

Watershed and Embayments Work Group Meeting Notes
Wednesday, November 9, 2022
Meeting conducted remotely via Microsoft Teams



Attendees:

Kelly Streich, CT DEEP (Co-chair)

Mary Arnold, NYSDEC/NEIWPC (Co-chair)

Jean Pillo, ECT Conservation District

Qian Lei-parent, UCONN

Jordan Bishop, NEIWPC

Mark Parker, CT DEEP

Dave Dickson, UCONN

Chet Arnold, UCONN

Kristin Kraseski, NYSDEC/NEIWPC

Elizabeth Hornstein, NYSG

Sarah Healy, NYSDEC/NEIWPC

Sue Van Patten, NYSDEC

James Ammerman, NEIWPC

Sarah Deonarine, Manhasset Bay

Eric Swenson, Hempstead Harbor

Lillit Genovesi, NYSG

Nikki Spiller, Earthplace

Mary Beth Hart, CTDEEP

Esther Nelson, EPA (EPA Lead)

Casey Abel, EPA (EPA Lead)

Leah O'Neill, EPA

Samarra Scantlebury, NYSDEC

Paul Stacey, Footprints on the Water

Heather Johnson, Friends of the Bay

Mark Tedesco, EPA

Sarah Crosby, Maritime Aquarium

Holly Drinkuth, TNC

Robert Hawthorne, NRCS

Jamie Vaudrey, UCONN

Sarah Schafer-Brown, NYSG

Cayla Sullivan, EPA

Introduction:

The meeting was called to order at approximately 10:00am in the Teams Meeting.

Management Committee Updates:

For staffing updates we had Judy Preston retire on April 1st and we've recruited Jessica Leclair as a new Connecticut Sea Grant outreach coordinator. Jennifer Street, NYSDEC asked to join the Management Committee. At the end of April, former WEWG co-chair, Mark Parker, CT DEEP retired. Kelly Streich is taking his place as the new Connecticut co-chair. Other Management Committee updates included the introduction of the Governance Structure and Management Framework for the Long Island Sound Study, an update on the 2022 Report to Congress, and upcoming in-person meetings.

The total of EPA funding available for FY22 is about 54 million and that includes 22 million through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and 32 million through our regular appropriations from our enacted budget. The 32 million that's coming from the infrastructure budget, will cover various topics such as coastal resiliency, land protection, acquisition infrastructure improvements that have been priorities for our program. The base budget is about 25 million and we have about 7.3 million for supplemental projects. In regard to the work group, we're continuing the water quality monitoring that has been done in the last few years, the wastewater treatment plant upgrades in Chicopee, MA and the IEC/Harborwatch proposal, discussed earlier this year.

Using Hempstead Harbor Water-Quality Data to Track and Resolve Watershed Problems – Carol DiPaolo, Coalition to Save Hempstead Harbor:

- Hempstead Harbor historically has had mixed uses, industrial and recreational, and, as always, had to balance those two uses of the harbor. The heavy industrial uses, really, which were consolidated around Glen Cove Creek and certain areas on the western shore and the Eastern Shore toward the middle section, most of those industrial uses have ceased, though there are still ongoing commercial enterprises and as the industrial uses have diminished, the recreational uses have of course increased as water quality has improved all around the harbor. Consolidated toxic waste sites, both Super Fund New York State and Federal Superfund sites, were in various stages of cleanup, and the development plans for this started and are still ongoing not completed. There is still the development of operating the

power plant and both aggregate transport operations and fuel transport are still working in the harbor. We started with three stations and as the program expanded, we're now at 21 core monitoring stations and additional stations have been developed in different parts of the harbor for different programs of as we've expanded with different projects that have been started up at TAP and Marina aquaculture projects where we've created monitoring programs around those.

Save the Sound: Unified Water Study Updates and 2021 – Peter Linderoth, Save the Sound

In regard to pathogen indicator, bacteria monitoring, we've been monitoring for about seven years on for pathogen indicator bacteria. We have a great dedicated group of Community scientists, trained community scientists, volunteers that assist us with this. We monitor 62 locations for about 10 to 12 weeks weekly from mid June to about Labor Day. We collect over 670 samples and then we calculate a geometric mean which is often used in the water quality criteria for Connecticut and New York in addition to single sample values. We sample rivers, tributaries, the open shoreline, and embayments and beaches in Long Island sounds. We sample our locations by watershed, so any given watershed, all the sample stations that are in it are always sampled on the same day. We put out results to the public on our website. There's a link here where people can go and get the Excel spreadsheets of all the data that's collected.

The Unified Water Study is a study designed to fill the margins of Long Island Sound. There's some outstanding programs out there like coalition to save Hempstead Harbors core program friends in the Bay. The great thing about this program and we have the buy in from those groups too is we all collect data the same exact way. The tier one parameters that all the groups monitor include dissolved oxygen turbidity, which is water clarity, chlorophyll, a great indicator of how much phytoplankton is in the water. Tier 2, which is a subset of all the tier one, is continuous dissolved oxygen quantitative macrophages, which are video surveys at the bottom and nutrients in the form of nitrogen and phosphorus. We submit all the unified water study to the water quality exchange, which is the larger national network.

Questions

Esther Nelson: Would either of you like to comment on any challenges you've had specifically communicating the data to the public or municipal level contacts?

Carol DiPaolo: I think that it was difficult for us as we're going, particularly through the Glen Cove, were people who are not used to reading data are seeing data even though they all receive our annual reports. A lot of that information never filters down to public officials in different departments that are making decisions regarding expansions within a municipality further development.

Sarah Deonarine: I was wondering, Carol, if you could talk about how you've been so successful in getting Futures Fund grants?

Carol DiPaolo: I would say from the from the outset it was because things were fortuitous and the fact that we were developing our monitoring program, as I said at the same time that people were really focusing on Long Island sound issues. We couldn't wait for the contracting process to go through wait for the funds to be issued, and the problem was solved with the Hempstead Harbor Protection Committee, so together, we worked on the issues. Together, we strategized about the priorities and the coalition led the way in how the program had to be focused on and always had the support of the Protection Committee.

Next Meeting & Adjournment – Mary Arnold

- Meeting was adjourned at 12:00pm.
- Next meeting: August 10, 2022