



**LONG ISLAND SOUND
PARTNERSHIP**

**Clean Water and Healthy Watersheds Work Group Meeting Notes
Wednesday, November 12, 2025
Meeting conducted remotely via Microsoft Teams**

Attendees:

Kelly Streich, CT DEEP (Co-chair)	DeAva Lambert, CT DEEP
Hope Savercool, NYSDEC (Co-chair)	Michaela Cashman, EPA
Tim Hunter, CT DEEP (Co-chair)	Samarra Scantlebury, NYSDEC
Harry Yamalis, CT DEEP	Melissa DeFrancesco, TNC
Gregory Wilkerson, NYC DEP	Denise Savageau, CT CSWC
Ranheim Beau, NYC DEP	Carriel Cataldi, CT DEEP
Tim Visel, Sound School Retiree	Abigail Winter, CT DEEP
Paul Stacey, Footprints in the Water LLC	Holly Drinkuth, CAC/TNC
James Ammerman, NEIWPC	Evelyn Powers, IEC
Emily Bulmer, Save the Sound	Jess Brandt, CTSG
Erica Casper, CTSG	Kimarie Yap, NYSDEC
Bill Cavers, LISP CAC	Mary Becker, CT DEEP
Eric Swenson, Nassau WCD	Kyra DeGroat, NYSDEC
Kathleen Knight, CT DEEP	Braden Lynn, CT DEEP
Richard Friesner, NEIWPC	Sarah Deonarine, CAC/Manhasset Bay
Marybeth Hart, CT DEEP	Matthew Lyman, CT DEEP
Christine Suter, Friends of the Bay	Robert Burg, NEIWPC
Nikki Spiller, HarborWatch	Matthew Lyman, CT DEEP
Peter Linderoth, Save the Sound	
Judith Sarkodee-Adoo, NYC DEP	

Introduction & Welcome:

The meeting was called to order at approximately 10:00 am on Teams by Kelly Streich and Hope Savercool. Attendees shared name and affiliation in the chat. Kyra DeGroat (NEIWPC/NYSDEC) and Emily Bulmer (Save the Sound) introduced themselves as new hires and members of the workgroup.

Announcements:

- Tim Hunter joined CWHW WG as an official CT Co-Chair
- Jim Ammerman joined the WG as Science and Technical Support
- Susan Van Patten has accepted a new position outside of the Partnership
- Hiring for second NY Co-Chair for Toxics and Marine Debris is paused until further notice
- NYSDEC Released [Long Island Watershed Action Agenda \(LIWAA\)](#)

Upcoming Events:

- 4th Annual Sustainable & Resilient Communities Workshop occurring on December 4th & 5th www.lisresilience.org/annual-workshop/

- The Salt Marsh Monitoring and Analysis Network for LIS is compiling information about past and ongoing work being done in the region, with the goal of creating an updated repository of available information. If you have been involved in past work or have ongoing projects, please fill out this form: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeok51MxFp16hXbwK48Mm7dYduBDUUPOsHsSj2uhGMdJu0PA/viewform> . If you have questions, please email chris.elphick@uconn.edu

Program and Workgroup Updates

LIS Partnership Updates

- EPA Staff still on furlough status until further notice
- October Management Committee Meeting was postponed due to lapse in appropriations

Scoping Groups Update

- Proceeding with Marine Debris scoping activity
- Toxic Contaminants action agenda will be passed for the interim

Microsite Updates:

- **Background:** There is a section of the LIS Partnership website called “[Track our Progress](#)” that is current based on old CCMP “Ecosystem Indicators” that use data to measure the health of the LIS and is in the process of being updated to measure success under the new 2025 CCMP Management Objectives. Each objective will have its own landing page with indicators with details about the measures of success, status and trends, challenges, importance and supporting environmental indicators.
- **Currently:** WG Co-Chairs have submitted comments to indicators review team (IRT) and the IRT aims to have it launched by end of calendar year. There is a focus on consistency across objectives and status of objective progress should be based on progress towards the 2035 measures of success.
- **Desired Outcomes:** The goal is to utilize secondary data to communicate the status of objectives to the public and have easy-to-understand indicators to measure progress towards objectives that tell a story.

