



## Long Island Sound Study Management Committee Meeting Notes Housatonic Community College Thursday, January 16, 2020

**Attendees:** Jim O'Donnell, STAC/UCONN; Dave Lipsky, NYC DEP; Richard Friesner, NEIWPC; Jim Ammerman, LISS/NEIWPC; Becky Shuford, NYSG; Sylvain DeGuise, CTSG; Casey Personius, NYSDEC; Judy Preston, LISS/CTSG; Koon Tang, NYSDEC; Sue Van Patten, NYSDEC; Nicole Tachiki, EPA LISO; Mel Cote, EPA R1; Mark Tedesco; EPA LISO; Rick Balla; EPA R2; Bessie Wright, EPA R1; Holly Drinkuth, CAC/TNC; Nancy Seligson, CAC/NY; Audra Martin, NEIWPC; Nancy Ferlow, USDA-NRCS; Mark Parker, CTDEEP; Phil Trowbridge, CTDEEP; Robert Burg, NEIWPC; Paul Stacey, STAC; Tracy Brown, Save the Sound; Darcy Lonsdale, STAC/NY; Vicky O'Neill; NYSDEC/NEIWPC; Suzanne Paton, USFWS; Jimena Perez-Viscasillas, NYSG; Evelyn Powers, IEC; Todd Randall, USACE; Julia Socrates, NYSDEC/MHP; Brian Thompson, CTDEEP; Harry Yamalis, CTDEEP; Jon Morrison, USGS CT

### **Introduction:**

Mark Tedesco called the meeting to order at approximately 9:38 a.m. and self-introductions followed. Mel Cote introduced Bessie Wright, who is working with EPA Region 1 splitting her time between the Long Island Sound Study and nonpoint source program. No proposed additions or changes to the agenda. No comments on the October Management Committee notes. Mark Tedesco reviewed the 2020 Management Conference Joint Calendar. No changes were proposed.

### **Presentation:**

2015 CCMP Tracking and Reporting (includes timeline slide)—view on [LISS website](#).

### **Reports:**

- **Science and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) Updates:**
  - Jim Ammerman sent out the notes from the November 15, 2019 STAC meeting, which focused on water quality. Monitoring presentations were given by CTDEEP, IEC, UConn, and Save the Sound. Additional input from monitoring programs included USGS, Suffolk County, NYSDEC, and Long Island Regional Planning Commission. There was an interesting conversation on data management. Main lesson was that one central database won't make sense, but there is a need for an easy way to interconnect all databases in use. Overall, the meeting was very technical and informative. Review the notes and send comments or additions to Jim. Meeting notes will be posted on the website [here](#).

- Next STAC meeting is on February 28, 2020 at Avery Point UConn. Suggested meeting topics include wildlife or ocean acidification.
- Restore America's Estuaries meeting is in Providence, RI on October 4-8, 2020. Ammerman encouraged LISS folks to go. It's not just dominated by science; it attracts a wide array of participants. Deadline for speaker submissions is April 3. Poster deadline is July 17.
- **Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Updates:**
  - Holly Drinkuth gave an overview of the December 12, 2019 meeting held at Housatonic Community college. The bulk of the meeting reviewed activities of the October Management Committee meeting. Mark Tedesco gave a presentation on priority areas for project investment. Two guest speakers included Alyssa Norwood from Sustainable CT and Drew Goldsman from TNC CT. Drew talked about resilient and equitable investments in tree planning in Bridgeport. A full summary of the meeting can be found [here](#).
  - Nancy Seligson announced the big news that LISS received federal funding of \$21 million for FY20. The CAC discussed the importance of channeling funds toward implementation and restoration to showing results of the increase in funding, not just focusing on modeling. Discussion also included the health of the watershed and communication. Communication touches upon all aspects of the CCMP. Nancy and Holly worked with Robert Burg to develop an enhancement preproposal for a communication plan.
  - Trip to Washington planned for early March to bring visibility to the Long Island Sound. Next CAC meeting is March 12, 2020.

