

Management Committee Meeting Notes

January 19th, 2022

Meeting Conducted Remotely



Attendees:

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| Mark Tedesco, EPA LISO | Francine Gordon, CAC | Thomas Morgart, USDA-NRCS |
| Cayla Sullivan, EPA LISO | Brian Thompson, CTDEEP | Todd Randall, USACE |
| Esther Nelson, EPA LISO | Kathleen Knight, CTDEEP | Jordan Bishop, NEIWPCC |
| Kristen Laccetti, EPA LISO | Harry Yamalis, CTDEEP | Evelyn Powers, IEC |
| Melissa Duvall, EPA LISO | Christopher Bellucci, CTDEEP | David Lipsky, NYCDEP |
| Mel Coté, EPA R1 | Kevin O'Brien, CT DEEP | Arthur Johnson, NYSDEP |
| Leah O'Neill, EPA R1 | Kelly Streich, CTDEEP | Kamazima Lwiza, SUNY SoMAS |
| Bessie Wright, EPA R1 | Erik Bedan, CTDEEP | Penny Vlahos, STAC |
| Casey Abel, EPA R1 | Richard Friesner, NEIWPCC | Suzanne Paton, USFWS |
| Ashley Desrosiers, EPA R1 | Jim Ammerman, LISS/NEIWPCC | Tim Hunter, MassDEP |
| Rick Balla, EPA R2 | Robert Burg, LISS/NEIWPCC | Danielle Alexander, NYCDEP |
| Nancy Seligson, CAC/NY | Victoria O'Neill, NEIWPCC | Emma Coffey, CTDEEP |
| Holly Drunkith, CAC/CT | Nancy Ferlow, USDA-NRCS | Lynn Dwyer, NFWF |
| Evelyn Spencer, EPA R1 | Elizabeth Hornstein, NYSG | Sylvain DeGuise, CTSG |
| Johnathan Hoffman, NYSDEP | Lillit Genovesi, NYSG | Susan Sullivan, NEIWPCC |
| Mary Arnold, NYSDEC | Sara Powell, NYSG | Abigail Winter, CTDEEP |
| Samarra Scantlebury, NYSDEC | Sarah Schaefer-Brown, NYSG | Katherine Bunting-Howarth, CTSG |
| Cassandra Bauer, NYSDEC | Deborah Abibou, CTSG | Jonathan Morrison, USGS |
| Kristin Kraseski, NYSDEC | Jimena Perez-Viscasillas, LISS/NYSG | |
| Sue VanPatten, NYSDEC | | |
| Rebecca Shuford, NYSG | | |

Introduction: Mark Tedesco welcomed everyone to the meeting at approximately 9:00am. He mentioned there were minor changes to the meeting agenda and that the I-team meeting on March 23rd may need to be moved due to the NEP meeting in DC. He opened the floor to anyone who had any personnel updates.

- Cassandra Bauer: Explained Julia Socrates was promoted so she is taking over as bureau chief of marine habitat and the LISS MC meeting representative. Received approval to hire a new seagrass coordinator.

Science and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) Updates by Penny Vlahos

- Penny Vlahos: Met on Dec. 2nd to go through reviews of communication, diversity, equity and inclusion workshop they had done in June. Explained they started working on inclusion by planning to open their meetings to colleges and educational facilities.
- Kamazima Lwiza: Explained they wanted to make sure the science review is digestible, so they are writing an abstract that is technical and one that is non-technical for students.
- Penny Vlahos: Continued her update about the meeting explaining that they want to consider a new fellowship for grad student to help with science communication. Mentioned they had updates from Jim O'Donnell about gliders and three of eight research projects attended meeting and presented their work. Mentioned more PIs will be coming to the next meeting.
- James Ammerman: Mentioned that Mark gave an update about MC meeting in October and Shawn Fisher gave update on the USGS clearinghouse project.
- Kamazima Lwiza: Mentioned the new NY representative to the STAC is Maria Tzortziou.

Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Update by Nancy Seligson and Holly Drinkuth

- Nancy Seligson: Gave an update on the CAC meeting from January 16th commenting that they welcomed a new member, the town of Groton and met David Ansel from STS who is going to participate in CAC meetings. Gave an update on MC meeting in October and Mark gave update on budget. Sue Van Patten gave presentation on funding finder, which helps people find funding for LIS in NY, and was very well

received. Explained that they focused on WGs and how CAC would like to be more involved and attend more meetings as well as help improve coordination and organization. Introduced Francine Gordon as the new member coordinator for CAC, explaining she will work for 10 hours per week and has started to reach out to workgroups to compile meeting dates. Mentioned LIS congressional caucus has many new congressional representatives in New York causing some level of chaos and they need to start communicating with them about LIS. All CT representatives were re-elected. Beginning to plan DC trip. Next meeting is March 9th where they will have a discussion with the EJWG to plan EJ work within the CAC.