Public Perception Survey: Summary of Results from Public Perception Survey

♥ How People Feel

- Top words: *Beautiful, Fun, Peaceful, Relaxing*
- 60% feel happier near the Sound
- 67% care about LIS; 74% care about nearby waters
- 61% see it as recreation; 58% as economic asset
- Only 32% know they live in the LIS watershed

💧 Water Quality

- 45% say "Good/Excellent," 41% "Fair/Poor"
- 29% see improvement vs. 22% see decline
- Fewer fear safety issues (unsafe swimming ↓12%, unsafe seafood ↓16%)

🚶 Access & Inclusion

- 68% feel they have convenient access
- Barriers: distance (31%), time (28%), parking costs (28%)
- 15% don't feel welcome in waterfront spaces — higher among youth, low-income, and communities of color

🌿 Environmental Awareness

- 62% rank environmental protection high
- 53% aware nitrogen = pollution
- 64% know wetlands protect people & wildlife
- 51% unsure stormwater is treated

♻️ Behavior & Action

- Only 16% think their actions harm LIS
- 26% think they could help by changing habits
- 73% agree land actions affect LIS health
- 36% know specific ways to help (mostly litter reduction)

🗣️ Communication

- Trusted messengers: University scientists, local env. orgs
- Info sources: Local TV, newspapers, social media
- Residents want LISS rebranded to reflect *action*, not just *study*

People love the Sound but awareness, access, and confidence in personal impact need strengthening. Community engagement and clear, inclusive messaging can turn appreciation into action for a cleaner, more resilient Long Island Sound. Recording available at <https://lispartnership.org/public-perception-survey/>

Please reach out to Erica Casper (Erica.casper@uconn.edu) and Robert Burg (Rburg@lispartnership.org) with any questions.

CWHW Looking Forward:

Alignment with CCMP Structure

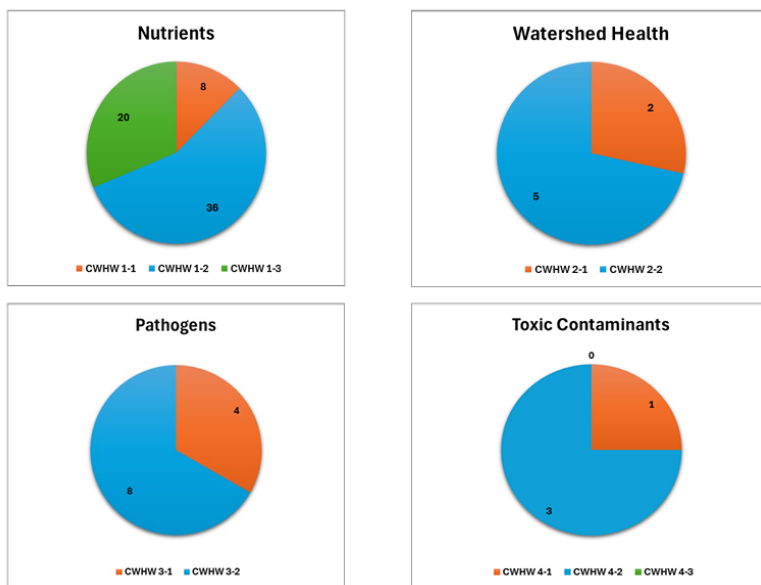
Workgroup Alignment with CCMP



SME = (Subject Matter Experts)

Status of Project Gap Analysis

- The goal of the gap analysis is to identify implementation gaps to help better align with the 2025 CCMP objectives and align with projects that fill current needs. Data was collected from EPA’s Power BI tracking tool to identify projects that align with CWHW and then project data was analyzed and sorted by implementation action to identify gaps. This gap analysis is ongoing.



Marine Debris not shown. We have one project supporting Marine Debris Action CWHW 5-1.

FY26 Workgroup Work Plan & Priorities

Kelly and Hope walked through the FY26 Workgroup Workplan and started the discussion of FY26 Supplemental Proposals.

Supplemental Project Proposals

Obj/Action	Project Title	Organization	Project Cost
Nutrients: 1-3	Landscape Turfgrass Alternatives	NYSDEC	125,000
Nutrients: 1-2, 1-3	Suffolk County Decentralized Sewage Plant and Clustered I/A Onsite Wastewater Treatment System Feasibility Study	NYSDEC	500,000
Watershed Health: 2-1, 2-2	Land Cover Mapping Analysis	UConn CLEAR	130,000
Pathogens: 3-1, 3-2	Suffolk County Pathogens Action Plan Pilot Study	NYSDEC	250,000
Marine Debris: 5-3, and THAW 3-2	Loxster Trap Recovery and Assessment Partnership's ongoing work to recover marine debris from the sound	The Maritime Ag, Save the Sound, Project O, CCE of Suffolk County	538,000
Marine Debris: 5-3, and IEP 3-1	Long Island Sound Marine Debris Removal and Prevention	The American Littoral Society	97,000

Answers to questions asked by CWHW Work Group participants are included as Attachments 1 and 2.

