



**Long Island Sound Study Citizens Advisory Committee  
Housatonic Community College, Bridgeport, CT  
Thursday, June 13, 2019 - Meeting Summary**

**Welcome and Roll Call**

- Holly Drinkuth, CAC CT Co-chair, TNC, called the meeting to order at 9:43 am with a quorum of 20 members present.
- Mark Tedesco introduced and welcomed Nikki Tachiki, the newly hired EPA LIS Office staff Life Scientist.
- Robert Burg was added to the agenda to update the CAC about the upcoming social media campaign and new stickers
- David Miller, NYLCEF, announced that this is his 30<sup>th</sup> year of involvement in the CAC, to a round of applause.

**2019 LISS Budget**, Mark Tedesco, EPA LIS Office

Mark provided an overview of the unexpected growth of LISS program funding over the past three years and outlined the application of new investments during that period. In 2017 this included increased funding for the LIS Futures Fund, new generation eutrophication modeling funds to NYCDEP, funding for the Stewardship initiative, Blue Plan, Nitrogen Reduction Strategy, the Bio-extraction Coordinator, and impervious cover mapping funds to UConn/CLEAR NY. In 2018 additional support was provided to NYCDEP for its modeling work, the Stewardship Initiative, river and groundwater monitoring by USGS, Nitrogen Initiatives funds to EPA and CT, additional research funds, as well as funds for Marsh Migration planning work. Key 2019 investments included further coordination of nitrogen initiatives (including building monitoring and modeling tools) and taking on more complex habitat restoration projects.

With the possibility of funding continuing at current levels or further increasing, the LISS is planning to set clear strategic priorities for 2020 and beyond. At the upcoming Management Committee meeting on October 23 – 24, key 2020 planning will include a review on the progress and highlights of the 2015 CCMP, generation of priorities to support the FY2020 workplan and budget, and to set the stage for the CCMP implementation actions update.

**LISS Program Evaluation**, Nikki Tachiki, EPA LIS Office

Nikki provided an overview of the purpose of, and steps toward, receiving a passing determination from the U.S. EPA that determines that implementation of the NEP's Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plans (CCMP) is making adequate progress in achieving programmatic and environmental results. The Program Evaluation site team included representatives from EPA HQ, the EPA Regional Coordinator, and the Ex-officio NEP Director from the Texas Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries program. The team attended the June 5<sup>th</sup> Implementation Team and participated in site visits the following day. Nikki highlighted 2015 program evaluation highlights, including strengths and recommendations, as well as the general thoughts and key areas of interest of the current evaluation team. These include determination if adequate progress is being made on the LISS CCMP, including the three cross-cutting principles of resilience to climate change, environmental justice, and long-term sustainability.

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Nikki highlighted the timeline for the Program Evaluation letter, with a final evaluation expected in late August or September.

**Policy Subcommittee Update**, Tracy Brown, Save The Sound and Bill Lucey, Save The Sound

NY State legislative update: Tracy Brown reported that there has been a flurry of activity at the legislature in Albany, where Democrats are in the majority. Legislation that passed includes:

- Environmental rights amendment to the state constitution,
- Ban on purse seine nets for fishing of menhaden,
- No oil and gas drilling in state waters.
- An ocean acidification task force will be producing an interim report by December 2022.

NY pending legislation includes:

- Climate change legislation (passed June 18)
- Ban on use of fire-fighting foam for training purposes (passed June 21)
- Bans on glyphosate and methoprene which is harmful to lobsters
- Ban on high N fertilizers for Long Island,
- Ban on fire-fighting foam Expanded protection for class C and D streams and wetlands
- Proposed income tax credit for homeowner sewer lateral line work

David Miller reported that the clean water infrastructure initiative has increased to \$500M, which represents a major commitment by the state. Overall there have been significant increases in clean water funding, including green infrastructure grants. CAC members were encouraged take advantage of these grants when they're available because they will not last forever. Nancy Seligson noted that this ties into resilient communities (e.g. storm water and septic/sewage improvements).

CT State legislative update: Bill Lucey, STS, and Lou Burch from Citizens Campaign for the Environment in CT reported passed legislation including:

- No offshore drilling (no LIS drilling),
- Fracking waste ban
- Offshore wind program
- Net metering for solar power
- Phase-out of single -use plastic bags over 2 years
- State water fund
- Increased funding incentives for electric vehicles

CT Legislation that did not pass included:

- Ban on shark finning. \$5 boat registration fee for aquatic invasive plants
- No increases for clean Water funding due to Governor's "bond diet"
- State-wide stormwater authority legislation to fund MS4 programs. Advocates successfully fought rollbacks of MS4 legislation.

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- Ban on fire-fighting training foam
- Ban foam food containers and lunch trays
- The bottle bill did not get updated.

**Discussion: CAC Priorities 2020**, Holly Drinkuth and Nancy Seligson, NY CAC co-Chair, Town of Mamaroneck; all.

Nancy referred to the CAC Priorities 2020 document that was made available to the CAC and highlights of the list of accomplishments to date.

Holly noted that the EPA program evaluators stated education and outreach funding has decreased or stayed stagnant although budgets increased. Education and outreach are important components of environmental justice and community resilience. **We need to learn from organizations that work on those issues.**

Denise Savageau, CT Association of Conservation Districts, noted that the Chesapeake program has done a lot of modeling to inform its outreach needs but didn't consider work being done on farms by NRCS and had to redo their models. Tracking should include all activities in the watershed; that is too much for a two-person office to do and requires additional capacity.