- Brian Thompson: Asked who the town of Groton representative is.
 - Nancy: Responded it is Megan Granada, a newly appointed sustainability person in the town.
- Mel Cote: Mentioned Evelyn Spencer joined LISS EPA team in November to work on BIL funds.
- Jim Ammerman: Mentioned the previous Long Island assemblyman, Steven Engelbreit, who was the chair of the Environment Committee was defeated and therefore someone new will be the chair.
 - Nancy Seligson: Mentioned there was a policy subcommittee meeting where they talked about Albany and Hartford committees and going to their meetings more.

CCMP Progress Report to Congress 2020-2021 – Mark Tedesco

- Mark Tedesco: Have a finished product that was submitted to EPA and must go through a national review before it is distributed to congress. Awaiting word on it.

Overview of FY23 Work Plan and Budget – Leah O'Neill

- Mark Tedesco: Explained LISS saw increase in funds up to \$40 million from \$32 million and the NEP budget is likely to increase to \$850,000 on top of the BIL funding we have so we are in a good spot with funding.
- Leah O'Neill: Explained each funding source and the match required for each of them. Match currently waived for BIL funds. (See presentation)
- Nancy Seligson: Mentioned the CAC and other NEP programs should look at these funds as the new normal. Not the reality but increase in funds should be spoken about.
- Leah O'Neill: Showed the increase in funds from 2008 to 2023. (See presentation)
- Penny Vlahos: Asked what if there are anticipated growing pains and any match challenges.
 - Leah O'Neill: Mentioned that we have support from increased EPA staff to better support our grantees and there are growing pains, but staffing is very important piece. Explained that the first couple of years of increased funding had more back filling of needs but now we are able to expand into new areas. Mentioned that match is a concern as funds expand as the program has relied on the state to overmatch. Will be a discussion for new programs. Explained we will be looking to the states and other partners for match opportunities.
 - Sylvain DeGuise: Asked about any upcoming IRA investment to LIS.
 - Mel Cote: Responded no, all IRA funds to EPA are going to energy not water programs.
- Leah O'Neill: Showed the timeline of MC meetings and main topics of each meeting. Explained that the April MC meeting is where final budget recommendations are made to EPA. Better understanding of budget before this meeting. Explained we didn't want to ask for upfront work without knowing we had funding for it and early June will be the deadline to submit budget package to EPA. Outlined base budget, estimated unallocated base funds and overmatch funds required. Pointed out the significant overmatch needed of about \$6 million to help increase Futures Fund funds and lower their match requirement. Futures fund and research funds will remain at FY22 levels. Highlighted that if it tied to education, we could do a 5% match, but other proposals need 40% or 50%. Mentioned we are still in process of reviewing base budget plans. Supplemental proposals list that was submitted by the work

groups that were high on their list to implement CCMP goals. Looking for full budget picture and work plan now. Unanimous support at MC meeting for staff support for COE but wanted to call it out for transparency.

