

Sustainable and Resilient Communities Work Group
ZOOM Online Meeting
Tuesday, May 10, 2022 – Meeting Summary



Attendees

Deb Visco Abibou, CTSG	Nancy Seligson, LISS CAC
Sarah Schaefer-Brown, NYSG	Lynn Dwyer, NFWF
Elizabeth Hornstein, NYSG	Harry Yamalis, CTDEEP
Sara Powell, NYSG	Becky Shuford, NYSG
Alicia Tyson, CTSG	Kat Coughlin, TNC & North Shore Land Alliance
Brian Thompson, CT DEEP	Jess LeClair, CTSG/LISS
Sylvain DeGuise, CTSG	Vicky O'Neill, NEIWPC/NYSDEC/LISS
Juliana Barrett, CTSG	Anthony Allen, Save the Sound
Liv Herdman, USGS	Katie Friedman, Save the Sound
Samarra Scantlebury, NYSDEC	Nikki Tachiki, EPA
Sarah Watson, CT DEEP	Cayla Sullivan, EPA
Kathleen Fallon, NYSG	Esther Nelson, EPA
Jimena Perez-Viscasillas, NYSG/LISS	Shiela Hayes, NAACP
Alison Branco, TNC NY	David Anderson, Save the Sound
Lilli Genovesi, NYSG	
Kathy Bunting-Howarth, NYSG	

Welcome

- Becky and Sylvain welcomed everyone - thanks for joining!
- If you have any corrections or comments on our Feb 8 meeting summary, please let us know.

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.
- Currently conducting Needs Assessment and learning what resources implementation partners bring to the table. We'll be providing updates on successes and challenges so far during this call today. We are aiming to present a progress update during our June Oversight Committee meeting, and share preliminary findings during our August workgroup meeting. Will be looking for feedback on what format(s) will be most useful for sharing our findings.
- Continuing to think about and explore options for our 'Clearinghouse' as we conduct our Needs Assessment.

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- *Comment from Juliana, re: the steering committee for our annual workshops - "Depending on workshop topics, it may be good to reach beyond the steering committee in putting together agendas to broaden scope of a particular topic."*

Breaking Down Barriers update; Becky Shuford & Sylvain DeGuise // Alison Branco

- Breaking Down Barriers is one of the outcomes we are trying to achieve through our 5-year plan. Needs Assessment will help flesh out barriers, but it's clear there is a need for grant writing capacity.
- Requested funds through the LISS FY22 budget - \$500,000. (will be dispersed/used in FY23 - start date of October 1, 2022)
- Will allow communities to request funds for grant-writing support. Anticipate ~\$5k/award, which would allow for ~15 awards per region.
- Question from Jimena: "How will this funding mechanism be related, if at all, to the RFA being developed by Bessie Wright for an EJ Small Grants program? I believe that RFA includes help with capacity."
 - Sylvain - we want to be sure we are coordinating with programs, Alicia is coordinating directly with the EJWG so we can make sure these are complementary & not duplicative.
- Question from Anthony & Vicky: "Is this opportunity just for municipalities?"
 - Becky - no, intended to be for communities more broadly.
- Question from Sarah Watson: "Can you expand upon why \$5,000 is the targeted grant amount?"
 - Sylvain - aiming for this to be supportive, we want buy-in from communities. There could be some wiggle room if needed. Expected outcome is submission of grant applications.
- Alison Branco provided an update on a new [TNC Grant Writing Program](#)
 - Am glad that we both have the same idea! There are lots of funds that NY communities aren't accessing, we've gotten a lot of feedback that this is needed.
 - We can learn from each other about what works & what doesn't.
 - Deadline: Wednesday, May 25th. TNC is aiming to get the awards out by August/September so that contractors can assist applicants apply for the FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grants due in December.
 - Statewide program where TNC will provide grant preparation and writing capacity to New York communities that are pursuing funding for flood adaptation and mitigation projects that align with TNC priorities. This program aims to help municipalities develop successful flood adaptation and mitigation grant applications and for municipal staff and partners to develop capacity for navigating the funding landscape.
 - The grant amount is not set in stone for what will be available to municipalities and she will report back about what we are finding is needed.
 - Nancy commented it would be helpful to know which LIS communities apply to your program!

