



Sustainable and Resilient Communities Work Group Meeting Summary November 14, 2023 1:00 PM

Attendees

- Sarah Schaefer-Brown, NYSG/LISS
- Elizabeth Hornstein, NYSG/LISS
- Sara Powell, NYSG/LISS
- Deb Abibou, CTSG/LISS
- Sarah Schechter, CTSG/LISS
- Sylvain DeGuise, CTSG
- Kris Masterson, USGS
- Jennifer Street, DOS
- Sue Van Patten, NYSDEC
- Stephanie Pryor, Spruce Technologies
- Alison Branco, TNC
- Bryce Holland, Spruce Technologies
- Nancy Balcom, CTSG
- Nikki Tachiki, EPA
- Samarra Scantlebury, NYSDEC
- Lynn Dwyer, NFWF
- Kristen Laccetti, EPA
- Shahela Begum, RAE/LISCIF
- Anthony Allen, Save the Sound
- Marcy Balint, CTDEEP
- Kathleen Fallon, NYSG
- Jessica LeClair, Sustainable CT
- Jimena Perez-Viscasillas, NYSG/LISS
- Nicole Govert, CIRCA
- Paul Stacey, Footprints on the Water
- Owen Placido, CTSG
- David Kozak, CTDEEP *retired*
- Chris Eagler, NYSDEC
- Corey Humphrey, SCSWCD
- Esther Nelson, EPA

Welcome and Introductions - *Sylvain DeGuise*

- Sylvain welcomed everyone. Asked if there was any feedback on the [August 8th, 2023 meeting summary](#). None.
- Today's agenda features exciting progress!

Update on LISS SRCWG FY24 Workplan - *Sylvain DeGuise*

- Draft SRC Annual Workplan has been submitted to LISS. BDB program has officially rolled onto the LISS Base Budget - good news. We have two pending requests: (1) an additional SRC EP for NYC, (2) funds to assist in extension rollout of CFRM outreach. Would look for someone with technical background.
- Sarah Schaefer-Brown: Noted that some details are also on the slides. More details had been discussed at the August SRC WG meeting.

LISS CCMP Revision Updates - Sylvain DeGuise

- CCMP Revision: Work is in progress to revise the CCMP via a Revision Oversight Group (ROG) which Sylvain and SRCs are a part of. Purpose is to take a step back and revise the framework, vision, mission, and themes, and the outcome will be presented to the Management Committee at the next meeting. The ROG is working on simplifying the wording and structure.

LIS Resilience Opportunities - Sarah Schaefer-Brown

- To assist LIS coastal watershed communities, we have developed two programs to assist with the development of sustainability and resilience focused projects.
- We launched on Oct 16th: New Planning Support Program and round 2 of Grant Writing Assistance opportunities.
- The Break Down Barriers (BDB) program is funded by the EPA and administered through NYSG and CTSG and we're pleased that we'll be able to support these programs going forward.
- Referring to the Gantt chart - we met with the BDB Implementation Team and got great input and feedback that helped shape the program and defined metrics for how to evaluate success. Working over the course of the next year, we will roll these programs out and anticipate further modifications each year to help make each more effective.
- Track One: LIS Resilience Planning Support Program
 - Planning and Project Scoping Support - aims to help communities get planning support for preliminary planning or activities to better position these communities to access funding for the next stages of design, etc. This is meant to help add capacity at the early project stages.
 - There is a deadline of Dec 15th.
 - This program aims to help communities assess local climate risks, conceptualize project ideas, and conduct preliminary planning efforts/steps in order to be well positioned to access funding to design and implement successful sustainability and resilience focused projects. At the conclusion of the Track One Program, it is anticipated that awardees will be ready to seek funding for resilience-focused projects and can choose to utilize the Track Two Program. Receiving support through Track One is not a pre-qualification to receive support through Track Two.
 - Communities that participate in this program can receive support for project scoping and planning at the local or regional level. This support may include, but is not limited to:
 - Climate change risk and/or vulnerability assessment
 - Strategy development and project planning
 - Project prioritization and funding guidance
 - Preliminary community engagement
 - Project site feasibility and conceptual design
 - The support offered through this Program should help foster a sustainable and resilient Long Island Sound and the end products supported through this

