

Sustainable and Resilient Communities Work Group
ZOOM Online Meeting
Tuesday, August 16, 2022 – Meeting Summary



Attendees

Rebecca Shuford, NYSG	Katie Lund, CIRCA
Sylvain DeGuise, CTSG	Anthony Allen, Save the Sound
Deb Visco Abibou, CTSG/LISS	Corey Humphrey, Suffolk County SWCD
Alicia Tyson, CTSG/LISS	David Anderson, Save the Sound
Sarah Schaefer-Brown, NYSG/LISS	Kris Masterson, USGS
Elizabeth Hornstein, NYSG/LISS	Jess LeClair, CTSG/LISS
Sara Powell, NYSG/LISS	Kathleen Fallon, NYSG
Sarah Watson, CT DEEP	Nikki Tachiki, EPA/LISS
Sue Van Patten, NYSDEC	Samarra Scantlebury, NYSDEC/LISS
Alexa Fournier, NYSDEC	Marty Garrell, Adelphi
Jimena Perez-Viscasillas, NYSG/LISS	Alison Branco, TNC NY
Holly Drinkuth, TNC CT/CAC Co-chair	Harry Yamalis, CT DEEP/LISS
Katie Friedman, Save the Sound	Vicky O'Neill, NEIWPCC/NYSDEC/LISS
Kathy Bunting-Howarth, NYSG	Nancy Balcom, CTSG
Mary Arnold, NEIWPCC/NYSDEC/LISS	Emily Himmelstoss, USGS
Kat Coughlin, North Shore Land Alliance	

Welcome

- Becky and Sylvain welcomed everyone - thanks for joining!
- Kris Masterson with the USGS Water Science Center, is a new SRC Work Group Member and is now the project manager for the USGS Compound Flood Model

Review of SRC Workplan Year 1 Tasks and Proposed Timeline; Deb Visco Abibou

- Deb presented an update on the SRC Extension Professionals' Year 1 timeline and tasks.
 - Needs Assessment: Conversations wrapping up. Working to reach as many diverse stakeholders as possible. Will be presenting preliminary findings today and final results at the November WG meeting. Will also be developing a monitoring and evaluation plan.
 - Annual Workshop: Planning for a smaller virtual workshop in Nov/Dec for this year. The Steering Committee may just be the SRC Team and presenters we invite for this year. We will talk more about our plans later in the meeting and ask for your feedback.
 - Clearinghouse: Not going to go into this today but continuing to work on this.

- Coordination: Using needs assessment finding to identify opportunities for coordination and collaboration.
- USGS Compound Flood Risk Model: Will hear from USGS later in the meeting. The SRC EPs are providing USGS with relevant community information to help ground truth their model.
- Breaking Down Barriers: Needs Assessment is informing this task. We will be going into more details on the program we are developing to start with later in the meeting.

Preliminary Findings of SRC Needs Assessment; Sarah Schaefer-Brown, Sara Powell, Deb Visco Abibou

- Needs Assessment will inform our future work and ensure the delivery of information and programming will meet on the ground stakeholder needs. We have had lots of conversations with stakeholders over the last several months to understand what are the environmental threats, what are communities already doing to address threats, what are the challenges/barriers and what support is needed. We are working to synthesize all of the information we have amassed to inform our other work plan tasks. We will be presenting preliminary results today and looking for feedback on our process.
- We have been engaging with target stakeholder groups through informal discussions, attending meetings hosted by target groups, and in some cases hosting our own public meetings/workshops.
- We had established internal evaluation criteria to evaluate our progress/effectiveness: 1) Have spoken with at least 1 member of each municipality 2) Made an effort to reach a broad and diverse sample of as many Tier 1 (and Tier 2, as opportunities arise) stakeholders as possible within the agreed upon timeframe and 3) Are no longer getting new responses to “who else should we talk to”. We will give an update on where we stand with the first two criteria. The third criteria is more qualitative but we seem to be getting fewer new responses.
- Shared color-coded stakeholder table to show groups that we have a lot of engagement with (green), groups we had some engagement with (yellow) and those we have had no engagement with (red). The only group we have not any engagement with so far is resources users, but we have plans to reach out to this group in the next few weeks. While it may not be possible for us to reach everyone before we wrap up the Needs Assessment, due to capacity, as well as willingness of stakeholders to speak with us, relationship building will be ongoing.
 - Vicky: Can reach out to NYSDEC Marine Resources for resources user group contacts.
 - Marty: Baymen/fishermen associations have always been difficult to involve but it may be a good time to reach out now.
 - The SRC EPs will follow up with Marty for specific contacts.
 - Katie Lund: One missing category is Academic/Research Institutes.
 - Deb and Sarah: We have been talking with this stakeholder group even though they are not in our stakeholder table.

