



**Sustainable and Resilient Communities Work Group Meeting Summary  
August 8, 2023 1:00 PM**

**Attendees**

- Becky Shuford, NYSG
- Kathy Bunting-Howarth, NYSG
- Sarah Schaefer-Brown, NYSG/LISS
- Elizabeth Hornstein, NYSG/LISS
- Sara Powell, NYSG/LISS
- Deb Abibou, CTSG/LISS
- Sarah Schechter, CTSG/LISS
- Kris Masterson, USGS
- Jennifer Street, DOS
- Sue Van Patten, NYSDEC
- Marissa Bock, Spruce Technologies
- Alison Branco, TNC
- Bryce Holland, Spruce Technologies
- Nancy Balcom, CTSG
- Nikki Tachiki, EPA
- Diane Ifkovic, CTDEEP
- Samarra Scantlebury, NYSDEC
- Lynn Dwyer, NFWF
- Kristen Laccetti, EPA
- Alexa Fournier, NYSDEC
- Tim Clark, TNC
- Katie Lund, CTNERR
- Liv Herdman, USGS
- Shahela Begum, RAE/LISCIF
- Anthony Allen, Save the Sound
- Marcy Balint, CTDEEP
- Kathleen Fallon, NYSG
- Jessica LeClair, Sustainable CT
- Jimena Perez-Viscasillas, NYSG/LISS
- Sarah Watson, CTDEEP
- David Kozak, CTDEEP *retired*
- Marty Garrell, Adelphi University

**Welcome and Introductions - *Becky Shuford***

Becky welcomed the new Eastern CT SRC - Sarah Schechter! and new SRC Work Group member Shahela Begum, director of the new Long Island Sound Community Impact Fund.

**Draft LISS SRCWG FY24 Workplan - *Elizabeth Hornstein***

Elizabeth reviewed the draft SRC Work Group workplan for FY24 (October 1, 2024-September 30, 2025).

- Since we already have a 5-year workplan, we are essentially pulling out tasks from Year 4 of our existing workplan - e.g., continuing the implementation of our workshops and trainings, maintaining our Resource Hub, continuing our Break Down Barriers Program, outreach for the Compound Flood Risk Modeling Initiative, etc.

- There are a few additional specific priorities that we wanted to highlight (*italicized below*):
  - *Asking for support to bring on a new SRC EP for NYC.* This is a need we have heard over the past few years and would allow for greater support and coverage for our programs.
    - Multiple work group members indicated support for seeking funding to bring on a NYC SRC position. Alison noted that a NYC representative might have to work in slightly different ways than current SRCs. Samarra noted that someone already working in NYC would be preferable to reduce the learning curve coming on board. Anthony noted that eventually you might need two SRCs - one for the Bronx and one for Queens.
    - Kris wanted to note that there is a NYC representative on the Compound Flood Risk Modelling effort. Greg Wilkerson took over for Adam Parris.
  - *Supporting the LISS 2025 CCMP revision* - not exactly sure the level of effort that will be involved, but we plan to help review, refine, and develop SRC ecosystem targets and implementation actions, and assist with stakeholder engagement and solicitation of input throughout the revision process.
  - *Initiating a process to develop the next SRC 5-Year Work Plan*, which would go into effect October 1, 2026.
- If you have any further comments or questions, please let us know by August 31st - the final work plan is due to EPA by September 15th.

**LIS Resilience Resource Hub Updates - Deb Visco Abibou**

Deb gave an overview of where we are in development of our Resource Hub (formerly, “clearinghouse” task in our workplan).

- We are continuing to evaluate tools and resources and edit/organize our list to be able to pass it off to our contractor (Spruce Technologies), who we are meeting with weekly.
- Key dates to know:
  - We have 5 (monthly) check-in meetings scheduled with our LIS Resilience Resource Hub Development Team (Sylvain DeGuise, Robert Burg, Nancy Seligon, Eric Swenson, Megan Granato, Hannah Reichle)
  - Next SRCWG update will happen in November 2023
  - Expected launch of site in December 2023
- Reminder of overall vision - that users will be able to quickly and easily find the most pertinent resource and tools to assist with advancing the sustainability and resilience of their community.

**Updates on Resource Hub Development & Schedule - Marissa Bock and Bryce Holland (Spruce Tech)**

- Bryce, lead designer on our project, reviewed the site map and homepage mockup and discussed how there are multiple entry points on the homepage to the resources and tools. Also working with Ricardo, lead developer, on how to best connect all the resources and tools.

