



LISS Habitat Restoration & Stewardship Workgroup
Henry L. Ferguson Museum
1109 Equestrian Ave
Fishers Island, NY 06390
June 18, 2019

Meeting Minutes

Attendance-

In person

Tessa Getchis	CT Sea Grant
Farrah Ashe	CTDEEP
Robert Burg	NEIWPCC/LISS
David Gumbart	The Nature Conservancy
Ali Hibbard	CTDEEP
Kevin Kelly	Hallock State Park Preserve
David Kozak	CTDEEP/LISS
Victoria O'Neill	NYSDEC/LISS
Suzanne Paton	USFWS
Judy Preston	LISS/CTSG
Angela Schimizzi	NYSDEC
Harry Yamalis	CTDEEP/LISS
Jim Ammerman	NEIWPCC/LISS
Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe	Audubon-CT
David Carey	CT Department of Agriculture
Alex Krofta	Save the Sound
Holly Drinkuth	TNC
Casey Personius	NYSDEC/LISS
Jeff Main	Westchester Parks
Kevin Jennings	NYSDEC
Chantal Collier	TNC
Barry Udelson	CCE
Genevieve Nuttall	Audubon-CT
Mark Parker	CTDEEP/LISS
Elizabeth McCance	Ferguson Museum
Marje Helfet	FI Conservancy
Ben Strong	FI Conservancy
Justine Kibbe	FI Conservancy
Candace Whitman	Union Chapel FI
Jen Pagach	CT College
Terry McNamara	Ferguson Museum
Jack Schneider	Ferguson Museum
Steve Malinowski	FI Oyster Farm
Sarah Malinowski	FI Oyster Farm

By phone

Julia Socrates	NYSDEC
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Notes

*****Please note, the agenda was flipped due to expected inclement weather in the afternoon. As a result, the field trips occurred at the start of the day and the presentations followed after lunch.*****

Welcome, Introductions / Announcements

V. O'Neill / H. Yamalis / D. Kozak

Welcome to the Island

Elizabeth McCance, Henry L. Ferguson Museum

Presentations

Overview of land use, land conservation effort

Terry McNamara, Naturalist, Henry L. Ferguson Museum

Jack Schneider, Land Trust Coordinator, Henry L. Ferguson Museum

- Terry gave an overview of some of the wildlife that inhabit Fishers Island.
- Jack gave an overview of the history of the island and how that work shaped the landscape including how glaciation, historic agricultural practices, early island land use plans and the island's isolation from the mainland have significantly influenced its current landscapes. He also gave examples of some of the various habitat found around the island and the restoration work.

Fishers Island Conservancy

Introduction to the FIC, Parade Ground Grassland Restoration and other habitat restoration projects, sentinel monitoring program

Justine Kibbe, Island Naturalist, Fishers Island Conservancy

Ben Strong, Treasurer, Fishers Island Conservancy

- Ben and Justine discussed some of the habitat restoration work conducted on the island.

Fishers Island Seagrass Management Coalition

Chantal Collier, Director, LIS Program, TNC

Emily Bodell, Project Coordinator, FISMC

- The presentation reviewed the history of seagrass protection in NYS, including the Seagrass Task Force (2006), NY Seagrass Protection Act (2012), the Ocean Action Plan (2017), and the LISS CCMP (2015).
- There was a review of the previous seagrass monitoring efforts from USFWS aerial surveys to the recent TNC (Tong, 2019) field assessment of existing beds. There was discussion on some of those differences in data results.
- Chantal explained why there is an opportunity for collaborative management of seagrass areas on FI and she explained the reasoning and success of comanagement in other areas of the USA. Many of these efforts have led to the creation of Special Management Areas (SMA). This idea has led to the creation of the Fishers Island Seagrass Management Coalition (a community driven group created in 2017).
- The community had identified certain concerns and needs including vessel traffic in seagrass beds, exact extent of seagrass beds around the island, and determining how to create and manage a SMA.
- Emily Bodell is the new FI Seagrass Management Coordinator on the Island. Since her tenure, she has assisted the FISMC draft a charter and decision-making protocol, create work groups, and identified short term and long term priorities for the group.
- Emily presented all of the work that has occurred with seagrass on the Island to date and the results of that work.
- Emily presented the top items the group will work on in the near future including creating SMA with the use of SeaSketch, starting a boater education campaign, conducting a volunteer led boater usage monitoring effort, and conducting water quality monitoring through RI's Water Watch Program.

Nesting shorebirds and resident bats of Fishers Island

Kevin Jennings, Regional Manager, NYSDEC

- NYS runs an annual Long Island colonial waterbird survey that monitors for the presence of several bird species, colonial nesters and beach nesters. The survey covers a large geographic area covering over 237 different sites (70 additional sites every three years). It can be difficult to get to all of these sites, so they rely on the assistance of various partners.
- The targeted species for the survey is rosette terns, gull-billed terns, common tern, least tern, Forster's tern, black skimmer, and piping plover, along with various herons, egrets, and gulls.
- Many of these species have been recorded on Fishers Island over time. Two hot spots for the target species (Piping Plover and Least Tern) include Beach Pond and Airfield Beach. Banded piping plover from states other than NY (RI) have been recorded.
- South Dumpling, Stony Beach, South Beach, and Mud Pond have all had snowy egret, glossy ibis, least tern, and common tern in the past. Many of these nesting sites have been abandoned but it is not clear why. There is a need for more consistent surveys to confirm the presence of these species and determine why the nests are abandoned.
- NYS has been conducting bat surveys throughout the state to identify populations of long eared bat. Long Island, compared to the rest of the state, has a large population of this species. This survey includes both acoustic and capture work.

- One citizen science survey is asking citizens on the east end of Long Island and islands farther east to search crawl spaces for bats in hibernacula.
- NYSDEC is also conducting acoustic surveys at night on Fishers Island. Detectors were placed out several nights. Brown bats and silver haired bats were detected. No long eared bats were detected/
- The plan for 2019 is to put out more detectors in the summer and trap in the fall and put out more transmitters.

For those of you who missed the meeting, or for those that would like to revisit the presentations, you can find the presentations here:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ennEL9_DuQEk_gqWeCjyXnYT_W_vyf5H?usp=sharing

***Please note, K. Jennings presentation is for personal use only and should not be reposted online in any form.*

Tour of Fishers Island Restoration Sites and Stewardship Areas

Tour included the Parade Grounds coastal grassland restoration project Middle Farms Flats coastal maritime grassland restoration site, and view of an eelgrass bed at East Beach.

J. Schneider, E. Bodell, J. Kibbe, C. Collier, T. McNamara

2019 Meeting Dates:

Wednesday, September 18 CT (Location TBD)

Thursday, November 21 NY (Location TBD)



Elizabeth McCance from the H.L. Ferguson Museum welcomes the LISS HRSWG to the Island (photo Judy Preston, CTSG).



View of the shoreline at East Beach on the eastern end of the Island. This site has a very large eelgrass bed just off shore
(*photo Judy Preston, CTSG*).



Jack Schneider and Terry McNamara discuss the restoration of the coastal maritime grassland site at Middle Farms Flats
in the center of the island (*photo Judy Preston, CTSG*).



A view of the Middle Farm Flats grassland restoration site (photo Vicky O'Neill, NYSDEC).



A few LISS HRSWG members pose for a photo on the Fishers Island Ferry at Fishers Island, NY (photo Judy Preston, CTSG).

