



Long Island Sound Study Management Committee Meeting Notes Housatonic Community College Thursday, January 18, 2018

Attendees: Jim Ammerman, NEIWPCC; Rick Balla, EPA Region 2; Cassie Bauer, NYSDEC; Robert Burg, NEIWPCC; Mel Coté, EPA/NE; Sylvain DeGuise, CTSG; Holly Drinkuth, TNC; Nancy Ferlow, NRCS; Peter Francis, CTDEEP; Richard Friesner, NEIWPCC; Nathan Frohling, TNC; Laura Grieco, NYCDEP; Emily Hall, CTDEEP; Chuck Lee, CTDEEP; Darcy Lonsdale, STAC/NY; Dawn McReynolds, NYSDEC; Tom Morgart USDA/NRCS/CT; Jonathan Morrison, USGS/CT; Jim O'Donnell, UCONN; Leah O'Neill, EPA; Mark Parker, CTDEEP; Evelyn Powers, IEC; Judy Preston, CTSG; Todd Randall, USACE; Kimberly Roth, NEIWPCC; Nancy Seligson, CAC/NY; Susan Sullivan, NEIWPCC; Mark Tedesco, EPA; Brian Thompson, CTDEEP; Harry Yamalis, CTDEEP; Anna Weshner-Dunning, NYSG; Gary Wikfors, NOAA Fish;

Welcome/Introductions/Logistics. Mark Tedesco called the meeting to order at 9:35am. There were no proposed changes to the agenda, but Mark did provide a few of updates:

- The October Management Committee meeting notes have been posted on the LISS website. If anyone has comments, please let Mark or Leah know.
- The February 16th STAC meeting has been postponed to February 23rd and will be held in Avery Point, CT.
- The March 15th CAC will likely be postponed a week or two and will be held at the EPA Region 2 office in NYC. More details to follow.

REPORTS

Science and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC).

Jim Ammerman provided the STAC update. The last STAC meeting was held on Nov 17th at Stony Brook University and focused on bioextraction. Jeff Levington gave a presentation on the potential of bioextraction in Jamaica Bay and Great South Bay; Julie Rose and Anthony Dvarskas talked about bioextraction and shellfish in Greenwich, CT (60% of Greenwich seafloor is used for shellfish); Larry Swanson provided an update on the NYS Shellfish Funding from the Governor; and Mark Tedesco gave information on the new LISS/NYSDEC Bioextraction Coordinator position. In the afternoon, Dave Lipsky provided an update on the NYC modeling effort; Mark Tedesco talked about the Coastal Hypoxia Research Program RFP; and Jamie Vaudrey presented on the ecological indicators for the 2018 Save the Sound Report Card. The meeting notes will be posted on the LISS website shortly. At the next meeting, on February 23rd in Connecticut, the STAC will have an election for the CT co-chair position.

Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC).

Nancy Seligson provided the CAC update and introduced Holly Drinkuth as the new CT CAC co-chair. At the last meeting, held on December 14th, the CAC talked about the importance of the October 20th LIS celebration event and how this high-level action and commitment needs to happen more than every 20 years. The CAC also agreed to sign on to a support letter for the Save the Sound Nitrogen Reduction Recommendations to NYC. Jennifer Mattei gave a presentation on the status of horseshoe crabs in LIS and the CAC would like to recommend her to be on the STAC. The CAC also discussed establishing 2018 priorities and heard a presentation on the tracking and reporting of ecosystem indicators. The next meeting will be held in the EPA Region 2 office, date TBD (now set for March 22).

CCMP IA PROGRESS REPORTS

No general questions from work group summary abstracts.

GAO update

The GAO sent a draft Statement of Facts to EPA and the States for comment and review. The GAO is setting up a meeting with EPA at the end of January where they will go over the Statement of Facts and any recommendations. They also welcome additional meetings with anyone else they interviewed. Then they will modify the Statement of Facts and provide another period to comment. The GAO is particularly interested in tracking and reporting and how to assess whether we are attaining intended results. Their recommendations will determine how we move forward with tracking and reporting. Mark will follow up with the GAO to see who they circulated the Statement of Facts to and if it could be sent out to others for comment. It was also suggested to invite the GAO to the April Management Committee meeting.

