

**Long Island Sound Study
Citizens Advisory Committee
Thursday, September 8, 2016
Vanderbilt Museum, Centerport, NY
Meeting Summary**

Welcome, Housekeeping & Logistics

Nancy Seligson, *Town of Mamaroneck* and the *NY Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Co-chair*, and Sandy Breslin, *Rivers Alliance Connecticut* and the *CT CAC Co-chair*, welcomed the group at approximately 10:00am. A quorum of approximately 30 CAC members was present.

Updates

LISS Management Committee

Nancy Seligson and Sandy Breslin gave an update on the LISS Management Committee meeting from July 21, 2016. They highlighted the need to fund a nonpoint source pollution tracking tool and include it in the CAC priority letter. Mark Tedesco (called in), *EPA Long Island Sound Office*, called in to join the discussion. Nancy asked him to talk about the EPA Nitrogen Strategy and Long Island Sound Study (LISS) match requirements. Mark was not able to talk about the EPA Nitrogen Strategy since it is in the contract phase. As for the LISS match requirements, Mark explained how there is legislation in place regulating the match requirements for the Long Island Sound program. There are two categories for match: implementation and education projects. For implementation projects, each award needs to be matched dollar-for-dollar. For education projects, there is a requirement of a 5% match. As for the match, it can be calculated on a cumulative basis, so LISS can use overmatch (historically from CTDEEP) to meet the match requirements.

Report Card and Unified Water Study

Tracy Brown, *Save the Sound*, gave an update on the Long Island Sound Report Card. As a result of meetings with the Report Card's science advisors, there have been some changes, such as the decision to combine nitrogen and phosphorus into one water quality indicator called "nutrients." Other updates include that the grades from NYC to Eastern LIS will range from an "F" to a "B." She believes that the new report card format improves and simplifies the message to the public. Tracy also reminded the CAC that this is only an ecological report card, and they are not reporting on beach closures/bacterial health of LIS. She also said the graphics show that they are highlighting the water quality in central Long Island Sound/open water data, not the bays and harbors.

The anticipated release date of the report card is October 6, 2016 at 11:00am-12:00pm, which corresponds with two press events: one in Flushing, Queens, NY and one at Lighthouse Point Park in New Haven, CT. Confirmed speakers are Congressman Crowley (NY) and Senator Blumenthal (CT). All CAC and Science and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) members are invited to these events. There will also be a social media packet that corresponds to the rollout. They will print 2,000 copies of the report card brochure. CAC members should let Tracy know if you would like brochures to distribute (tbrown@savethesound.org). Sandy asked if Tracy could send out talking points to share with the group; Tracy responded that there will also be a corresponding PowerPoint version to share with the group.

There were no updates on the Unified Water Study.

Hudson Valley Municipal Infrastructure Needs

Dave Miller, *New York League of Conservation Voters Education Fund (NYLCVEF)*, talked about the LIS Clean Water Jobs Coalition he helped create to build a bridge between the construction industry and environmental organizations to work together to advocate for funds for water infrastructure. He is currently working in the Hudson Valley with the

Construction Industry Council and NYSDEC Region 3 to draft report on the need for funding for water infrastructure projects that will be completed in early October 2016. The message in the report is the immense need for funding for water infrastructure projects due to a backlog of projects to repair infrastructure. Water infrastructure projects create lots of jobs in the construction industry and for long-term operations. He thinks that this can be replicated in other parts of NY State. He also handed out the *Construction News* issue (August- September 2016) for their cover story on “Hudson Valley Wins \$29 Million in State Water Grants to Locals.”

CAC Work Group Participation Updates

There were no updates on the CAC participation in the LISS work groups.

Nitrogen Reduction Efforts

EPA Nitrogen Strategy

Mark Tedesco (called in) was not able to talk about the EPA Nitrogen Strategy since it is in the contract phase.

Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan

Lorraine Holdridge (called in), *NYSDEC*, gave an update on the Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan (LINAP). The draft scope of work was issued in February 2016 and NYSDEC received comments from the public; a finalized scope of work was completed in June 2016 and can be found on the DEC website: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/103654.html>. The scope of work includes, but is not limited to, wastewater treatment plant upgrades, public education and citizen science, and the development of technical and public education work groups.

There is also a schedule for “early action” items to be completed by the end of 2017. These include data inventory, literature search, sub-watershed delineation, load model development for nitrogen and groundwater, identification of conditions of existing water bodies and setting a first-cut load reduction for these areas.

