



**Long Island Sound Study
Management Committee Meeting
Fairfield University Alumni House
April 21, 2016**

Welcome/Introductions/Logistics. Mark Tedesco called the meeting to order at 10:09 asking for any proposed agenda changes. No changes and no additions were proposed. Tedesco indicated that several people would be calling in at 11:30am for the nitrogen update session.

Announcements. Sandy Breslin was announced as the new Connecticut Citizen's Advisory Co-chair.

REPORTS

Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). Nancy Seligson reported that the CAC met on March 10 in New York City. The CAC voted in three new members, Rivers Alliance of Connecticut; the Whaling Museum and Education Center at Cold Spring Harbor; and the Greenwich Conservation Commission. Nancy was reelected as the New York co-chair and Sandy Breslin was elected the new Connecticut CAC co-chair. Marty Garrell was reelected as secretary. Mark Tedesco presented the 2016 budget; Amy Mandelbaum presented the communications program and products that were reported at the National Estuary Program workshop in February in New Orleans. Seligson said that CAC members' participation in the new work groups was encouraged and members were asked to sign up for the work groups. Assistant DEC commissioner Jim Tierney provided an overview of the Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan, which Seligson said was very helpful for the CAC and to have his involvement. The CAC policy committee plans to visit Washington, DC to advocate for support for the program, and the diversity of the group that goes to DC, such as scientists, marine business members, etc. create a stronger coalition. There is a letter circulating from Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) recommending \$10 million for LIS. Finally, Seligson said that the New York state budget contains good news for LIS, with additional funding for clean water infrastructure projects and the Clean Water Fund.

Science and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC). Jim Ammerman reported that the minutes from the February 19 STAC meeting are posted on the LISS website. The STAC met in Connecticut at UConn's Avery Point campus. Jim O'Donnell opened the meeting by introducing a new STAC member from Mystic Aquarium, research director Paul Anderson. The STAC reelected Jim O'Donnell as the Connecticut co-chair. The STAC had a long and contentious discussion on the 2016 research Request for Proposals (RFP). Dr. Nikitas Georgas of Stevens Institute of Technology presented his recent modeling and hindcasting for Long Island Sound. Syma Ebbin described the biennial Long Island Sound research conference scheduled for May 13 at Bridgeport Holiday Inn. Ammerman reported that the LIS proposal for the Coastal Hypoxia Research Program was submitted on February 1. It is the first RFP in 4-5 years on this topic. The proposal was developed by UConn and Stony Brook and has a project period of five years. Ammerman said that we do not expect to hear anything before September 1. A National Science Foundation long term ecological research project was also submitted on February 1 by UConn; the funding is \$1.0 million a year with no expiration date. Mark Tedesco discussed the EPA

nitrogen strategy. Finally, Ammerman reported that there was a discussion of the newly reorganized LIS work groups, and STAC members were invited to join any particular work group.

Work Groups. Mark Tedesco said that at the January Management Committee meeting, the work groups gave overviews of what they were going to do over the next two years. While there was discussion and feedback on the process at that time, we wanted them to come back and report on what they are planning to accomplish more specifically, so all the work groups were invited to present at this meeting. We also wanted to discuss the best way to communicate what is being done and how to keep the Management Committee informed and to get members' feedback. We will continue to discuss this matter at next I Team meeting. Management Committee members should contact Leah O'Neill or Joe Salata about their preferences on reports by the work groups.

Public Involvement and Education (PI&E). Robert Burg reported that the work group has 16 members, eight members already serve on other work groups. Others rep CAC March 18 conference call; overview of work group. Trails day, interest by CAC members. Looking forward to future meetings. Invite students to meeting? Good venue to get people involved. Rob, colleges have environmental clubs. Worth reaching out to them. Opportunity we're missing. Water works. Research projects, students. Mark Tedesco clarified that if the partners decide to coordinate a campaign, it is problematic to have many messages coming from many different sources. In New York, messaging would be specific to the Sound, which would be different from Peconics or South Shore. Messages vary and can confuse the public. With a limited budget, it is best to determine how to get a maximum message out of it.

