

Communications, Outreach, and Engagement Work Group
Meeting Notes
Thursday, April 27, 2023



Attendees:

Casey Abel, EPA
Deb Visco Abibou, CTSG
Nancy Balcom, CTSG
Faith Barclay, NYC DEP
Robert Burg, NEIWPCC
Bridget Cervero, The Maritime Aquarium
Leona Chin, Kissena Synergy
Emma Coffey, CT DEEP
Sally Connolly, City Island Oyster Reef
Francine Gordon, Citizens Campaign for the Environment
Larissa Graham, CT National Estuarine Research Reserve
Megan Granato - Town of Groton
Elizabeth Hornstein, NYSG
Emily Lavin, The Maritime Aquarium
MaryEllen Mateleska, Mystic Aquarium

Peter McCartt, Westchester County
Maureen Murphy, Citizens Campaign for the Environment
Diana Payne, CTSG
Jimena Perez-Viscasillas, NYSG
Nicole Pocchiare, Town of Brookhaven Marine Environmental Stewardship Center
Sara Powell, NYSG
Robin Sanchez, NYC DEP
Arielle Santos, Seatuck Environmental Association
Roxana Saravia, Audubon NY
Emma Sarnacki, SUNY Maritime College
Samarra Scantlebury, NYSDEC
David Seigerman, Save the Sound
Kayla Serina, Avalon Nature Preserve
Christine Suter, Friends of the Bay
Tom Vicale, Coastal Steward LI

Co-Chair and Zoom host – Lillit (Lilli) Genovesi, NYSG
CT co-chair vacant

Introduction:

Lilli called the meeting to order at approximately 10:00am with a brief introduction of the COEWG and launch for this new group. During the introduction, participants were asked to enter their name and organization and Jimena collected COE words to add to a Word Cloud included below.



The group then went into lightning talks which are brief 2-3 minute snippets about the organizations participating in COE work from around the LIS, starting in the northern CT and circling around to Long Island as listed below:

1. Larissa Graham, Connecticut National Estuarine Research Reserve – Newly established NERR in CT (52,000 Acres) with protected spaces for research, monitoring, education, coastal training, and stewardship. Larissa shared a link to an educator's survey and email list for sign-up - estuarineresearchreserve.center.uconn.edu/stay-connected/
2. Emily Lavin, The Maritime Aquarium – City Nature Challenge and BioBlitz, a Community Science project, that the public is invited to participate in along with overview with marine mammal cruises.
3. Deb Visco Abibou, Connecticut Sea Grant and Sara Powell, New York Sea Grant – Sustainable and Resilient Communities programs and projects including a new one-pager on our the newly completed SRC Needs Assessment results- <https://longislandsoundstudy.net/2023/04/a-regional-needs-assessment-to-help-build-a-sustainable-resilient-long-island-sound/> and new Breaking Down Barriers grant writing assistance program.
4. Emma Sarnacki, SUNY Maritime College – Programs at Maritime including community outreach to bring waterfront activities to the Bronx and all of NYC. Emma shared information about Boogie Down event (City of Water Day) in July, boating programs, summer camps, and the new research vessel for NYC that will be utilized by students and educators.
5. Robin Sanchez, NYC DEP –Water Resources Art and Poetry Contest and new LIS focused information for students and educators via DEP website, partnership with SUNY Maritime to host LIS focused Professional Learning Opportunities at the LIS waterfront with another being hosted at Fort Totten this June. Robin also shared DEP resources on their website- <https://www.nyc.gov/site/dep/environment/resources-for-educators>
6. Leona Chin, Kissena Synergy – Volunteer opportunities for the public, homeschool groups, and community members in Queens. Volunteers can participate in stewardship projects, get service hours, and connect with other groups within this LIS watershed.
7. Kayla Serina, Avalon Nature Preserve – Shares information about Stoney Brook Nature Preserve with 216 acres of preserved land. Nature Initiative is an environmental stewardship program for youth and all Long Island school districts. The program provides services hours to participants. Presentation also included information about shellfish growing projects.

