

State of Connecticut



GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING, ROOM 3200
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ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

EELGRASS WORKING GROUP MEETING AGENDA

October 26th, 2023
3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Zoom Remote Meeting

1. Welcoming Remarks (Vaudrey, Lucey)
2. Introductions (15 min total)
3. Establish a Recurring Meeting Time (or the next meeting time).
4. Brief review of the charge ([SA 23-7](#)):
 1. *Such working group shall develop strategies for the preservation, restoration and expansion of eel grass along the state's shoreline. In developing such strategies, the working group shall review and synthesize information from studies performed by the states of New York and Rhode Island, including, but not limited to, Tier 1 mapping of *Zostera marina* in Long Island Sound and change analysis performed by the University of Rhode Island. [...] including, but not limited to, explanations of any such strategies and identification of any priority areas of the shoreline for the implementation of such strategies.*
 2. Here is the link to the ENV website w/ info on the working group
https://cga.ct.gov/env/taskforce.asp?TF=20230720_Eel%20Grass%20Working%20Group
5. Review Resources
 1. Our working group resources include links to information from other states
 1. [Rhode Island's Eelgrass Mapper](#)
 2. [2012 Rhode Island Aerial Survey Report](#)
 3. [2021 Rhode Island Aerial Survey Report](#)
 4. [New York State Seagrass Protection Act](#)
 5. [New York State Seagrass Task Force Proceedings Webpage](#)
 2. Connecticut's Eelgrass
 1. [Tier 1 2017 Mapping of *Zostera marina* in Long Island Sound and Change Analysis](#)

2. [Aquaculture Mapping Atlas](#)
- c. Long Island Sound Eelgrass Management and Restoration Strategy, Identifies key tasks:
 1. Create an Eelgrass Collaborative (first meeting is next week)
 1. Professional sharing
 2. Identify & remove barriers to restoration
 3. Advise on how to update the Eelgrass Habitat Suitability Index
 4. Work closely with CT DEEP and the Connecticut Aquaculture Permitting Work Group to alleviate user conflicts between eelgrass and aquaculture
 5. Work closely with NYSDEC and the New York State Seagrass Task Force to help implement the actions outlined in the Report of the New York State Seagrass Task Force
 6. Work with all LISS partners and regional Long Island Estuary Programs (South Shore Estuary Reserve and Peconic Estuary Partnership) to address similar priorities and actions outlined in this strategy and develop new actions as new science and needs arise
 2. Update the Eelgrass Habitat Suitability Index
 3. Enhance Continuous Water Quality Monitoring and Initiate Human Activity and Eelgrass Monitoring
 4. Continue and Enhance Remote Sensing Surveys
 5. Analysis of Historical Data
 6. Identification of Eelgrass Resiliency and Common Garden Implementation
6. Establish Outline for Report (suggestions below, for discussion)
 1. Current Knowledge
 1. History of LIS policy (NYS task force and seagrass liaison)
 2. Mapping results & overview of change analysis in CT & LIS
 3. Review of issues identified by LISS Eelgrass Management and Restoration Strategy
 2. Potential Barriers to Restoration
 1. Identification of suitable areas (Eelgrass Habitat Suitability Index)
 2. Overview & review of restoration techniques and capacity for upscaling in LIS.
 1. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County's plantings in NY and CT
 1. Adult plants
 2. BUDS (seeding method)
 3. Tobias & Vaudrey soil amendments to improve planting success
 2. Save the Sound's clam planting, as an example of continuing innovation
 3. Overview of the need for genetic populations resilient to higher temperatures.
 4. Available infrastructure to support restoration.
 3. Siting & Permitting of planting
 1. Planting of eelgrass - no known barriers

2. Obtaining eelgrass - protection of current beds, timing of flowering and seed availability
 4. Co-location of restoration with aquaculture
 1. Review potential overlap between eelgrass habitat suitability and aquaculture leases (active and inactive)
 2. Out-of-state seeds
 1. Potential for invasives
 2. Can be sterilized, but needs confirmation at what level/degree?
 3. Suggestions on Funding Needs
 4. Suggestions on Policy / Procedural Needs
7. Committee Members - Volunteer/Assignment of topics to review prior to our next meeting, to begin populating the outline for the report.