

**Management Committee Meeting  
Virtual Attendance (MS Teams)  
January 16, 2025, 9 am to 12 pm**

**In Attendance:** O'Neill, Leah, EPA; Tedesco, Mark, EPA; Vlahos, Penny, UCONN/STAC; Harris, John, Mohegan; Ferlow, Nancy, FPAC-NRCS; Wright, Bessie, EPA; Laccetti, Kristen, EPA; Skenandore, Candice, Mohegan; Nyman, Robert, EPA; Ammerman, James, LIS; O'Brien, Kevin; UCONN; Yap, Kimarie V, DEC; Nelson, Esther, EPA; Bellucci, Christopher, CTDEEP; Begum, Shahela, RAE; Scantlebury, Samarra, DEC; Goldberg, Ben, NYSG; Deguise, Sylvain, CTSG; Tanzi, Elizabeth, EPA; Sullivan, Cayla, EPA; Hammond, Nicole, EPA; Lyons, Regina, EPA; Randall, Todd, USACE; Street, Jennifer, DOS; Cozens, Margaret, CTSG; Balla, Richard, EPA; Winter, Abigail, CTDEEP; Thompson, Brian, CTDEEP; Morrison, Jonathan, USGS; Bauer, Cassandra, DEC; Spencer, Evelyn, EPA; Drinkuth, Holly, CAC; DuMont, Alex, NEIWPC; Sullivan, Susan, NEIWPC; Yamalis, Harry, CTDEEP; Seligson, Nancy, CAC; Hunter, Timothy, CTDEEP; Cernadas, Sara, NYCDEC; Schechter, Sarah, CTSG; Sara Powell, Sara, NYSG; Mayer, Audrey, FWS; Lambert, DeAva, CTDEEP; Hornstein, Elizabeth, NYSG; Schaefer-Brown, Sarah, NYSG; Grondalski, Anya, LISS; Burg, Robert, LISS; Tachiki, Nicole, EPA; Bedan, Erik, CTDEEP; Paton, Suzanne, FWS; Kamath, Shauna, DEC; Stacey, Paul; Footprints In The Water; Duvall, Melissa, EPA; Coffey, Emma, CTDEEP; Friesner, Richard, NEIWPC; Lwiza, Kamazima, Stony Brook/STAC; Streich, Kelly, CTDEEP; Van Patten, Susan, NYCDEC; Eagler, Christopher, DEC; Shuford, Rebecca, NYSG; Knight, Kathleen, CTDEEP; Hagy, Jim, EPA/ORD; Beatriz Perez-Viscasillas, Jimena, NYSG; Desrosiers, Ashley, EPA, Alexander, Danielle, DEP; Kocek, Alison, FWS; Shin, Youngmi, EPA; Abibou, Deborah, UNCONN; Winter, Abigail, CTDEEP; Habersang, Steve; Kutschenreuter, Kathleen, EPA; Genovesi, Lillit, NYSG

**Introductions:** Mark Tedesco welcomed everyone to the meeting around 9:00 am and introduced Councilor John Harris from the Mohegan Tribe. Each of the management committee members introduced themselves and their affiliation. Mark reviewed the meeting agenda and opened the floor for any additions to the agenda and staff announcements. Susan Van Patten shared that Chris Eagler will be leaving and transitioning to another role within DEC and his position will be backfilled. Additionally, Rebecca Shuford shared that Ben Goldberg joined as a SRC professional. Mark shared that he would retire around mid-April and Richard Balla/Regina Lyons provided a summary of what the transition will look like and how Mark's position will be filled. They emphasized that EPA would take the necessary steps to fill Mark's position, and that role will be filled by an EPA person as by statute. Since the hiring process is lengthy, Mark's role will be filled with a temporary detail until the permanent vacancy is filled. Regina and Richard are

both available for support and can answer any questions. Mark ended introductions by providing a 2024 recap and expressed appreciation for everyone's contribution and work towards the development of the CCMP while also managing \$60 million of numerous awards and projects.

### **Advisory Committee Reports**

**STAC Update:** Penny Vlahos and Kamazima Lwiza represented STAC and provided updates to the MC. STAC had their last meeting on November 22<sup>nd</sup> and during the meeting there were updates from Mark on the revision of the CCMP and there were several presentations on new investigations including microbial communities, the impact of climate change on Spartina, the colonization of salt marshes on the coastline, and updates on the new LISS research program. Penny noted that there were several topics of discussion during the STAC meeting that they would like input on such as the function of STAC and how they can serve the community through the implementation and execution of the new CCMP. Additional topics of conversation included potential revisions to the bylaws to modify the length of term for co-chairs, opportunities for science communication training and the formulation of ad hoc committees to address topics as needed. During the meeting, there was an interest in engagement with state representatives through meetings similar to that of CAC. The STAC intends to have more conversations and urges committee members to think about what functions of the STAC they would like to see.