Funding from New York State is assisting with the following projects:

- Stony Brook University’s Center for Clean Water Technology in developing innovative/alternative onsite wastewater treatment systems;
- Suffolk County to conduct septic programs;
- Stony Brook University to conduct watershed planning;
- United States Geological Survey (USGS) to conduct a groundwater study;
- Nassau and Suffolk Counties to do nitrogen reduction practices; etc.

Overall, NYSDEC wants to continue the Long Island Sound TMDL by focusing on nitrogen from nonpoint source pollution.

CT Second Generation Nitrogen Strategy

Mark Parker (called in), *CTDEEP*, gave an update on the Connecticut Second Generation Nitrogen Strategy. CTDEEP has had a nitrogen reduction program for the past 20 years that was focused on point sources. Now, after completing their goals for point source reductions, they want to move forward with additional nitrogen reductions aligned with LISS’s new CCMP and the EPA Nitrogen Reduction Strategy. Connecticut’s strategy has four priority components: (1.) wastewater treatment plants, (2.) stormwater and nonpoint source pollution, (3.) loads to embayments, and (4.) continue to coordinate efforts with the EPA Nitrogen Strategy.

Wastewater treatment plants: CTDEEP has revised the nitrogen general permit and waste load allocations for each wastewater treatment plant.

Stormwater and nonpoint source pollution: CTDEEP renewed the municipal stormwater sewer systems (MS4) permit program. They also contracted CT NEMO to assist with the outreach and training on the new permits with a series of training programs scheduled for 2017. CTDEEP is also working with the Department of Transportation on their stormwater permits. In addition, CTDEEP is working with the CT Department of Health and NEIWPCCC on addressing septic systems and new innovative/advanced systems. CTDEEP has also met with the CT Department of Agriculture to discuss fertilizer laws and new legislation on fertilizer application times including turf fertilizer. The plan is to present the new legislation to the Connecticut legislature in early 2017.

Embayments: CT DEEP is working on piloting a volunteer embayment monitoring study. CTDEEP is also working with UConn CLEAR and CT NEMO on a coastal embayment community outreach program to reduce nitrogen from and fertilizer in municipalities in 2017.

Coordinating with the EPA Nitrogen Strategy: CT DEEP is working with EPA regions 1 and 2 on their nitrogen reductions. CTDEEP has a repository of fact sheets on each MS4 program for each town in Connecticut (there are a total of 169 towns).

NYCDEP TMDL

Tracy Brown talked about NYCDEP TMDL. She reached out to the Riverkeeper, NRDC, TNC, Audubon, and others to engage them in the NYC nitrogen issue. They met with NYCDEP and with the new NYCDEP commissioner, Vincent Sapienza. At the meeting NYCDEP indicated that they were aware of the EPA Nitrogen Strategy, and expressed interest in the LIS report card, especially the water quality in the western narrows.

Sandy Breslin also added that Laura Grieco from NYCDEP presented at the July 2016 LISS Management Committee meeting regarding the upgrades that are underway at the NYC wastewater treatment plants, and how they will reach their nitrogen reduction targets in 2017.

Policy Committee Updates

Trip to Washington, DC

Adrienne Esposito, *Citizens Campaign for the Environment* and the *NY CAC Policy Committee Co-chair*, gave an overview of the CAC's trip to Washington, DC where they lobbied for funding for Long Island Sound. They met with Congressional Representatives Israel (NY), Zeldin (NY), Schumer (NY), Gillibrand (NY), and the staff of others in the Long Island Sound contingency. They discussed funding for Long Island Sound and the concerns that they have for Plum Island. Adrienne reported that a \$10 million allocation for Long Island Sound was approved by the appropriations committee in the House of Representatives. The Senate was planning to pass a \$5.1 million bill. Although the \$10 funding level probably won't come to pass, the CAC Policy Committee believes that having the House of Representatives pass that amount creates a new threshold for funding for Long Island Sound, and should increase the chances to get higher funding for Long Island Sound in the future.

River Herring

Curt Johnson, *Save the Sound/Connecticut Fund for the Environment* and the *CT CAC Policy Committee Co-chair*, gave an overview of the letter by the CAC to support to help move river herring upstream to allow for spawning. This letter was sent to the CAC via email and, as of now, there are no comments.

NYS MS4 Update

Curt Johnson gave an overview of the NY State MS4 permit update that includes impervious cover reductions. There's a letter that was distributed to CAC by Nancy yesterday. This letter was sent to the CAC via email and comments will be

incorporated into the letter. The CAC Chairs asked the members to forward any new comments to them in the next week.