CCMP Tracking & Reporting updates

Robert Burg gave an update on the ecosystem target webpages. The indicators workgroup presented the draft webpages to the I-team and links to the draft pages were sent out to the Management Committee in December with comments due by January 15th. The plan is to have the webpages live and on the LISS website by the end of February 2018.

Public Involvement & Education

Anna Weshner-Dunning provided an update on the LISS Newsletters. The communications team has decided to merge the Sound Update Newsletter with the Sound Bytes electronic newsletter. After getting feedback from the CAC, it was decided to have one printed newsletter each year, which will be a “Year in Review” issue. The next newsletter will include the ecosystem targets and should be released in April/May. Anna also mentioned that the PIE workgroup is going to be doing the marine debris social media campaign again this year and will be talking next week about how they should update and improve it.

Coastal Certificate Program

Judy Preston gave a presentation on the Coastal Certificate Program. The Program, which has been going on 5 years, was put together as a response to increasing Master Gardener interest in understanding environmental issues associated with gardening and landscaping practices. It is the Extension Model – combining current issues and science based information with a mandatory outreach component. The emphasis of the program is the use of native plants as an alternative to more nutrient, chemical and water-intensive landscaping, including the replacement of lawn area, and the use of native plants to create buffers between water and polluting and uses. The program has rotated to all 5 CTs coastal counties drawing 163 participants from 54 towns in CT as well as 5 people from neighboring states. Around 1500 hours of diverse outreach has been conducted, including land stewardship, educational publications, movies shown, native plantings, even a play written and performed. This program creates partnerships around LIS. Guest speakers include experts from academia, non-profit sector, for profit sector, and state and federal agencies. The program includes field trips and outreach projects that emphasize Green Infrastructure and Low Impact Development.

Comments:

- There was a suggestion to do pre/post surveys to gauge what the students have learned from the program.
- Participants in the program tend to be biased toward people who are retired and from wealthy, suburban areas. Jim O'Donnell brought up the point of not using pictures that just represent a certain group of people.
- Nancy asked about funding- it costs \$65 to take the class. Holly suggested giving a scholarship for the \$65 and asked if Judy was tracking others things besides number of people (like nitrogen reduced, etc.).
- Rick commented on the opportunity of this program to reach different audiences (homeowners, landscapers, etc.)
- Mark T asked if there was information that we can use to infer where fertilizing application is increasing or decreasing in CT. Some research has been done by UCONN and Holly has done specific research on fertilizer work in four priority embayments in CT.

Budget Update

FY18 budget & workplan process:

Mark told the group that until a federal budget for FY18 is finalized the amount of funding for LISS remains uncertain. We are working on the assumption that funding could remain at the FY2017 level of \$8.6 million, either under a year-long continuing resolution or new FY 18 appropriation bill. EPA asked for detailed work plans and budgets for each LISS base program to give us a sense of how much money we would have remaining to fund special projects. The goal is to have a full package of funding options for the April meeting. If the 2018 budget has not been finalized by our April meeting, we can push back our meeting (the room at Housatonic is available).

Leah passed out handouts on the estimated base program budget. The total FY2018 Base Program draft budget is approximately \$5.2 million, with the LISFF being funded at the 2017 funding level. However, all the numbers on the chart are draft and some proposals included non-base work, while others did not maintain the forward funding for staff. Also, research wasn't funded last year, so there is a line for research in this year's budget.

EPA is going to be working with the base grantees to finalize the numbers over the next few weeks. EPA will also be building the CCMP enhancement proposal package, which will be distributed by mid-February.

The program has a ULO of almost \$13 million which, given the fact that \$8.6 million of that was just allocated in Oct, is not that bad.

Comments

- There was a discussion on whether match requirements should be on each individual grant or on the aggregate. EPA has the option, which it has used to date, to document match in the aggregate. The ability of states to provide "overmatch" may become more limited as large-scale implementation projects become fewer in number. All applicants are encouraged to identify and provide match. If the amount of overmatch becomes limited, then funding decisions will need to consider available partner match. There was also discussion on whether resiliency funding from

HUD could be used as match, as well as other state funded projects relating to storm water, sewers, and CSOs. EPA will provide detailed match requirements and guidance to applicants.