- Kris Masterson (chat): How were Tier 1 and Tier 2 designations made?
 - Elizabeth: Tier 1 and Tier 2 designations were made when we developed our Needs Assessment approach in consultation with the SRC Oversight Committee and Work Group.
- Shared regional stakeholder map to visualize all of the conversations we have had to-date across our regions. Eastern CT data is pending. We have connected with 80% of our counties/towns/cities and 50% of villages. Nassau has a lot of villages (37), so connecting with all of them is challenging.
- Regional Synthesis Process: Built an internal spreadsheet to compile all our conversations/findings per community in each of our regions. We are pulling out environmental threats, current goals/actions, successes, barriers, current coordination efforts and coordination challenges/areas for improvements, needs, and training ideas. Pulling out barriers/challenges and needs for each of the major stakeholder types (government, community, nonprofits). Today we are going to present the top things we have heard so far across all our regions. For our final analysis we will be working to parse out similarities and differences across regions and stakeholder types, and will go into more detail about anticipated next steps regarding development of training programs, etc.
- Regional Synthesis Preliminary Findings
 - Environmental threats: Number one issue is stormwater management and associated flooding. Other threats that have come up in the majority of our regions are coastal erosion, water quality, impacts from development, SLR/ coastal flooding, and tree loss.
 - Challenges/Barriers: Major challenge/barrier is limited capacity, including limited staff/technical expertise, limited ability to coordinate, and limited funding. Also burdensome grant/funding requirements, lack of political will, leadership and action on these issues, and institutional inequities.
 - Needs: Increased capacity, including funding, connections to partners, and more staff/consultant time; Identification of funding opportunities and understanding requirements; Technical guidance; Step by step guide of “what to do”; General education/outreach on a range of issues/topics.
 - Training Ideas: Series on resilience planning for municipalities; Guidance on grant opportunities and requirements; Guidance on identifying priorities and communicating effectively to decision makers; General education on topical issues (e.g., living shorelines, green infrastructure, nature-based solutions), including education for both the general public and municipal staff/elected officials.
- Current initiatives and opportunities
 - NY: 1) Partnership with NYSACC to develop a Coastal Resiliency Network for Long Island and Westchester 2) Collaboration with NY Climate Smart Communities and Clean Energy Coordinators, 3) Plethora of plans across all our regions that already identify a number of priority projects and opportunities that we can build off, 4) Various regional coordination efforts including Suffolk County Regional Resilience

- Planning, Nassau County Protection Committees for the three major watersheds, and the Westchester County Long Island Sound Watershed Intermunicipal Council
- CT: 1) Sustainable CT Certifications, keeps municipalities focused on planning and allows them to see what other communities are doing 2) Deb and Alicia planning regional NOAA NART workshops in Bridgeport, New Haven, New London and Norwich to reach underserved communities and test methods to incentivise community participation.
 - Western CT: 1) SCROG and New Haven HMP and Comprehensive Plan updates presented opportunities for community engagement on resilience 2) Bradford Coastal Resilience Fund is a good model that other communities could potentially replicate
 - Eastern CT: 1) Integrating mitigation planning efforts with CIRCA, TNC, CT DEEP and the COGs 2) Support multi-town partnership of Old Saybrook/Westbrook/Fenwick/Clinton 3) Watershed scale efforts by various groups/Native communities, and 4) Supporting trainings/discussions on stormwater utilities
 - NA Findings and Presentation Schedule
 - October 19-20, 2022 LISS MC Meeting
 - November 9, 2022 SRCWG Meeting
 - 2022 SRC Bi-State Annual Workshop - Fall/Winter 2022
 - Restore America's Estuaries Conference - December 4-8th, 2022
 - Feedback:
 - Marty: It's important that we plan for catastrophic events and for 40-50 years down the line, especially since sea level rise risks may be underestimated.
 - Deb: When communicating risks we want to balance doom and gloom with sharing solutions but also want to share accurate information.
 - Holly: Appreciate the collective look around the Sound and liked the visualization. Also like the shared spreadsheet you developed. May be worthwhile to identify opportunities to measure/track communities' implementation progress (who has plans, how are they doing on implementation, where are resources needed).
 - Deb: This has come up and we are thinking through how best to track this.
 - Becky: Incorporating a longer view into planning is important, as well as coming up with an adaptive approach and continuing to work to understand barriers to implementation.
 - Katie Lund: For annual workshop, could maybe work with partners to highlight new funding and tools (DEEP funding, CIRCA projects, etc)
 - Anthony: Parsing out the data to understand which communities/stakeholder groups identified which barriers, needs, opportunities etc. would be helpful.
 - Sara: We were trying to do a bit of that with our process spreadsheet and can make note to have that for the final presentation.

