



**Long Island Sound Study
Management Committee Meeting
Thursday, January 21, 2016
Housatonic Community College Beacon Hall**

Welcome/Introductions. Mark Tedesco called the meeting to order at 9:15am and asked for self-introductions of attendees and an attendance sheet was circulated. Jim Latimer announced that this was his last Management Committee meeting and introduced Dr. Jason Grear, who will replace Latimer on the Management Committee and Science and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) as EPA's representative of the Office of Research and Development, Atlantic Ecology Division. Dr. Grear's field of expertise is estuarine ecology; he is a research ecologist focusing on population ecology, oceanography and climate science. He taught in the Department of Natural Resources at the University of Rhode Island and at Yale University's School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, where he earned his Ph.D. Tedesco also introduced Dr. James Ammerman as the new Long Island Sound science coordinator. Dr. Ammerman's research background is in nutrient recycling and he is currently serving on EPA's Science Advisory Board looking at eutrophication in Lake Erie. He is an adjunct professor at Stony Brook University and former director of New York Sea Grant. Dr. Ammerman will assist the STAC co-chairs in coordinating the program's science agenda and will serve as the lead for the water quality monitoring work group, among other responsibilities. Tedesco introduced Kimberly Roth, the new Long Island Sound Coordinator for New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIWPC); NEIWPC is still working to replace its role on the Management Committee. Tedesco called for any additions or changes to the agenda, as none were received he asked if there were any public comments, and as none were received, he proceeded with the agenda.

Reports.

EPA Nitrogen Strategy Letter. Mark Tedesco referred the Committee members to the December 23, 2015 EPA R1-R2 Regional Administrators' letter to the five Long Island Sound watershed state environmental Commissioners that was included in the meeting materials. Tedesco briefly described the purpose and content of the letter, which is to propose a way forward on further improving nutrient controls in the watershed in the absence of any consensus on adjusting the current nitrogen TMDL. Mel Coté indicated that while he is new to the Management Committee, he reminded members that he was involved with the development of the TMDL in the 1990s. Great progress has been achieved over that time frame, with eelgrass recovering in the Sound, achieving more than a 50 percent reduction in nitrogen loads to the Sound, with improving trends in reducing the area and duration of hypoxia. As described in the TMDL, modeling and monitoring do not project attainment of dissolved oxygen water quality standards from the nitrogen target alone and more will be needed. In addition, there are other adverse impacts from nutrient pollution that were not specifically targeted in the TMDL. EPA's strategy is organized by three customized watershed groupings (coastal embayments, rivers, and western Sound watersheds),, with a goal of establishing new end points that may be of interest or use to people, such as eelgrass restoration, water clarity, and the like. Rick Balla reiterated that both EPA Regions agree there is more to do; there are still problems faced in western part of

system; however there are opportunities to work in coastal communities on water quality problems; as we consider FY2016 budget decisions, some recommendations in the letter may influence our future decisions. Mark Tedesco said that the letter is just the start of a dialogue, it does not present all the answers, but it is consistent with what we've funded, such as development of water quality objectives for eelgrass. EPA is proposing discussions with the states and to follow up with them, to hear their perspectives and concerns. EPA is planning on having dialogue with the public, perhaps sponsor webinars, or public meetings, and to obtain formal input and comment on the strategy before implementation. Dawn McReynolds said she echoed the proposal to consult with the states. DEC is working on its own public action plan and it would be best to communicate and coordinate to make the most efficient use of resources and avoid duplication of effort.

STAC Report. Larry Swanson recognized Jim Ammerman's new role as science coordinator and said the STAC is looking forward to working with Jim in his new capacity. The STAC did not have a formal meeting since June, cancelling its scheduled November meeting in favor of a coordinated meeting of core staff to discuss and develop the NOAA Coastal Hypoxia Research Program (CHRP) proposal. There was an August monitoring workshop at Avery point, and a meeting summary had been distributed. There also was a joint meeting with CAC in September. Both at the June and September meetings there was a healthy discussion of the Long Island Sound report card, and in the interim several issues had been resolved and the report card moved forward. Also after the October Management Committee meeting the STAC co-chairs and Sea Grant directors discussed reinvigorating the STAC fellows program on a conference call on January 13. While some details are remaining to be worked out, the support for the STAC co-chairs would take the form of administrative support in the LIS research grants, which already contain support for the STAC meetings. The next STAC meeting is on Friday, February 19 at Avery Point.

