Habitat Restoration & Stewardship Work Group
Virtual Meeting
Wednesday, December 2, 2020 – Meeting Summary

A recording of the meeting can be found here:

https://meetny.webex.com/webappng/sites/meetny/recording/638dd65c7ed14fba9a556f39f114b8e7/playback

Welcome and Roll Call

- A total of 35 people attended the meeting. Roll call: Bill Lucey (Save the Sound/Soundkeeper); Victoria O'Neill (NEIWPCC/NYSDEC/LISS); Harry Yamalis (CTDEEP/LISS); Alex Krofta (Save the Sound); Elizabeth Amendola (Audubon-CT); Sally Kellogg (SSER); Benjamin Maher (Audubon NY); Alissa Dragan (DA/BA); Angela Schimizzi (NYSDEC); Bridget Giblin (USFWS); Terra Willi (USFWS); Juliana Barrett (UConn/CT Sea Grant); Maggie Sager (NOAA); Todd Bobowick (NRCS); Kelsey Taylor (USFWS); Robert Doscher (Westchester County); Jimena Perez-Viscasillas (NY Sea Grant/LISS); Kathleen Fallon (NY Sea Grant); Patrick Comins (Connecticut Audubon Society); Peter Solomon (Sound School); Emily Hall (Seatuck Environmental Association); Casey Personius (NYSDEC/LISS); Rachel Neville (SSER); David Kozak (CTDEEP); Luke Miconi (Audubon CT); Stephen Schott (Cornell Cooperative Extension); Mark Tedesco (LISS/EPA); Nikki Tachiki (LISS/EPA); Heather Johnson (Friends of the Bay); Cayla Sullivan (EPA/LISS); Emily Stephan; Lindsay Suter, AIA (Dam owner); Arielle Santos (Seatuck Environmental Association); Kevin O'Brien (CTDEEP); Bridget Hilgendorff (Connecticut College).
- Alex Krofta announced that Save the Sound has several job announcements. Check it out!: https://www.savethesound.org/about-us/jobs-rfps/
- Patrick Comins announced that the Roger Torrey Peterson Estuary Center had been running in a small location in Old Lyme, CT but is now under contract to buy a property on the Lieutenant River for a new space. Hope to close by the end of December. Large building on property and will serve as a great nature center. Will have water access too. Still need to raise money for repairs and exhibits. Stay tuned! https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=10157973293054480&set=a.10157890865174480

Phillips Millpond Fishway; Alex Krofta, Save the Sound

- 300-year-old privately owned dam in North Branford, CT. The completion of this fishway would reconnect 4.25 acres and 10.4 miles upstream. There was another fishway completed downstream by the Regional Water Authority.
- Designs began in 2008. The designs included concrete channels and pools and a chute with baffles. Designs were completed by Nathan Jacobson & Associates (Chester CT)

- Schumack engineered the construction. Phase 1 included water handling by using a lower and upper coffer dam, existing sluice gate, and pumps and siphons. It was critical to maintain flow at the site for aquatic life.
- Construction included excavation by removing the existing gabion wall, and concrete walkway. The fishway was composed of concrete and metal and included a 30ft prefab section salvaged from CTDEEP and a smaller section from Sheepscott (Newcastle, ME).
- Construction began in January 2020 and lasted until May 2020.
- Fish were seen moving into the fishway right away within days (brown trout, white suckers).
- Stop plank slots were placed along the channel which allows for easy flow regulation.
- An eelevator was installed. It is composed of plastic tube filled with chains and water.
- The site is designed for seasonal usage. So, will be closed over the winter to avoid damage to the fishway.
- There is an O&M Agreement between Trout Unlimited and CTDEEP.
- Keys to Success: Outreach, local champion, right contractor, complimentary projects, making connections, organizational capacity
- Impediments along the way: Finding resources and funding, need private match,

<u>Living Shorelines: Panel Discussion focused on planning, permitting, and implementation</u>

Hepburn Living Shoreline Project, CT

Juliana Barrett, UConn/CT Sea Grant

- Area composed of Beach & Dune, Tidal Wetlands, Coastal Grassland, Coastal Forest along the LIS and the Connecticut River.
- Are was owned by Catherine Hepburn then transferred to the Land Trust.
- Concern over potential breach at the site. If breach occurs and stays open, then the brackish tidal wetland behind the beach would become salt marsh and there would be potential for flooding into the creek and surrounding homes.
- After Hurricane Irene and Sandy, Fenwick residents formed a living shoreline committee to discuss and promote the concept for this site.
- Workshop with leading living shoreline expert Bhaskar Subramanian (head of Shoreline Conservation Service for MD Department of Natural Resources).
- CTDEEP has recommended using a living shoreline at the site.
- Borough of Fenwick received grant to have engineering study conducted by GZA
- Design included 9 cobble sills, tidal marsh, cobble beach, dune enhancement, and movement and realignment of the creek.
- Construction at the site began in September 2020. SumCo is the lead on the project.

Widow's Hole Living Shoreline Project, NY

Steve Schott, Cornell Cooperative Extension

- This 0.4 acre site is broken up into 3 sections composed of Spartina alterniflora, beach, and dune.

- Boulders were placed on top of Geotech fabric at the upland edges then covered with sand from the dune.
- This is not a high energy site so it was determined that loose cobble could be used instead of cobble edge.
- In total, 2000cy of sand was used, rock toe upland edge was 51 boulders, 20cy of cobble was placed in a 6ft band.
- Construction was completed in 2 weeks.
- Planting included 5000 plugs of American beech grass and 5-6000 plugs of Spartina alterniflora.
- In the end, they found out that the rock cobble was not sufficient to protect the beach.
- Lessons learned: allow 9-12 months for permitting

Chittenden Park Living Shoreline, CT

Alex Kofta, Save the Sound

- This existing marsh serves as good Salt Marsh Sparrow habitat.
- Conceptual design was completed by Milone & McBroome and GEI.
- This design included 2.5 acres of stone sills and jetty, nearshore breakwater, dune restoration, tombolo features, and coastal plantings.
- Final designs and permit is estimated to be $300,000. Construction is estimated to be $2.1 million.

Topic Ideas for 2021 Meetings

- Artificial reefs (overlap with oyster reef and living shorelines)
- Need information on making living shoreline features more accessible to underserved communities.
- More information on the new NERR in CT.
- CT State of the Birds report-perhaps topics in that report that might be suitable for a future meeting.
- More presentations on climate change impacts on LIS, not just SLR impacts. Include presentations on storms and warming.
- Updates on the sand lance and other forage fish.
- Incorporating more environmental justice projects into the meetings. This could be a meeting focused on different examples of projects that have done this effectively, meaning really working closely with the community, such as involving them in the design, implementation, monitoring, etc. of the project. This would complement current LISS efforts to develop a formalized EJ Workgroup.