

Management Committee Meeting Notes

April 20th, 2023

Meeting Conducted Remotely



Attendees:

Mark Tedesco, EPA LISO	Brian Thompson, CTDEEP	Arthur Johnson, MassDEP
Cayla Sullivan, EPA LISO	Harry Yamalis, CTDEEP	Kamazima Lwiza, SUNY SoMAS
Esther Nelson, EPA LISO	Christopher Bellucci, CTDEEP	Penny Vlahos, STAC
Kristen Laccetti, EPA LISO	Kevin O'Brien, CT DEEP	David Ansel, STS
Melissa Duvall, EPA LISO	Kelly Streich, CTDEEP	Tod Randall, USACE
Rick Balla, EPA R2	Erik Bedan, CTDEEP	Jennifer Street, NYSDOS
Leah O'Neill, EPA R1	Melinda Gosselin, CTDEEP	Danielle Alexander, NYCDEP
Bessie Wright, EPA R1	Tim Hunter, CTDEEP	Lynn Dwyer, NFWF
Casey Abel, EPA R1	Richard Friesner, NEIWPCC	Gary Wikfors, NOAA
Ashley Desrosiers, EPA R1	Jordan Bishop, NEIWPCC	Jim Hagy, EPA ORD
Mel Coté, EPA R1	Jim Ammerman, NEIWPCC	Suzanne Paton, USFWS
Evelyn Spencer, EPA R1	Evelyn Powers, IEC	Audrey Mayer, USFWS
Holly Drinkuth, CAC/CT	Kimarie Yap, IEC	Nancy Ferlow, USDA-NRCS
Nancy Seligson, CAC/NY	Sara Powell, NYSG	DeAva Lambert, CTDEEP
Mary Arnold, NYSDEC	Sarah Schaefer-Brown, NYSG	Machelle Simmons, USDA-NRCS
Samarra Scantlebury, NYSDEC	Deborah Abibou, CTSG	Denise Savageau, CT Council on
Cassandra Bauer, NYSDEC	Jimena Perez-Viscasillas, NYSG	Soil and Water Conservation
Sue VanPatten, NYSDEC	Shahela Begum, RAE	Paul Stacey, Footprints in the
Rebecca Shuford, NYSG	Sylvain DeGuise, CTSG	Water
Elizabeth Hornstein, NYSG	Jonathan Morrison, USGS	
Lillit Genovesi, NYSG	Shauna Kamath, NYSDEC	

Introduction: Mark Tedesco welcomed everyone to the meeting at approximately 9:00am. He mentioned there were no changes to the meeting agenda. He opened the floor to anyone who had any personnel updates.

- Ashley Desrosiers: Introduced Shahela Begum as the LISCI program director.
- Shahela Begum: Thanked everyone and explained she is excited to be aboard.

Science and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) Updates by Penny Vlahos

- Penny Vlahos: Gave an update from the last STAC meeting: There was a presentation from Sylvain to give results of the research grant competition, which maintained a very high standard for awarding funding. There was discussion on the renaming project. Cayla introduced the LIS hypoxia prediction project and the planning meeting in May and mentioned that it is a public outreach project. There were presentations from new PI's working on LIS research. Discussed new fellowships and how to make those effective in terms of mentorship. Paul Stacy introduced the integrated watershed management tool. Also discussed the new NOAA Milford oyster disease project that was funded.

Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Update by Nancy Seligson and Holly Drinkuth

- Nancy Seligson: Had a meeting on March 9th that included: An update from policy subcommittee about conversations with congresspeople in Long Island with Andrew Garbarino, who's from the South Shore of Long Island, Anthony D. Esposito, also from the South Shore, and Nick Lalota, who is on the eastern end of Long Island. They are all freshman and had real interest in LIS and participating in the congressional caucus. Felt they were well versed in the issues and had personal connections to the LIS. New NY co-chair for congressional caucus will be Nick Lalota and Joe Courtney will remain as the CT co-chair. Had presentations from COE workgroup. Also discussed a name change. Evelyn Spencer talked about WG coordination.

