

Watersheds and Embayments Work Group (WEWG) Meeting Summary
February 17th, 2016

Attendees

Cassie Bauer, Mark Parker, Jamie Vaudrey, Judy Preston, Amy Mandelbaum, Sarah Crosby, Corey Humphrey, Chet Arnold, Mark Tedesco, David Dickson, Sarah Deonarine, Marybeth Hart; Leah O’Neill, Pat Aitken, Paul DeOrsay, Carl P. Lobue, Corinne Fitting, Margie Purnell, Holly Drinkuth, Peter Linderoth

1) Review and finalize WEWG technical workgroup summary

- The workgroup summary sets forth the 2016 goals and task for this work group. These goals and tasks are focused around the priority implementation actions that were identified by the LISS Management Committee and/or the 2015 LISS CCMP.
- There was a discussion about the relationship between the work group, the EPA Nitrogen Strategy and the Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan (LINAP). The workgroup summaries were completed before the release of both the nitrogen strategy and the action plan. It was suggested to include the Nitrogen Strategy and LINAP in the workgroup summary.
- It was suggested that pathogens and sub-watershed improvement plans also be a focus of this workgroup.

ACTION: *Mark and Cassie will update the summary with a paragraph adding the pathogen/watershed plans and adding the appropriate implementation action (ie. WW-13, WW-31, WW-32). Send out to the WEWG for discussion on the next call.*

Future non-point source project ideas

- Judy Preston mentioned a project, initiated by Robert Burg (LISS), to look at social marketing for behavior change using the Jamie Vaudrey’s Embayment Nitrogen Loading Tool. The focus of the behavior change campaign would be to reduce fertilizer use. This project would require several years of funding.
- Develop a nonpoint source tracking tool based on recommendations from first project.

ACTION: *Invite Kim Roth (NEIWPCC) to send all WEWG members a copy of the completed NPS Tracking Assessment Tool report and report on its status at the next conference call meeting. Perhaps she could also give her recommendation for selecting a Tracking Tool for the next round of Base+ funded enhancement grants. The WEWG will review the report over the next 3 months and at the August 17th meeting, will discuss recommendations for phase 2 implementation in FY17.*

2) Update on nitrogen strategies and how they address watershed and embayment loadings

- The Nitrogen Strategy was generated as a result of the LIS TMDL petition from Save the Sound. EPA will be meeting with NYS on March 7th and CT on March 23rd to discuss the Nitrogen Strategy in detail. The challenges and approaches to the strategy are complimentary to those in the Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan. There needs to be coordinated discussion with this work group and the LISS water quality monitoring work group.
- NYSDEC and LIRPC are working on the development of a Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan (LINAP). A conceptual draft scope of the plan was released. Three public meetings were held during the first week of February and public comments were due by February 19th. Similar to the EPA Nitrogen Strategy, the LINAP will establish nitrogen reduction endpoints as well as nitrogen loading targets for specific embayments.
- It was suggested that we should agree upon where we want to work first based on Jamie Vaudrey's work.
- It was also suggested that this workgroup have a role in determining priorities.

ACTION: *Include discussion of the Nitrogen Strategy and LINAP as a task for this workgroup.*

3) Discuss related research topics for 2017-2019 LISS research RFP

- A summary of the upcoming LISS Research RFP was included in the meeting materials. Jim Ammerman (LISS Science Coordinator) has asked all the LISS work groups to send him any specific suggestions for research questions. The group was asked to send any specific research questions that they felt needed to be addressed to Cassie.

4) Updates on other state, agency, or group activities related to WEWG

a. Embayment Nitrogen Loading Tool – *Jamie Vaudrey*

- Jamie Vaudrey updated the group on her embayment nitrogen loading tool. The results of this work will be important for setting priorities. Jamie would like the group to review an excel file of the tool and comment on its usability.
- It was noted that TNC is also doing a similar project and that the two models are consistent with each other. However, TNC has done more in terms of outreach.
- A practical activity of this workgroup would be to provide a review of Jamie's work and discuss how we can communicate some of the results, what the implications are, and how to best apply it.

- Holly Drinkuth (TNC) reported that the Saugatuck River Watershed Partnership held a Saugatuck Water Quality Symposium to address Nitrogen Pollution in the Saugatuck River Watershed on February 4, 2016 and a number of presentations were given including Jamie Vaudrey's 'Nutrient in Embayments' project. The symposium announcement is posted on TNC's web site at:
<http://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/unitedstates/connecticut/newsroom/symposium-to-address-nitrogen-pollution-in-saugatuck-river-watershed.xml>. The presentations will also be posted.