Discussion of what is LISS COE and why the need for a new work group

- Any organization is invited to present a Lightning Talk in our next meeting!
- Lilli shares slides about need for the new COEWG, including how the WG has evolved from the Public Involvement and Education Work Group to COE, based on the strategic plan that outlined recommendations to LISS, to broaden and deepen connections with our communities and partners.
- This work group will continue to seek and welcome members from across LIS that are involved in LIC focused COE work. The goals of the COEWG are to develop a work plan, develop shared messaging about LIS, and involve new groups in LISS. The WG will provide opportunities for networking, resource sharing, and planning.

- Poll shared for meeting preferences – results show over 78% of members prefer meeting via Zoom with optional field trip.

Casey Abel shares slides explaining LISS background and the operation of the organization:

- LISS is a National Estuary Program, one of 28 in the country.
- LISS receives funding from CWA 119 and 320 plus BIL funding. Match requirements vary among funding sources.
- LISS has had significant increases in funding to about \$52 million
- LISS structure is reviewed via the slide below:



- LISS potential name change discussions to better communicate the program to our partners and stakeholders.
- CCMP theme are shared including- 1) Clean Waters and Healthy Watersheds 2) Thriving Habitats and Abundant Wildlife 3) Sustainable and Resilient Communities 4) Sound Science and Inclusive Management
- Cross Cutting Principles that get integrated include Environmental Justice, Resilience to Climate Change, and Long-term Sustainability
- Work Groups can request supplemental funding and COE work group is able to develop and make these requests to the Management Committee
- New technical groups are sometimes formed temporarily or within the other work groups
- Review of funding sources including LIS Futures Fund
- Review of the new funding sources including Community Impact Fund via Restore American Estuaries with new Program Director is Shahela Begum.
- COE annual work plan will be due mid to late September and should outline needs and priorities, desired outcomes, activities, and support needed. This will include a mission statement, background, priority implementation actions, and needs.

Discussion of Environmental Justice Work Group

Jimena Perez-Viscasillas shared DEI efforts of LISS including inward facing and outward facing approaches. The WG explores EJ opportunities withing LISS and outward facing approach currently involves a EJ Needs Assessment. Results of assessment will help LISS better understand and inform needs for the program. The needs assessment will be wrapping up in the fall and results will be shared throughout the organization.

Discussion of new Strategic Communication, Outreach, and Engagement Plan

Robert Burg shares about the new strategic plan, who helped develop the plan and how it will be implemented. The plan was adopted in July of 2022 to replace the plan from the 1990's and helps to develop engaged and informed communities who will advance the priorities of the LISS.

Recommendations of the plan was to start the COE WG to develop meaningful partnerships in order to amplify information and messages to best present information about what is happening in LIS. The full plan can be see here: <https://longislandsoundstudy.net/2023/04/communications-outreach-and-engagement-plan/>

Break-out rooms, final discussions, and future topics

- Participants were sent into three break out rooms led by Jimena, Lilli, and Casey.
- Two questions were posted and comments were gathered via posts and chat.
- Questions included: 1) How is LIS a resource for you and your organization? And 2) How can the LISS COE work group support the work you do? What kind of actions and outcomes would you like to see as a result of this work group?
- Sharing of key points from JamBoards including:
 - Shared resources such as LIS Beach Report
 - Collaboration on professional development trainings for educator and specific focus on education in the COE WG
 - Place-based-learning resources
 - Support from COE WG on design of materials, shared guidelines, and resource guides
 - Shared contact lists and networking opportunities
 - Collaboration on annual events (Ex: Latino Conservation Week in July)
 - A centralized calendar to share
 - Collaboration with other groups on fundraising
 - Coordination of social media campaigns and messaging
 - Inclusion on EJ topics in COE
 - Networking Opportunities
- Please let us know if you would like to present a lightning talk!

Next Meeting & Adjournment – Lilli

- Meeting was adjourned at 12:00pm.
- Next meeting: July 19, 2023!