

Long Island Sound Study Citizens Advisory Committee
Virtual Meeting Via Zoom
Thursday, December 8, 2022
Meeting Summary



Welcome

- **Nancy Seligson** (CAC NY co-chair; Town of Mamaroneck) and **Holly Drinkuth** (CAC CT co-chair; The Nature Conservancy) called the meeting to order at 9:04 am.
- A quorum of 22 CAC member groups were represented and a total of **44 participants** attended.
- **Holly** and **Nancy** introduced the new CAC Member Coordinator **Francine Gordon** (Citizens Campaign of the Environment) and **David Ansel**, (Save the Sound) the new Director of Water Protection.
- **Mickey Weiss** (Project Oceanology) nominated and moved to vote on the Town of Groton as a new CAC member. **David Miller** (NYLCV) seconded. The motion carried unanimously. Groton will be represented by **Megan Granato**, Sustainability and Resilience Manager. **A majority of CAC members (20) voted in favor; zero opposed.**
- Nancy welcomed Megan Granato and invited all Long Island Sound Study agency and partner staff to introduce themselves.

Management Committee Meeting Report-Out

Mark Tedesco, EPA LIS Office

- **Mark Tedesco** reported on the two-day Management Committee (MC) meeting held October 19-20. FY23 \$52M budget priorities include increased funding for modeling and monitoring, nutrient modeling, Sustainable and Resilient Communities (SRC), Environmental Justice (EJ), habitat restoration, research program, water quality infrastructure via BIL funding and \$10 million for Futures Fund.
- Mark said the LISS Executive Steering Committee is scheduled to meet on January 9, 2023, and full notes will be available on the website.
- Nancy shared her observations from the October MC meeting including the need to focus on the ecosystem targets behind schedule and connecting Implementation Actions (IA) to ecological indicators and targets. She noted the CAC's responsibility to support improved LISS program coordination to help achieve Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) goals.

Communications, Outreach, and Engagement (COE) Plan Update

- **Robert Burg** reported on LISS COE updates presented at the October MC meeting. He noted the need to fill the open CT Sea Grant Outreach position and increase COE staff capacity to support LISS program growth. Tracking and updating indicators has largely been a communications team responsibility and requires monthly updates, which limits other communication work. The COE strategic plan recommends the addition of 2 full-time equivalent staff to develop communications content, reach more audiences, manage public online platforms, develop factsheets, newsletters, messaging, social media, engagement, and manage website updates as well as other outward facing work that will help to foster deeper appreciation of the Sound.

- Robert shared that the FY23 COE team workplan includes starting a **COE work group**, developing a demographics story map, conducting an EJ needs assessment, hiring a contractor to conduct a public perception survey in 2023 and exploring potential rebranding or renaming of LISS.
- David Miller commented LISS should strive to keep the name changing simple. Holly Drinkuth suggested the public perception survey may be an opportunity to test name recognition.
- **Lilli Genovesi** (NYSG/LISS) commented that including "estuary" and "program or partnership" in the name of our organization will benefit to community partner understanding of the program.
- **Nancy Seligson** noted the benefits of improved name recognition for social media campaigns on increasing engagement.
- CAC members shared ideas on names in the chat: LONG ISLAND SOUND ESTUARY PROGRAM (LISEP); Partnership for Long Island Sound (PLIS); Strong Partnership for the Long Island Sound, Honestly (SPLISH)
- **Bill Lucey** (Save the Sound) spoke about targets and needs for supporting indicators.
 - **Robert Burg** mentioned other estuary programs have added interim or supporting indicators and ecosystem targets. He emphasized the LISS public access target might benefit from additional indicator data.
 - **Mark Tedesco** noted changes to CCMP indicators and how changes can be made internally without outside approval, however changes of this nature would require significant dedication of time and resources.
- **Marty Garrell** (Adelphi University, CAC Secretary) looked ahead at potential challenges with changes in the House of Representatives.
- **George Hoffman** (Setauket Harbor Protection Committee) commented on the Embayment workgroup and suggesting more in-person meetings vs virtual.

Funding Finder Overview

Sue Van Patten, NYSDEC

- **Sue Van Patten** presented the NYS Funding Finder created by Mary Arnold (NYSDEC). The tool is used to identify water quality funding opportunities for municipalities and groups. It is designed for New York groups but search functions can be used by others. Sue demonstrated how the tool works and CAC members offered very positive feedback. Sue said she would reach out to CT DEEP to encourage them to create a tool for CT applicants. The tool is available on the DEC LINAP website.
Action item: CAC Members are invited to try the tool and send feedback on spreadsheet issues or gaps to Sue Van Patten via email to susan.vanpatten@dec.ny.gov .
- **Nancy Seligson** noted that municipalities can apply for funding to receive administrative help with grant writing as shared by the SRC staff during the December webinar.
- **Sue Van Patten** shared that DEC will host a webinar that will highlight success stories from communities that received funding.
- **Sara Powell** (NYSG/LISS) shared information about a new funding opportunity to hire grant writers via the SRC Team's LISS Resilience Grant Writing Assistance. These grants range from \$5,000 to \$9,500 and are available to municipalities for both NY and CT. The RFP can be accessed at <https://www.seagrant.sunysb.edu/proposals/> and at <https://seagrant.uconn.edu/2022/11/14/long-island-sound-resilience-grant-writing-assistance->