STAC/CAC Priorities

The co-chairs identified how the FY26 proposals align with the STAC/CAC priorities.

Report out of Subgroups:

Hypoxia indicator subgroup (lead: Jamie Vaudrey) is considering three options: annual embayment hypoxia displays, in-season monitoring reports, or a real-time dashboard; progress slowed by partner changes and the shutdown, with next steps to be vetted by the work group.

Nature-based solutions subgroup (lead: Denise Savageau) is advancing baselines (land cover mapping), riparian buffers (including regulatory considerations), and soil/forest health, leveraging existing mapping from the Connecticut River Watershed Coalition, UConn CLEAR, and WestCOG; monthly meetings continue, with emphasis on upper watershed engagement and implementation-oriented work plans

2025 Monitoring Season Debrief:

Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) – Matthew Lyman

- Conducted seven surveys June–September 2025; hypoxia persisted for 40 days (July 14–Aug 22) with the smallest hypoxic area since the survey began, just over 18 square miles.
- National Coastal Condition Assessment work at 27 sites, adding ~20 field days and significant lab/shipping effort; data uploads to EPA are underway and a new vessel came online for Long Island Sound operations

Save the Sound – Peter Linderoth:

- Unified Water Study: Network included 26 participating groups covering about 46 embayments and roughly 300 stations across CT–NY embayments. 2025 saw new Tier 2 work at Fishers Island (eelgrass observations and continuous nutrient/logging data), Westchester additions (Larchmont and Milton Harbors), and planned adds for next year (e.g., Branford, Blackhall, Milford).
- The program aims to speed data releases by automating QA/QC and using new templates, but real-time reporting remains challenging; data submitted by partners in late December are targeted for public release in spring 2026.

Interstate Environmental Commission (IEC) – Evelyn Powers:

- IEC’s weekly hypoxia runs (late June–mid Sept) observed onset around July 8 through Aug 19, with a minimum dissolved oxygen of 0.95 mg/L in Manhasset Bay, QA is ongoing, and some nutrient data are delayed while awaiting a UConn analyzer before upload to WQX.
- The pathogen monitoring network involved 8 groups across 17 waterways (May–Sept), with “track-down” sampling at outfalls and engagement with municipalities; plans are underway to expand to additional communities next sampling season

New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYC DEP) - Beau Ranheim:

- Field capacity improved (new boat, full staff), but lab staffing/QA backlogs delay release of summer data. DEP aims to publish additional comparative reports once QA is complete

Science Needs & Data Management – James Ammerman:

James provided an overview of science and research-related actions listed by workgroup. The needs for CWHW include:

CLEAN WATERS AND HEALTHY WATERSHEDS WORK GROUP (1)

NUTRIENTS

- CWHW 1-2: Support monitoring, modeling, and research – with appropriate data management, storage, and accessibility requirements – to improve understanding of source contributions, their impacts to ecosystem health, and the relative performance and benefits of nutrient reduction actions.
- CWHW 1-3: Collaborate with stakeholders and partners to develop plans, tools, and strategies that support nutrient reduction actions to improve overall ecosystem management. (Evaluate data to ensure sound science and develop an embayment hypoxia indicator.)

WATERSHED HEALTH

- CWHW 2-1: Preserve, restore, and steward natural landscapes and the ecosystem services they provide through land conservation and protection efforts beyond the coastal boundary. (Collect GIS data on land use for planning, develop models of ecosystem services from different habitats to inform restoration.)

PATHOGENS

- CWHW 3-2: Expand the spatial and temporal coverage of sampling and source tracking and encourage advancements in methodology.