#### **LIS 2020 Work Plan and Budget – Mark Tedesco**

- Mark Tedesco articulated the need for clarity on topics and proposals to be reviewed. Final budget recommendations will be made at the April Management Committee meeting with a quick turnaround in Spring for final grant applications. Mark reviewed the 2020 total base funding request with the caveat that numbers are still subject to change. Two topics that need to be discussed include LIS Futures Fund and Scientific Research Support budget amounts for FY20. A recap of the October Management Committee meeting discussion about increasing funds for the LISFF was given. Mark explained the increase in the Scientific Research Support funding in the proposed FY20 base budget.
- Sylvain discussed the Sea Grant RFP and grant administration process. The money is split between NY and CT.
- Mark Tedesco emphasized the 40% match for all grants awarded by EPA through Clean Water Act Section 119 and 50% match for all grants awarded by EPA through Section 320. Bessie Wright emphasized the education and outreach match is 5%.
- Koon Tang received clarification that match for LIS FF does not have to be state dollars. Match can be provided as in-kind.
- Phil Trowbridge brought up discussion of increasing funding to the Futures Fund.
  - Mel Cote agrees but raises the point that if the funding increases, the budget cap per project should increase as well.
  - Suzanne Paton wants to ensure there is strong outreach and technical support to applicants to make sure proposals coming in have the weight they need. Local communities and towns should be supported to ensure successful proposals.
  - Holly Drinkuth suggested finding ways to emphasize environmental justice and resiliency projects.
  - Mark Tedesco shared that applicants have a 60% success rate with the Futures Fund. MC favorably supports increasing funding. This can be accomplished by 1) increasing the

funding cap to promote bigger projects that are deterred by the cap and 2) make sure the outreach and support is extensive and topics are emphasized for proposal submittal. Proposals won't be funded just because money is available.

- Koon Tang supports increasing LISFF funding to support community resiliency. He supports raising the cap and targeting bigger projects. Is it possible to set aside money for planning? Communities need to be able to plan for better resiliency and ways to be more sustainable.
- Jim O'Donnell suggested revising LISFF priorities to emphasize projects that have transferrable lessons.
- Nancy Seligson emphasized the significant cost to municipalities to apply, plan for and implement Green Infrastructure (GI) projects. One of the benefits of municipal GI projects is that they provide examples to everyone else.
- Brian Thompson agrees that there is a huge gap between helping communities plan for projects and then actually doing it. Match is a concern, especially for bigger projects. He sees a lot of CT projects that have been planned but are not getting done.
- Koon Tang discussed two NY grant programs 1) targets municipalities to develop engineering reports to fix wastewater or sewer system problems and 2) targets green infrastructure and stormwater BMPs to reduce nutrient and sediment runoff.
  - Sue Van Patten explained that the genesis of these grant programs came from a gap they observed where engineering reports were a hurdle to applying for implementation funding. NYS realized people were not applying for implementation funding.
- Dave Lipsky suggested more coordination with states so that applications are not coming into LISFF that the states should be supporting.
- Mark Tedesco started reviewing the FY20 CCMP Enhancement Summary Discussion. Two goals for today's discussion: 1) A list of topics all in blue to confirm that these preproposals should be turned into full proposals for the April Management Committee meeting. 2) Decide on the level of increase to LISFF and scientific research.
  - Line 4 Streamflow/WQ monitoring of Nissequogue River, Suffolk – Jon Morrison explained that the gauge on the longest river on LI was discontinued. This gauge has a long-term historical record of 80 years. Application came in as bridge funding until they find a long-term funding source. If long-term funding is not recovered, application may come in as base funding after two years.
    - Koon Tang supports this, especially regarding the implications it can have to monitoring climate change impacts. Support for full proposal.
  - Line 5 Solute Transport Model – This model is already in place for Peconic, so this application would complete the model for LI. It would help target Nitrogen reduction and supplement subwatershed work that the county is already doing. The groundwater model will help understand how N is moving to embayments and surface water and target legacy nitrogen. Support for full proposal.
    - Mark Tedesco requested clarity on the timeframe for products. He emphasized showing the benefits to Long Island Sound.
  - Line 6 Method Development for Drone Embayment Assessments – Potential to rapidly map embayments. Proposed comparison between drone assessments and eelgrass surveys. Jim O'Donnell expressed excitement. University of RI is using drones for eelgrass assessments and they are getting amazing images and mapped products. Suzanne Paton and Richard Friesner will send Phil Trowbridge contacts who are working on drones. Nancy Seligson said this would be a good story to tell the public about innovation. Support for full proposal.
  - Line 7 NCCA Probabilistic Sampling of Embayments – Randomly generated sites to sample embayments, strong in sediment sampling. Product is knowledge of distribution

