

Climate Change and Sentinel Monitoring Workgroup Meeting Summary

Wednesday, November 15, 2023

Teams Meeting (Link in Meeting Invite)



Attendees

Samarra Scantlebury, NYSDEC (Co-Chair), Kathleen Knight, CTDEEP (Co-Chair), Samantha Apgar (USFW), Juliana Barrett (CT Seagrant), Jordan Bishop (NEIWPCC), Sarah Crosby (Norwalk Maritime Aquarium), Gregory Dietl (Cornell), Elizabeth Hornstein (NY Seagrant), Gavin Jackson (CT DEEP), Shauna Kamath (NYSDEC), Alison Kocek (USFW), Madeline Kollegger (UCONN), Kristen Laccetti (EPA), Shannon Meseck (NOAA), Jackie Motyka (NERACOOS), Esther Nelson (EPA), James O'Donnell (UCONN), Owen Placido (USFW), Matthew Pruden (Cornell), Sarah Schechter (CT Seagrant), Evelyn Spencer (EPA), Ron Rosza (retired- CTDEEP), Penny Vlahos (UCONN), Harry Yamalis (CT DEEP)

Introduction

Samarra Scantlebury called the meeting to order at approximately 10:00 AM. Samarra provided an overview of the CCSM purpose and a staffing update. Evelyn Spencer and Melissa Duvall of EPA will be joining our planning committee team members. Cayla Sullivan of EPA will be stepping down from that role.

Samarra also provided a brief overview of August 2023 Meeting. Please see those meeting minutes on our workgroup webpage. If you have any revisions, please send those recommendations to Kathleen.Knight@ct.gov.

Management Committee Update, Samarra Scantlebury

Samarra shared highlights from these years in person management meeting:

- Significant focus on Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan Revision and its process. These included:
 - Coastwise was hired to recommend process and take feedback from interviewing LISS members.
 - During the meeting a revision oversight committee (ROG) was formed to develop guiding principles.
 - We anticipate workgroup will be asked for input during the thematic teamwork.
 - Process is currently expected to be as follows: ROG recommendations, Management Committee review and approval of ROG recommendations, Thematic Team's work (depending on ROG outcomes)
 - Thematic teams are anticipated to change at this moment but an example of what that might look like was presented.
- An environmental justice training was also provided that is being repeated for the CAC/STAC as well as general membership. The invitation for the general membership went out and registration closes November 30th. A question was asked if one should do both the CAC and STAC
- Summary of Workgroup workplans was also provided by EPA staff. Management committee had asked workgroup to prioritize the asks.

Expertise Poll, Kathleen Knight

Kate reminded the team of the goals from the environmental justice meeting about a year ago.

- Create a Safe Inclusive Space—This led to the reformatting of the facilitation.
- Bring Diverse Perspectives and Expertise to the Workgroup—This led to co-chairs reaching out to seek additional participation and thankful for all of your participation. Today's poll is to evaluate where we stand on that progress.

- Coordinate More Proactively with Community Programs and Community Colleges- While these conversations have started this is far from complete and will take time to fully build those partnerships.
- Be Inclusive in Monitoring Planning with Proactive Community Engagement- Something we hope to begin to address this year with scoping of Community Action Plan.