Susan Van Patten noted she saw space for STAC to support the clean water, healthy watershed workgroup as they transition and do an assessment of actions, programs and room for growth. Holly Drinkuth noted potential collaboration between CAC, STAC and staff to collaborate when it comes to meeting with state representatives especially with the rollout of the CCMP.

**CAC Update:** Nancy Seligson and Holly Drinkuth provided updates for CAC. CAC last met on December 12<sup>th</sup> where they recently held their elections; Nancy was reelected for another 3-year term and Vicky O'Neil will serve as the new secretary of CAC. During the meeting, there was a presentation from STAC about changes they are considering and dialogue around how to best align structure with the CCMP. CAC is looking to implement similar changes to STAC such as terms for elected officials and adding additional officer positions. In addition, during the meeting there was a presentation from Steve Raabe from Opinion Works about the Public Perception Survey and there will be efforts to schedule a presentation to the MC. Overall, results provided a helpful perspective on how to focus community and outreach efforts. Nancy noted that the Long Island Sound Restoration Stewardship Act was not authorized in the last Congress and the NYS horseshoe crab bill was vetoed by Governor Hochul.

**FY25 Work Plan & Budget:** Leah O'Neill provided an overview of the FY25 budget and further information on base and supplemental proposals. Leah provided a summary of the enabling and authorizing sections and additional sources of funding like the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), previously called the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). Leah noted that there is a continuing resolution until March 14<sup>th</sup> so there is still uncertainty as to what the final budget will look like and current planning is based on last year's funding. Leah additionally noted that FY25 Planning Target is a little over \$41 million. The FY25 Base &

Ongoing budget request package was estimated at \$37 million. It will require \$5.8 million in overmatch to implement and leaves roughly \$3.4 million in unallocated funds supplemental proposals. EPA is working with applicants to review budgets, and some may transition into the supplemental review process. The request for supplemental funding is going through the CCMP writing teams and FY25 workgroups to look for cross-cutting topics and those are due January 31<sup>st</sup>. Leah then walked through the budget process and timeline. She noted that EPA will be looking for MC input on supplemental proposals at the implementation team meeting on March 20<sup>th</sup>. Leah additionally noted that during the MC meeting in April, the MC will review and provide final budget recommendations to EPA. Ultimately, final funding requests are due to EPA the first week of June.

Kevin O'Brien asked about the eelgrass survey and its status about being in base or supplemental funding. Leah responded that it is an ongoing project and priority for MC and since it is a new project and out of scope, it will be transitioned to supplemental funding. Paul Stacey noted that there should be a focus on results given that there has been a substantial increase in funding and investments over the years. He particularly noted that there has been no change in hypoxia. He emphasized that "environmental outcomes" in the budget package should be prioritized and actions that correlate to improving LIS. Mark echoed some of Paul's statements and noted the change in workgroups and workplans. There are efforts to align workgroups with new CCMP. The team will be sending out guidance on how to develop work plans.

**Final 2025 CCMP:** Nikki Tachiki provided a recap on where we are on the CCMP revision process and the MC review and approval process for design and layout. She noted and summarized the significant accomplishments and steps taken to complete the revised CCMP in 2024. Nikki noted that, as of December 31<sup>st</sup>, the draft final text was sent to the contractor. Additionally, the 60-day public comment period ended. Responses to comments were developed and will be posted on the website/shared with the MC. Nikki walked through the CCMP Timeline and Approval Process noting that only stylistic and grammar changes will be added, and we don't expect edits to the content. They will work through the end of January to incorporate editor feedback and receive soft approval from EPA HQ. Approval is required by EPA R1/R2 and EPA HQ. After providing final text with the recommended edits, EPA approval of the CCMP will occur at the Executive Steering Committee on February 10<sup>th</sup> and then approval will transition to the states, and there may be a policy committee briefing. A first formatted draft is expected by March 17<sup>th</sup> and following that a small group feedback session would occur. With that feedback, a second draft would be distributed on April 7<sup>th</sup> and any additional edits would be completed in a third draft created by May 5<sup>th</sup>. The Executive Steering Committee would be given time to review along with some small group feedback. The goal is to have a final CCMP product that has pdf accessibility and formal EPA HQ approval by June 9<sup>th</sup>. The social media promo, CCMP four-pager, story map, and full text will be available by June 18<sup>th</sup>.