- of contaminants to benchmark further specific embayment studies. Support for full proposal.
- Jim Ammerman emphasized that this would provide information to the sediment quality ecosystem target and there is no other way to gather this information for the ET.
  - Line 8 Incorporate Climate into CT/NY Stormwater Guidance – Stormwater manuals are out of date in terms of frequency and intensity of storms. NY has a different need than CT. NY adding climate change impact into design standards. Support for full proposal.
    - Jim Ammerman asked if this is a state responsibility rather than LISS. At least one other person agreed.
  - Line 9 Bioextraction Pilot Using Sugar Kelp – Year 2 of 2. Looking at kelp nutrient uptake and fertilizer use.
  - Line 10 Bioextraction Pilot using Ribbed Mussels
    - Sylvain De Guise asked what is different about these two bioextraction projects. LISS has funded bioextraction projects before and doesn't want to repeat work.
    - Sue Van Patten says these projects are grown, harvested and utilized locally.
    - Dave Lipsky – There might be funding in NYS Agriculture and Market. Dave will send Sue Van Patten the contact information.
  - Line 21 Acoustic Data Acquisition for Seafloor Mapping – Brian Thompson described multiyear seafloor mapping. Starting 2<sup>nd</sup> phase in Eastern LIS. Next phase is Western LIS using cable funds. Central sound has not been mapped and funds would be used to cover that. Support for full proposal.
  - Line 22 Exploring Options for Beneficial Use of Dredged Material – support for full proposal
  - Line 24 Sustainable and Resilient Communities Work Group – Will undertake a year of planning, both in-person and remotely, to develop a 5-year workplan. Will propose \$50,000 to implement workshops and meetings. Support to develop full proposal.
  - Line 27 NYS DOW Coordinator – Might have implications for base budget. Support to develop full proposal.
- Mark Tedesco – Revised guidance will be sent out to refine and resubmit proposals for the April meeting.
  - After lunch, Mark Tedesco proposed an increase in LISFF from \$2.3 to \$3 million.
    - Koon Tang proposed a 50% increase to make it \$3.5 million. Koon wants to see more oversubscription of applications to get more qualified projects.
    - The Management Committee supported listing the LISFF at a \$3.5 million amount to the planning level.
  - Phil Trowbridge asked who would help applicants turn in better proposals?
    - Mark Tedesco – Applicants are encouraged to contact technical contacts and workgroup leads.
    - Jim Ammerman emphasized the need to highlight environmental justice in the LISFF.
    - Jim O'Donnell wants to see habitat restoration connected to resiliency.
    - Vicky O'Neill – It's hard for smaller entities to be competitive with applicants who are very familiar with the application process. Vicky and Harry gave in-person workshops in the past with applicants talking to them about their proposals in-person. The workshops were very successful. Increasing the LISFF cap is great but it won't fix the problem of who is getting the funding because the money can be dominated by the same players.
  - Mark Tedesco – Current research for 2020 cycle is \$2.3 million; increase from \$1.6 million in 2018 cycle. Mark suggested an increase to \$3 million, which is an addition of \$700,000. Request in FY20 budget of \$2 million.

- FY18 RFP - \$1.6 million; demand was \$8.1 million in preproposals and \$3.3 million in full proposals.
- Jim O'Donnell proposed a FY20 RFP for \$4 million.
- Suzanne Paton – Why is RFP carried out every other year?
  - Sylvain De Guise explained that Sea Grant is running their own competition in the off year.
- Suzanne Paton emphasized the success of incorporating academics in the LISFF applications regarding the habitat restoration projects. The outcome is restoration and lessons learned.
- Mark Tedesco emphasized importance of implementation, because the program will be held accountable for results. After discussion the Management Committee supported listing the FY20 RFP at \$3 million
- Phil Trowbridge emphasized the disparity in oversubscription between research grants and implementation grants is likely due to differences in the applicant pools and suggested offering additional technical support to those applying for LISFF grants to increase quality of grants coming in.
- Casey Personius reported out on Watersheds and Embayments Work Group proposals.
  - Scope opportunities for work to fund Onsite WWTF to reimburse homeowners. There are existing programs in Suffolk county. Homeowners would put out the cost to retrofit their system and then they would be reimbursed. Huge need for the money.
    - Sue Van Patten – Outreach would be helpful.
    - Mark Tedesco – This work would be eligible under LISFF and perhaps a better venue.
  - Expand bacterial monitoring and evaluations – IEC offered to incorporate pathogen monitoring in embayments.
    - Koon Tang – Wants to evaluate bacterial microbial tracking very closely before funding anything.
  - Determine optimal suite of BMP options – Kristina Heineman, EPA R2, working on nitrogen modeling to identify holistic and long-term solutions. Unique because it looks at societal, legislative and economic perspective. They are working with Suffolk County on model.
- Phil Trowbridge asked about optimal suite project. Wants to see the proposal fitting into the existing modeling projects.
  - Casey and Sue described the model as being very unique and covering a different aspect of modeling that is not currently being pursued.
  - Rick Balla mentioned that a proposal is also being submitted to ORD.
- Mark Tedesco will follow up with NYSDEC to discuss the roll of the project within the context of LINAP.