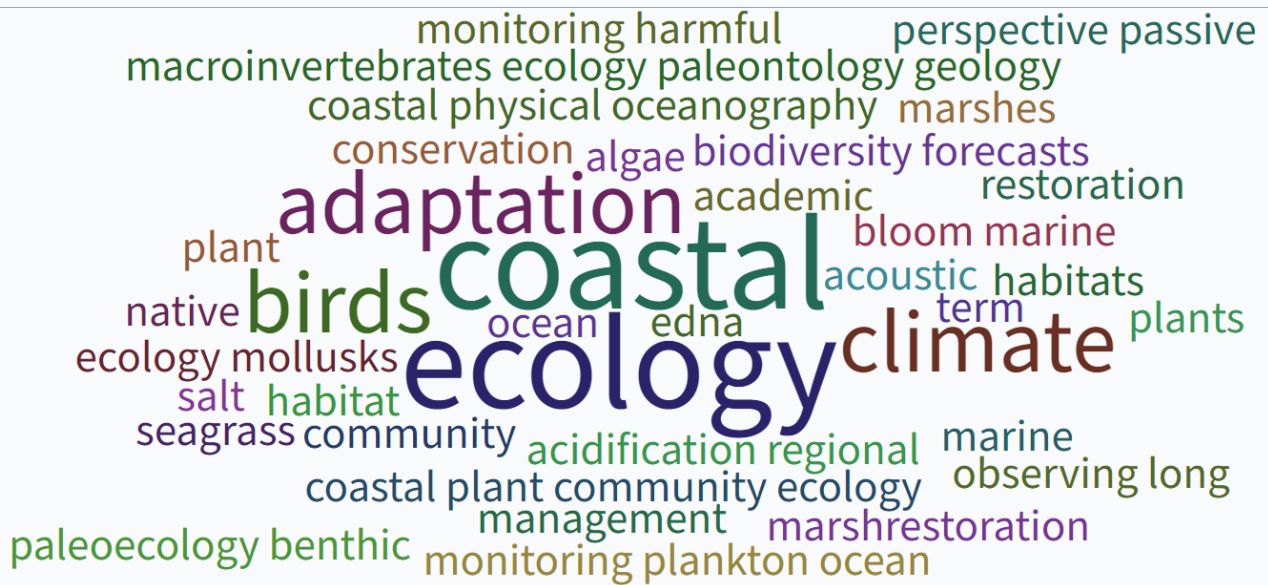
Expertise Poll was then shared and live results were collected: PollEv.com/kathleenknig891

Results of this poll indicate the following:

Join by Web PollEv.com/kathleenknig891 Join by Text Send [kathleenknig891](https://text.poll-ev.com/kathleenknig891) and your message to 22333



CCSM Expertise Diversity Poll



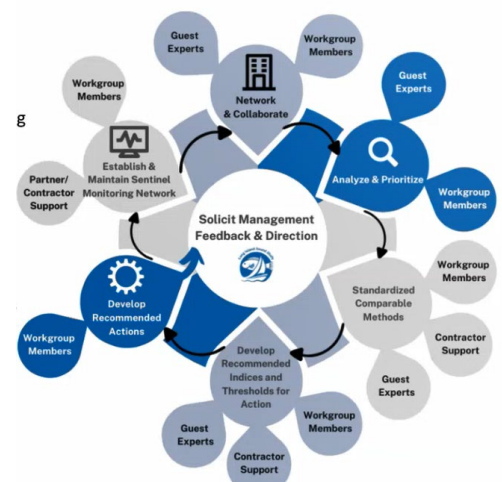
< 4 / 4 > | Instructions Responses Clear responses

The results of this poll will help us evaluate where we have expertise gap that can either be additional workgroup participation or seek additional expertise by inviting special guests.

FY2024 Workplan Overview, Kathleen Knight

Kate shared a summary of our final workplan. The over arching goal is to standardize metrics and thresholds or find ways to make them comparable. Some of this work is done through workgroup coordination already. However, some standardization is still needed so that when we make recommendations to the management committee we have agreed direction and coordination.

Kate shared how that overarching goal relates to the management committee and the role of CCSM’s recommendations.



Our workplan sought two projects with funding support:

Marsh Health- Coordinated SOPs and QAPPS to reduce program redundancy. Define recommended parameters for whole marsh health. Recommend locations that represent at risk sites and baseline change sites.

Two roles the active project team and the workgroup advisory team. The later hasn't really been flushed out yet and we are seeking interested parties to take part in that aspect.

Fish Communities in Embayments: For FY24 evaluate existing sampling and indices, create recommended sampling plan that supports recommended indices. We found that there is significant data in open sound, but found a potential data gap within the embayments. This first phase is review the data available and compare what we have to other estuaries, get a recommended sampling plan (potentially a gold star plan and a minimal needed plan) and what indices those plans could support. Then armed with that information we could take it back to our CCSM team and our respective fish experts to make some recommendations to the management committee.