Nancy Seligson asked whether the editor will address the content or just formatting. Nikki noted that she is editing language to make it more understandable but not changing the understanding of the content. Most of the comments/edits so far have been related to acronyms and uses of technical language. Mark also noted that clarity is improved by the editor and then will go into the hands of the graphic designer. If there is a major text change needed the team will consult with the writing team leads. Nancy then asked about the involvement of the policy committee. Who will participate in the Policy Committee meeting, and how will the team communicate with the MC about the approval process and meeting dates? Mark said the team will be transparent about meeting and briefing dates with the MC and other core program staff. Additionally, Nancy noted that CAC would like to see the EPA administrator and NY and CT state governors at the CCMP Signing Ceremony, and she asked if the public summary can be available before June 18<sup>th</sup>. Mark noted that the public summary will not be available before June 18 due to consultant time/capacity constraints but the 4 pager will be available on June 18<sup>th</sup>. Robert Berg mentioned that IEP will be involved with the release. Richard Friesner expressed it could be helpful to have a toolkit on how to amplify the release and provide guidance to partners. Anya will consult with Robert and noted that there are other outreach resources to help spread the word (e.g. story map and video).

### **Management Committee Decisions**

Nikki transitioned back to the presentation to guide the discussion on decisions that need to be made by the MC. The following topics were discussed:

1. Land Acknowledgment
2. How to Address Actions Contributing to Objectives in other Goals
3. 2020 National Coastal Condition Assessment (NCCA) Results and Toxic Contaminants CCMP Objective

**Review of New LIS Partnership Logo:** Robert Burg and Anya Grondalski provided a recap of the work process for selecting a new logo. Robert provided a summary of the path and timeline to a new logo. Since November 2024 there has been work with the logo designer to create options. Robert noted that the MC voted to change the program name to the Long Island Sound Partnership and for the interim the old name and logo will be used until the CCMP is released in June. Anya provided an overview of the logo review process and the work of Dan and Steve from Taylor Design. Anya noted the hard work that went into creating and narrowing down the options to two logo designs. The Management Committee members were asked to provide feedback on the logo choices on a form by January 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Dan and Steve presented the Long Island Sound Study Brand Identity Redesign Process. Dan provided a summary on the background and brand identity concepts. The goal was to create a logo that symbolized the diversity of the program and that would work well in a small size and in one color. Steve presented each option, the thought process for each one and showed the logo on several mediums and side by side.

The presentation will be shared with the MC and the form to choose one design. Mark urged everyone to spend some time and look at the logos prior to deciding.

Responses: Sylvain Deguise said option 1 reminded him of a municipal garbage can. Susan Van Patten asked if the slides could be shared and particularly noted it was helpful to see the logos side by side with other partner's logos.

**Brief Updates:**

- Melissa Duvall shared that contractor HDR submitted a draft calibration report for the ROMs RCA model that covers 2005 to 2014. The report was shared with the model evaluation group and Management Advisory Group, who will meet on Thursday, March 13th to discuss the report and hear an update from HDR. The development of the graphical user interface is ongoing and there are efforts working with the contractor and teams at EPA to assess the feasibility of EPA hosting the application over the long term.
- Nancy Ferlow shared that Phase 1 of the CT Coastline of the Coastal Zone Soil Survey is completed after two and half years of work. It is published on the web soil survey for Connecticut. There are 5 new tidal marsh soil series and 11 new subaqueous soil series. The work was funded by UNCONN and URI and there is a now a focus on New York. There is a presentation demo available on how to use the portal. Learn more at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/natural-resource-concerns/soil/coastal-zone-soil-survey>
- Cayla and Kristen shared their work on the stewardship initiative. The stewardship initiative was developed in 2006 and designated 33 stewardship areas in LIS boundary. The LIS Futures Fund has traditionally funded stewardship activities. Cayla and Kristen are developing a stewardship strategy that has two goals: 1) provide a framework for the management and use of stewardship areas and their sites while enhancing collaboration and communication amongst managers and partners. 2) Provide foundation of action to be supported under the reauthorization of the LIS stewardship act. There will be a series of meetings for the initiative:
  - March 18th, 11:00 to 1:00 to introduce the draft strategy and presentations showcasing the different activities at some of our stewardship areas that have shown great success and strong partnerships.
  - April 24th, 11:00 to 1:00 to review any comments and edits. There will be a 60-day public comment period for this strategy and in early June the strategy will be finalized and then there will be a discussion of next steps.
  - The goal is to build a network amongst the stewardship areas. Many site managers and partners are interested in continuing the conversation, learning from each other, and collaborating. Registration links will be sent in the future and will be shared with the public.
- Anya shared that the communications and outreach team in partnership with EPA and the states have been working with UCONN Clear to develop a story map that characterizes the entire Long Island sound Watershed. The Story Map is published and available on the

LISS website. It includes information such as land use cover, population data and demographic information. The story map can be found at

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/1d4b55a254524c34a458ff7384de8028>

- Robert reported that there is a supplemental budget proposal to provide 16 scientists with science communications training at the innovative Alan Alder Center for Communicating Science in Stony Brook. Additionally, there will be a webinar on February 13<sup>th</sup> led by Steve from Opinion Works to share the results from the Public Perception Survey. The announcement will be sent out soon to the MC.