program should advance a community's efforts to anticipate, absorb, accommodate, and recover from the effects of natural disturbances (e.g., sea level rise, storms and other extreme events, and human impacts), while promoting social, environmental, and/or economic well-being for all communities, particularly those communities with environmental justice concerns. The work supported through this program must advance one or more of [The 2020 LISS Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan Implementation Actions \(IA\)s of focus for the Long Island Sound Resilience Assistance Program.](#)

- We have a general timeline laid out. We'll review Expressions of Interest in January-February and select Candidates in February-March. Through Cornell and UConn we will competitively procure contractors from February-May. Awardees would be notified in the Summer of 2024 and we hope that contractor work could commence shortly thereafter.
- Sylvain: This is a great example of flexibility, listening to feedback that we've received and taking a step back to assist communities where help is needed. Hopefully this can lead communities to eventually successfully tap all of the federal funds that are out there.
- Comment from Anthony Allen (from chat): How was the turnout for the webinars in NY/CT?
 - We had about 20 attendees at each webinar, so turnout was good and recordings are available.
- Comment from Paul Stacey (from chat): Will there be any funding for ecosystem resilience projects, or will they be pretty much public works projects?
 - We're leaving it open to what communities want to do, so we're leaving it up to the applicants. We do have a list of LISS Implementation Actions that projects should align with, to offer guidance.
- Comment from Jessica LeClair (from chat): Do you know if the timing of this opportunity aligns with the timing of federal funding opps in late 2024?
 - Projects would likely continue into 2025 or even later. We're trying to tee projects up for future funding cycles so that applicants have a better idea of what they want to accomplish. Those who are eyeing federal grants at the end of the year could use the Grant Writing Assistance program.
- Track Two: LIS Resilience Grant Writing Assistance
 - Second round, first year was launched in November 2022. Meant to assist with hiring of grant writing writing and preparation consultants.
 - Applications To Date from the 2022 program: 26
 - Accepted Award Applications: 17
 - CT Total 8
 - NY Total 10
 - Western CT 5
 - Eastern CT 3
 - Suffolk County, NY 6
 - Nassau County, NY 4

- Westchester County, NY 0
- Through the Track Two Program, NYSG and CTSG will provide grant preparation and writing capacity to New York and Connecticut communities that are pursuing funding for sustainability and resilience focused projects. This program aims to help communities develop successful sustainability and resilience focused project grant proposals and for municipalities and community organizations to develop capacity for navigating the funding landscape. Receiving support through Track One is not a pre-qualification to receive support through Track Two.
- Support may include, but is not limited to:
 - Budget preparation
 - Cost-benefit analysis
 - Writing and narrative development
 - Mapping
 - Application preparation and submission
- Changes include:
 - Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until all available funding is allocated. There is no longer a deadline of September 30.
 - The program will support sustainability and resilience focused projects that will impact a community(ies) within or partially within the Long Island Sound Coastal boundary within Bronx and Queens counties in addition to Westchester, Nassau, Suffolk counties, western Connecticut, and eastern Connecticut.
 - Funding is to be awarded up to \$9,950 per Application. Each Application should focus on one discrete project. Applicants can now submit multiple Applications.
 - Grant preparation and writing support activities can now include applying to multiple grant opportunities for a discrete project identified by the Applicant, but the total award to a given Contractor for that discrete project shall not exceed \$9,950.
- Types of projects that are eligible for funding are the same as the previous round.
- Open on a rolling basis. The program is open as long as we have funding available. Looking to promote the program more and grow awareness among stakeholders that this will continue to be available.
- Links to program are available in the agenda:
 - [LIS Resilience Planning Support Program](#) RFEI
 - [LIS Resilience Grant Writing Assistance](#) RFP

SRC Training Programs, Field Trips & Annual Workshop Updates - Sara Powell

- Warren Pinnacle has been holding Marsh Conservation Plan meetings in NY. Sara Powell, Sarah Schaefer-Brown, and Elizabeth Hornstein have been helping to organize and hold these meetings. The draft plans are now available for public comment.
 - Oyster Bay Cold Spring Harbor Marsh Conservation Plan Public Workshop was held 11/13 and 20 people attended!