- Holly Drinkuth: Mentioned they received the annual member survey to learn what WG members are working on and how their work connects to CCMP. This round included environmental justice questions to kick off conversation with EJWG.
- Nancy Seligson: Mentioned there was a great presentation from Jimena about DEIJ and big picture of what it means and how they then asked 4 questions about environmental justice to the CAC and had break out groups. Feedback from groups pointed toward a more watershed approach, working to engage with communities in issues that are important to them. There was also discussion about how the CCMP ecosystem targets need to be updated to be able to expand implementation. Got specific activities that involve branching out to the watershed. Would like to share summarized results to relevant WGs. Next CAC meeting will be June 8th will discuss priorities of those actions and provide them to the MC meeting.
- Kamazima Lwiza: Explained he was reading about offshore wind and worries about workers migrating to the area that would affect EJ communities and lead to displacement, and it is possible this will also affect Long Island.
 - Nancy Seligson: Responded that it is an interesting point but has not come up yet but would be an interesting angle to discuss since they are following offshore wind projects being discussed in Long Island.
 - Holly Drinkuth: Agreed it is important and mentioned that Connecticut will see this as well especially in New London, a disadvantaged community.

Overview of FY23 Work Plan and Budget – Leah O’Neill

- Mark Tedesco: Explained that LISS saw a 25% increase in fiscal year appropriations. Explained the call for proposals for both rounds of supplemental proposals, the first-round proposals developed from workgroups and partners and the second round developed by partners.
- Leah O’Neill: Explained the increase in funding LISS has seen in recent years and outlined the different sources of funding: CWA 320 and CWA 119 Non-BIL and CWA 320 and 119 BIL funds. Mentioned that this meeting will be discussing CWA 320 and CWA 119 Non-BIL funds. Explained that the base budget items shared in January have all changed in dollar amount due to indirect rates, etc. but the projects have stayed the same. Outlined the match requirements and the ability for LISS to use aggregate match, allowing partners to over-match to cover partners who cannot provide the full match. Mentioned that \$6 million in overmatch is currently required for the base proposals. Stated that after allocating the base budget we have \$13.9 million funds that will be discussed today. Reminded everyone about where the BIL funds will be going. Showed a chart describing the categories of FY23 projects and how much funding is going towards each category, broken down by types of funds (BIL vs non-BIL base).
- Mel Cote: Mentioned he noticed habitat restoration and protection and water quality Implementation are a very small piece of the base budget when BIL funds are removed.
 - Leah O’Neill: Agreed and noted a lot of the supplemental funds go towards those categories.
 - Mark Tedesco: Mentioned the LISFF projects are not parsed by what the project funds go towards yet but that is a big piece of our base investment.
 - Leah O’Neill: Agreed and mentioned the projects are typically spread equally across the activity types.
 - Cayla Sullivan: Explained that futures fund projects are all categorized under ‘implementation’ so they are not included in the chart but once those projects are selected, they are parsed by these categories.
 - Bessie Wright: Explained that the FY23 Futures Fund has 3 themes so all the futures fund projects will be going towards habitat restoration, outreach, etc. not monitoring or modeling.

- Leah O'Neill: Moved on to supplemental budget. Mentioned the first round of proposals were discussed at the March I-Team meeting. Thanked everyone for the quick turnaround for second round proposals. Reminded everyone that proposals need to be in line with the CCMP and priority will be given to proposals that were created through typical channels, projects that build off current work, etc. Shared the budget chart showing the base budget and the supplemental projects. Mentioned that EPA has worked on budget scenarios that have a balanced budget. Outlined the discussions about increasing the Futures Fund and land acquisition funding for the states by \$2 million each.
- Penny Vlahos: Mentioned CTNERR parcels are split up and the plan is to acquire all of them.
 - Mark Tedesco: Responded we want to help capitalize on opportunities.
 - Kevin O'Brien: Added he is not part of the reserve but shared part of the management planning and that the parcels are disjointed and there is a section of the management plan that states they are required to look at long term strategies for acquisition. Mentioned the program is focusing on getting everything started up.
- Leah O'Neill: Mentioned the first round of proposals and the cost totaling \$9 million with a match of over \$5 million needed.
 - Jim Ammerman: Commented on the DEIJ training and that while he supports these initiatives, he questioned whether the video training will be effective but agrees the in-person training has potential.
 - Bessie Wright: Recognize that there is a lot of learning and the need for a better understanding of EJ communities in LIS but there was a big push to get beginner training as soon as possible because some training is better than none. Recognizes that it is a starting point and more targeted trainings will be developed as we learn more.
- Esther Nelson: Noted that data management has been discussed but no proposal came from it.
 - Mark Tedesco: Mentioned the steps taken to help remedy this such as addressing these issues within the existing programs and agreements.
- Mark Tedesco: Reiterated that LISS is recommending the first round of supplemental proposals should be funded but there will be a tally of overmatch before we can finalize the budget.
- Leah O'Neill: Explained that after funding the first round of supplemental proposals there is \$350,000 left if an extra \$2 million is given to the states for land acquisition and another \$2 million to the futures fund. Mentioned the CTDEEP proposal for improving access to LIS will be moved to BIL funds. Suggested to fund the proposals for CTNERR's establishing an eelgrass collaborative and CTDEEP's proposal for total alkalinity analysis. Mentioned this is all up for discussion this meeting.
- Mark Tedesco: Felt we should present a balanced budget option but anything we don't fund this year we want to consider for FY24 funding.
- Sylvain DeGuise: Mentioned the call for second proposals had \$6 million unallocated but the numbers being presented here are much lower and asked where those funds have gone.
 - Leah O'Neill: Explained the expansion for land acquisition and futures fund funding has taken most of that budget but it is still up for discussion.
 - Mark Tedesco: Mentioned that part of it was also a revised proposal for Titus Mill Pond, from the first round of proposals, that increased in budget.
 - Cassandra Bauer: Clarified that the additional cost is for the Flax Pond restoration that was funded last year but needs more funds to continue that work.
- Nancy Seligson: Asked that FY24 budget have workgroups review proposals that don't get funded so they can give their input going forward.
 - Mark Tedesco: Agreed.
- Bessie Wright: Mentioned that implementation projects were heavily funded through BIL due to the match waiver allowing communities that can't meet match to get the funding they need.