The meeting ended at 12:15 pm and the next Management Committee Meeting will be held on April 17, 2025.

### **Attendance**

Tachiki, Nicole (EPA); O'Neill, Leah (EPA); Hagy, Jim (EPA); Shuford, Rebecca (NYSG); Reilly, Adam (EPA); Seligson, Nancy (CAC); Drinkuth, Holly (CAC); Vlahos, Penny (Guest); Fenwick, Whitney (DEP); Hammond, Nicole (EPA); Ammerman, James (NEIWPC); Morgart, Thomas - FPAC-NRCS, CT; Janus, Ken (Mohegan Tribe); Savercool, Hope (NEIWPC/DEC); Mayer, Audrey (FWS); Hunter, Timothy (CTDEEP); Deguise, Sylvain (CTSG); Streich, Kelly (CTDEEP); Bellucci, Christopher (CT DEEP); Ferlow, Nancy - FPAC-NRCS, CT; Balla, Richard (EPA); Friesner, Richard (NEIWPC); DuMont, Alex (NEIWPC); Sullivan, Cayla (EPA); Yap, Kimarie V (DEC); Spencer, Evelyn (EPA); Thompson, Brian (CT GOV); Kamath, Shauna R (DEC); Lyons, Regina (EPA); Wright, Bessie (EPA); Duvall, Melissa (EPA); Stacey, Paul; Van Patten, Susan E (DEC); Schechter, Sarah (CTSG); Hornstein, Elizabeth (NYSG); O'Brien, Kevin (UCONN); Cozens, Margaret (CTSG); Goldberg, Benjamin (NYSG); Argue, Denise (USGS); Genovesi, Lilli (NYSG); Perez-Viscasillas, Jimena (NYSG); Cernadas, Sara (DEC); Winter, Abigail (CTDEEP); Brandt, Jess (UCONN); Bedan, Erik (CTDEEP); Knight, Kathleen (CTDEEP); Apgar, Samantha (FWS); Coffey, Emma (CTDEEP); Lwiza, Kamazima (Stony Brook); Marty, Kellie (RAE); Begum, Shahela (RAE); Scantlebury, Samarra S (DEC); Crk, Tanja (EPA); Alexander, Danielle (DEP); Wikfors, Gary; Abibou, Deborah (CTSG); Powell, Sara (NYSG); Burg, Robert (NEIWPC); McInnis, Jean (Mohegan Tribe); Bumgarner, Johnathan (USGS)

### **Introductions**

Meeting began at 9 am. Leah started off the meeting and reminded that April MC committee meeting notes are ready for review and please let Nicole Hammond know if you have any edits. Rick provided updates on EPA staffing and LIS Office closure. Nicole (Nikki) Tachiki is serving as

the acting LIS Office director through October this year through a temporary promotion as noted in an email from Javier Laureano. Region 2 is working to find solutions to provide additional support. Regina noted that R1 has lost people in leadership roles, and it is important to remember that EPA has lost individuals in support offices like IT, communications and public affairs. David Miller (NYLCVEF) made a motion to approve the meeting summary of the June 11, 2020 CAC meeting; Carl Harvey (Menunkatuck Audubon Society) seconded; the motion carried.

**Staffing Updates:** Nancy Ferlow (NRCS) shared that she will be retiring September and Tom Morgart will be taking her place as a member of the MC for NRCS. Susan (Sue) Van Patten shared that she has good news that there is an addition to the DEC LIS program, Hope Savercool. Hope introduced herself and shared that she's taking over Chris Eagler's role as a part of NYS DEC Division of Water. Denise Argue also mentioned that John Bumgarner is taking over the role as the Long Island Sound Coordinator for USGS.

### **Advisory Committee Reports**

#### **Science and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC):**

Penny Vlahos provided the updated for the STAC. Penny shared that the last STAC meeting was June 27th and the STAC has an assistant, Nicole Hammond who is working on several initiatives for the STAC including a website update and newsletter. Penny also shared that at the last meeting there were presentations from each of the Long Island Sound workgroups which will have participation from STAC members. The goal is to have regular reports from the WG to keep open communication. During the meeting there were additional presentations including one from Nikki about the CCMP Signing and budget updates and presentations from new investigators. One from Shuwen Tan who is based out of UCONN and her work focuses on internal waves and is looking to apply her work to Long Island Sound. An additional presentation from Anil Yazici from Stony Brook whose work focuses on equitable access to Long Island Sound waterfront and beach through on demand mobility via a pilot study. Additionally, during the meeting there was an update on the Long Island Sound Data Clearinghouse from Tim Stagnitta. Penny also noted that there will be a joint STAC and CAC meeting in September.

