven Town Hall.

Dawn also introduced Nelle D'Aversa, the new Bioextraction coordinator, who is working at NYSDEC's Region 1 office in Stony Brook.

CTDEEP 2nd Generation

Chuck Lee provided an update of Connecticut's Second Generation Nitrogen Strategy. Lombardo associates is on track to complete their contracted work by September 30. They are doing a lot by lot assessment in three municipalities. CTDEEP is in communication with EPA on how to best to report back on the completed actions to EPA. There was interest from the Management Committee in the estimated number of homes on cesspool/septic systems in Connecticut.

NYC Modeling effort

Dave Lipsky provided an update on the NYC modeling effort. On April 24, the TAC will be meeting to review the technical guidance document. The TAC will also be providing comments on the draft scope of work for water quality monitoring. Another meeting will be held on April 30 to finalize the scope of work. The TAC includes outside experts as well as NYSDEC, CTDEEP, and EPA staff.

There was a suggestion to include NYC modeling efforts in the Nitrogen updates for future Management Committee meetings.

FY18 LIS Budget Update

FY18 budget & workplan process:

LISS was awarded \$12.6 million in the FFY18 budget, \$4 million more than last year. Mark Tedesco went over the budget package prepared for the Management Committee, which includes a draft base program budget, a summary of the enhancement proposals, and a draft summary

budget chart with proposed funding recommendations. The summary chart also includes a few new suggested funding options including, LIS scientific research support, support for technical integration of nitrogen efforts, additional support for NYCDEP modeling, and additional support for the LIS Futures Fund.

Comments:

- We can't assume that we will be given this amount of funding in future years. We need to take that into consideration when deciding to fund a long-term project.
- EPA cannot commit to future appropriations. All CCMP enhancement proposals selected this year will need to reapply for FY19 CCMP enhancement funding if they require additional support.
- The base budget includes having all staff funded through September 2020.
- The base budget numbers are not finalized, but should not change too much.
- The match requirement is still 1:1. EPA cannot start giving out awards until match is established.

The Management Committee went through the budget line by line. Comments on each of the proposals and final MC recommendations are summarized below:

LIS Scientific Research Support

- CT and NY Sea Grant will be able to send out an RFP this year. Jim Ammerman has already drafted potential topics for the RFP. If we do fund this, we would have to finalize the RFP very quickly so it could fund work in the 2019 field season.
- Jim O'Donnell suggested setting higher funding limits for each project (last time the limit was \$200,000 max).
- Gary Wikfors noted that the research request is 10% of the total budget and suggested adding more money to research as it is a good investment for the future.
- It was suggested to increase research funding above the proposed recommendation amount. It is important to keep researchers interested in the STAC and LISS projects.

Proposed Recommendation = \$1,200,000

MC Recommendation = \$1,300,000

NYCDEP Modeling funds set-aside

- LISS provided \$1.4 million to this effort last year, with \$1.4 million in NYC match. The funds last year were considered a down payment with additional funding needed in the future. Continuing to move forward on an effort we funded last year makes sense.
- NYC will work to secure additional match if awarded more funding this year.
- This is not just a model. It would include simulations and measurements to understand the process of nitrogen and hypoxia in WLIS.

Proposed Recommendation = \$1,200,000

MC Recommendation = \$1,200,000

Technical Integration of Nitrogen Efforts

- There is no specific proposal for this at this time.
- CTDEEP drafted a proposal to model a number of embayments. This could potentially fund that effort.

- There was a discussion about whether this money should be split between the states and EPA on their respective efforts or if it would be better to use this money for projects that would help integrate efforts. Maybe a technical workgroup can think about recommendations of where to spend this money. If we don't have the technical capacity within our entities, it might make sense to fund an external contractor.
- There is a need to have a structured evaluation of these efforts and identify where there are conflicts/compatibility.
- CTs suggested project was put as a place holder.

Proposed Recommendation = option to fund

MC Recommendation = \$250,000

Development of Benthic Macroinvertebrate Sampling Methodology and Tools to assess Embayment Health in LIS

- This would be a new effort. The proposed recommendation is to set aside money to help development of a design program that would be funded in the future.
- There is a call in May with EPA ORD for work that has gone on elsewhere (Narragansett and NJ) to potentially incorporating their efforts here and also help to coordinate with sea floor mapping work through the cable fund.
- It was noted that coordination may be more complicated as it looks since many of the bottom waters are managed on the municipal level for shellfish.

Proposed Recommendation = \$100,000

MC Recommendation = \$100,000

Phase II of Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems - implementation of Phase I recommendations

- The proposed recommendation of \$100,000 will allow CTDEEP to keep the contract they have with Lombardo Associates going so they won't have to go through another procurement process, but, since it is not the full request, it also leaves time for uncertainty with what direction to take.
- This assessment (maps, elevations) will be publicly available.

Proposed Recommendation = \$100,000

MC Recommendation = \$100,000

Groundwater Budgets and Estimated travel times of Groundwater to the Connecticut Coast of LIS

- This project would help CTDEEP with their onsite wastewater project.
- The proposal, as modified, would include Westchester county.
- It is essential to know what the uncertainties in the measurements are

Proposed Recommendation = \$250,000

MC Recommendation = \$250,000

Development of LIS Hypoxic Volume Calculation Methodology and Increased GIS Analyses

- There was a discussion about how much more informative a volume calculation would be over the area calculation that we have. Jim O'Donnell explained that the area calculation

is a less stable statistic when you are looking at the impact of nutrient discharge. The link between sources and discharge is tighter when you look at volume.