- Paul Stacey: Mentioned that CTDEEP had to go in front of financial board and explain results-based accountability. Added that we must be careful that we aren't doing implementation that costs a lot and looks nice but implementation that gets results.
 - Mark Tedesco: Agreed.
 - Bessie Wright: Mentioned that Futures fund doesn't report on the metrics until the award is completed, so what is showing in the PowerBI report is from 2017. Explained that the results from newer awards have not been reported yet.
- Mel Cote: Mentioned that stormwater and non-point source pollution is not being addressed enough. Explained that MS4 permits are another avenue to get better nitrogen control.
- Sue Van Patten: Stated that BIL money for WQIP projects are implementation as well as septic system replacement program through NYSDEC. Mentioned the Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan group that focuses on implementation as well.
- Holly Drinkuth: Mentioned the BIL money going towards implementation helps free up what we will do in the future when the BIL money has run out. Gave kudos to Sue on the NYSDEC programs and mentioned we should focus on how to do that in the other watersheds of LIS.
- Mark Tedesco: Added that NRCS and FWS positions were funded that will help develop proposals competitive for other pots of funding that will benefit LIS.
- Rebecca Shuford: Clarified what is being proposed: only two proposals from round 2 will be funded on top of all first-round proposals.
 - Mark Tedesco: Responded correct, the two proposals chosen were because they built off what has been discussed and recommended previously. Mentioned the second-round proposals not selected will be put forth for the FY24 funding discussion.
- Sylvain DeGuise: Commented on discussion of implementation and mentioned that the next generation is an important piece and mentioned the SeaGrant proposals on education.
 - Mark Tedesco: Responded there can be a post-meeting conversation about money left over to fund more projects.
- Jim Ammerman: Supported the eelgrass collaborative project but asked if LISS will end up supporting the CT NERR and will this lead to more meetings.
 - Cayla Sullivan: Responded it hasn't been discussed yet, but this funding will help get the collaborative up and running with quarterly meetings and there is a two-year project period to see where it goes.
- Jim Ammerman: Mentioned the Norwalk water quality monitoring proposal mentions equipment is already there and it is for continued monitoring. Asked if this funding required to continue the monitoring.
 - Jonathan Morrision: Funding runs out this year, so it is required for the ongoing operation and maintenance.
- Becky Shuford: Asked about collaboration between other estuary programs in the region regarding eelgrass initiatives and stated that it is important to have broader links to these other estuary programs.
 - Mark Tedesco: Agreed and there has been a lot of discussion with Peconic Estuary Program as well as New England.
 - Cayla Sullivan: Added that Phil Colarusso is spearheading a regional eelgrass coalition to focus on eelgrass resiliency, so it is a work in progress to be more coordinated. Mentioned a proposal has been discussed for all Northeast estuary programs for eelgrass but there are steps that need to be taken to do that.
- Mark Tedesco: Gave kudos to NYSDEC for spearheading regular calls for all the Long Island estuary programs on how we can work together. Encouraged people to reach out about any of the proposals to

address issues. Explained that next steps will be summarizing recommendations so partners can see the numbers and confirm if there are left over funds to have a discussion on what else can be funded.