#### **Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC):**

Nancy Seligson and Holly Drinkuth provided updates for the CAC. Nancy shared that they just returned from their trip to Washington D.C. and that there was CAC meeting on June 12th. 21 people attended the trip which has been the largest group so far and they had a breakfast meeting with six congressional representatives. The breakfast meeting included an introduction of the CAC and its priorities, CAC members shared stories of recent accomplishments in restoring LIS to demonstrate how the money in the Partnership is spent on the ground. The CAC also shared with congressional members about the issues and gaps and concerns they have going forward. During their trip, the CAC had three priority asks: 1) reauthorize the Restoration and Stewardship Act which expired in 2023 2) support funding for National Estuary Program 3) and support Plum Island. CAC also emphasized the importance of federal partnerships (e.g. NOAA, USGS, FWS, ETC.) in accomplishing goals. Overall, there were positive and effective

conversations with both NY/CT representatives surrounding gaining support for the goals of the CAC along with positive conversations with members of EPA HQ.

During the June 12th CAC meeting, additional vice chairs were elected; Sarah Deonarine from Manhasset Bay Protection Committee, Vicky O'Neil from Audubon, Sarah Crosby from Maritime Aquarium and in September Andrew Ely from Project Oceanology. Additionally, there was a presentation from Cayla about the stewardship strategy and time was spent planning for upcoming events and actions. It was noted by Penny that in the upcoming meeting between the STAC/CAC there will be a joint letter to congress if anybody has ideas of items they would like to be considered.

### **FY25 Budget Recap**

Leah provided a brief update to the FY25 Budget. Leah shared that that EPA project officers are processing the awards and will reach out to recipients if needed. If recipients have any concerns about awards being finalized before October 1st, please reach out to your PO. Leah also noted that aggregate statutory match has been met, and we send a big thanks to the states of New York and Connecticut. The final budget table will go out to the MC members within the next few weeks. Leah also noted that as agencies and programs go through staffing changes, any carry over funds will be driven by MC decisions moving forward. Leah also shared that a requirement of the National Estuary Program (NEP) to submit an annual workplan at the beginning of June. Cayla Sullivan has been taking the lead on this, and EPA LISO is working on pulling together the plan to submit in early August.

FY26 Workplan: Evelyn provided an overview to the FY26 Workplan. Evelyn shared the workgroup memo that was shared with the workgroups. The memo highlights the upcoming trajectory of workplans and format. Layout will include mission statement, full membership list, background and desired outcomes of their workgroup aligning with the CCMP. There was an additional section added that will keep track of recent accomplishments and ongoing projects and an example table was provided for Thriving Habitats and Abundant Wildlife.

Nancy asked if desired outcomes refer to the outcomes in terms of restoring Long Island Sound because a concern of the CAC is that actions and work that has been done is communicated as outcomes not necessarily the impact of that action. Evelyn noted that the outcomes and cross cutting issues that were laid out in the CCMP are the driving force, a top down instead of the typical bottom up from actions. Evelyn noted that the last section is an ask for FY26 Funding priorities and needs and the addition of this to the workplan should make the process for drafting supplemental proposals and approval by the MC easier. The memo has been shared with WG chairs and the due date for work plans is due in mid-September. EPA plans to review and distribute works plans by the October MC meeting where there will be presentations from each WG.

Sylvain Deguise agreed that the top-down approach is good and noted that for the SRC WG that are working developing their 5-year plan. He noted in the plan that some work was sequential and knowledge building, so it wasn't necessarily addressed in the first year. Sylvain asked if it is okay to continue to do that because not all the objectives might be addressed in the workplan for this year as progress continues over the next couple of years. Evelyn noted that there is no

penalty as progress moves forward under the new CCMP and it is not expected that each objective is going to be targeted with funding starting off.