- Sylvain DeGuise: Asked why the Breaking Down Barrier program is supplemental instead of base since it was in 5-year work plan for year 3.
 - Leah O'Neill: Explained there weren't work plan and details provided as well as they need to meet match requirement to be put into base, so it is in supplemental for now before we know if we have overmatch to support it.
 - Sylvain DeGuise: Mentioned the grant is for addressing needs of communities that do not have match abilities and requiring match could discourage them from applying.
 - Leah O'Neill: Explained the proposal needs to be discussed at MC meeting so other programs can meet that match.
 - Mark Tedesco: Explained the spreadsheet was to highlight activities that are either new or a significant expansion to the program. Mentioned it is clear how the Breaking Down Barriers program would benefit from not having match requirements.
 - Lynn Dwyer: Asked what the Breaking Down Barriers program is comprised of.
 - Mark Tedesco: Second year of program.
 - Sylvain DeGuise: Explained the program identified several barriers for communities to move to implementation and provides support for contractual grant writing assistance for year one, as grant writing assistance was the most pressing need discovered in year one. Year two will continue that or offer different assistance that is needed such as engineering studies, etc. that will move communities from the planning phase to implementation.
 - Becky Shuford: Mentioned the needs assessment can also inform what other capacity needs are priorities but they are currently working through a grant writing assistance program and seeing how that plays out.
 - Lynn Dwyer: Asked if they are proposing to run a subaward grant program to support planning activities from community-based concept development and through what vehicle.
 - Sylvain DeGuise: Responded the five-year plan has other barriers to overcome but early on the ability to write grants was consistently brought up.
 - Lynn Dwyer: Asked if they are proposing to help with planning.
 - Sylvain DeGuise: Responded they are just providing grant writing assistance to start.
- Mark Tedesco: Commented that is a great discussion for when we have the full proposal. Mentioned many project topics on the list came out of work groups. Explained the MC meeting focused on who would carry these projects out and that column is in the spreadsheet. Mentioned the discussion of eelgrass strategy and 3 items specific to that discussion.
 - Becky Shuford: Asked why the SRC workgroup is involved with the COE.
 - Mark Tedesco: Responded that it came out of 5-year COE plan.
 - Leah O'Neill: Asked if she would like SRC to be removed from that list.
 - Becky Shuford: Responded yes. Explained it doesn't seem to align with SRC WG or extension professionals.
 - Sylvain DeGuise: Added he would be uncomfortable having to take the lead on that.
 - Mark Tedesco: Clarified that the SRC WG and extension professionals would not be asked to take the lead, but it was added out of recognition for how valuable the SRC

- team is being out and about in the communities communicating with them directly. The organizational lead would come from whoever sends the proposal.
- Robert Burg: Added that the Connecticut and NYC grants will also play a role.
 - Mark Tedesco: Agreed and mentioned that is why the SRC group was included initially, to highlight the coordination needed for this to be successful.
 - Jimena Perez-Viscasillas: Added the SRC group was included because engagement is what the group does.
 - Becky Shuford: Responded she agrees and was trying to better understand the role they would play.
 - Kevin O'Brien: Mentioned the base material doesn't have the \$2,000,000 for seafloor mapping characterization in phase three area. Asked if this is because discussion is needed to figure out where it fits best.
 - Mark Tedesco: Pointed out the \$300,000 for sea floor mapping phase four and mentioned it is a place holder and that the concept was to have the remaining funds left over from phase three would be directed towards a separate sea floor mapping project taking advantage of NOAA assistance and LIS would then cover any additional funds needed. Asked if that is what he means or if there was something that was missed.
 - Kevin O'Brien: Responded that the current line item is match for the Brennan proposal and that there is a separate \$2,000,000 proposal. Thought it might fit in BIL funding realm and might need to have discussions on where that proposal best fits.
 - Mark Tedesco: Asked him to hold that thought and we will follow up on that.
 - Evelyn Powers: Flagged that the regional fecal indicator monitoring network is in supplemental and base budget to make sure it wasn't being counted twice. It was pitched as 3-year project and FY23 would be year 2. Suggested to be funded through year 3 in FY23 and that they anticipate they will be able to provide the match for it.
 - Leah O'Neill: Explained they did not add up supplemental budget because it is not the only item in base as well, but it was pulled out to be discussed at WG or I-team level. IEC proposal was not carried over, but it was approved as a 3-year project with the intent to fund all 3 years. Mentioned that some work plans have multi-years projects but staff or other pieces are single year so there is some vulnerability in a grantee carrying so much unliquidated obligations or to commit match up front for the full amount. Explained we do anticipate funding these programs, but it could be a vulnerability to hold large amounts of funds that are not being expended regularly if we have funds that are needed now. Mentioned it can be discussed offline as well.
 - Mark Tedesco: We can follow up and discuss if we want to get the 3rd year budget option in there.
 - Cayla Sullivan: Mentioned the eelgrass strategy that was developed and outlined three projects. The first project is updates to eelgrass habitat suitability model for climate change indicators/factors and plan is to compete it. Second project was to initiate continuous monitoring for eelgrass beds, as temperature is huge stressor and becoming a big problem as well as light and the Unified Water Study could be a good partner for this project. The third project, an eelgrass survey for 2024 to set up an annual monitoring method which could be done by NEIWPCC or another entity as USGS and USFWS both have experience doing these types of surveys. Mentioned there is an aerial survey being conducted this year, but it is important to find an annual monitoring mechanism to evaluate eelgrass in the LIS, which is why there is a comparison study to find the best one.