Habitat work group. Harry Yamalis reported that the next meeting is May 11. Dave Kozak and he started to develop the agenda. The IA that the work group is working on is: create a centralized list of habitat restoration and protection parameters. Dave Kozak led a discussion of stewardship sites and a process to add new sites; there are currently 33 stewardship sites. There were presentations on Barn Island and Julianna Barrett presented a web-based document. Connecticut is on the list for establishing a National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR). Brian Thompson, Kevin O'Brien, Sylvain DeGuise and Jim Edson are the contacts with NOAA to guide CTDEEP through the process, which should be about one to two years for establishing a NERR in Connecticut.

Water Quality Monitoring. Jim Ammerman chairs this work group under the new CCMP; the purpose of the group is to help coordinate water quality monitoring within the Long Island Sound system. An initial workgroup call was held on March 7 with 11 participants from EPA, NEIWPCC, state and NY city agencies, universities, and Save the Sound. The meeting summary is posted on the LISS website under committees and work groups. Jim introduced the work group and its purpose. Peter Linderoth from Save the Sound talked about citizen monitoring. Matt Lyman from CT DEEP discussed plans for IEC and DEEP to combine their annual hypoxia reports. Beau Ranheim from NYC DEP mentioned his available data back to 1906 for NYC waters and is currently improving his data accessibility. The NERACOOS observing system has plans to deploy a nutrient observatory in western LIS later this year that has automated nutrient sensors. Jim mentioned the recently submitted NOAA CHRP proposal to address hypoxia in LIS

with improved modeling and field observations. Jim also mentioned the recent EPA nitrogen strategy for LIS and Charlie DeQuillfeldt of NYS DEC described the Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan (LINAP). Jim plans to organize an in person work group meeting with Bill Dennison from the University of Maryland whose group has provided expertise for the LIS and embayment report cards. Evelyn Powers of IEC/NEIWPCC is planning a NEIWPCC-IEC District Shared Waterways Monitoring Work Group meeting at EPA Region 2 in NYC in May. The LISS Water Quality Monitoring Work Group will need to coordinate with this work group to maximize the benefits while limiting overlap.

Climate Change/Sentinels. Cassie Bauer reported that the work group will hold its first call on April 28. The group invited the chair of NEIWPCC's climate change work group to conduct a webinar on its work for the group. There will be an update on two sentinel monitoring projects and a review of the climate change website, as well as an update of the sentinel monitoring strategy, which was last done in 2011.

Watersheds/embayments. The work group reviewed its one page charter statement, which was done before the EPA nitrogen strategy and the Long Island nitrogen plan were released. The nonpoint source tracking tool project is to move forward and the work group's next call will review an evaluation report on May 18.

Nitrogen Reduction Updates. Mark Tedesco recognized Lorraine Holdridge on the conference phone to discuss the Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan (LINAP). Holdridge gave some background on development of the LINAP, which came about as a realization of the need for addressing nitrogen pollution on Long Island. The need became apparent through monitoring of water quality in embayments around Long Island and nitrogen levels in groundwater. Acknowledging nitrogen is polluting groundwater and the embayments, Governor Cuomo provided \$5 million in the budget for Long Island waters. The goals of LINAP are to assess nitrogen pollution, identifying sources of nitrogen pollution and its impacts to waterbodies, both ecological problems and reductions required to meet ecological endpoints. LINAP will establish implementation plans to achieve the reductions necessary to achieve endpoint goals. It will identify sources, quantify inputs, identify impairments and endpoints. NYSDEC will work with USGS to determine groundwater sheds and groundwater discharges to Long Island embayments. LINAP will have both short and long term activities, with the longer term a more TMDL-like effort to develop with numbers and to target resources for restoration of embayments. NYSDEC will work with existing protection programs and both the Peconic program and LISS, with already established work groups. Mel Coté and Rick Balla gave some background and a brief update on the EPA Nitrogen Reduction Strategy. EPA has conducted a lot of outreach to communicate the Strategy and solicit input. EPA has hosted a public webinar on February 26, public meetings on April 13 (CT) and 15 (NY) with another one planned May 12 (MA).

FY2016 Budget/Workplan. Leah O'Neill reported that the decisions by the Management Committee at its January meeting have been operationalized in the final budget request for FY2016. EPA will explore using the funding in mission contracts to accomplish the work that is outlined in the attachment provided to the Committee for this meeting. A handout was distributed with the specific proposed budget task to support the Strategy. EPA is using this technical information to draft a statement of work. The MC agreed the remaining unencumbered

funds would be used for implementation of the nitrogen strategy, and any other carryover funds would also be used for that project.

