



LISS Habitat Restoration & Stewardship Workgroup
CT Audubon Coastal Center
1 Milford Pt. Road, Milford, CT
March 13, 2019

Meeting Minutes

Attendance-28

In person

Kjirsten Alexander	NYC Parks
Farrah Ashe	CTDEEP
Riley Baxter	CTDEEP
Todd Bobowick	NRCS
Robert Burg	NEIWPC
Patrick Comins	CT Audubon
Rob Doscher	Westchester County
David Gumbart	The Nature Conservancy
Mitch Hartley	USFWS/ACJV
Ali Hibbard	CTDEEP
Kevin Kelly	Hallock State Park Preserve
David Kozak	CTDEEP
Jennifer Mattei	Sacred Heart University
Victoria O'Neill	NYSDEC
Amanda Pachomski	Audubon-NY
Mark Paine	West Haven DPW
Suzanne Paton	USFWS
Judy Preston	LISS/CTSG
Ron Rozsa	CTDEEP, retired
Angela Schimizzi	NYSDEC
Jim Turek	NOAA-RC
Danica Warns	NYC Parks
Roger Wolfe	CTDEEP
Harry Yamalis	CTDEEP

By phone

Jim Ammerman	NEIWPC
Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe	Audubon-CT
Ursula Howson	NOAA
Nicole Maher	TNC-NY

Notes

Welcome, Introductions / Announcements

V. O'Neill / H. Yamalis / D. Kozak

Welcome to Edith G. Read Natural Park and Wildlife Sanctuary

Patrick Comins, CT Audubon

Presentations

Restoration of Intertidal & Upland Habitat at Stratford Point Project Presentation

Dr. Jennifer Mattei (Sacred Heart University)

- Update on living shoreline work at Stratford Point. Oyster reefs were once dominant in the area in the past.
- Currently the site only contained fringing marsh areas.

- In 2014, an oyster reef pilot project was initiated. Reef balls were set and spartina alt. was planted behind it. Spartina alt was also planted along the shoreline with no reef balls in front of them. It was found that Spartina alt did better behind reef than with no reef. Sediment deposition was improved behind the reef balls. In 2016, the reef was expanded to include more reef balls. High marsh area was created in high erosion zones. Spartina patens was planted and cultch/wood debris was tied down as wrack line. The reef balls successfully serve as a wave break and reduces the slope. In 2018, dune habitat was created, and 47 dunes were constructed to serve as a wind break. Erosion continues to be a problem at the site and was particularly bad in winter 2018/2019.
- A Party for the Planet event is available for volunteers at the restoration site on Sunday, April 28!

Regional Conservation Implementation Planning for Salt Marsh Birds

Mitch Hartley (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)

- Atlantic Coast Joint Venture for migratory birds.
- An organized partnership of State, Federal, NGO, academic groups along the US Atlantic flyway.
- Flagship focus on saltmarsh sparrow, black duck, black rail
- Salt marsh conservation business plan
 - Should be out for review in the next few months, spring 2019
 - Final plan scheduled for release summer 2019
 - Focusing on high marsh as highest priority
- Saltmarsh sparrow implementation plan
 - Species specific (compliments the business plan)
 - Population and habitat objectives: include threats, management and priority maps, and science needs.
 - 25,000 saltmarsh sparrows are the goal population level.
 - Decline in birds is 9.5% each year
- ACJV has a pilot study to look at synthetic mat usage to create microsite high marsh habitat for Saltmarsh sparrow. This technique could work for areas that can't do thin layer deposition. It is a technique that has been used in living shoreline projects. They want to test this technique in wildlife refuges. Although there is no funding for the effort they are looking for partners that could implement the pilot projects at their properties.

Updates on Restoration at Great Creek and the Housatonic River, Milford, CT

Roger Wolfe, CTDEEP; Ron Rozsa, retired CTDEEP

- Much of the marshland area within Silver Sands State Park was used as a dump, garbage disposal up until the 1960s. CTDEEP was approved for tidal wetland restoration of the site.
- Great Creek has a self-regulating tide gate. Hurricane Sandy had a major impact on the marsh behind the gate. In 2014, CTDEEP received funds for debris removal within the marsh. In 2014 there was habitat enhancement funds (focused on creating black duck habitat) to create new pools and channels. In 2017, Phragmites was treated with herbicide and mowed. The sluice gate/Self-regulated tide gate needs to be adjusted to allow for Phragmites control, but it needs to be monitored to prevent flooding at adjacent homeowner properties. Floats are constantly adjusted, as recent at winter 2018/2019 and March 2019.
- Housatonic River has several restoration sites that CTDEEP focused on. In 2011-2013, up to 500 acres of Phragmites was treated with herbicide. An example of this successful effort is Powerline Marsh. Most of the original work was Hurricane Sandy related debris removal which used up all the funds. In 2015, \$55K was added and Phragmites was treated and pools were constructed.
 - A video about the Housatonic River Restoration can be found here:
<https://youtu.be/Ch7RnwieTKw>
- *Phragmites americanus* was discussed during Ron's presentation. It is an officially recognized subspecies, the one recognized as native to North America (*Phragmites australis americanus*) –according to the USDA. Looking at other online sources, *P. americanus* is its own species. Here's some links that may be helpful for those that are interested:
 - <https://protect2.fireeye.com/url?k=4d47fe22-1161c981-4d450717-000babda0106-cfe7a3f60ef04777&u=https://gobotany.newenglandwild.org/species/phragmites/americanus/>
 - <https://protect2.fireeye.com/url?k=72e7bd0e-2ec18aad-72e5443b-000babda0106-2cb5074d81e95665&u=https://www.minnesotawildflowers.info/grass-sedge-rush/american-common->

- [reed](#)
- <https://plants.usda.gov/core/profile?symbol=PHAUUA6>

For those of you who missed the meeting, or for those that would like to revisit the presentations, you can find the presentations here:

<https://protect2.fireeye.com/url?k=369868c2-6abe5f61-369a91f7-000babda0106-f261525d3d27d0f0&u=https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1rdw6Wvdk-FIx2jLZXh2ahs4Ab2L9APUn?usp=sharing>

Tour of Silver Sands State Park Tidal Wetland Restoration

Roger Wolfe, CTDEEP; Ron Rozsa, retired CTDEEP

- The group toured the restored tidal wetland area along the boardwalk, walked along the beach, and viewed the tidal gates.

2019 Meeting Dates:

Tuesday, June 18 Fishers Island, NY

Wednesday, September 18 CT (Location TBD)

Thursday, November 21 NY (Location TBD)



View of the restored tidal wetland habitat at Silver Sands State Park in Milford, CT (*photo NYSDEC*).



Ron Rozsa discusses the tidal wetland restoration work at Silver Sands State Park in Milford, CT (*photo NYSDEC*).



LISS HRSWG members pose for a photo next to the tide gates at Silver Sands State Park in Milford, CT (*photo Judy Preston, CTSG*).