Rebecca (Becky) Shuford ask for Evelyn to clarify the memo in the context on the funding cycles and what that means for the workplans. Evelyn added that fiscal year 2026 starts October 1st, 2025, and funds will be used the duration of the winter into spring for allocated projects. The workgroup within the workplan will also identify funding priorities using anticipated FY26 appropriations for projects October 1st, 2026, to September 30th, 2027. Deb Abibou asked for additional clarification on funding cycles language. Evelyn added that funding cycle indicates that the grant is being distributed while the actual fiscal year starts this October. Even though the federal fiscal year starts, EPA may not get its budget until federal fiscal year ends for the back year, we are essentially using FY25 funds to fund the next year. Even though it's two-year money, it's not received until the second year. Sylvain suggested that we adopt common language to decipher differences between the grant year and appropriations process. Nikki closed out the conversation suggesting for it to be brought up at the next core program staff meeting for discussion.

**Bioextraction Strategy Presentation by Susan Van Patten (Long Island Sound Coordinator – NYDEC) and Kimarie Yap (Bioextraction Coordinator, NEIWPC)**

Highlights:

In 2018, Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan (LINAP) launched the Nutrient Bioextraction Initiative in partnership with NEIWPC and Long Island Regional Planning Council (LIRPC), with funding provided by the Long Island Sound Partnership.

- Goal is to establish an industry to make bioextraction a sustainable long-term management strategy to target nitrogen polluted waters.
- Vision: Improved water quality and cleaner waters in LIS, strengthen coastal economies and local businesses and benefit local communities and provide environmental stewardship opportunities.
- Role: develop and manage projects to address bottlenecks of bioextraction industry; facilitate communication, resources and collaborations with partnerships on many levels (state, nonprofits, academia, etc.); outreach to raise awareness and promote efforts.
- Expectations: water quality improvements take many years to be seen after implement; establishing a brand-new industry takes a long time.
- Bottlenecks include needing more growers; development of non-food products, acceptance and understanding. This will be addressed by facilitating communications and openly sharing resources to build partnerships, connecting people together.
- Aim to Expand Communications across LIS Partnership: Bioextraction Newsletter and other communications products, presentations to partnership members and external partners, Bioextraction Advisory Committee (BAC), hiring of bioextraction assistant, increase in NY and CT cross-state efforts.

Previous Work/Studies:

- Commercial Bioextraction Economic Feasibility Study by SUNY Farmingdale
  - o Most effective seaweed is Ulva (Sea Lettuce) and shellfish is ribbed mussel
  - o Recommended profitable, feasible product markets
  - o Barriers to industry establishment, resource access, regulations, lack of processing facilities
  - o Bioextraction can be a profitable industry!
  - o Next steps: research on Ulva as seaweed fertilizer and continue investing in ribbed mussel research, share finds with aquaculture growers to gauge interest
  
- Super Kelp Pilot Study – Bioextraction Effectiveness (DEC, SUNY, Save the Sound)
  - o Removal Scale: 1-acre farm to 15 lbs of N and 118 lbs of C
  - o Poor kelp growth due to poor seed spool quality
  - o Total heavy metals less than detection limit
  - o Next steps: Current study focusing on alternative seed sourcing method to address seed quality issues, future study on the impact of sugar kelp by extractive aquaculture and decipher how the pounds of nutrient removed compare to land-based management practices.
  
- Sugar Kelp Fertilizer Trails – Commercial Farm (Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County)
  - o LIS sugar kelp is comparable or better than commercial kelp fertilizer for crop yield and growth
  - o LIS sugar kelp increases plant micronutrients and improves crop flavor
  - o No heavy metal uptake in crops
  - o Next steps: compare effectiveness between Ulva and sugar kelp fertilizers, develop fact sheets to promote LIS seaweed fertilizer to farmers
  
- Ribbed Mussel Pilot Study – Bioextraction effectiveness and Animal Feed Suitability
  - o Scale 1 acre-farm is 124 lbs N and 715 lbs C
  - o Promising results for animal feed suitability based on nutrient and contaminant data
  - o Next steps: determining how removal rates compare to land-based management practices, Phase 2 Aquaculture Hatchery Method Refinement to scale up seed production

- Challenges: Cycle of proposal development to funding awarded is time-intensive and there is a need to adapt research needs after new data are discovered in pilot studies and many of these projects are multi-year
- Solution: Instead of funding individual projects and staffing there is a suggestion to provide a chunk of funding to cover multiple projects. This would allow flexibility in timing for working with species with specific growing seasons and adapt to next-steps projects based on pilot study results.

Discussion: Penny asked if it is possible to come up with numbers of potential market demand for products and are there any local groups that have interest in being a part of the initiative. Susan answered that they have work with fertilizer companies, but they haven't done calculations for demand, but it could be done. Penny added that she would like to know based on the growth rate limitations is the target maximum percent of substitution that could be achieved for lawn fertilizer in CT and NY. Susan shared that NY has put together what they would like to see homeowners do in fertilizer application under the LINAP resources and the next steps are providing a product that is effective and affordable. The team has been working Cornell who works directly with farmers and there has been interest in golf courses and wineries. Kimarie added Zach Gordon at CTSG has noted a greater supply in sugar kelp than demand and an option to fix that would be to develop the market for a fertilizer. Sue and Kimarie noted that some golf courses use kelp fertilizers from Maine and transitioning that to LIS based products decrease carbon usage and stimulate a local market.