Needs Assessment Progress; SRC Extension Professionals

- Reminder: SRC Extension Professionals are engaging with stakeholders using a combination of approaches - namely informal discussions to build relationships - to learn what priorities they have, what barriers & challenges they are encountering, and how the SRC team can help them overcome the identified barriers.
- We are attending virtual and in-person meetings, site visits, events, etc. We could also explore hosting our own public meetings/workshops to learn from communities while they also learn from each other.
- Each SRC EP provided a brief overview of their progress to date:
 - Deb Visco-Abibou (Western CT): Have had ~25 stakeholder meetings & am hearing an interesting amount of variation in threat perception. Inland communities are concerned about flooding, but some neighborhoods in New Haven were more concerned about asthma & other secondary impacts. I've been hearing a lot about vulnerable (aging) infrastructure. Barriers - capacity & available expertise. QAPPs & match requirements have also come up. Needs - have been requests for clarification about roles of organizations/people working in similar spaces. A lot of positive feedback about our goal of getting projects to implementation.
 - Alicia Tyson (Eastern CT): Has had a wide variety of meetings with a number of sectors. (see slide) She found attending community events to be most successful in connecting with a diversity of community leaders and engaging in genuine conversations about their priorities and concerns. Two of the biggest challenges are the geographic scope and connections between coastal communities and more inland communities and the need to clarify our role/goals/benefits to the community as opposed to other groups working in the same spaces. Many communities are aware of the need, but would benefit from guidance on how to scope a project (e.g. need technical expertise and guidance). Also, some communities are wary of getting involved because they haven't seen their efforts reciprocated before. Sensitivity to schedules is key.
 - Elizabeth Hornstein (Suffolk County, NY): Have been working to connect with local governments & civic/community groups & NGOs. I've connected with all the towns in my region, as well as some villages. Some villages haven't been responsive yet. NY team has made some regional connections that I think will be helpful: NYSACC (looking to form a coastal resiliency network for LI, NYC, Westchester; participating in a meeting they are holding on Thursday & will be helping to coordinate that group moving forward), NYS Climate Smart Community Coordinators as well. In my region, one of the biggest issues that's come up is coastal erosion - I've been working with Kathleen Fallon (NYSG) and a local legislator to organize some upcoming events. Other major issue is stormwater & concerns about flooding/stormwater runoff. Barriers that I've

been hearing are aligned with what's already been said... capacity for my villages is a huge issue. Funding & political will as well. Some of the needs: technical expertise, wanting information on what municipalities should be doing... I'm finding that a lot of them really aren't aware of the resources that are out there. I've also heard some interest in updating municipal codes and partnering with other municipalities. Next up: trying to make connections with other groups (faith-based community groups, utilities, developers, etc.)

- Sarah Schaefer-Brown (Nassau County, NY): Most notably in my region, there are three Protection Committees that have membership from a lot of coastal municipalities - I've been attending their meetings & setting up follow up meetings with individual municipalities. Challenges: many small villages that don't coordinate or have capacity to manage projects/write grants. Another barrier: there is a huge need for coordination amongst governments and organizations. Currently trying to figure out where we can help connect the dots. Working on finding creative ways to make connections.
- Sara Powell (Westchester County, NY): Similar to the others, I have been reaching out to municipalities and community groups in Westchester, I've also talked to folks at the County planning level. We had a meeting with the Long Island Sound Funders Collaborative a few weeks ago & I've since had a subsequent conversation with someone at the Westchester Community Foundation that was very helpful. I've been hearing about similar challenges... capacity, funding, and politics are, as expected, coming up a lot. Communities are concerned about flooding, which is not a surprise given how devastating Hurricane Ida was last Fall. I've gotten encouraging responses when I mention our intent to hold bi-state workshops to bring together municipalities to learn from each other & look for ways to work together. I've also heard a need for resources/training to help bring up the basic level of conversability in municipalities & communities related to green infrastructure and resilience/climate change issues.
- Deb provided a review of the takeaways from the last work group meeting's EJ-focused breakout sessions. Our next steps are to work on implementing the already identified ideas, discuss EJ integration with other work plan tasks at future meetings, think about metrics, and continue coordination with the EJ Needs Assessment team.
- Alicia discussed SRC integration with the EJ Working Group - Alicia is a member of the EJ Planning Committee (a committee within the EJ Work Group) that meets bi-weekly to coordinate outreach efforts across NY & CT.
 - Goal is that eventually EJ will be fully integrated across LISS & eventually the working group will not be needed.
 - She underscored the value of critical self examination as a program to reflect on equity and inclusion and the timeliness of recent feedback and guidance from guest speakers such as [Dr. Maime Parker, Former Head of Fisheries, USFW](#).
 - She also highlighted the importance of recognizing different ways of holding knowledge and knowledge forms, whether local or indigenous.

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- As relates to the coordination with the forthcoming EJ Needs Assessment, she reinforced the awareness that the SRC EP team will coordinate with others to avoid overburdening communities and integrating plans and objectives. The SRC EP team will be instrumental in helping to guide the identification of “hot spots” that will be prioritized for the EJ Needs Assessment.
- Sarah discussed the plan for sharing Needs Assessment findings & recommendations.
 - Plan to work internally to compile our findings & present a preliminary high-level summary of findings & recommendations to the SRC work group on August 16th.
 - Final presentation of findings & recommendations during November 9th SRC WG meeting.
 - We’ve submitted a proposal to the Restore America’s Estuaries Conference (December 4-8th).
 - The findings and recommendations will be the foundation for our annual bi-state SRC workshop in 2023, the plan is to present the high-level summary back to the stakeholders we engaged with during the needs assessment and present our next steps.

