



**Public Information and Education (PIE) Work Group Call  
July 24, 2019  
Meeting notes**

**Participants:** Erin McGrath, Jordan Christensen, Casey Personius, Amanda Pachomski, Robert Burg, Vicky O'Neill, Mary Ellen Mateleska, George Hoffman, Jim Ammerman, Pat Aitken, Judy Preston, Holly Drinkuth, Christianne Marguerite

**Announcements:** Judy gave an update on an aquatic invasives work event on the Connecticut River for water chestnut (*Trapa natans*); there has been an alarming increase in both water chestnut and hydrilla in the estuary, which has the potential to significantly impact the natural communities that the site is known for. Vicky talked about the September 14<sup>th</sup> National Estuary Day event that is being organized. The theme this year is marine debris; there will be a variety of events open to the public. George announced the Setauket Harbor Day event on September 28<sup>th</sup> that will also open to the public, featuring boat lessons and touch tanks, among other things.

**2019 Social Media Campaign:** Robert explained this year's social media campaign that will start on August 5<sup>th</sup>; he showed the Hootsuite site with Facebook, Twitter and Instagram posts scheduled and explained the process for everyone to participate by sharing posts. A kickoff event will be held at Lighthouse Point in East Haven on August 8<sup>th</sup>; everyone is invited. Mary Ellen will be leading beach clean-up events at Lighthouse Point and Hilary Starks of SoundWaters will be coordinating cleanups at Cove Island and Boccuzzi Parks in Stamford. Judy Benson (CTSG) will once again be writing an op-ed piece for the Hearst papers in CT. Rain will not cancel the event, only threatening conditions will postpone it (after the meeting the planning team for the clean-up events decided on Aug. 9 as the rain date). In NY, Vicky also will be having a beach clean-up at the Flax Pond Research Institute that will include using a net capable of collecting microplastics.

**PIE Work Group Summary info:** Judy introduced the discussion on collecting information, via the questionnaire, on the progress, priorities and needs of the Public Information and Education (PIE) work group. She requested feedback by the **week of August 5<sup>th</sup> – no later than that Friday the 9<sup>th</sup>**. If people's input can be consolidated in advance of the 9<sup>th</sup>, that information will be sent out in advance of the 9<sup>th</sup> to provide some examples of how the questions are being answered. This information is critical to help the PIE group prepare a 2020 CCMP update, and

assess needs and priorities moving forward, and in anticipation of the October LISS Management Committee meeting.

**Discussion:**

Chris Gobler on LI was cited as someone who commands a sizable following about updates concerning water quality/algae blooms on LI, but it often leaves the public thinking that everything is bad concerning water quality, when a lot of progress has actually been made. How do we counter this? Judy noted that a Water Quality Fact Sheet has recently been completed through the LISS and needs greater distribution.

Robert cited the last Public Perception Survey, done 13 years ago, that people who live close to the Sound and get out on it believe that the water quality is getting better. He also noted that this survey continues to be cited.

Holly remarked that the CCMP gives us the information about what people need to know to accomplish the tasks that have been established for LIS.

Robert asked Casey to discuss how she is attempting to track the work being done to address coastal sustainability and resilience. She noted the Climate Smart Communities program and has been researching on LI what towns have plans (although having the plan doesn't address whether or not it is being implemented). There is confusion about how plans overlap between communities, villages, counties, and if there is redundancy. The CIRCA program in CT is tracking progress in CT.

When asked about the separateness of the outreach from the sustainability planning elements in the Sustainable and Resilient Communities section of the CCMP, Mary Ellen noted that, at least in eastern CT, local boards are made up of the public, many of whom know very little about the topic of sustainability or resiliency; there is a great need here. Despite this, she believes that there has been a lot of outreach done resulting in a big impact overall; it would be terrific to pull this information into a press release. Holly noted that the LISS CAC did an assessment of the overall outreach accomplishments of the member groups; the results were impressive. Without effective annual monitoring it will be difficult to do a 5 year review of outreach success. Judy commented about the need to measure effective impact.

Vicky encouraged everyone to give their grand ideas –“PIE in the sky”, and think about how we can prepare for a growing program. George included that we need to identify our audience(s); most people don't know what we do and we need to do something about that. He also commented that the Future's Fund process is not easy to apply for, to which Vicky encouraged everyone to look at the latest RFP for the Futures Fund and if it isn't addressing what needs to be addressed they should note that in this “what if” opportunity.

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