- Stony Brook Harbor Marsh Conservation Plan Public Workshop is tonight, 11/14.
- Glen Island Park Marsh Conservation Plan public webinar will be virtual on Monday, 11/27. Link to join if anyone is interested:
<https://cornell.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJMvdeCrrTkuGNN5Yi1rhm7tfGGRPGliqEeV>
- Steps to Resilience Webinars held on Sept 19th and Sept 21st
 - Total of 146 people attended both webinars (250 people registered)
 - Webinars provided an introduction to resilience planning strategies, local climate impacts and projections, and climate certification programs in CT & NY.
 - Link to recording:
<https://longislandsoundstudy.net/2023/10/climate-resiliency-webinar-now-available-on-video/>
- Field trips are in progress
 - Elizabeth Hornstein hosted a field trip at Sunken Meadow State Park on Nov 3rd, held in partnership with Save the Sound, Audubon, NYS Parks and NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
 - 25 people, mix of municipal reps, nonprofits, consultants, and state/fed representatives. Had several participants from CT and other regions.
 - Looked at both GI projects constructed to reduce flooding/stormwater runoff, also marsh restoration, and discussion of future marsh restoration
 - Got good feedback, people liked networking and seeing the projects.
 - Deb Visco Abibou hosted a Green Infrastructure Tour in New Haven on Nov 8th in partnership with the City of New Haven's Engineering Dept, City Plan Dept, Office of Climate & Sustainability, Save the Sound, Urban Resources Initiative, and Yale School for the Environment.
 - 24 people attended, including a mix of municipalities, committee leaders, and nonprofits. We toured four different locations and then had presentations. Attendees learned about how the bioswales were designed, funded, constructed, maintained, and monitored.
 - Some of the main takeaways were about leveraging partnerships and using green infrastructure to achieve multiple objectives.
 - Received praise from attendees on content and ability to network with others on this topic.
 - Sarah Schechter- Fenwick Living Shoreline.
 - 20 people attended, including a mix of municipal officials, committee group members, interested engineering consultants, and non-profit organization members
 - Marilyn Ozols and Andy Fisk - Background of development of site. Presentation included information on development and creation of the site, including a question and answer section. Following the presentation, the group walked down to the site itself and had further explanation using the context provided during the presentation. Attendees had a chance to explore the site and ask further questions. Many people mentioned they were interested in developing similar projects