CAC Report. Nancy Seligson reported on the CAC's December 10, 2015 meeting, noting that Curt Johnson had resigned as Connecticut co-chair. The CAC talked about the October Management Committee meeting. The CAC recommends merging the water-related work groups into one. Also, it seemed that work group reports were process-oriented rather than action-oriented. The CAC recommends the work group plans tee- up projects. The LISS needs to be specific about what future funding needs with Congressional Representatives. Seligson said it was good to have Jim Ammerman attend the meeting, and he spoke about his new position. Dr. Jamie Vaudrey also presented her work on nitrogen loading to the embayments, which was both inspiring and encouraging and provided valuable information. The CAC Policy Committee reported on microbeads, and recommended sending a letter to New York to enact legislation similar to Connecticut; however, in the interim, the President signed new Federal legislation that bans microbeads from cosmetic products (P.L. 114-114, *Micobead-Free Waters Act of 2015*. This bill amends the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to ban rinse-off cosmetics that contain intentionally-added plastic microbeads beginning on January 1, 2018, and to ban manufacturing of these cosmetics beginning on July 1, 2017. These bans are delayed by one year for cosmetics that are over-the-counter drugs.). Seligson reported that the Governor of New York's budget proposed an additional \$100 million for clean water infrastructure and \$300 million for the Environmental Protection Fund. The CAC also proposed writing to the Governor of Connecticut to increase funding for water projects. Seligson read from a press release of the

New York and Connecticut Senators that the *Long Island Sound Restoration and Stewardship Act* passed out of the Senate Environment and Public Works committee to the Floor. The bill would reauthorize at the same funding levels. Seligson said that the CAC did discuss the EPA nitrogen strategy letter, and felt strongly that its voice needs to be heard, and the Management Committee should create an action-oriented process and information for the nitrogen strategy, as well as for the CCMP and work group products. Jim Ammerman reported that NY Congressman Steve Israel was not running for Congress in the next election, leaving a vacancy for Co-chair of the Long Island Sound Congressional Caucus. Seligson reported that the CAC will reach out to Congressman Lee M. Zeldin (R-NY1), the second of two Republicans (Peter King, NY3) in the Long Island Sound Congressional Caucus as the replacement co-chair, and he would need to have indicators of support from his constituents. Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) is the Connecticut co-chair.

October Meeting Next Steps. Cassandra Bauer and Mark Parker reviewed the agenda and results and summary of the findings and recommendations of the October 22-23, 2015 Management Committee meeting in a PowerPoint presentation (available upon request). The meeting resulted in final recommendations in each of the four CCMP areas: Waters/Watersheds, Habitats/Wildlife; Sustainable Communities; and Science/Management. Following that overview, each of the work group leads presented the charter of each proposed work group (available on request).

CCMP Work Groups. Work group leads/designees Robert Burg, Harry Yamalis, Leah O'Neill (standing in for Monitoring), Jim Ammerman, Mark Parker, Mark Tedesco, and Cassie Bauer briefly presented the purpose, objectives and proposed activities of their respective work groups, which were reorganized from the discussions at the October Management Committee meeting. The Implementation Team met via teleconference and in-person to vet the meeting recommendations and develop the final work group organizations based on their best professional judgment. The Committee had received copies of each work groups' single-page charter based on the October meeting results in their January meeting package. In reply to a question, Jim Ammerman clarified that the Ad Hoc Modeling Work Group would likely continue if the NOAA CHRP proposal does not get funded because of the ongoing need for modeling. Bill Wise asked if there is opportunity to provide letters of support for the Long Island Sound proposal, and Ammerman said he would check on it and advise Committee members. Mel Cote said he was not clear on the nature of how the work groups relate to STAC, CAC and Management Committee. Mark Tedesco offered that work groups needed to make sure there is good cross communications among the work groups and other parts of the conference, and that this is an ongoing task. In general, work groups will be asked to provide updates to the advisory and management committees. The implementation team will identify topics for cross work group coordination and resolution Bill Wise said there is a need for internal communications and coordination, and this did come up with STAC co-chairs as they discussed additional administrative support. Rob Hust clarified that all the work groups were working under the auspices of the new CCMP and were taking their action and direction from those identified in the CCMP.