Joe Salata advised that the final NEP work plan is due to EPA Headquarters by June 3. Grantees will be notified to submit their grant applications via grants.gov and to work with their Project Officers in modifying their work plans to reflect any new work or projects assigned.

UPDATES

LIS Disposal Site Designations. Mel Coté from EPA Region 1 provided an update on the LIS dredged material disposal designations. EPA published a proposed rule amendment for the Central and Western Long Island Sound Dredged Material Disposal Sites (CLDS and WLDS) on February 10 for a 45-day public comment period, and received 119 comments on the proposed rule. EPA will publish the final rule on or about May 10; NYSDOS has provided a conditional concurrence with EPA's CZMA federal consistency determination, and will remove the conditions once it's assured EPA addressed their comments on the proposed rule. EPA published a proposed rule for a new Eastern LIS Disposal Site (ELDS) and notice of a draft Supplemental EIS on April 27 for a 60-day public comment period, or until June 27. EPA expects it will take 2-3 months to respond to comments, come out with a final rule and final SEIS by end of September. Four public hearings on the ELDS proposed rule: May 25 in Riverhead and Mattituck; May 26 at Avery point, morning/evening.

Long Island Sound Study Futures Fund. Request for proposals was released on March 17 and will close May 5. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation conducted several webinars to encourage and assist applications with the streamlined application. Proposals should be closely aligned with the new 2015 CCMP.

LIS Research RFP. The RFP is currently open for proposals and went with the same priorities as last year.

Connecticut Blue Plan. Harry Yamalis reported that the "Blue Plan" legislation establishes a process by which Connecticut will develop an inventory of Long Island Sound's natural resources and uses and, ultimately, a spatial plan to guide future use of the Sound's waters and submerged lands. The Act, Public Act 15-66 created a Blue Plan Advisory Committee; Robert Klee is the DEEP representative. The website is:

http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2705&q=574290&deepNav_GID=1635

2016 Eelgrass mapping. USFWS member Tom Chapman was unable to attend the meeting to report on progress. Mark Tedesco reported that USFWS is updating its work plan with EPA for eelgrass mapping, and it is hoped that overflights can be done in 2016 to coincide with eelgrass work in Rhode Island.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). NRCS funded 84 high-impact projects this year for fiscal 2016 funding. The projects cover all 50 states and target all eight Critical Conservation Areas. In total, NRCS received 265 pre-proposals from partners, and of those, selected the best to submit full proposals. National HQ announced funds for 2017 RCPP, approximately \$200 million is available nationwide; every state gets a different amount. The pre-

proposal period for 2017 closes on May 10. For further details and lists of funded projects see <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/farmbill/rcpp/>.

Citizens Summit. The 25th summit will be held at Stony Brook University on June 3 from 9:00am-3:30pm. The topic is *Translating Science to Action for Long Island Sound*. Registration information is posted on the Connecticut Fund for the Environment/Save the Sound website, <http://www.ctenvironment.org/> and the LISS website, <http://longislandsoundstudy.net>.

Connecticut Conference on Natural Resources. Rob Hust reported that the 10th annual conference held at UConn's Laurel Hall had a good segment on LIS. Mark Parker and Kelly Streich presented for DEEP, and about 300 people attended. The agenda and proceedings are available at <https://www.regonline.com/builder/site/tab2.aspx?EventID=1809384>.

CIRCA. Jim O'Donnell was unable to report on the Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA) at the meeting due to a previous commitment. There will be an update at a future meeting. Information on CIRCA is available at, <http://circa.uconn.edu/>.

Other.

Sandy Breslin reminded the members that the Latitude 41 conference is scheduled for May 3 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Stony Brook. The agenda and information on the pre- and post-conference can be found at <https://www.estuaries.org/latitude-41-regional-symposium>.

Mark Tedesco asked for suggestions for the July agenda. A discussion of the final lobster report by CTDEEP was suggested.

The next Management Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 21 at Housatonic Community College in Bridgeport. Logistics on the meeting will be posted on the LISS website when available. Tedesco adjourned the meeting at 2:25pm.