- Annual Workshop Goals and Considerations:
 - Introduce LISS/SRC Program and Goals
 - Share NA Findings, ask for feedback on future programming
 - Outreach for the BDB Grant Writing Assistance Program
 - Introduction to other funding programs
 - LISS Regional Network Building (Breakout sessions on key concerns), use NA to highlight issues/projects of importance and ask partners to present
 - Proposed length 2-3 hours
 - Aiming for November or early December, looking for feedback on proposed dates
 - Several folks noted Nov 30/Dec 1 works well for them
 - Kathleen: NYSG has a Coastal Bluff Symposium planned for November 14th
 - Nov 18th is LISS STAC Meeting
 - Dec 15th is I-Team Meeting
 - Jimena: Who is the main audience for stakeholders?
 - Sara: Local governments, nonprofits and community leaders/groups. We acknowledge that no time is going to be perfect for everyone but ultimately want to be sure to reach local governments/regional entities so will likely hold it during the business day. We plan to record it for those that cannot attend.
- Breaking Down Barriers: Requested \$500K through LISS FY22 budget for Breaking Down Barriers implementation task to roll out Sound Resilience Grant Writing Assistance Program, in response to needs we have heard through conversations with stakeholders
 - Funding opportunity will be open to communities and municipalities in the LIS Coastal Boundary and provide funds for grant writing to support planning, design and implementation of sustainability and resilience projects.
 - Looking to roll out the program October 1 when funding is awarded.
 - Application process will be very simple, and applicants will be accepted/approved on a rolling basis. SRC Team will review applications.
 - Still fine tuning RFP
 - Jimena: Should make sure to coordinate with LI Community Impact Fund which is also focused on capacity building; contact Bessie Wright.
 - We will be establishing an Implementation Team to guide the BDB Program per the work plan. For this first year, timeframe was moved up a bit and had a quick turnaround, so we have mostly been working internally to develop this program so far, but we will be looking for feedback to inform future development/adaptations of this program. Let us know if you would like to be part of the BDB Implementation Team. We plan to convene the Implementation Team and evaluate the program March 2023. We will also send a formal request to the WG.

USGS Compound Flood Risk Model Updates; Kris Masterson

- Summary of Progress:

- Development of project GIS & spatial analysis of factors/characteristics that contribute to flood risk/potential (rainfall, land surface cover, storm frequency, etc.); sifting through data layers to identify what can be used.
- Review underway of reports provided by SRC EPs; will be used as check of model/analysis
- Compilation of data series for multivariate statistical modeling to identify probability of when you may have two flood risks occurring
- Pilot process based model being developed for phase 2 (Greenport, Long Island)
 - Plan to do processed-based models for 3 LISS sites
 - Purpose is to simulate groundwater flow and link coastal model results with groundwater model and possibility storm sewers.
- First steering committee took place May 12th. Series of steering committee meetings planned for August with individual members to confirm results are presented in a way that's helpful.
- August 16-17 working to finalize phase 1 analysis and develop ranking strategy to look at risks and develop the map. End product will be a map of the compound flood vulnerability index. Should have some results to share at the next meeting.
- Marty: How does your data match up with the Long Island Express Hurricane of 1938 that drowned Greenport? Should be lots of data out there on that storm.
 - Kris: Current model includes data from 2000 onward but will look into this historical data. Also trying to get sewer information for Greenport.
 - Sarah and Elizabeth can help with contacts for Village of Greenport
- Deb: What makes Greenport a good pilot model?
 - Kris: It's in the study area, has a sewer system, has flooding issues and is a small area so can start simple to test linking of models.
 - Elizabeth: Greenport is on the Peconic Bays and only a small portion of the Village is within the LIS Watershed.
 - Kris: Peconic and LIS may be connected though during storm events.

USGS Coastal Resiliency Assessment; Emily Himmelstoss

- Compute shoreline change assessment rates for both long (80+) and short-term (~30 years) using digital shoreline analysis system
 - Will compile and standardize shoreline positions from various sources/studies and extract MHW shorelines from LIDAR surveys
- Incorporate shoreline change data into coastal change likelihood model to estimate the potential for the shoreline to change over the next decade
 - Combines shoreline changes rates with landscape data
- Compare assessment outputs with available coastal classification schemes (for example, classify change for natural vs hardened shorelines)
- Publish all geospatial data and display in the web accessible USGS Coastal Hazards Change Portal

- Currently have shoreline change data for every area around Long Island Sound so will be nice to fill in Long Island Sound
- Publish a peer reviewed interpretive report on the model outputs and data aggregation
- Connect USGS social scientists with SRC EPs to support product dissemination and solicit feedback on produce use and applications
 - Want to consider users input and ensure data meets stakeholder's needs
- Timeline: 3 year project will start in 2023, first step will be shoreline change assessment, hope to do that step in first year to 1.5 years, then will move on to updating the coastal change likelihood model

Updates from Work Group Members

- Sarah Watson: CT DEEP Office of Climate Planning anticipates opening the DEEP Climate Resilience Fund next month
- Katie Friedman: Save the Sound will be kicking off the Hutchinson River Watershed Plan - Phase I for Westchester County through a public meeting in September - keep an eye out for a save-the-date! Contact kfriedman@savethesound.org for more information.

Wrap up & Next steps; Becky Shuford & Sylvain DeGuise

- Thanks to all!
- Next SRC WG Meeting Nov 9th
 - Based on poll, preference is for virtual meeting