[program/](#). There were also webinars both for NY and CT applicants to share more information about this program. To receive a recording, please email LISResilience@gmail.com

LISS Work Group Overview and Discussion

Nancy Seligson and Holly Drinkuth

Holly Drinkuth and **Nancy Seligson** talked about the importance of LISS work groups and participating in their meetings. They showed a brief overview of LISS's existing work groups, inviting CAC members to share which ones they are a part of, to join if they haven't, share what barriers exist to them participating in work groups, and discuss questions they might have.

- **Mickey Weiss** reported that the Science and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC), is interested in EJ work, and suggested the STAC consider social science research topics that could be supported by the CAC and the LISS.
- **Maureen Murphy** (Citizens Campaign for the Environment) suggested work groups communicate meeting information with CAC for better collaboration and partnership opportunities.
- **Sarah Crosby** (The Maritime Aquarium) suggested CAC clarify and identify how to join LISS work groups, noting some confusion on who can/should join these groups. **Joining or participating in a work group meeting simply requires a CAC member to email the chair of the work group to inform them of your interest in participating. Please copy the CAC Co-chairs on the outreach email.**
- CAC member suggestions for work groups:
 - More descriptive work group names and specific annual focus areas
 - Inform CAC members of work group meeting dates
 - Meet in person occasionally
 - Regular reports on work group activities and information during CAC meetings
 - Collaborate with other work groups on similar topics

Action Item: Francine Gordon will coordinate with LISS staff and share information about upcoming LISS work group meetings with the CAC.

Policy Subcommittee Update

Adrienne Esposito, Citizens Campaign for the Environment; Bill Lucey, Save the Sound

- **Adrienne Esposito** provided the update for NY:
 - IRS fixed the tax on septic system grants!
 - NYS passed Environmental Bond Act with 67% overall support from the state showcasing overall public support for the environment by people from many different views and outlooks. The environment is valued by ALL!
- **Bill Lucey** shared information on Plum Island and the potential to get the site designated a National Monument. He requested help from CAC members to meet with and share LIS and Plum Island information with new congressional representatives. Senator Gillibrand is working

to get Plum Island protected. LIS Congressional Caucus will need new co-chairs from NY and increased communication from CAC. Bill noted concerns about blue-back herring declines in LIS possibly caused by overfishing and will update group. Holly agreed to circulate a letter submitted to the New England Fisheries Council on behalf of the LISS CAC.

- **Nancy Seligson** said the STAC asked the CAC to determine the 2023 date of the trip to Washington DC in early 2023 so their members can plan to participate. CAC will plan early but noted this trip is often a reaction to what is happening in DC. Suggestions from group to plan longer stay in DC.
- **Holly Drinkuth** noted discussion at the RAE Conference about treating the increases in environmental funding for programs such as NOAA fisheries and LISS as the new normal.
- **Carl Harvey** suggested developing a shared photo album for trips to DC.
- **Nancy Seligson** reported that the STAC elected SUNY Stony Brook professor Kamazima Lwiza as the new NY co-chair of STAC. The STAC co-chairs requested STAC members to consider serving as liaisons to the CAC.

Action Item: Adrienne and Bill will schedule a CAC Policy Subcommittee meeting in January (planned for January 9, 3:30pm).

Long Island Sound Report Card 2022

David Ansel, Save the Sound

- **David Ansel, new Director of Water Protection for Save the Sound**, presented the 2022 Long Island Sound Report Card that was released on Nov 17. There were multiple public events for the release of the report, and a dedication to increasing the presence of Save the Sound in NYC. This is the 4th annual report and used for informing advocacy and policy. The Report Card this year highlights climate change. Sound water temperature has increased 1.4 deg in the past decade contributing to anoxic conditions and other negative impacts in the ecosystem. David shared that water quality grades drop moving east to west in the Sound. More than 57% of bays received poor grades (C,D,F) and only 11% received an A. The grades are associated with land use conditions in the local community.
- The 2022 Long Island Sound Report Card is available here:
<https://www.savethesound.org/what-we-do/healthy-waters/report-cards-grades/>

Wrap-Up

- **Holly Drinkuth** shared the LIS Coastal Watershed Network will host a Webinar on January 11, 2023, highlighting Long Island Sound Bay Grades and collaborative local projects to improve water quality.
- The CAC plans to hold two in-person meetings in 2023 (June and September). Please share ideas for locations suitable for online presentation sharing.
- **Nancy Seligson** reminded people to look for CAC communications from new member coordinator Francine Gordon and asked the CAC to please help inform municipalities about the available funding opportunities shared during the meeting.

The Meeting adjourned at 12:06pm.

The next CAC meeting is scheduled to be held remotely on **March 9th, 2022**.