

Wetlands Stewardship Meeting Highlights December 5, 2007

WSC Members Present: Louise Harrison (Long Island Sound Office), Rick Balla (Peconic Estuary Program), Jeffrey Fullmer (South Shore Estuary Reserve), Tamara Sadoo (SC Executive's Rep.), Vivian Vilorio-Fisher (SC Legislature Presiding Officer's Designated Rep), Carrie Meek Gallagher (SCDEE (Chair), Michael Kaufman (SC CEQ), Walter Dawydiak, (SCDHS), John Pavacic (SC Dept of Parks), DeWitt Davies (SC Dept of Planning), Gilbert Anderson (SCDPW), Bob DeLuca (SC Executive Representative), Adrienne Esposito (SC Executive Representative), George Hammarth (NYSDEC Region)

WSC Members Absent: Dennis Mildner (NYSDOS), Karen Chytalo (NYSDEC Bureau of Marine Resources), Maria Brown (SC Legislature Representative), SC Legislature Representative (TBD)

Guests Present: Nicole Maher (The Nature Conservancy), Steve Terracciano (U.S. Geological Survey), Anne McElroy (Stony Brook University), David Tonjes (Stony Brook University), Richard Mendelman (Association of Marine Industries), Jennifer Skilbred (Group for the East End), Matthew Atkinson (Peconic BayKeeper), Sarah Newkirk (The Nature Conservancy), Mary Dempsey (SCDEE), Brian Pedersen (SCDEE), Kim Shaw (SCDHS), Dominick Ninivaggi (SCDPW), Nick Gibbons (SC Dept of Parks), Laretta Fischer (SC Dept of Planning)

Agenda Item 1: June 7, 2007 Minutes

Change to minutes on the bottom of page 2, as suggested by Tonjes, on the timeline for Wertheim to read “that the Wertheim monitoring in the field was finalized in October and that the Wertheim report will follow early next year.” Maher did not agree with the term, rapid, used in the 1st paragraph of the second page, “....rapid assessment programs...” prefers marsh by marsh assessment.

Agenda Item 2: Wetlands Stewardship Program and Strategy

Commissioner Gallagher explained that this is a whole new program and described its financing, committees, products, and timetable. Funding is available from DPW capital project monies in the amount of \$220,000 for planning in the first phase. The subsequent phases will include a survey of several key Suffolk County marshes and identify pilot restoration projects. Wetlands Stewardship Strategy is different than the Workplan and is the overarching plan which the Workplan and Committees will follow. The Committees include the Wetlands Stewardship Committee (WSC), the WSC's subcommittee or the Wetlands Management Workgroup (WMW) which provides technical expertise to the WSC, and the Pesticide Management Committee (PMC). She went on to describe the Suffolk County Wetlands Workshop, which Maher indicated could happen in March

2008, with local and out of state wetlands' experts to go over issues such as marsh health and monitoring programs, that could resolve some issues that have been discussed at the WSC and WMB meetings. Tonjes will make a presentation on Wertheim for the Wetlands Workshop.

Agenda Item 3: WMW Bylaws (dated 11/28/07) and WSC Bylaws (dated 8/16/07)

The WSC Bylaws were considered adopted late summer since no further comments were received. But Atkinson pointed out that, on page 3, Section 7c of the WSC Bylaws, the Steering Committee only deals with the Vector Control Long-Term Plan and does not have to approve the water management component of the Triennial Long-Term Plan Update. Point was raised as to how could BMPs, for example #5-9, be considered if the Wetlands Stewardship Strategy is not yet completed. Walt answered that these BMPs and BMPs #10-15 are not being considered at the moment and are not even considered as part of the annual plan of work (2008). Esposito asked for clarification of these Bylaws as far as majority vote is concerned as to whether the majority represents the majority of those voting members present or the majority of those that can vote. Walt explained that the WSC Bylaws will be edited and sent out and any further comments could be forwarded to Jeanine Schlosser or Kim Shaw.

Agenda Item 4: Wetlands Stewardship Workplan

Consultants are expected to be hired to assist with the field work. TNC and CCE are contributing a match by hiring Wetlands Stewards to assist with the field work and providing other personnel services including themselves. The plan is to leverage resources of towns, and coordinate any projects with Estuary programs. Every project should be complementary with the habitat restoration programs of the 2 Estuary Programs and the Long Island Sound office. In answer to the point raised by Tonjes concerning the 12/21/06 DEC letter commenting on elements of the Workplan and other aspects of the WSP, Dawydiak stated that their concerns were addressed.

Discussions include taking the Adaptive Management Approach which has accountability and flexibility built into the plans. This way lessons can be learned from mistakes and applied to ongoing and future projects. Another point raised was that one set of monitoring parameters cannot be applied to the assessment of every marsh. McElroy explained that Suffolk County marshes are independent of each other and that there will be a range of responses to any restoration activities. Also contributing to any outcomes are unpredictable environmental events such as sea level rise, which has to be considered in its effects on a marsh. It is also wrong to have the same goals for every marsh. One suggestion was to use Fred Mushacke's NYSDEC photos as a good starting out point to determine the state of some of these marshes. To consider a pilot project it was suggested to research its mosquito larviciding history. The Nature Conservancy is suggesting their Conservation by Design approach which measures success against set priorities and looks at measures of success to determine the effectiveness of these strategies.

Viloria-Fisher wondered about the role of this committee as far as wetland monitoring goals are concerned and how would this committee be able to track a number of possible wetland projects. It was suggested that marshes be categorized, somewhat similar to the primary study area criteria that were used in the Vector Control and Wetlands Management Long-Term Plan. Then that way, any pilot project(s) undertaken would only consist of one marsh type at a time.

Agenda Item 5: Next meeting will occur before the Suffolk County Wetlands Workshop.