- Would money be better spent getting more frequent samples at different depths?
- This is a one-time funding request and then the analysis would be incorporated into the report every year.
- Through this analysis, we may find out that we have reduced hypoxia more than we know, which would be helpful.

Proposed Recommendation = \$100,000

MC Recommendation = \$100,000

Lower Connecticut River Salinity Monitoring Equipment upgrade and replacement

- Suggested funding at the full level.

Proposed Recommendation = \$135,000

MC Recommendation = \$135,000

Development of a Nonpoint Source and Stormwater Tracking Tool for the LIS Watershed – Phase 2

- There is uncertainty in the ability to populate this tool with information. Who would input the data?
- NYSDEC may be tracking this in some way already so need to make sure we aren't duplicating efforts. It was suggested to charge the WEWG to follow up on this item and help find pilot embayments that would want to do this.
- This is type of tool is a specific component of the CCMP and part of the nitrogen ecosystem target.
- CAC supports moving forward with the tracking tool.
- Recommended to pursue the tracking tool for CT with consideration for NY in future. CTDEEP is comfortable committing to piloting this in the CT watershed.

Proposed Recommendation = option to fund

MC Recommendation = \$150,000

Unified Water Study: Nitrogen Impacts on LIS Bays and Harbors

- Data sharing is not included in this proposal. It was suggested to have 10% of the cost be used to make the data accessible besides the website.
- There was concern about whether the data would be useful if it doesn't get funded in future years. Jim O'Donnell mentioned that the value of the first year is much more than the next year. The screening level for the first year is very valuable.
- There remains support from the funders collaborative if LISS did have funding problems in future years.
- The program has proven to be very successful so far.

Proposed Recommendation = \$765,000

MC Recommendation = \$765,000

Enhancements to the LISICOS Buoy Array for Monitoring Hypoxia and Nutrients

- \$260,000 is likely needed to add the buoy.
- This grant will get the chlorophyll *a* sensor back on.

Proposed Recommendation = \$275,000
MC Recommendation = \$260,000

IEC 2018-2019 Monthly Water Quality Monitoring Surveys in Western Long Island Sound

- Recommend funding. No comments.

Proposed Recommendation = \$69,739
MC Recommendation = \$69,739

EPA Nitrogen Strategy Contract: Phase 2 Refining the technical methodology and outreach

- The Management Committee already approved \$30,000 at the last meeting for technical review. This would be to respond to potential comments and update the analysis in response to external technical review.
- Task H and I may not be funded in this proposal. It depends on how much further effort is required with tasks F and G. Funding Task H and I is a goal for the future.

Proposed Recommendation = \$200,000
MC Recommendation = \$200,000

Long Island Sound Nitrogen Reduction Coordination Workgroup

- This would be more formal coordination than what is currently happening and would include products.
- This would help set the stage for what is needed to help coordinate these efforts.
- There was a discussion as to whether this could be incorporated into the tasks of an existing work group. LISS currently does not have a work group that is set up to take this type of task on.

Proposed Recommendation = \$43,000
MC Recommendation = \$43,000

Stewardship Acquisition Proposals

- NYSDEC has two parcels in Conscience Bay (around \$450,000 each) that are ready to go.
- CTDEEP's proposal #14 is ready to go. CTDEEP is also confident that proposals #12 and #13 would be ready to go in FFY18.
- The states would provide match.

Proposed Recommendation = \$1,500,000
MC Recommendation = \$1,500,000 between the two states

Developing Conservation Plans for New York's Long Island Sound Marsh Complexes

- This is taking some of the SLR modeling and seeing what it means near stewardship areas. It is similar work to what was funded in CT last year.

Proposed Recommendation = \$87,116
MC Recommendation = \$87,116

Coordination of LIS Education Resources with the Next Generation Science Standards

- This project is likely not eligible through the LIS Futures Fund so it was recommended to fund.

- This proposal was not discussed through the PIE workgroup.
- There will be coordination with NY.

Proposed Recommendation = \$46,219

MC Recommendation = \$46,219

Long Island Sound Model and Data Sharing System

- The NYC model will be an open source model.
- Would it be possible to loop in the UWS data with this?
- NYSDEC DOW is working on data sharing effort as well. Great idea, but how do we integrate efforts?
- This proposal would benefit from further upfront planning of what we want, where it would be housed, etc. So, it was suggested to ask a core group from the STAC to come back with a recommendation on how to satisfy this broader need. This group will likely need 6 months to a year to figure out what is most appropriate.

Proposed Recommendation = \$0

MC Recommendation = \$0

LIS Futures Fund (additional support)

- Last year we expanded the geographic scope to include the tributary states (MA, NH & VT), and this year we increased the outreach so we expect to get a lot more proposals from them this year. NFWF still has around \$195,000 remaining from FY17 and they can carry over funds until FY19, if needed.

Proposed Recommendation = \$500,000

MC Recommendation = \$500,000

EPA emphasized that it will continue to work with applicants to finalize the base budget requests, confirm required 1:1 aggregate match, review available remaining funds, and clarify final enhancement proposals. EPA will then send out funding guidance to all applicants. As a result, the final budget numbers may vary slightly from figures discussed at the Management Committee meeting. The final work plan and budget will be summarized in the annual LISS work plan.

Mark Tedesco adjourned the meeting at 2:40pm.