Kamazima asked 1) how a nitrogen balance is being factored into studies to ensure equilibrium in inputs and outputs 2) clarification on the lbs of N and C and 3) heavy metal impact. Susan noted that we know how much nitrogen needs to be removed which is the motivation behind using bioextraction as a way to remove nitrogen. Kimarie added that pounds of nitrogen removed is within the season and noted that sugar kelp has a winter growing season. Kimarie additionally added that experts at CCSF County noted that the rate that fertilizer is applied would not impact heavy metals; it is applied to large plot of land, and it is not a standalone fertilizer.

Sylvain asked if there has been a calculation on scaling and the potential for removal for the need for quantity to be removed. Susan noted that this is one of many methods needed to remove nitrogen so there is not a calculation as of right now – currently the goal is to figure out the most efficient species. Sylvain added it could be helpful to assign a percentage that is being removed. Kimarie noted that there are counties/towns who are currently trying to develop an aquaculture lease program and plot out sites where shellfish and seaweed can be grown and there are other long term monitoring programs that could give an average of removal rates. Sylvain clarified that it would be beneficial to know rates relative to load removal. Kimarie noted that they will definitely keep that in mind.

Nancy noted that in the CAC's presentations to Congressional members that there were presenters from Manhasset Bay, Oyster Bay and Hempstead Harbor who covered oysters and their importance in improving water quality in embayment's particularly in LIS.

**11:06 to 11:11 am Stretch Break**

**Sustainable and Resilient Communities Presentation:** Elizabeth Hornstein (Suffolk County), Sarah Schaefer-Brown (Nassau County), Ben Goldberg (NYC), Sara Powell (Westchester County), Deb Visco Abibou (Western CT) and Sarah Schechter (Eastern CT)

Highlights:

Current five-year plan ends September 2026 and next five-year workplan covers October 2026 to September 2031. Activities include needs assessment, annual workshops, developing and maintaining the clearinghouse, develop training programs, improve coordination among levels of government, support a compound flood risk modeling initiative, create a project pipeline and understand and break down barriers to implementation

Overview of Major Accomplishments

- Conducted a needs assessment through over 300 conversations with a wide range of stakeholders and findings were developed into a 1-page summary. One of the main challenges is limited capacity for resilience work and various funding challenges
- Annual SRC Workshops: Began in 2022 and since then have engaged several hundreds of individuals. Initial workshops were virtual half days in person field trips in 2023. In 2024, workshops were virtual but ranged in time commitment along with field trips prior. All recordings and resources are available at [www.lisrilience.org/annual-workshop/](http://www.lisrilience.org/annual-workshop/). Stay tuned for the 2025 workshops.
- LIS Resilience Resource Hub: A user-friendly website to meet LIS community needs and guided by a committee with additional feedback from testing group. Launched in March 2024. [www.lisresilience.org](http://www.lisresilience.org)
- Resilience Planning Guide: Useful to help communities move resilience projects from idea to implementation. Includes a printed guide and interactive page on resource hub. [www.lisresilience.org/a-guide-to-resilience-planning/](http://www.lisresilience.org/a-guide-to-resilience-planning/)
- SRC Training Programs: Programs have reached more than 2,500 people. Examples of ones below and all resources/trainings are archived on resource hub.
  - o Steps to Resilience Webinars – provided introduction to resilience planning steps and strategies and State Climate Certification Programs
  - o Regional Funding Workshops – opportunity for funders and applicants to network, collaborate and support dialogue around resilience-related funding
  - o Long Island Coastal Resilience Forums – workshops to share information on best practices and enhance coordination across communities
  - o Land Use Leadership Alliance Trainings – three-day workshop to train local leaders on land use best practices and policies related to resilience
  - o CT Community Participation and Risk Communication Workshops – community events to build relationships, test engagement strategies and incentives, and identify priority information and training needs

o Upcoming Events: training on USGS Compound Flood Mapper, October Coastal Resilience Forums and 4th Annual SRC Workshop

#### Breaking Down Barriers Assistance Programs:

- Goal is to address main barriers that communities face when trying to advance projects; lack of capacity, expertise and resources to prepare and apply for funding (addressed through grant writing assistance program), lack of capacity and resources to identify, conceptualize and develop projects (addressed through planning support program).
- Grant Writing Assistance Program: Starting in Nov 2022 the program provides funding up to \$9,950 per applicant to bring on consultant for grant application preparation. The goal is to help groups secure funding for sustainable and resilience-focused projects. Program has supported 32 applicants with total allocated funds of \$264,783. \$11 to \$1 return on investment
- LIS Resilience Planning Support Program: Started October 2023 and provides support for project scoping and planning. The goal is to advance sustainable resilience-focused projects to a design or implementation grant-ready stage. Program has awarded nearly \$1.1M to 15 communities.
- To date, the SRC team and programs have assisted over 70 communities with project planning and implementation.