- As a private site, people appreciated the opportunity to visit it.
 - The site had been facing a lot of erosion issues prior to the installation - there some more information here: <https://circa.uconn.edu/fenwick/>
 - Sarah Schaefer-Brown is hosting a field trip tomorrow (11/15) at Manorhaven Beach Park in Nassau County. Focus will be on Town of North Hempstead Climate Smart Communities Program and local oyster restoration work.
 - Sara Powell is hosting a walking tour of sites along Blind Brook in Rye on 11/17 - expecting some municipal representation.
 - Will figure out as a team how to highlight and share results out in November.
- Annual Workshop
 - Registration is underway. Dec 7th from 9-12:30
 - Virtual workshop will focus on beta version of the Resource Hub and feature breakout sessions centered around the resilience planning steps featured on the Resource Hub site: Learn, Plan, Implement, Sustain
 - Learn: EJ or NOAA Snapshots tool
 - Plan: hear from communities across the sound who are/have completed a vulnerability assessment
 - Implement/Sustain: Codes and ordinances - topic that was requested at last workshop
 - Registration link: <https://tinyurl.com/2023SRCWorkshop>
 - Workshop agenda link: <https://tinyurl.com/2023workshopagenda>
 - Note that it will be held as a “Webinar” rather than a meeting
- Funding Workshops - early 2024
 - The funding session at our last workshop was well-received, as were workshops held with Lynn/NFWF last year.
 - Planning to hold four in-person workshops to focus on state and local grant opportunities plus LISFF, and other regional/national grants as appropriate.
 - Opportunity to ask questions directly of funders, brainstorm ideas and network, and for us to share the resources we have available.
 - Hold these prior to grants opening so people can begin to get prepared and planning in advance of when grants are open.
 - Plan to invite program officers from relevant funding opportunity programs (mostly state-level).
 - Looking for advice on ideas, content, and timing. Thinking of one on LI, one in Westchester, and two in CT.
 - Alison Branco: Suggests holding at least one virtual because it is hard to make time for travel.

LIS Resilience Resource Hub Updates - *Deb Visco Abibou*

- Visual design is complete, currently in development phase, testing to happen in December, launch in January
- SRC Team is working to finalize content for the site
- Will share the beta site at the Workshop, so we can demo how the site will work. Will also use this beta site for testing.

Updates on Resource Hub Development & Schedule - Bryce Holland (Spruce Tech)

- Funding Database - includes a highlighted banner to indicate when Grant Writing Assistance is available.
- Case Studies - Can see what your neighbors are doing.
- Trainings Archive - Can filter by topic and location. Can watch videos.
- Upcoming Trainings & Events - Users can see upcoming events that are happening and how much time is left to register. Icons indicate the type of event. Defaults to a list view, but will also be able to toggle to a calendar view.
- Getting closer to finishing up the development stage. Making sure that development is aligned with the design.
- Comment from Jimena Perez-Viscasillas (from chat): I would imagine that most of these resources are not for community members/homeowners/for private use, but if there are any that are, even if it's just how-to's, I think it would be good for that to be a filter.
- Comments from Paul Stacey (from chat): This seems very focused on the coastline and fixing existing problems. How about some preventative projects? Natural landscapes are truly resilient and self-sustaining, unlike the living shoreline and Nature-based projects, which become an administrative and O&M burden, and are extremely costly to implement. Conservation projects in the watershed also address water quality in the local basin where people live and provide ecosystem health services for human health and welfare for everyone. The "Resource" Hub should have a focus and role for "Natural" resource conservation and recovery.
- Esther Nelson asked: Do you have an expectation as to how often would funding source information be updated in the hub?
 - Deb responded that we would update it regularly. We currently update our funding list that we share with stakeholders at least monthly.
- Comment from Jess LeClair: along the same funding hub page - it might be helpful to have a feature where folks can sign up for weekly alerts on funding opportunities.
- Marcy shared the following resource to promote appropriate coastal landscaping and buffers as much as possible : <https://media.clear.uconn.edu/projects/crlg/index.htm>.
- Testing timeline:
 - 11/21 - Reach out to testers and confirm participation
 - 12/1 - Send spreadsheet and explain process
 - 12/7 - 12/22 - Two-week review period
 - 12/30 - End of testing/QA
 - Will have a spreadsheet for testing to fill out to make note of any bugs or functional/use issues
 - If you would like to volunteer, let us know!
 - Nicole Govert, Jennifer Street, Anthony Allen, Chris Eagler (DEC) volunteered. Paul indicated he would be interested.

USGS Compound Flood Risk Model Updates – Kris Masterson (USGS)

- Note that Liv is at a conference this week.