SRC Task Updates

- Clearinghouse; Sara Powell
 - We have a comprehensive list of tools and resources that we’ve shared with the Oversight Committee & received some feedback on.
 - Will be working to evaluate and pare down the tools/resources over the next few months. Will have more updates at the next SRC meeting in August.
 - Name ideas so far: Climate Smart Sound Toolkit, LIS Resiliency Community Resource Hub, Sustainable and Resilient Community Resource Directory
 - Other ideas from group: Sound Community Resources, Long Island Sound Resilience Directory (LISRD!)
- Project Pipeline; Elizabeth Hornstein
 - Reminder on this task from the workplan - this year, inventory existing/new projects and establish selection criteria for high impact projects.
 - As a part of our Needs Assessment, we are inventorying plans and projects and identifying barriers to implementation. We’ve started to identify funding sources & have had some internal discussions about project selection/prioritization criteria & overall goals... are aiming to discuss further with the Oversight Committee in June.
 - *Nancy asked: “From the municipal perspective, municipalities are excited about funding, etc., but they don’t know how to rank them. Need the manager or the engineer to know what needs to be done next.”*

USGS Compound Flood Risk Model Updates; Alicia Tyson, Liv Herdman

- Alicia provided an update on the coordination with Liv, Chris, & Jennifer - Liv set up a Sharepoint site to facilitate information sharing with SRC EPs.
- Liv shared information on the first Steering Committee meeting coming up on May 12.
- Steering Committee members:

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- La'Tasha Maddox, Eastern Pequot Tribal Nation Council
- Giovanni Zinn, City of New Haven Engineering Department
- Adam Parris, New York City Mayor's Office of Climate Resiliency
- Diane Ifkovic, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
- Brian Zitani, New York State Floodplain and Stormwater Managers Association-- Region 1 (Long Island)
- Gaurav Savant, United States Army Corps of Engineers—Engineer Research and Development Center
- Nelson Vaz, National Weather Service New York, NY—Weather Forecast Office
- Have completed QAPP & have begun initial GIS analysis on rainfall.
- Hope to have some initial products to share in the next quarter.
- Sarah noted the August SRCWG meeting will feature a presentation from Emily Himmelstoss from USGS on the FY22 LISS Supplemental Budget Project Proposal - Coastal resiliency assessment: near-term coastal change along the shorelines of Long Island Sound.

Updates from Work Group Members; all

- Nancy Seligson - Want to ask the SRC & EJ work groups how the CAC can best help/help you move forward? Would be helpful if SRCs have a direct ask. Suggested that this could be on the agenda for the next SRCWG meeting. Mark Tedesco has been made aware of Nancy's request.
 - Nikki - I've seen an early draft of the 5 year LISS Communications Plan, EJ is a big focus. There were several areas that Nikki suggested CAC members should take the lead. This is definitely something we can discuss in the EJWG as well.
- Vicky O'Neill - question re: living shoreline bill in NYS Senate sponsored by Senator Mayer.
 - Sara shared the recording of the Living Shorelines event:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=olgQORSBOZ8>
- Lynn Dwyer - In delivery of grant writing assistance, the support also needs to consider sorting around what grants are available/who's providing the funds (Federal/ State vs. Community, Corporate, Non-federal grants etc.) and think about the grant management side as well to make sure the applicant is appropriate for the funding opportunity. Consideration should be given to review the applicant's administrative, financial, programmatic capacity and providing guidance about the applicant's capability to manage the awarded project grant funds (along with the required reporting requirements) and the project successfully to completion.
 - Deb responded that this is a thought that the SRC team has considered as we build out the Breaking Down Barriers program and it is important we think about this now as we develop this first year of the proposal.
 - Elizabeth commented that the SRC team is thinking about providing trainings about grant applications and we can include information on grant management.
 - Sarah Watson seconds the need for training on grants management responsibilities.

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- Sarah Watson - CT DEEP had a public meeting yesterday about the forthcoming CT DEEP Climate Resilience Grant program- funds planning & project development.
<https://portal.ct.gov/ConnecticutClimateAction/Executive-Order/Executive-Order-No-21-3#Community%20Climate>
 - CT DEEP is accepting public comment until Monday at 4 PM.
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/ConnecticutClimateAction/Docs/Public-Notice_Meeting-and-Straw-Proposal_Climate-Resilience-Grant-Program.pdf
- Sarah commented that the SRC team will compile a list of grant funding opportunities that are out right now that are applicable to our work and include it in the follow-up email for this meeting.

Wrap up & Next steps; Becky Shuford

- Our next meetings are August 16th & November 9th
- Keep the opportunity to share updates in mind for future meetings - this will be a standing agenda item!
- Zoom poll: are you interested in having one of our next meetings be in-person?
 - Idea: field trip/site visits that are in addition to the SRC WG meeting so we are not excluding people who are not comfortable meeting in-person or cannot travel.
 - Winning answer: everyone is currently unsure at this time if they would like an in-person or virtual meeting. The SRCs will send poll around in June/July to see where everyone stands for an August meeting.
 - Vicky noted that DEC staff need 45 days notice to apply for out of state travel, if the meeting is held in CT.
- Thank you to the work group for your engagement in this process & these meetings!