Nitrogen Strategy Update

EPA Nitrogen Strategy

Leah gave an update on the EPA Nitrogen Strategy. Comments from the Technical Stakeholder group on Tasks F and G were due on January 16th. EPA has a meeting with Tetra Tech to review and provide response to comments. The contract with Tetra Tech is up in March, but not all the tasks will be completed by then. EPA has taken additional time under the contract to disseminate each draft deliverable through the Technical Stakeholder Group and has worked to provide additional public webinars. EPA has requested more money and time for phase 2 as a base + grant for 2018 funding. Also, in the base budget EPA is requesting a technical review of methodology for \$30,000 from an independent party. All the information and deliverables are posted on the LISS website.

Comments

- There were comments on how the individual EPA and State efforts are going to be used together and what the nitrogen strategy product will be. A lot of this is still being worked out. The EPA effort is not a TMDL, it will be used to inform permit decisions, not set waste load allocations. All three efforts are focusing more on embayments, trying to focus on what the TMDL didn't address at all.
- In Task 6d of the draft base budget NEIWPCC is proposing to have directed meetings with EPA and the States to help coordinate the different nitrogen efforts.

Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan

Dawn gave an update on what NYSDEC and other partners are doing regarding the Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan (LINAP). Some highlights include:

- Suffolk County's subwatersheds plan should be coming out soon.
- Suffolk County installed 6 alternative septic systems at 19 residential sites and are offering grants and low interest loans to homeowners. Legislation was also signed into law regarding replacing failing cesspools.
- Suffolk County completed a HAB action plan.
- Nassau County's subwatersheds planning is also underway
- The LIRPC held several work group meetings around fertilizer, bioextraction, nitrogen reduction, and water reuse
- Stony Brook's CCWT is developing non-proprietary wastewater treatment systems that could be installed to remove nitrogen from septic tank effluent.

For more information about LINAP efforts, check the latest "Year in Review" newsletter on the [LINAP website](#).

CTDEEP 2nd Generation

Chuck gave an update on CTDEEP's 2nd Generation Strategy. CTDEEP is pursuing nitrogen updates at 6-8 plants and continuing reductions through the credit trading program. They also finalized the DOT permits, and the MS4 permit outreach is ongoing (UCONN CLEAR did a number of webinars to coastal communities about fertilizers). CTDEEP is working with Lombardo Associates to assess the nitrogen load system. CTDEEP is also working with NRCS to look at loads of nitrogen on fields from manure. An RFP for 319 projects goes out in February.

NYC modeling efforts

Laura gave an update on NYC's modeling efforts. NYC is currently working with the Consultant to put together a guidance document for the effort. NYCDEP will organize a Technical Advisory Group to help inform the development of the guidance document which will serve as the basis for the modeling approach and will include management agency representatives in the effort.

Presentation: CT Blue Plan

Brian Thompson and Nathan Frohling gave a presentation on the CT Blue Plan (what it is, why it is important, and how it will work). The purpose of the CT Blue Plan, established by the CT General Assembly in 2015, is to identify uses and resources and guide the future use of Long Island Sound. The Blue Plan will support Connecticut's existing regulatory processes for making decisions on Long Island Sound activities and policies to direct and shape future uses to avoid conflict with existing uses and ecologically significant areas, but it will not create new zoning or regulations. The CT Blue Plan supports all the themes of the LISS CCMP, especially the Science and Management theme where there is a specific implementation action for marine spatial planning. The CT Blue Plan advisory committee meets quarterly and is made up of 16 members, with CTDEEP being the lead agency. Several work groups and subcommittees were also established and meet regularly. In addition, multiple meetings and webinars were held to get stakeholder input on the resource and use inventory. A draft plan will be completed by March 2019. Funding for the Blue Plan came from the Moore foundation (\$60,000) and two LISFF grants and LISS FY2017 funding of \$200,000, but additional funding needs to be secured for the Spring of 2019 and the Summer of 2020.

Updates:

LIS Futures Fund Events

The CT and upper watershed grant announcement event was held on November 16th and the New York grant announcement event was held on December 4th. The FY 18 RFP is under development now and upstream pollution projects will remain eligible for funding.

March 13-15 National Estuary Program Meeting

The EPA Office of Water will host a workshop for the National Estuary Program in March. This is a good opportunity to meet with new Office of Water personnel on estuary issues.

Mark Tedesco adjourned the meeting at 1:45pm.