The workplan also requested two unfunded tasks:

Community Action Plan- We are hearing a lot of outreach fatigue but also hearing a lot of interest of being a co-creation partner. We thought this would be applicable across all of our work groups. EPA noted that this could potentially be a futures fund project. We don't know how this would work at this point, and purely sharing this idea at this point.

Expert Shellfish Panel- We heard a lot of interest with shellfish both related to climate impacts on HABS, nutrient impacts. Therefore, we plan to initiate a dedicated meeting for this topic, similar to how we initiated the Marsh needs through the SHARP meeting. Stay tuned for a doodle poll or meeting schedule.

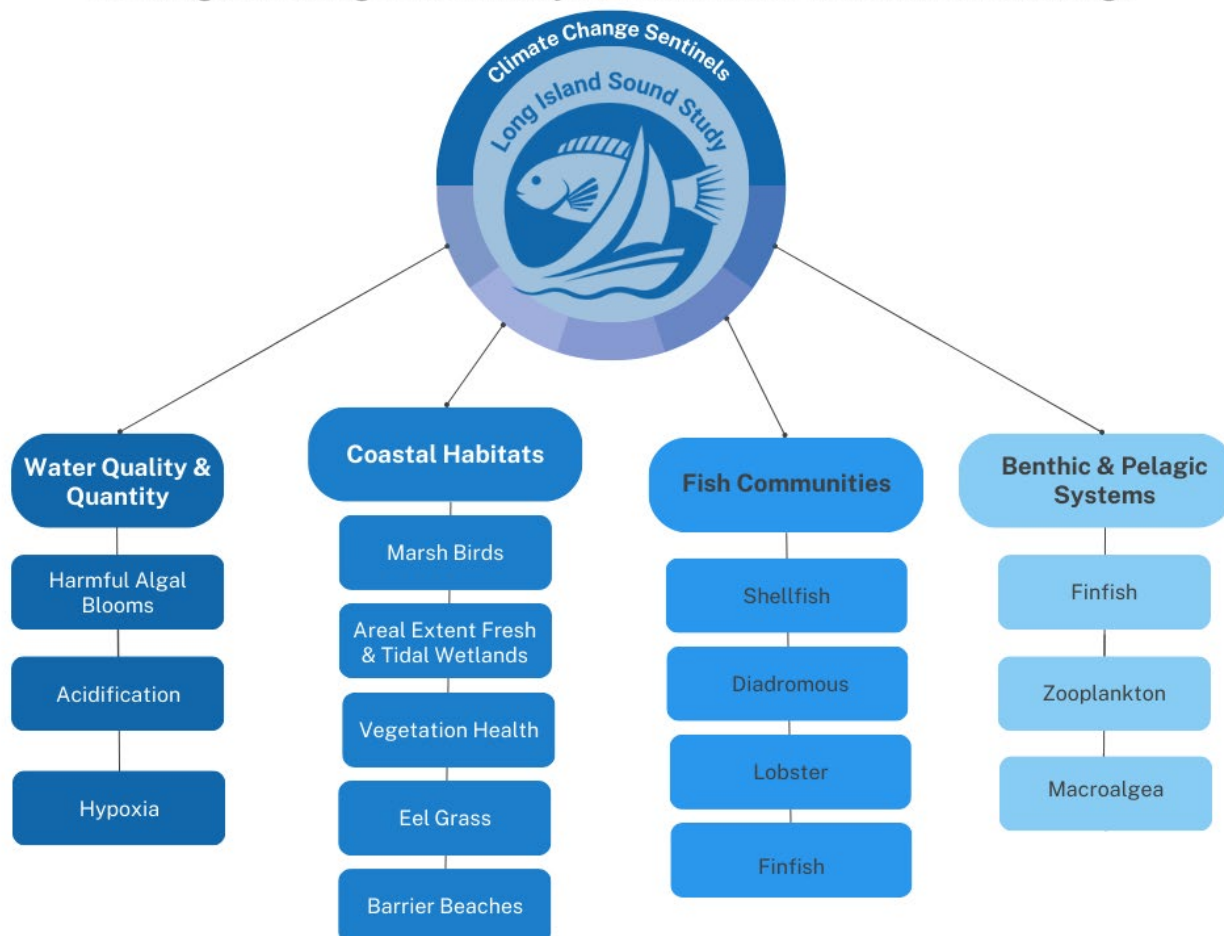
Sentinel Monitoring Strategy Overview Per the 2018 Strategy, Samarra Scantlebury