- Marissa, our project manager, reviewed the overall timeline of this project. Phases 1 & 2 are complete (Planning and Info Architecture) Currently in Phase 3 - Visual Design. Phase 4 is Implementation and Deployment - scheduled through December 2023. Final Phase is training the SRC Team on how to use the site in December.
- Deb asked the Work Group members for feedback on:
  - Entry points to resources
    - Planning Phase/"Steps to Resilience" framework
    - Location
    - Topic
    - Funding Database
    - Decision Tree
      - Dave Kozak noted that from his experience in trying to share complicated information with the public, it's easy to jump to conclusions that people that are going to use the website are going to think the way that you do. Suggests having people test the site sooner rather than later with people outside of this group, and be open to making modifications.
      - Marty echoed Dave's comments, and suggested reaching out specifically to town planners/boards for early feedback.
      - Marcy noted in the chat: I think it looks fantastic so far. Of course early testing is always valuable. My question for down the road... how will groups/towns etc. learn about it. Will they be invited to an intro meeting to learn more? My experience is they are all so busy.. so an intro invite with a walk thru the site would be very helpful (if not already planned).
        - SRC EPs have started having discussions with the development team about this. Also, our intent for the rollout is to sync with our Annual Workshop also so we can use that as a platform to promote it and show everyone how it works.
      - Nikki asked in the chat: Have you had any conversations with folks that run similar types of climate resilience resource hubs for lessons learned?
        - We did look at many others from other geographies, good idea to try and ask them about lessons learned.
      - Liv asked in the chat: Is there a plan to update the resources available? I imagine funding sources etc. are dynamic.



- Visual design
- Search function
- Case studies

### **Updates on LIS Resilience Grant Writing Assistance Program - Sarah Schaefer-Brown**

Sarah provided an overview of the LIS Resilience Grant Writing Assistance Program (launched November 15, 2022) to date. We met with our Implementation Team for the first time in May, our next meeting is this Thursday (8/10).

- Review of outreach, interest, and applications
  - To date, we have received 22 applications. Awarded 16 - 4 from Western CT, 3 from Eastern CT, 5 from Suffolk County, 4 from Nassau County. Majority of the applications were for the LISFF, we are waiting to see how many are successful.
- BDB Implementation Team Report Out & Next Steps
  - BDB Implementation Team members include representatives from EPA, LISCI/EJ team, NYSDEC, CTDEEP, TNC, Save the Sound, NFWF, LIS Funders Collaborative.
  - BDB Implementation Team met in May to evaluate the program to date - considered the program impacts, lessons learned, and feedback from program participants. Decided to make updates to the current program, and release those updates in a revised RFP effective October 1, 2023.
    - Updates include:
      1. There is no longer a deadline of September 30, the program will be open on a rolling basis
      2. Bronx and Queens Counties in NYC are now eligible for the program;
      3. Applicants can now submit multiple applications with funding to be awarded up to \$9,950 per application and applications must focus on one discrete project
      4. Grant preparation and writing support activities can now include applying to multiple grant opportunities for a discrete project however the total award given to a contractor for that discrete project still may not exceed \$9,950
      5. A grant calendar is being developed that will suggest applicants apply 6-8 weeks prior to the targeted grant deadline.
    - During the August 10th meeting, we are going to continue evaluating the program, and solicit comments and feedback on our draft program RFP/RFA.
      - RFA is for a Planning Assistance Program to support applicants who need additional scoping/planning support. Idea is that we would hire an external consultant who could provide support to applicants who are not yet ready to apply for a grant - support could come in the form of a high-level risk assessment, project scoping, and preliminary planning.
    - David Kozak asked some clarifying questions about what we intend for this program to accomplish, and Jess LeClair noted in the chat: one thought - perhaps host a workshop where project planning happens - and all attendees are fast tracked for grant writing assistance?