#### New SRC Work Plan: Proposed Tasks align with CCMP Objectives

Discussion: Paul asked about forest cover as a method. Elizabeth noted that the goal is implement holistic approaches so community wide watershed plans. Kamazima asked about making sure the award process is equitable. Elizabeth noted that it is evolving discussion and they welcome input. Samarra Scantlebury suggested getting involved with/suggestions from the community engagement subgroup. Deb echoed that it is a great idea and would like to get feedback on evaluation criteria.

Stewardship Strategy Overview: Cayla Sullivan provided an overview on the history of the Long Island Sound Stewardship Initiative and accomplishments since its formation.

#### Highlights:

- Goals of the strategy are to 1) lay the foundation for building a network by summarizing site specific challenges, needs and priorities at each of the 33 areas 2) identify approaches to enhance collaboration among managers and partners and 3) establish a framework for action.
- Data was collected on the challenges/needs in relation to the CCMP goals from each of the site managers
- Strategy is now published and available for viewing
- Recommendations included: 1) Developing a stewardship strategy network, and from there establish a framework to establish future projects 2) Enhancing education and outreach about the steward initiative by creating a steward communications subgroup, updated atlas and media, installing signage and social media campaign and 3) Designating new stewardship areas and anchor sites with support from the MC

### **CCMP Final Products**

Nikki provided a summary of what Management Committee had approved for the CCMP final products back at the October Management Committee Meeting. Robert Burg provided a summary of all the products that have been released to date for the CCMP; a four-page overview booklet with a one-page summary, CCMP StoryMap which is available on the website, full CCMP in PDF format and in an interactive flip book format. Future products include fact sheets for 40th anniversary events, new indicators presentation that will track CCMP's measures of success, additional stories and articles focused on CCMP actions and and new State of the Sound report. Nancy noted that some of the CCMP resources were used during their meetings in Washington DC. Paul also added that it would be very helpful to have

communications projects that really speak to how the public benefits from a healthy LIS particularly in relation to the CCMP. Robert shared that Partnership members wrote engaging stories about the CCMP. Nikki echoed that the articles were engaging and Anya prior to her departure worked hard to make sure the CCMP StoryMap was understandable.

### **Tracking and Reporting Under 2025 CCMP**

Evelyn provided an overview on progress reports under the CCMP. There was a break in progress reports for April but moving forward progress reports with significant progress left or new projects will be tracked under CCMP objectives and actions. There will be a training in September and there will be a new template sent out. There are efforts to revise the power BI tracking and reporting tool to align with the new CCMP and will include additional widgets and illustrations.

### **Update to Long Island Sound Community Impact Fund**

Shahela Begum provided updates for LISCF. The second annual learning exchange was at the CUNY Graduate Center in early July. The purpose of the learning exchange is to bring together communities together in person to collaborate, network and learn together. There were 100 attendees from NY and CT with 7 trainings on a variety of topics. There were recently press conferences announcing the 2025 awardees in CT and NY; this year four of the projects are indigenous led or co-led. There has been funding allocated for another 3 years and RFA will be released in September along with mini learning exchanges.

### **Other program updates/resource sharing**

Cayla - The hypoxia storymap is available and there will be a release of a hypoxia communications toolkit soon. The toolkit will include the storymap, an animated video and graphic. Next steps include installing signage at a location where hypoxia has been present. The StoryMap tells the history of LIS and water quality, focuses on priorities like TMDL, CTDEEPs monitoring program and improvements to the sound. There are also connections to recreation and commercial activities, land development and connection to the upper watershed. The storymap rounds out with Jim Hagy's 2025 hypoxia prediction forecast that was shared with the

MC during a previous meeting. There are plans being made for a hypoxia workshop later in the fall.

Robert - Communications and Outreach Team has been working hard and published the CCMP, launched a new website, supported the June 20th celebration. Shout out to Erica for managing social media as there has been significant increase in engagements and impressions on socials but also in website traffic with the release of the CCMP and new website. Robert also added that there is a new subgroup focused on community decision making and there will be 40th Anniversary events through NY and CT

**Meeting adjourned at 12:32 pm.**