

Communications, Outreach, and Engagement Work Group
Meeting Notes
Wednesday, July 19, 2023



Attendees:

Deb Abibou, CTSG	Elizabeth Hornstein, NYSG
Casey Abel, EPA	Shauna Kamath, NYS DEC
Jim Ammerman, NEIWPCC	Emily Lavin, The Maritime Aquarium
Juanita Asapokhai, NEIWPCC	Robyn Linner, Stony Brook University
Nancy Balcom, CTSG	Peter McCartt, Westchester County
Robert Burg, NEIWPCC	Diana Nguyen, The Nature Conservancy
Bridget Cervero, The Maritime Aquarium	Jimena Perez-Viscasillas, NYSG
Leona Chin, Kissena Synergy	Robin Sanchez, NYC DEP
Emma Coffey, CT DEEP	Roxana Saravia, Audubon NY
Sally Connolly, City Island Oyster Reef	Samarra Scantlebury, NYSDEC
Holly Drinkuth, The Nature Conservancy	David Seigerman, Save the Sound
Andrew Ely, Project Oceanology	Nancy Seligson, LISS CAC
Larissa Graham, CT National Estuarine Research Reserve	Holly Weeks, NYSG
Megan Granato - Town of Groton	Amelia Zaino, Bronx River Alliance

Co-Chair and Zoom host – Lillit (Lilli) Genovesi, NYSG

CT co-chair – Welcome Maggie Cozens – joined team on August 23, 2023. WELCOME!

Introduction:

Lilli called the meeting to order at approximately 10:00am with a brief introduction of the COE WG, LISS COE staff, and review of previous meeting topics covered.

The group then went into lightning talks which are brief 2–3-minute snippets about the organizations participating in COE work, from around LIS, as listed below:

1. [Roxana Saravia](#) - Public Programs Coordinator at the NEW Education and Visitor Center at Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and Audubon Center at Oyster Bay. This site hosts bird habitat and programming including for school group visitors, shorebird signage (expanded into multiple languages including Spanish and French), a Teen Conservation Ambassador group, Be A Good Egg program, and beach clean-ups. Future programs include [Latino Conversation Week](#) (Hispanic Access Foundation) July 21 at Sunken Meadow.
2. Holly Weeks – [New York Sea Grant Community Engaged Intern](#) and Environmental Science student from Adelphi University. Holly participated in the Natural and Nature Based Features (NNBF) Monitoring, a partnership with NYC Parks, CUNY, Urban Waters Federal Partnership and Natural Areas Conservancy. NNBF documents shoreline ecology and geomorphology using protocols developed by partners. The data is submitted to the Department of State. Monitored sites this year included:
 - Muscota Marsh (MMI)
 - Randall's Island Bronx Kill (RIBK)
 - Starlight Park (SP)
 - Hunts Point Park (HPP)
 - Mill Pond Park (MPP)

- Pugsley Creek Park (PCP)
- 3. [Sally Connolly](#) – [City Island Oyster Reef \(CIOR\)](#) based in the Bronx. CIOR is a volunteer focused group working on education, engagement, and water quality monitoring. CIOR has oyster cages in the Sound (Eastchester Bay) and three oyster reefs in the plans. Viva La Sound festival will be held on September 30. Will be hosting dozens of organizations will be presenting and CIOR will be sharing diver surveys and shoreline. Please reach out to participate in Viva La Sound this month!
- 4. Amelia Zaino, education coordinator* – Bronx River Alliance, work to preserve and protect the Bronx River, NYC'S only major freshwater stream that flows into the LIS. EELS or Environmental Leaders high school students from local schools, program includes enrollment in a Lehmann College course and working in the field with forest and greenway teams. Students worked mentors including:
 - Dr. Matthew J. Lundquist, Marymount Manhattan College
 - Kristin Hudgins, NYC Parks
 - Heather Platt, NYC Parks
 - Caner Sahin, The City College of New York

*Amelia left Bronx River Alliance in August of 2023 in pursuit of a new job.
- 5. [Robyn Linner](#)- PhD student at Stony Brook University working Climate Change Adaptation by Fish research along with CT DEEP and NYC DEC on NYSG funded project. Objectives include literature review, predict and map habitat suitability to help habitat management and conservation of fish species. Can use our help to connect with communities. Looking to host a workshop in February/March 2024 also interest in connecting with anglers.
- 6. [Diana Nguyen](#) – The Nature Conservatory. [Connecticut Reef Ball Project](#) – reef balls are artificial reef with Ph neutralized concrete and a habitat for invertebrate species. They are often used to restore habitats, like marshes, by trapping sediment. They slow down impacts of erosion and recruit sediment. The Connecticut Reef Ball collaborative launched in May 2023. This is a collaboration with NERR, Connecticut College (Professor Maria Rosa), and The Nature Conservancy. The project is designed to prevent further loss of shoreline reducing erosion and accruing sediment. This makes it possible to restore marsh with planted grasses. The project provides opportunities for engagement and volunteers participation during habitat monitoring and environmental education. The project also helps to understand changes, challenges, and next steps. The Project can help with funding to cover permitting fees, training materials, and other support to groups in Southeastern Connecticut. Connect with [Diane](#) for more information.
- 7. Emma Coffey – Project Coordinator for LIS with CTDEEP- Urban Water Initiative: Community Engagement to Restore the Mill River Watershed. Modeled after the Urban Water Partnerships, this new project will provide support to community groups, partners, and sound school students, to monitor and take care of local water bodies. A water quality lab has been established and outreach projects will help to amplify community engagement and leadership in environmental stewardship.