ACTION: *Jamie Vaudrey will send the group the excel file to review.*

b. Coastal Certificate Program – Judy Preston

- The Coastal Certificate Program is designed to generate ambassadors of alternative landscaping practices for Connecticut coastal and watershed residents. The Program provides continuing education credits and is an outreach component- Judy trains the trainers. This year, the coastal certificate will be held at Connecticut College.

c. Sustainable Landscaping Initiative – Judy Preston

- The Sustainable Landscaping collaborative is an off shoot of the Coastal Certificate Program for Long Island. Perfect Earth Project, Peconic Estuary, and LISS are working together to provide a portal of information for sustainable landscaping. This portal will provide resources, speakers, educational opportunities, etc. Currently, the collaborative working on finding the best way to consolidate information and is discussing the option of partnering with BlueThumb.org and Rusty Schmidt.

d. CT Green Infrastructure/CLEAR project- Dave Dickson

- Dave Dickson provided an update on the West River/LID Regulations Project. The publication summarizes the results of extensive internet research covering 85 towns, and accompanying phone interviews with 78 planner in those towns and asked them what are the drivers and barriers to LID at the local level. The State of LID Research Brief can be downloaded here: [REPORT PDF](#). The StoryMap that was created as a resource for towns to explore the data further and find examples of LID regulations can be found here: <http://s.uconn.edu/stateoflid>.

e. CT Coastal NPS program – MaryBeth Hart

- The CT Coastal NPS program was developed as the result of the 1990 coastal management program.
- Implementation successes include the Coastal Certificate Program, CLEAR projects, and watershed plans (specifically the Niantic River Watershed Protection Plan which was the result of a one-time grant from NOAA OCRM). The Niantic River plan is currently undergoing updates and implementation of the plan depends on the CCMP.

f. LISS NPS indicators/CCMP Ecosystem targets – *Mark Parker/Cassie Bauer*

- The LISS Indicators work group and reporting work group are updating the indicators website and figuring out how to best align the indicators with the new CCMP ecosystem targets. CCMP ecosystem targets related to this workgroup include:
 - Riparian buffer extent- The 2015 NY update was not funded, should we request LISS funding?
 - Impervious cover
 - Nitrogen loading
 - Beach closure days

g. Newtown Creek litter trappers – *Mark Parker/Cassie Bauer*

- See article about the construction of four litter trappers in Newtown Creek <https://www.dnainfo.com/new-york/20160112/greenpoint/city-invest-30-million-stop-trash-flow-into-newtown-creek>

h. Stormwater Pollution and Green Infrastructure Solutions Film by NassauSWCD and NYSDEC

- The Nassau County Soil and Water Conservation District, with funding from the NYSDEC, has just wrapped-up production on an educational film entitled “Stormwater Pollution and Green Infrastructure Solutions.” This film highlights stormwater runoff impacts throughout New York State and showcases several green infrastructure solutions to help mitigate the issues associated with stormwater runoff pollution. Check out the film here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ATNy-vaIPXI&feature=youtu.be&t=3s>

i. Other updates?

- The 27th Annual NPS Conference will be held on April 20-21, 2016 at the Hilton in downtown Hartford, Connecticut. Registration is now open. <http://www.neiwpcc.org/npsconference/>
- The 2016 CWP National Stormwater and Watershed Conference will be held on April 12th. The local host is Goodwin College, CT.

5) WEWG Membership – *Mark Parker/Cassie Bauer*

- If there is anyone else who you feel should be added to this work group, please let Cassie or Mark know.

ACTION: *Invite John Mullaney to report on USGS work. Invite Nancy Ferlow to inform us on the RCPP.*

6) Future WEWG meeting logistics - *Mark Parker/Cassie Bauer*

- The group agreed to have 3 conference calls/webinars and 1 in-person meeting a year. The in-person meeting will occur during the summer meeting and will include a site visit. If you have any suggestions on site visits/meeting locations please let Cassie or Mark know.
- Tentative 2016 meeting dates: May 18th, August 17th, November 16th
- Future agenda topics:
 - Regional Conservation Partnership Program – \$10 million grant to reduce nitrogen inputs from working lands.
 - Priority CCMP actions- identify the priority IAs for this year and designate which partner agencies are going to take the lead in initiating them.
 - Selecting a tool to implement- look at NPS tracking tool
 - Look into nitrogen and pathogen pollution projects ideas.