This is reminder of what the current strategy has for sentinels and categories, and which of those we have begun to review for the 5 yr required review and how to incorporate for sentinel monitoring network we are charged with (See Figure below). We are attempting to be as opportunistic as possible to be as efficient as possible and coordinated as possible.

Note this isn't a set process and we are seeking feedback on this process as well.

Note this may also need to change as we see the outcome of the Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan. (Some things to note about this is we anticipate this will be ready 2025 and may come with a name change). Therefore our strategy will have to change with it and this is part of the rational for the pace of this 5-yr review.

Monitoring and Tracking Whole LIS Ecosystem Health Under Pressures of Climate Change



Samarra then went over each of the sentinels and the associated Monitoring Question that was outlined in [the Appendix D of the 2018 Strategy](#).

We are seeking that you consider the current questions if these are adequate are we ready to evolve them and who we may partner with to evaluate the data and develop a network.

We plan to put these out there for groups consideration for the year so that we can fold what is appropriate into the FY25 work plan, determine what partners we need to coordinate with and consider how we need to update our strategy when we are ready for that step.

Q&A:

Are there acidification models we can utilize?

Are there trends in annual zoo plankton abundance? – Kate noted we put this in the FY24 workplan as something to consider beyond FY24. But we did note that Watersheds and Embayments Workgroup was seeking to answer this question too, so there may be an opportunity there.

Ron noted observations about low marsh and high marsh and indicated the question in the strategy has already been answered and that these questions are too generic and recommends we define more specific questions.

Kate agreed we could evolve this question with lessons learned. Ron provided specific example about zooplankton and how we can evolve these questions.

Samantha raised the

Jim noted the link between the plants, birds and marshes. If we don't measure water level in marsh, flushing rate and habitat capacity we will miss the connection between has been missed previously. NERACOOS is seeking to measure water level in more places. Jim also noted that restoration changes, flooding control and sea level rise is changing things and we don't know this well enough.

Jackie shared there is a lot of physical bouys, water level behind this information. Especially for ocean acidification how do we know when we have enough data to tell the story we need to tell. Are there things from this group that we can identify as gaps?

Penny- There is a lot of data that is emerging right now, but even more importantly the groups listed under the OA coordination are currently coming together for an intercalibration to identify the uncertainty. This is major focus for 2024.

Kate asked if this is something we should focus coordinating on this year or is the timing more appropriate for 2025.

Penny- The data is coming in now and going through QA. So 2025 is better timing for that. But with regards to the other projects how do we coordinate across projects like water level, temperature, how you count species, location, scale of observations how do we convey what we recommend can this group play a role in that?

Kate- Yes absolutely, how do you envision that facilitation?

Penny- I think the data gathered would have the best perspective on the pinch points and therefore make recommendations on best practices for those more generic parameters.

Samarra- Asked for input on the feedback process graphic too.

Kate noted that one of the community action tools is getting public to participate in photo stories to track the change. Ron has taken significant photos through out the study period and Kate indicated that pairing this with that work may tell us a really useful and engaging story.

Matthew Pruden asked what we plan to use for baseline and what we meant by baseline.

Kate indicated it would include as much information as available and is intended to be an evolving baseline, meaning what is achievable under our current climatic pressures.

Sarah offered long term fish data in embayments from Harbor Watch, Norwalk Maritime Aquarium and Project O.

Meeting Close Out\Next Steps

2024 Calendar was shared, and a conflict was noted with February time that would impact a large portion of the workgroup. Meeting schedule to be adjusted for that meeting schedule and co-chairs will prepare and share an updated teams invitation for 2024.

Stay tuned for agendas meeting updates and materials for feedback.

Meeting Adjourned at 12:00