- Suzanne Paton: Mentioned it may make sense to have appropriate funding going to USGS than USFWS as USFWS did more ground truthing and land based or boat-based work for these types of surveys. Mentioned they could work with STS for land and boat-based work but not sure how budget would be shown.
- Mark Tedesco: Explained we would want to keep it as one budget item and then detail which entities will do what work and the lead group would formulate the proposal.
- Cayla Sullivan: Added she will set up a meeting with Suzanne and USGS.
- Lynn Dwyer: Mentioned Fishers Island eelgrass engagement coalition ran into significant issues around establishing a management plan as the community said they didn't want a regulatory framework.
- Cayla Sullivan: Explained they were involved in building the strategy and called out awareness and regulatory issues in the strategy.
- Lynn Dwyer: Mentioned getting people to participate is a big social aspect and if people in Fishers Island don't want to be involved it might need to be more robust.
 - Cayla Sullivan: Agreed and mentioned that was just an example of how they will be looped in more.
 - Lynn Dwyer: Mentioned they got significant pushback, and they are not ready for it.
- Mark Tedesco: Explained the next steps are to work with lead organizations to get detailed proposals. If there is something missing from this list, please get in touch and let us know.
 - Leah O'Neill: Mentioned it sounds like we will be receiving full proposals from everything on supplemental list and will be discussed. Will look for ways to improve and enhance them then make decisions at the April 20th meeting.
 - Sylvain DeGuise: Asked if there are several proposals and overmatch is there a process to determine who that overmatch belongs to.
 - Leah O'Neill: Replied that sometimes organizations providing overmatch have discretion.

Update on BIL – Ashley Desrosiers, Kristen Laccetti, Evelyn Spencer 10:42

- Evelyn Spencer, Ashley Desrosiers, Kristen Laccetti: Discussed BIL funded projects and plans for future years. Gave an overview of LISCIF and how LISS partners can help. Explained the equity strategy and highlighted the numerical target of 40% of benefits from LISS BIL funds going to disadvantaged communities. Mentioned the first equity strategy deadline is January 31st.
- David Lipskey: Asked how project decisions are being made in relation to providing benefits in disadvantaged communities, are projects in disadvantaged communities being prioritized over projects that are better supporting the goals of LISS. Gave an example that the septic system replacement could help low-income homeowners, but those homeowners might not be putting a lot of N into the sound.
 - Sue Van Patten: Responded that the septic program the money will only be used for homeowners in the LISS watershed and the focus is on the north shore. We have not gotten the money to the counties yet to know what percentage is going to disadvantaged communities.
 - Mark Tedesco: Added that our initial 40% estimate does not include the septic system replacement funds or the WQIP funds so hopefully we can improve on that number.

Update on LISS Renaming – Robert Burg

- Robert Burg: We decided not to go through the rebranding process as some people feel we already did some of that work with defining a mission. But we could investigate a renaming. He presented on different name choices with visualizations and pros and cons.
 - Nancy Seligson: Asked if we asked them to come up with any suggestions.
 - Robert Burg: Responded no we gave them name suggestions based on what we saw from other estuary programs.
 - Nancy Seligson: Commented she will need time outside of this meeting to look at all of them.
 - Mark Tedesco: Responded we are not looking for an answer this meeting. We want to have a conversation and look at the package of slides. We can move forward with a name change and we can execute it relatively quickly. There is legislation that specifically mentions Long Island Sound Study so we would need to do our due diligence with legal ramifications on that.
 - Chris Bellucci: Mentioned legislation might be a barrier and asked if there was any follow up on that.
 - Mark Tedesco: Responded that we haven't followed up first wanted to confirm continued interest in changing the name. Mentioned this is a limited internal response to a name change and due diligence would need to be done before any formal action.
 - Robert Burg: Mentioned the CCMP update is coming up and a good time to have a new name rolled out would be then.
 - Suzanne Paton: Mentioned it would be a good idea to show this to the workgroups. Asked how the process of deciding the final name would work.
 - Mark Tedesco: Responded we are at internal feedback and discussion at this point. It would ultimately come back to the MC and have more discussion. We would also likely raise this to the policy committee. Need to submit formally to EPA. Many programs have changed their name but most of those programs do not have authorizing legislation.
 - Suzanne Paton: Mentioned she likes the alignment of "Long Island Sound Estuary Program/Partnership" with other estuaries.
 - Holly Drunkith: Reiterated the need for internal due diligence. Understands the intent to not use taxpayer money but it could be helpful to get public perception of the program and see how people react. Recommended focus groups upcoming to get public perception.
 - Sylvain DeGuise: Asked if there is value in testing the new names with outreach professionals to see if using a new name would facilitate engagement.
 - Robert Burg: Haven't begun asking coordinators or extension professionals but they like either partnership or estuary partnership.
 - Mark Tedesco: Mentioned the intent to ask those who work directly with the public their opinion so we will hear their thoughts before we decide.