- Leah O'Neill: Explained EPA is still working with base budget grantees to finalize their numbers. Mentioned the CCMP revision vs update and said we are due for a revision and to keep in mind the staff time for that. Asked that grantees keep in mind that there needs to be accessibility and accountability with data management for awards. Went through the timeline: EPA will execute funding memo and have workplans submitted by early June then begin work on FY24 budget.
 - Becky Shuford: Mentioned the SRC position for NYC has been asked for by many people and is something to consider.
 - Leah O'Neill: Mentioned the CAC usually sends a list of priorities and asked Nancy if they will be doing that.
 - Nancy Seligson: Responded they will do it for FY24 but haven't yet.
 - Holly Drinkuth: Mentioned they sent a list prior to the October meeting for FY23.

Update on CT NERR – Mark Tedesco

- Mark Tedesco: Discussed how we can include CT NERR into the management conversation.
- Sylvain DeGuise: Suggested adding a member from CT NERR to the management committee as they are also focused on LIS and would add significant value to the management committee.
- Mark Tedesco: Explained the formal process is a conversation about adding a member with the committee and it is important to think about balance and diversity of different interests. He opened the conversation up to others' opinions about adding CT NERR.
- Mel Cote: Supported the idea.
- Brian Thompson: Also voiced support and mentioned now is a good time as they are nearly fully staffed. Mentioned CTDEEP is a partner of NERR and has a voice on the plans and implementation and they are focused on things we don't necessarily have the time to work on.
- Kevin O'Brien: Asked if this would also extend to representation on the STAC and CAC.
 - Mark Tedesco: Replied it would be different because it would be up to the STAC and CAC to include new members but doesn't mean it can't.
 - Jim Ammerman: Pointed out that the research coordinator of CT NERR is on the STAC already.
 - Holly Drinkuth: Mentioned it would be important to expand to workgroup membership so as not to overlap on the same projects.
- Mark Tedesco: Asked NY representatives if they have any issues with adding a CT organization.
 - Nancy Seligson: Expressed no concern about adding a CT organization but wanted to see the totals of who on MC is NY or CT.
 - Leah O'Neill: Replied that the agenda lists the members and their respective organizations.
 - Sue Van Patten: Agreed with including them in the management committee.
 - Cassandra Bauer: Agreed.
- Mark Tedesco: Stated that after this meeting we will send them a formal invitation to join the management committee.

Next Steps on CCMP Revision or Update for 2025-2029 – Esther Nelson

- Esther Nelson: Gave background on previous CCMP updates and revisions, with the last revision happening in 2015. Explained that a revision would have to go through EPA HQ as well.
- Mark Tedesco: Explained that more discussion is welcomed in advance of the July MC meeting with the I-team and CAC based on a proposal put together by EPA in May.

- Leah O'Neill: Mentioned guidance for the CCMP comes from the NEP so while our 2015 CCMP was completed with a 20-year vision, now NEP suggests a revision every 10 years. Explained that we should consider the dramatic increase in funding since 2015 but acknowledges a full revision is a big lift compared to an update but had contractor support for the last revision.
- Paul Stacey: Mentioned the 2015 revision themes resonated with everyone but the ecosystem targets and implementation actions are outdated, and it is important to think about this now rather than 10 years from now.
- Bessie Wright: Explained that we should make measuring success more simplified and show the success through the metrics we are tracking. Mentioned environmental justice and resilient communities' themes would be better integrated through a revision.

Updates

- Mark Tedesco: Explained that there is a tentative meeting for the Policy Committee meeting for July 11th or July 13th, just waiting on the CTDEEP commissioner, and it will be held at NYSDEC headquarters in Sunken Meadows.
- Mark Tedesco: Gave an update on the renaming process and that there is strong support for the name change with two suggestions having equal support. Mentioned there could be an issue with the authorizing legislation is for Long Island Sound Study so there was a meeting with EPA HQ about the concern. Suggested announcing the new name with the new CCMP.
 - Mel Cote: Mentioned the name was not initially included in the authorizing language and is still in just a minority of the language.
 - Mark Tedesco: Responded that it may not be an issue at all, but we would like to formally confirm that.
- Mel Cote: Mentioned that Mark will be speaking at the NEWIPCC executive committee and board meeting about their involvement in LISS.
- Casey Abel: Reminded everyone that the new COE workgroup will have their first meeting one week from now. Contact Lillit Genovesi about joining.
- Kevin O'Brien: Introduced Mindy Gosselin as a new CTDEEP employee who will be working on habitat restoration and land acquisition.

Next Meeting & Adjournment

- Mark Tedesco: Meeting was adjourned at 12:00 pm.
- Next meeting: July 20th