Discussion included the need for a mechanism for non-competitive funding for long-term monitoring programs. The LIS Futures Fund covers bacteria track-downs but not ongoing pathogen monitoring. Additional long-term monitoring needs include living resources and shoreline adaptation projects. Identifying a funding mechanism or creating a budget line item to support these programs is a priority. Mark said that this will be looked at in the next few months.

Mickey Weiss, Project Oceanology/STAC asked how independent the LISS can be regarding talking about climate change. Mark Tedesco replied that nothing has been changed on the LISS website or communications regarding climate change; we don't have to alter how we communicate. LISS focus is more on resilience.

**#DontTrashLISound Social Media Campaign** Robert Burg, NEIWPC, LISS

Robert Burg updated the CAC on the upcoming *#DontTrashLISound* social media campaign, which will be held during August 8 to September 14. Posts will be generated by the LISS and placed on Facebook and Twitter, and possibly Instagram, for the CAC to share. There will be a kickoff event and beach clean-up at Lighthouse Point in East Haven. Judy Benson, CTSG, Mary Ellen Mateleska, Mystic Marine Aquarium, and Save The Sound will be joining this effort. Robert displayed the new campaign stickers; **an order form will be sent out to CAC members (number limit 300 per organization)**. Recycled metal pins may also be generated for distribution.

**Greenwich Seaweed Farm**, Leigh Shemitz, Soundwaters

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Leigh introduced Soundwaters' kelp farm project for education and outreach, with the potential added bonus of becoming a self-sustaining enterprise. (See link to presentations below.)

**Motion to accept minutes**

Recognizing the need to approve the CAC meeting minutes, Holly called for a motion to accept the minutes of the March 14, 2019 CAC meeting. David Miller made the motion, which was seconded, and carried unanimously.

**LIS Research Symposium Update**, 2018 LIS Research Program Awards, Mickey Weiss, STAC

Mickey reported on the LIS Research Symposium that is held every two years, with multiple sessions. This year there were about 30 presentations plus posters. The proceedings are available in a booklet that can be downloaded here: <https://tinyurl.com/LIS-Research-Proceedings>.

Mickey gave a recap of his presentation at the symposium on Blue Crab populations and the correlation to water temperature fluctuations in LIS. (See link to presentations below.)

**Resumed Discussion: CAC Priorities 2020**, CAC co-chairs and membership *Holly Drinkuth, Nancy Seligson, CAC Co-Chairs, All*

A working group to review the CAC Bylaws including the co-chairs, Carol Di Paolo, Coalition to Save Hempstead Harbor and Tracy Brown recommended the following changes:

- Update voting rights and proxy voting to clarify attendance and attain quorums
- Change "Issues Subcommittee" to "Policy Subcommittee"
- Update and formalize subcommittee chair and STAC liaison leadership roles
- Establish a "Leadership Subcommittee" to strengthen support for carrying out regular business of the CAC and build a pipeline of leadership experience.

Discussion suggested that less detail be put in the bylaws and accomplished instead by resolution; define what a quorum is, current active members, and put this into operating guidelines. Robert's Rules should also be added to the operating guidelines/procedures. **The co-chairs will review the discussion input and create policy guidelines and will send the info out for the next CAC meeting.** Mark recommended that this information be shared with work groups as it is being developed.

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**Priorities for \$21M projected budget Discussion:**

Sarah Crosby, Earth Place, noted that it would be good to add equal levels of specificity in the CAC list of proposed funding increases to accommodate any reductions to the budget.

Bill Lucey clarified the detail related forage fish data needs noting a 12-mile buffer is not much research for the tropic zone. Mystic Aquarium and UCONN require equipment for surveys – recommend this should be proposed by STAC.

Tripp Killin, LIS Funders Collaborative, asked how the CAC can build capacity to maintain a level of visibility and momentum? David Miller noted that this gets back to administrative capacity and the need to increase communication, tracking and monitoring.

Leigh Shemitz suggested that the Futures Fund could be reporting better about how goals are being met.

Sarah Crosby asked if there is a way that we can emphasize the importance of the climate change issue, as it is not explicitly mentioned, to which Mark Tedesco noted that it is mentioned as a cross-cutting issue in the CCMP: Climate, Sustainability, and Resiliency.

**The co-chairs will send a letter outlining CAC FY20 priorities to the LISS Management Committee, which meets in July and October.**

- Building capacity in the LIS office
- Tracking CCMP implementation progress and investments by the LISS and federal agency partners
- Establishing dedicated funding for long-term monitoring programs (e.g. water quality, living resources, shoreline adaptation projects, etc.)
- Focusing on fertilizer management and/or restrictions
- Defining, strengthening and increasing outreach and communications to local governments
- Increasing community resilience outreach

**Adjourned**

The meeting adjourned at 2:20 pm. The next regularly scheduled CAC meeting will be held in Roslyn Harbor at Cedarmere, North Hempstead, New York on September 12, 2019.

For additional information on the CAC, visit:

<http://longislandsoundstudy.net/about/committees/citizens-advisory-committee/>

**Links to presentations as pdf's:** <https://tinyurl.com/PowerPoint-pdfs>

**Link to meeting handouts/materials:** <https://tinyurl.com/CAC-Handouts>