### **2015 CCMP Tracking and Reporting – Nikki Tachiki**

- Process and schedule of simple spreadsheet for 2015-2019 reporting. The spreadsheet captures implementation progress made over the last five years and considers changes moving forward in the next five years (2020-2024).
- LISS staff has been working on a spreadsheet to evaluate progress on 2015 CCMP tracking. The spreadsheet identifies each IA as a discrete or continuous task, describes the progress that has been made, and identifies if changes need to be made to the IA.
- Nikki reviewed the timeline for moving forward on tracking.
  - Conclusions on the spreadsheet will be drafted and presented to the MC in April, while aiming to submit the final report to Congress by the end of 2020. Updates to the Implementation Actions will begin in the summer of 2020.

**2020 CCMP Update – Mark Tedesco and Phil Trowbridge**

- Review of existing plan will help create a 2020-2024 Implementation Action Plan update.
- Casey asked if we had decided if we were tracking at the strategy level or IA level
  - Nikki – IA level most likely but up for discussion
- Phil T. mentioned that adjustments to the plan should consider the areas of emphasis and to make sure the actions are smart, achievable, and specific. Focus on strategic priorities.
- Need to consider how IA's relate to the ecosystem targets as we consider the analysis and the 2020 update.
- Paul commented that the IA's should reflect the priority of sustainability and resilience.

**2020 CCMP Tracking and Reporting – Nikki Tachiki**

- The GAO Report recommended incorporating leading practices of performance reporting.
- Horsley Witten Group, Inc. and FB Environmental, Inc. identified LISS reports on targets but not on IA's. However, other programs, such as Chesapeake Bay and Puget Sound, are reporting on the individual actions and the link between action and goals.
- HW reviewed other programs and found that they all shared similar components including a very clear linkage between actions and goals, owner, status, timeline, date of last update, and costs. Also, HW proposed the factors that should be included in a LISS database tracker.
  - A graphic could eventually be included on the ecosystem target website that gives an overview of the actions related to that target.
- Nikki reviewed HW's Pro-Con list of tracking IA's vs strategies.
- We need to have clear specific implementation actions and strategic goals that those actions will progress.
- Phil commented that this is moving in the right direction but in the process of developing this tracking system we should create flexibility into the system since we may need to adjust reporting in the future

**Updates:**

- Vicky O'Neill gave an update. The tidal wetlands workshop will focus on tidal wetlands loss and change. The last workshop in 2014 recommended a follow-up workshop in five years. The planning team includes Vicky, Casey, Harry and Jimena. The focused topics include habitat restoration, monitoring and assessment, and research. Date will most likely be June 10 at Port Jefferson Village Center from 9am - 4:30 pm. Save the date will be released in February and registration will open shortly after. Send Vicky contact information if interested in attending.
- Robert Burg gave an update. The community-based social marketing workshop will occur on April 28-29 at Beardsley Zoo in Bridgeport, CT. The speaker is well known environmental psychologist – Dr. Doug McKenzie-Mohr. He will review how to create behavior change by identifying behaviors and barriers, making plans, and communicating those plans. An executive follow-up session will occur in May for administrators. Save the date went out January 15, 2020. Registration will open in February with \$75 registration fee.

**Next Meeting & Adjournment – Mark Tedesco**

- Guidance for full proposal development will be sent out.
- March Implementation Team meeting will include discussion of proposals and recommendations.
- Meeting was adjourned at 2:20pm.