Discussion of CCMP Update or Revision for 2025-2029

- Mark Tedesco: Explained the 2015 CCMP revision was a complete redo with a 20-year vision and every 5 years would be an update, which was done in 2020. Asked if we would like to make more structural changes to the CCMP. Mentioned a full revision would take more staff time and public input and meetings. We would have to plan now for a full revision to make sure we allocate the funds.
- Leah O'Neill: Mentioned there are pros and cons to both. Lots of staff time and support. NEP CCMP guidance highly recommended 10-year plans so we would need to defend an update vs revision, but we could defend it.
- Nancy Seligson: Agreed there is no easy answer. Suggested ecosystem targets could be updated based on changes throughout the past 5 years. Mentioned we could go through pros and cons to help determine which is best decision.

- Bessie Wright: Brought up a concern of what is best for EJ vs what is best for the sound from the BIL discussion. Explains the current CCMP focuses on the ecosystem and does not consider EJ throughout the plan. Mentioned climate change and sustainability would also be great to be fully implemented.
- Mel Cote: Asked if a name change warrant a full revision and when the next program evaluation by HQ is.
 - Mark Tedesco: Responded summer of 2024 for the next program evaluation.
 - Mel Cote: Mentioned it would be a lot to do both but we could possibly postpone the evaluation if we do a full revision.
- Mark Tedesco: Explained that we want to ask WGs and advisory committees if there are things we are not able to do that we want to do that is limited by the CCMP and cannot be addressed with an update. Mentioned feedback from people working on issues is important.
- Jim Ammerman: Explained that we can do a lot of what we want with the current plan but we are a very different program especially in terms of funding. Mentioned ETs are not all great and are challenging to address and asked if we want to expand targets to social, etc.
- Sue Van Patten: Mentioned she really likes the idea of asking what we can't do. Suggested EPA asks pointed questions to see where people are leaning.
- Sylvain DeGuise: Asked if we could update some things and still call it an update.
 - Mark Tedesco: Responded there could be some in between.
- Leah O'Neill: Stated she will send out most recent NEP guidance for revision vs update.
- Cayla Sullivan: Pointed out that we should see what implantation actions the partnership will take the lead on.
- Holly Drunkith: Added to Cayla's point and is in favor of a rewrite and the use of the IAs not particularly useful for determining results.
- Esther Nelson: Asked how a CCMP update would look in terms of visualization. Mentioned getting feedback on what other estuary programs are doing.
- Mark Tedesco: Responded that times have changed and just a hard copy of the CCMP would probably not be sufficient and we will plan to better communicate what we choose to do.

LISS Technical Workgroup Coordination Update – Esther Nelson

- Esther Nelson: Gave an overview of comments and suggestions raised by partners at MC meeting in October. Mentioned some steps they are taking such as a shared calendar, timely posting of meeting minutes and joint occasional meeting between WGs.
- Nancy Seligson: Mentioned Increase communication and coordination by letting people know meetings are public and Francine is helping to increase participation and supporting the coordination.
- Holly Drunkith: Stated Francine should be POC for WG leads to get information to the CAC.
- Mark Tedesco: what is being discussed and when

Updates

- Mark Tedesco: Mentioned the Executive Steering Committee was earlier this week where they approved the governance document, discussed the budget, introduced name change idea and brought opportunities for involvement of tributary states. Working to schedule the policy committee. Mentioned the estuary program conference in 2024 that LISS is a proposed co-sponsor and will reach out to NEIWPCC for support.
 - Nancy Seligson: Stated the Policy Committee meeting could be a way to show the success of the LISS.
 - Mark: Responded we would want to do that and see it as an opportunity for the CAC and STAC to be involved. Remote meeting possible to make it easier to schedule.
 - Nancy Seligson: Asked if any dates have been decided.

- Mark Tedesco: Replied not yet but we will follow up.
- Mark Tedesco: Mentioned other funding programs that have selected LIS projects for funding such as the National Coastal Resiliency Fund. Return of earmarks for tribal assistance grants.
- Mel Cote: Mentioned EPA will be resuming national meetings in Washington and there is talk about cross agency meeting about ocean and coastal management that will be open.

Next Meeting & Adjournment

- Mark Tedesco: Meeting was adjourned at 12:09 pm.
- Next meeting: April 20th