

State of Connecticut



GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING, ROOM 3200
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591
TELEPHONE (860) 240-0440

EEL GRASS RESTORATION WORKING GROUP
MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 7TH 2023
FROM 3:00 PM TO 4:30 PM ON ZOOM

Attendance: Jamie Vaudrey (Chair), Larry Dunn, Craig Tobias, Zach Gordon, Senator Heather Somers, Kelly Streich, Bradford Towson (LCO)

1. (2 min) Welcoming Remarks

1. Link to this document:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/16a5ocRvraUrMIYGPFJT2xOcUzx4f1t-TCJnmLzkl8co/edit?usp=sharing>

2. (5 min) Introductions

3. (3 min) Follow up on Establishing a Recurring Meeting Time.

1. Meet every 2 weeks; 3pm-4:30pm. For 2023 / 2024:

1. Dec 7 (Thu)

1. ~~Dec 18 (Mon), Dec 19 (Tue),~~ Dec 21 (Thu)??

1. Jan 10 (Wed)

1. Jan 24 (Wed) - review of final draft

4. (1 min) Outline of document is now available - please sign up for sections by adding your name as a comment: [2024-Feb CGA Eelgrass WG Report](#)

5. (3 min) Review Topics of Discussion and assign Leads:

1. Nov 22 (Wed)

1. *Stressors to Connecticut Eelgrass* - presentation & discussion (lead Jamie)

1. *Eelgrass Habitat Restoration* - presentation & discussion (lead Craig)
1. Continue discussion of barriers & pathways to success (specific topic will be refined based on results of previous meeting; permitting, siting, funding, capacity of workforce)
1. Dec 7 (Thu)
 1. *Preservation and Expansion of Eelgrass - Policy, Legislation, and Recommendations in Neighboring Regions and Programs* - presentation & discussion (lead people?)
 1. Continue discussion of barriers & pathways to success; start to develop policy/ruling recommendations informed by activities in neighboring regions
1. ~~Dec 18 (Mon), Dec 19 (Tue)~~ **Dec 21?**
 1. *Monitoring and Change Analysis of Eelgrass in Southern New England, Long Island Sound, and Long Island* - presentation & discussion (lead person/people - Jamie, Bill(?))
 1. *Engaging the Community* - presentation & discussion (lead person/people?)
 1. Discuss *Working Group Recommendations* - funding, policy and legislative rulings
1. Jan 10 (Wed)
 1. Discuss *Working Group Recommendations*
1. Jan 24 (Wed)
 1. discuss final draft of recommendations

(20 min) *Stressors to Connecticut Eelgrass* - presentation & discussion (lead Jamie) JAMIE's SECTION - STRESSORS

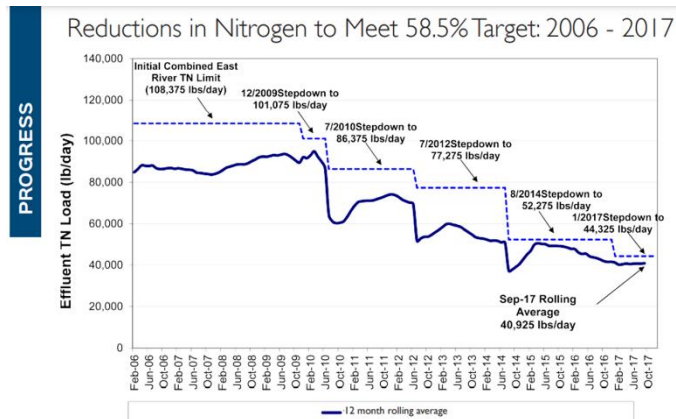
See presentation:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1NeNb0WmKCwA59ZKd2bqai0E2APOXt6-H/edit?usp=drive_link&oid=111748038879777406810&rtpof=true&sd=true

NUTRIENTS, flip the order – find something relating nutrient loads (versus population)

Perhaps shellfish closures as a metric

Nutrients being reduced - add a historical load to the following graphic (think USGS has that estimate? Or the older CCMP?)



Tipping point - can we define... not Valiela's work, but Latimer's plot - N load vs eelgrass loss

Mention seaweed removal from beaches - as way to get people to relate to the image

TEMPERATURE

Graphic which relates temperature stress & eelgrass success

Is there a temperature resistant eelgrass?

Locally, water is getting hotter (# of days when water exceeded a specific temperature) - and cite grass doesn't like it hot

PHYSICAL DAMAGE

Is there a regulation to use conservation anchors - in CT, may be in MA, NY?

Number of boats - do we have a trendline on the boating usage? Check the Blue Plan - do we have stats on boat sales over time, or boat registrations?

Check for permitted moorings in harbor management districts, expansion of mooring areas.

OTHERs

Manage the stresses we can control

Planning eelgrass sites- not too shallow, to avoid foraging

II. CRAIG'S SECTION - MAINTAINING and RESTORING EELGRASS

See presentation:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1bedMtzZt_UrVJo569M86powxPGQwkpZA/edit?usp=drive_link&oid=111748038879777406810&rtpof=true&sd=true

Eelgrass suitability index - focus on the eastern Sound for restoration.

Three-legged stool - Regulation, Education, Restoration

Address genetic diversity on our recommendations -

Scaling limitations - refer back to the previous meeting's discussion; need to develop capacity in CT

Watershed management is important - could also look at soil amendments - may be able to do some ecological engineering

Question - what are we missing...

On Education slide, "causal links between land and water side activities and eelgrass health" - incorporate a lot of ideas under this one... for example policymaker education, understanding those links between policy and these issues