CLEAN WATERS AND HEALTHY WATERSHEDS WORK GROUP (2)

TOXIC CONTAMINANTS

- CWHW 4-1: Identify existing and emerging contaminants of concern and support mitigation efforts as warranted.
- CWHW 4-2: Continue collection and evaluation of contaminant data (e.g., NCCA) for Long Island Sound and its embayments.
- CWHW 4-3: Encourage proactive research and assessment of emerging contaminants including but not limited to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), 1,4-dioxane, and trifluoroacetic acid.

MARINE DEBRIS

- CWHW 5-1: Support research and monitoring efforts that aim to increase understanding of the extent and sources of marine debris and its impact on the ecosystem.

A review of CCMP science actions highlighted growing monitoring, the need to strengthen data management, expanding pathogen networks, and significant knowledge gaps on toxic contaminants (including NCCA sediment toxicity data feeding the Sediment Quality Index).

Closing & Next Meeting Dates:

- 2026 Meeting Dates – February 11th, May 13th, August 12th, November 4th
- Contact Information: Kelly - kelly.streich@ct.gov, Hope - hope.savercool@dec.ny.gov, Tim - timothy.hunter@ct.gov

ATTACHMENT 1

20251118_CWHW work group memo

Re: Suffolk County Pathogens Action Plan Pilot Study (SCPAP)

Project Partners: NYSDEC DOW and Suffolk County

At the November 12th meeting, the work group co-chairs briefed the group on the SCPAP project which is included in the FY26 work group work plan. For more details, please refer to the FY26 work plan.

Two specific questions were asked about the project:

1. "How does this proposal interact with MS-4?"
2. "And additionally, it seems to be somewhat duplicative of our pathogen monitoring network that we have going on. Have they mentioned anything about either of those two programs?"

Suffolk County has provided answers to those questions:

1. The proposal supports Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) requirements, in that the resulting Pathogen Action Plan will:
 - a. Provide specific recommendations for mitigation measures and best management practices (BMPs) for each particular pilot area, including a conceptual design and cost estimate. MS4 managers associated with these pilot area watersheds can use the findings to support satisfaction of their MS4 permits. At a minimum, these findings could be used by managers as the basis to obtain local operating/capital or State or Federal grant funds to support implementation of the recommendations.
 - b. Provide MS4 managers with recommendations on how to perform a source tracking study as well as various options for mitigation measures and BMPs for watersheds with similar characteristics within their respective municipality.
2. We reviewed the map and documentation provided on the IEC pathogen monitoring network. Based on the map, it appears that there are two waterbodies from Suffolk County included in the network: a) Cold Spring Harbor sampling at one outfall along Shore Road, and b) sampling at multiple locations in the Nissequogue River. We are already planning a robust pilot study with Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) to identify and source-track pathogens in Cold Spring Harbor (see attached a draft project summary), which is separately funded. In addition, we will not select

Nissequogue River if we receive funding from the LISS per our proposal. Therefore, there would be no duplication of effort between our proposed project and the IEC pathogen monitoring network. Additionally, we are happy to share results between the pathogen monitoring network and our programs.

ATTACHMENT 2

20251118_CWHW work group memo

Re: ***Lobster Trap Recovery and Assessment Partnership's ongoing work to recover marine debris from the Sound (L-Trap) Project Partners: The Maritime Aquarium, Save the Sound, Project Oceanology, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County.***

At the November 12th meeting, the work group co-chairs briefed on the L-Trap project which is included in the FY26 work group work plan. For more details on the project, please refer to the FY26 work plan.

Two specific questions were asked and referred to the project manager, Sarah Crosby of the Maritime Aquarium. Sarah provided detailed responses that clarify the governing authorization that permits removal of derelict fishing gear, as well as the specific stipulations that apply to work group questions.

For background, anyone who collects a trap must be authorized by the state (the L-Trap Partners renew this authorization on a 1–2-year cycle). Each organization that participates has an independent authorization, with the specific individuals listed who can handle traps on behalf of the organization. The "Appointment Letter" specifies additional reporting requirements. Here is the statute that permits the recovery of traps (emphasis added):

*"(b) Any derelict lobster gear may be seized by an authorized representative of the commissioner. The commissioner, **or the commissioner's authorized representative**, shall attempt to notify the last known licensee of such derelict lobster gear not later than thirty days following such seizure. In the event: (1) There is no identifying marker on such seized derelict lobster gear, (2) the owner of such seized derelict lobster gear cannot be identified, or (3) the last known licensee of such seized derelict lobster gear fails to claim the seized derelict lobster gear, the commissioner may dispose of such seized derelict lobster gear or authorize the disposal of such seized derelict lobster gear. For the purpose of this subsection, "derelict lobster gear" means any lobster pot, trap, warp or live car found in Connecticut waters that does not have the current Connecticut commercial license number branded on the pot, trap, warp or live car in accordance with section 26-157a and that is not attached to the annual trap tag required by regulations adopted pursuant to section 26-157c for the current trap tag year cycle or the trap tag from the previous year's trap tag year cycle."*