Plum Island

Curt Johnson gave an overview of the appropriations language for Plum Island and how the Island should not be marketed for sale.

Letters: Blue Plan, CTDEEP Integrated Water Resource Management

Sandy Breslin said that the Blue Plan letter has been revised and will go out very soon. Also, Curt Johnson said that the CTDEEP Water Resource Management letter was already submitted to CTDEEP.

Atlantic National Marine Monument

Curt Johnson discussed the proposed Atlantic National Marine Monument off Massachusetts. It would be the first one in the Atlantic, and it is an area that has been overfished. Adrienne Esposito said that Congressman Zeldin (NY) proposed legislation that would ban all marine monuments in the Atlantic. Marty Garrell, *Adelphi University*, said that there's something called "freedom to fish" and that mentality is prominent in commercial and recreational fisheries. Adrienne hoped that there would be a compromise similar to the marine monument designated in Hawaii, where commercial fishing is banned, but recreational fishing is allowed. Nancy and Adrienne reported that Senator Gillibrand (NY) suggesting designating Plum Island as a national park when they met with her in Washington, DC.

Dredge Material Management Plan (DMMP) Press Event

Adrienne Esposito gave an update on the DMMP press event that was held at Sunken Meadow State Park. She explained that New York and Connecticut are at odds on the issue of disposal of dredged material. Connecticut wants to continue to allow dredged material to be placed in Long Island Sound, whereas New York wants to ban disposing of dredged material in the Sound. The Army Corps of Engineers has completed a DMMP that seems to continue to allow it.

Joel Ziev, *Town of North Hempstead*, then gave a history of the DMMP committee in Long Island Sound. He explained that twenty years ago, he said that there should be beneficial use of dredge material. However, the Army Corps of Engineers didn't take into consideration beneficial reuse, and instead they insisted on continuing the dumping of dredge material in Long Island Sound. Joel thinks that we need to be vocal regarding this issue, and Nancy Seligson suggested including this in CAC's priority letter to the Management Committee.

CAC Priority Letter to the Management Committee

Nancy Seligson reminded members that at the June 2016 CAC meeting, the CAC members brainstormed on issues they would like included in the priority letter and those issues were listed. It was decided that the letter should be centered on the four CCMP themes and also add a section about investing in Long Island Sound.

Potential Future Meeting Topics and Presentations

The next CAC meeting will be held on Friday, Nov 18th with the STAC in CT focusing on communicating science with Christine O'Connell from the Alan Alda Center, UMD UMCES (Caroline Donovan), TNC (Holly Drinkuth), and the Yale Project on Climate Change Communication. The goal of this meeting would be to develop messages that can be shared among Long Island Sound agencies and groups.

As for upcoming possible presentations, Chantal Collier, *The Nature Conservancy*, suggested having someone at TNC give a presentation on the Long Island Sound Ecological Assessment. Denise Savageau, *Greenwich Conservation Commission*, suggested having a presentation on trash-free waters/marine debris in Long Island Sound.

Announcements

Carol DiPaolo, *Coalition to Save Hempstead Harbor*, talked about the abundance of bunker in Hempstead Harbor. Denise Savageau explained that there were fish kills in her area of the Sound.

Jim Ammerman, *NEIWPCCEPA Long Island Sound Office*, talked about hypoxia in Long Island Sound. He said that this year's area of hypoxia is much bigger than last year, and you can see the data from the CTDEEP mid-August cruise. Marty Garrell asked if Long Island Sound set a temperature record this summer. Jim responded that the data isn't out yet, but it's possible.

Sandy Breslin said that there is a possibility that the saltmarsh sparrow will become a listed species.

George Hoffman, *Setauket Harbor Task Force*, talked about the Shoreham, NY site and suggested it be designated as a Long Island Sound Stewardship Area.

Denise Savageau briefly discussed the 2018 farm bill and how it does not include aquaculture; she thinks this language should be included.

Citizens Campaign for the Environment will be holding a green methodologies forum at the Town of Huntington's Town Hall on September 29, 2016 at 7:00-8:30pm. At this forum, green infrastructure projects will be discussed, such as the Long Island Sound Futures Fund project to install a bio-retention basin in Centerport Beach, NY.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:40pm. The next CAC meeting will be held on November 18th with the STAC in CT.

For additional information on the CAC, visit: <http://longislandsoundstudy.net/about/committees/citizens-advisory-committee/>