- Katie Lund noted that CIRCA has gone through a similar process - they have a list of consultants already approved by UConn for Resilient CT project. SLR, GZA, etc. are on the list.
  - <https://resilientconnecticut.uconn.edu/phase-iii/>

### **SRC Training Program Updates & Next Steps for Annual Workshop - Sara Powell**

- Since our last meeting in May, Deb has been working to plan NOAA NART Workshops - 2 in Bridgeport and 1 in New Haven - that are coming up this month and in September. Sarah Schechter will also be beginning to plan NOAA NART workshops for New London and Norwich in the coming months as well.
- In NY, Sarah, Elizabeth, and Sara partnered again with NYSACC in June for another quarterly Coastal Resiliency Network webinar. This one featured Jess Kuonen from NYSG talking about MyCoast NY and Nelson Vaz from the National Weather service.
- Sarah and Elizabeth also partnered last month with NYSDEC, CCE Suffolk, ReWild, and the LI Commission for Aquifer Protection to hold a Sustainable Landscaping webinar that was well received. Sara has had conversations with Jimena and DEC to hold a similar webinar for Westchester in conjunction with a local partner in 2024.
- Also in June, all the SRC EPs partnered with Save the Sound to help host an invitation-only “Expanding the Benefit Cost Analysis for Nature-Based Solutions” workshop that was attended by more than 50 professionals from federal and state agencies, municipalities, environmental NGOs, and engineering firms. The SRC EPs in particular helped facilitate three breakout sessions.
- Dates and times are now set for our Steps to Resilience webinars - Tuesday, September 19 from 7-8:30 PM and Thursday, September 21 from 9:30-11 AM. These webinars will feature the same content that sets the stage for how to get started with resilience planning and introduce NY & CT-specific climate resilience certification programs. We will have guest speakers from Cameron Engineering, Hudson Valley Regional Council, Sustainable CT, and the Sustainability Institute at Molloy University join us to speak about those programs.
- Registration pages are ready to go (linked below) and a graphic + blurb for publicizing them will be shared with the Work Group soon!
- Sept 19 registration link:  
<https://cornell.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJlvcOyoqjgsGNYwjs4T8P4u6RCtjQZFz9y0#>
- Sept 21 registration link:  
<https://cornell.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJlqc-2srj4jEtVK2-wk6HHMF9II-Pwtvv#>
- The Steps to Resilience webinars will be followed by regional field trips in October/November that we are planning now, and will announce during the webinars.
- Those two events will then roll into our Annual Workshop - we are targeting an early December date, in conjunction with the release of the Resource Hub. We also plan to highlight the Project Pipeline decision support criteria. Then we aim to hold a Funding Workshop in early 2024 in advance of the Spring grant season.
- We’ve begun brainstorming and planning for this year’s Annual Workshop, and welcome any input and/or participation in the planning process from Work Group members! Please let us know if you’d like to be more involved.

### **Project Pipeline Next Steps - Elizabeth Hornstein**

- [Final Decision Support Criteria](#)
  - Thanks to everyone for your feedback, both during and after our last Work Group Meeting!
  - Reminder of the goal: Help LIS communities identify & prioritize high-impact projects that advance CCMP and SRC 5-Year Workplan goals.
  - Will be putting the criteria on the Resource Hub, discussing at this year's Annual Workshop, and incorporating them into training programs.
  - Will promote and use to help communities understand which projects to move forward with and which will be the most impactful.

### **USGS Compound Flood Risk Model Updates – Kris Masterson & Liv Herdman (USGS)**

Liv Herdman provided a summary of the project scope and progress to date.

- Pushing back some Phase 1 deliverables. Tasks accomplished so far include:
  - Selected steering committee
  - Compiled data
  - Conducted spatial risk analysis on 900-m grid for each of the quadrants
- Phase 1 reporting plan: combination of scientific journal articles, USGS reports, USGS data releases, USGS model archives
- New iteration of map from previous comments/suggestions
  - Online map interface that presents information on coastal, precipitation, groundwater, and combined risk per 900m quadrant.
  - Would like to have a demonstration of the mapping tool at “beta-testing” sessions with EPA and SRCs, preferably in person, so that recommendations can be incorporated as appropriate/feasible before final USGS approval.
    - SRCs can discuss internally opportunities for beta-testing and follow up to let USGS know some options.
  - You won't be able to make projections with this map. Phase 1 analyses aren't a process based model - they are statistical. Phase 2 will include a process-based model.

### **Updates from SRC WG Members**

- Alison noted that there is an opportunity to provide feedback to FEMA on the BRIC program, whether you have (successfully) applied or not.
  - <https://www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation/building-resilient-infrastructure-communities/about/2023-stakeholder-engagement-effort>

### **Wrap-Up & Adjourn - Becky Shuford**

Thank you to all Work Group members for your input today and throughout the year so far!

- Upcoming SRC Work Group meetings:
  - 1 - 3 pm 11/14/2023