Following the lightning talks the group completed a poll on where to meet for to meet: Nearly half the group opted to meet in a park or another outdoor site during the next meeting in October.

Approximately 30 minutes into the call Lilli shares [link to order LISS materials](#) and products including stickers, Living Treasures booklets (thank you Nancy Balcom and CTSG!) and other promotional materials available to partners.

Casey Abel – Shares information and the breakdown of the [longislandsoundstudy.net](#) and highlighting opportunities with other work groups, blogs, calendar with LIS events.

Jimena Perez- showcases education materials on the website with a focus on the Stewardship Atlas and [Education Resource Catalog](#), an resource for learning about the LIS Estuary. Also shared was the [“What you can do?”](#) site that encourage you to look for volunteer opportunities. **If you are looking to get volunteers for your programs and want to be listed on the site [please contact us!](#)**

The [2022 Sound Update](#) newsletter was shared. This features Futures Fund projects and other updates from 2022. Copies of the newsletter e also available to order through [the order form](#).

Robert Burg – shares LIS #LIsound stickers – 10 available! Available to [order via the form](#).



Approximately 1 hour into the call Larissa Graham, CT NERR, presented “Increased Sound-wide Collaboration: Partner Portal (Brainstorm)”

Intro: CT NERR is funded by NOAA, University of Connecticut, and CT DEEP

NERR has been conducting a needs assessment survey to collect data from educators and others. Phase II has been to identify resources for education. Please consider participating in [the survey!](#)

Based on feedback from the estuary network the [CAELI Portal](#) was recommended as a sample platform. This portal has search function to find partners and resources that can be filtered by programming, location, and topic. The portal can be a way for LIS to connect educators to resources, partners to resources, and for members of COE to connect with one another. Would a tool like this be helpful? Are there other tools similar to this portal that we should explore?

Participants were sent into three breakout rooms to discuss and create Jam Boards to answer the following three question:

- 1) What are some important components/features that you would like to have in a shared COE calendar? Any examples of calendars/apps/format you like to use? (Google calendar/website/searchable hashtags/social media/ other)”

TNC has event lists. The tool should specify the audience ex) students, Bridgeport residents, general public, etc.

We should have hashtags that organizations can use on their individual posts.

We should have hashtags that could appear on general searches and google searches.

A shared calendar with time frame so organizations can identify opportunities for collaboration at events.

Calendar listing time celebration days and weeks such as Estuary Day, LIS Day, holidays, and observances to be mindful of.

Not aware of any shared calendars like this idea, currently.

- 2) “What are your thoughts about having a LISS partner portal and or contact list? What might be some important components or features that you would like to share/search using this resource? (ie: links, contact, target audience, location, focus area)”

So many resources – this is a challenge worth exploring and to study to find what method would work best.

We should take more time to research ideas and platforms. Might be overwhelming with all the categories.

We would like to be able to search partners to find one another and to find programs/opportunities.

There are number of networks in the metro area – perhaps we can partner with the other existing groups for example: EEAC and Climate and Resilience Task Force.

SRC program has similar program, although not education related, but this portal may follow similar process.

Portal should be public facing and to help people get involved to create opportunities for stewardship.

Having everyone in one place is a helpful tool for LISS.

Opportunities on how to get involved on the public portal would be more engaging, especially for students looking for infield opportunities.

We should be mindful on how to share information without sharing personal contact information.

Where would funding come from?

NYC Parks has a list of different evets with filter features for time of day and place.

Could be useful for Grant applicants.

A video tutorial on the educational resources page and how to navigate the website, or find appropriate resources like lesson plans, would be helpful.

Good to know what other groups are doing and potential upcoming work to avoid double dipping and enhance collaboration.

Search by idea or category of topic that people are working on to enhance collaboration.

This platform could show who is part of different work groups. An opportunity for networking.

Good way to share press releases or blog posts.

3) What COE priorities missing from our work plan?

There was no time left to discuss this question in detail and it was deferred to email.

The meeting ended with exciting announcements:

Nancy announces new Connecticut Outreach Coordinator: Maggie Cozens!

Next meeting to be October 11, full day, in-person with virtual option. Location TBD