- Had a mapper testing session on October 17th where people were able to demo the mapper in person. There was also a virtual discussion component.
- Comments and suggestions:
 - Incorporating a guide on how to navigate viewer
 - Providing example applications or “stories” (will probably take the form of a Story Map)
 - Formatting /consistency notes
 - Glossary for technical terms
 - Functionality (importing/exporting GIS layers to mapper, point/click, hover/info available)
 - Distinguishing current vs. future risks
 - Incorporating links to other online tools
- Latest version of the mapper is available. Have added an outline drop-down to help sort materials.
- Phase 1 Reporting Plan
 - Before the mapper can be released, the associated data has to be documented and released. There is also a USGS review process.
 - Combination of sci journal articles, USGS reports, USGS data releases, and USGS model archives.
- Sylvain DeGuise: As a tester was impressed with how the information was summarized and how you could dig down into the data to find more details. Would be great to have people empowered to get to potential solutions by having appropriate outreach/technical guidance.
 - Kris Masterson - Idea emerged to create a focus group. Thinking about rolling it out.
- Comment from Paul Stacey (from chat): I'm always discouraged when I see these "flood risk" maps, which seem to focus on sea level rise. Everyone who does not live in the red areas says "not my problem". But, everyone in the watershed needs to be part of the solution, including extreme event flooding which a double impact in coastal areas, as well as the nearest river upland of the coastal zone. And it's not just climate change! The combined drivers of land development and climate change need to be addressed collectively to resolve the ecosystem health tragedy that we're enduring, that rain gardens and living shorelines do not solve. Structurally sound watersheds with natural cover provide the functional solution to flooding and water quality and human health and welfare, too! We need to think more holistically and recognize ecosystem health means human health and lowered risks. That should be our message to everyone! And solutions to extant problems needs a strong preventative partner, which has been long neglected to prevent future problems.
 - Sylvain DeGuise (from chat): Paul, the viewer actually includes some of the natural features that contribute to, for example, drainage.
 - Paul Stacey (from chat): That's helpful, Sylvain, but we need to tell people how much of the landscape needs to be dedicated to natural features to keep us in the "safe zone". We don't do that and only speak to how we can fix the problems

we've created through our indifference and neglect, not how much Natural Capital we need to strike a balance.

- Kris provided a quick demo of the USGS Compound Flood Risk Mapper
 - Some new features that came from recommendations include a dropdown with tabs to access the various interfaces. Refining how much text is showing in different places.
 - Maps show individual coastal, rainfall, and groundwater emergence flood risks. Top map shows Compound Flood Risk Assessment.
 - Clicking on a location shows a summary of risk along the sidebar. Can then drill down to specific risks. For example, can explore ponding risk based on LIDAR topography (will change color so the enclosed enclosed depressions are not confused with ponds). Stormwater Runoff Potential (curve number). Regional Wetness Index - legend defines colors. Slope (degrees). Each feature can be zoomed in on.
 - Story Map will help planners think about how they can use the tool.
 - Future Case is available in Coastal map; otherwise existing conditions; thinking about how to indicate this.
 - It's not too late to share your notes if you attended and have any additional thoughts!
- Comment from Anthony Allen (from chat): Very cool, thanks Kris! Is there a link to this where folks can review to provide feedback before 11/30?
 - Kris Masterson - USGS has to follow certain review procedures, so we can't offer a link just yet.
- Kris Masterson noted that as far as timeline they can't offer anything firm, but hoping that the mapper could be released by January.
- Kris Masterson wrote in to chat: Sea level is included, and we are trying to incorporate all components that drive flooding as well.

Updates from SRC WG Members

- None

Wrap-Up & Adjourn - Sylvain DeGuise

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
 - 2/13/2024
 - 5/14/2024
 - 08/13/2024
 - 11/12/2024
- Hopes all will agree that there has been a lot of significant progress taking place from trainings, to field trips, resource hub that is taking shape, and the USGS Flood Map that synthesizes a huge amount of data. Thanks to five SRCs and hoping to add another to

extend reach to NYC. Please reach out to the EPs or he and Becky as co-chairs. Please help spread the word on these tools and opportunities to help our communities become more resilient.