Each work group will be asked to revise its one-page organization strategy based on the Management Committee discussion. Some specific points that were raised for consideration include:

- Habitat Restoration and Stewardship: Build on existing living shoreline regional efforts.
- Water Quality Monitoring: Integrate near shore water quality monitoring needs and coordinate with the Watershed and Embayment work group. Consider research data in characterizations.
- Ad Hoc Reporting: Consider internal reporting and communication needs.

LIS 2012 Research Project Results: *Susceptibility of Long Island Sound embayment to eutrophication*. Dr. Jamie Vaudrey of the University of Connecticut presented the results of her research on the above topic. Cooperating investigators were: Charles T. Yarish, and Jang Kyun Kim, University of Connecticut Department of Marine Science, and Christopher Pickerell and Lorne Brousseau, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County. The project estimated the risk of eutrophication, which is often characterized by hypoxia and algal blooms, for 115 embayments in the Long Island Sound coastal region in Connecticut and New York. The researchers used computer models to calculate dissolved nitrogen concentrations and freshwater flushing times for a subset of embayments. They sampled embayments at dawn and slack tide during the summer hypoxia season to compare the results with the main stem of Long Island Sound. An assessment of the potential risk of eutrophication in the embayments will be prepared and distributed to coastal managers with the final report. A brief 20 page summary report will be completed within the month and a more comprehensive report detailing individual embayment results will be completed in 1-2 months. More information is available on the NY Sea Grant research website: <http://www.seagrant.sunysb.edu/projects/t/comparative-analysis-and-model-development-for-determining-the-susceptibility-to-eutrophication-of-long-island-sound-embayments?q=>

LIS 2012 Research Results: *Simulating the effects of climate on Long Island Sound physical environment and living marine resources*. Dr. Nickitas Georgas of Stevens Institute of Technology presented results of his above investigation. Cooperating investigators were: Alan F. Blumberg, and Philip M. Orton, Stevens Institute of Technology; Penelope Howell, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Marine Fisheries Division; and Vincent S. Saba, NOAA/National Marine Fisheries Service Northeast Fisheries Science Center. Researchers developed a computer model to analyze historical environmental trends back to the 1970s to enable the projection of environmental conditions of Long Island Sound into the future. Researchers synthesized physical data collected for LIS and global climate change indices. The computer first modeled backward in time, a process called “hindcasting,” and compared historic marine resources data provided by CTDEEP with a high-resolution global climate model from NOAA’s Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory. The computer model then looked forward to simulate the effects of climate changes on Long Island Sound’s physical environment and living marine resources up to the year 2100. The project found that LIS is more influenced by atmospheric temperature dependent on the Pacific Decadal Oscillation than by the Atlantic Decadal Oscillation. More information is available on the New York Sea Grant research website: <http://www.seagrant.sunysb.edu/projects/t/analyzing-history-to-project-and-manage-the-future-simulating-the-effects-of-climate-on-long-island-sound-s-physical-environment-and-living-marine-resources?q=>

FY2016 Budget/Work Plans. Joe Salata distributed an abstract on the FY2016 budget, indicating that the Planning Target is \$4,540,000 -- level-funded from FY2015. Base program work plan and budget requests were received at a total of \$4.283 million, leaving an unallocated balance of about \$254,000. Salata and Leah O'Neill will work with their respective grantees to develop final grant allocations in view of any unliquidated obligations and any other potential savings to be identified. Salata briefly reviewed accomplishments in FY2015 for the area of hypoxia, and acres of habitat restored/protected and river miles reopened. Mark Tedesco proposed that the unallocated balance and any other savings identified in the budget/work plan review be reserved to potentially support the work identified in EPA nitrogen strategy, which can be confirmed at the April Management Committee meeting after meetings with the states and others. Tedesco asked if there were any objections or other proposed uses of the funds; as none were indicated, consensus on this use of the unallocated funding was supported by the members.