The work group questions with accompanying responses are included below:

Question 1: *Traps costs over \$100 apiece and I've seen a lot of social media posts where the traps are being flattened and sent to recycling facilities. Has anyone ever*

looked into offering the traps for sale (to other jurisdictions or commercial fishers in other parts of the country)? They contain a lot of coated wire that's not being produced anymore but could be of value to someone else.

Response from L-Trap lead: There are two items to consider related to question 1. First, our authorization letter from DEEP requires us to "dispose" of any seized gear after attempting first to return it to its owner. Based on our conversations with DEEP fisheries on this matter, it has been my understanding that we do not have leeway to "dispose" of them through donation/sale/etc. to someone other than the owner. We would need a revision of our authorization to explore that. Here is the relevant language from our authorization: *"Any seized gear bearing a commercial license number on the trap or warp shall be held in a secure location for a period of 30 days from the date of seizure. The authorized agent must provide notice of seizure to the license holder. If the license holder fails to take possession of seized gear within 30 days from the date of seizure, the authorized agent must dispose of said gear as soon as practicable."* There is also concern that the traps will find their way back into "wet storage" in Long Island Sound if we offer them to other folks locally; lack of on-land storage space is an issue that comes up regularly when we hear from fishermen.

Second, the overall condition of most of the traps recovered is pretty poor; once we account for the repairs that would be needed, cleaning off the fouling organisms to make all trap elements functional, and transporting them (they are pretty darn heavy) to whoever might want them, I am not sure that the benefits of putting the traps back into use would be worth the cost (financially or in terms of environmental impact). It is uncommon for us to pull up newer traps that are in good condition, and we have to put back any traps with 1 year old tags that come up. My sense is that the traps still in fishable condition are largely those still in use (but I am not a fisherman, so I could be wrong). 17 years is the median time that a recovered trap has been underwater, based on our analysis.

Question 2: I'm wondering if offering a bounty on old traps might be a way for diving clubs to earn some funding. Probably not a great money maker, but something for them to volunteer and would be fun for them to do. Or even, kids out on the sound and their boats doing a little bit of dragging and trying to pick up a pot or two to buy themselves some beer at the end of the day or something. That might be something else to think about.

Response from L-Trap Lead: There are a few things to consider here.

- First is that we have to coordinate closely with working fisherman to make sure that we don't grapple over any active gear, so it would be pretty risky (to both the fishing community and to our collective reputation with them) to have random folks grappling without that coordination. Justin (from my team) sends an email to members of the permit list in advance of recovery trips to let them know where we will be working to ensure no conflicts. Cooperation with fishermen is key to this work, and they (rightly so) get really heated if we accidentally mess up their actively-set gear.
- Second, anyone bringing gear up would need to be trained on how to identify the permit information, cross reference that against the permit holders list, and notify the permit holder about the gear's location (if deemed legal and put back) or their plan to safely retain the gear for 30 days and to coordinate recovery of that gear by the owner. They have to track the timing of the notification and return (or disposal) for reporting to EnCon, too.
- Third would be safety; this is pretty rugged work. For trawling, you need a vessel with a very powerful pot hauler to be able to get the traps off of the bottom since they can be filled with 100+ pounds of mud. We shorted out one of our partner Captain's pot hauler when we were out with him one due to the weight of the line of traps, and that is on a vessel that does this work regularly. On many occasions, someone from our teams has gotten really scraped up by a trap too. I would personally not want to encourage the public to do this work knowing the safety precautions that we have needed to take ourselves. I am not the only one with a scar to prove it!
- My fourth concern would be coordination and environmental impact. We map every line when we drag grapple in GIS so that we can do our best to minimize any unnecessary grappling and focus our efforts on un-searched parts of the benthos. Working as a partnership, with all organizations using the same protocols and sharing our spatial data together, helps us ensure that we aren't all working on the same place and potentially having a prolonged negative impact on the benthos.