Updates. Tracy Brown reported that the upcoming Long Island Sound Citizens Summit will focus on citizen science and is tentatively scheduled for June 10 at Stony Brook University. The agenda is still actively being developing but will include plenary presentations in the morning and afternoon small group breakout sessions to provide hands-on assistance on various citizen science topics.

Larry Swanson asked whether the LISS should take a position on specific issues relating to Long Island Sound, giving as an example statements relating to the Army Corps of Engineers release of a final dredged material management plan for Long Island Sound. Tedesco noted that traditionally the practice has been for LISS not to take positions on specific projects or regulatory decisions, recognizing that participating organizations are free to do so. Instead, the LISS has supported forums for information exchange and technical presentations.

Rob Hust discussed the upcoming 10th Connecticut Conference on Natural Resources on March 14, 2016 at UConn's Storrs campus. Hust indicated that he is on the development panel, and had suggested a general session on LIS. Abstracts are due by February 17 according to guidelines in a flyer he provided. Mark Tedesco asked if Hust was coordinating proposals on LIS, but Hust indicated that individuals should submit their ideas directly to the committee. More information on the presentation/poster requirements are at: <http://ccnr2016.weebly.com/talk-and-poster-guidelines.html>.

Susan Sullivan mentioned a Citizen's Science conference, sponsored by EPA New England and organized by NEIWPC, being planned for mid-June, possibly in Lowell, MA. This event should be dove-tailed with the LIS Citizens Summit on Long Island.

Larry Swanson reported that the next Long Island Sound biennial research conference is being planned for May 13, 2016 in Bridgeport, and that a planning committee chaired by Sylvain DeGuise and Bill Wise will have a conference call to discuss the details. The 2016 Long Island Sound Scientific Research Request for Proposals (RFP) will be developed and is planned for release this spring. The Planning Target for the RFP is \$850,000.

Mel Coté reminded attendees that at the October meeting mention was made of recognition awards for communities that had developed or implemented climate resiliency/adaptation plans. He reported that in the New England Region, EPA had established a database on the EPA Region 1 website at: <http://www.epa.gov/raine> to provide a source of information for local communities on resiliency and/or adaptation plans. The Resilience and Adaptation in New England (RAINE) database is a collection of vulnerability, resilience and adaptation reports, plans and webpages at the state, regional and community level. Users can learn from these experiences, share lessons being learned, discover how to better assist municipalities, and promote collaboration. RAINE provides information about actions at the state, regional, watershed or local community level. It not only includes links to web pages, reports and plans but also examples of presentations that communities use to engage their citizens, what tools they used to identify their vulnerabilities and who funded their projects.

Connecticut's Blue Plan Advisory Committee is having its first meeting at The Sound School in New Haven on June 29. See www.ct.gov/deep/lisblueplan for further information. Join the Long Island Sound Blue Plan List Server to receive notification of Blue Plan Advisory Committee meetings, web postings, and other information; email DEEP.BluePlanLIS@ct.gov; or contact David Blatt at 860.424.3610 for more information about the Blue Plan for Long Island Sound.

Attendees: Nancy Ferlow; Mark Tedesco (EPA), Mel J. Coté (EPA); Rick Balla (EPA); Susan Sullivan (NEIWPC); Sylvain DeGuise (CT Sea Grant); Jim Latimer (EPA); Jim Ammerman (NEIWPC); Evelyn Powers (NEIWPC); Peter Francis (CTDEEP); Dawn McReynolds (NYSDEC); Jason Grear (EPA); Nancy Seligson (CAC/NY); Tom Morgart (NRCS); Larry Swanson (STAC); Gary Wikfors (NOAA); Bill Wise (SUNY RF); Brian Thompson (CTDEEP); Leah O'Neill (EPA); Amy Madelbaum (NY Sea Grant); Cassandra Bauer (NYSDEC); Tracy Brown (Save the Sound); Mark Parker (CTDEEP); Rob Hust (CTDEEP); Harry Yamalis (CTDEEP); Joe Salata (EPA); Kimberly Roth (NEIWPC); Robert Burg. (NEIWPC). Guest presenters: Dr. Jamie Vaudrey; Dr. Nickitas Georgas; Penelope Howell. [Contact: Mark Tedesco, tedesco.mark@epa.gov]
