



1. Introduction
2. Virtual Meeting Details
3. Attendee WebEx Guidance
4. Presentation Slides

Introduction:

We are pleased to announce a virtual public meeting on Tuesday August 4th, 2020 from 7:00 to 9:00 PM EDT via WebEx. At the meeting we will provide an update on the effort to designate a proposed National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR or “Reserve”) in our state and to seek public input to help guide the required Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process.

The NERR system is a partnership between states and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) that establishes a location dedicated to estuarine research, monitoring, education, and stewardship. A Connecticut-based Reserve would complement and expand many existing scientific, environmental management, and educational activities through the addition of funding, resources, and expertise from the national NERR system. Additionally, it would help identify and enable new initiatives to improve the understanding and sustainability of Long Island Sound

NOAA will announce meeting details for this EIS Scoping Meeting in a Federal Register Notice no later than July 20th, 2020. Notices will also be announced via local newspapers (Hartford Courant, Middletown Press, New London Day) and the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) Notices page (<https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Public-Notices/Public-Notices-Proposed-Actions---Opportunity-for-Comment/Miscellaneous-Proposed-Actions>) on or before July 20th.

To help assist in the virtual meeting process, a document will be made available via the project website and updated with additional information prior to the meeting. This information will include how to access the WebEx by computer or phone, the meeting agenda, and final copies of the presentation materials. Please go to <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Coastal-Resources/NERR/NERR-Home-Page> and follow the links for the EIS Scoping Meeting to get the most current updates.

We have endeavored to target relevant individuals and groups that are aligned geographically or topically with a potential Connecticut Reserve, but please feel free to forward this invitation to other interested parties as needed.

We hope that you are able to participate and we look forward to seeing you the evening of August 4th.

Sincerely,

Brian Thompson, Director, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection - Land and Water Resources Division

J. Evan Ward, Ph.D., Department Head, University of Connecticut Department of Marine Sciences

Sylvain De Guise, Ph.D., Director, Connecticut Sea Grant College Program

Patrick Comins, Director, CT Audubon Society



Virtual Meeting Details:

The public meeting will be conducted online via WebEx and by phone.

Online participants should go to the University of Connecticut's NERR Public Scoping Meeting Information website: <https://uconn-cmr.webex.com/uconn-cmr/onstage/g.php?t=a&d=1200263550> to attend the webinar and get instructions for participating. The webinar passcode is 1111.

If you are unable to participate online, you can connect to the meeting by phone using +1 415-655-0002, and the attendee access code 120 026 3550.

Meeting documents will be available on the DEEP NERR website <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Coastal-Resources/NERR/NERR-Home-Page> as well as the Federal eRulemaking Portal www.regulations.gov/docket?D=NOAA-NOS-2020-0089.

Written comments may be submitted no later than Tuesday, August 18, 2020, by:

- Electronic Submission: Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal eRulemaking Portal. Go to www.regulations.gov/docket?D=NOAA-NOS-2020-0089, click the "Comment Now!" button, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments.
- Mail: Submit written comments to Erica Seiden, Stewardship Division (N/OCM6), Office for Coastal Management, NOS, NOAA, 1305 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, Maryland, 20910; ATTN: CT NERR. Comments must be postmarked no later than August 18, 2020.

Members of the public should refer to the DEEP Calendar of Events at <https://www.depdata.ct.gov/calendar/> for the official schedule in this matter, including cancellations, or other schedule alterations.

Agenda:

NOTE: Meeting Room will open at 6:00 PM

- Meeting Starts/Opening Remarks: 7:00 PM
- NOAA Presentation – NERR Overview and EIS introduction: 7:15 PM
- CT Presentation - Proposed Site & EIS needs: 7:35 PM
- Break: 8:00 PM
- Comment Period: 8:05 PM
- Closing Remarks/Meeting Ends: 9:00PM

Additional Information:

General Questions/ Persons with Disability Requirements:

- Please contact Kevin O'Brien at the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (E-mail: kevin.obrien@ct.gov, Phone: 860-424-3432) For disability requirements, please place requests by July 28th, 2020

Closed captions are available for this meeting. The link to the closed captioning window will be displayed at the start of the meeting. We suggest sending a question through the Q&A box, requesting the link to closed captioning; this way, you will be able to click on the link to the media window versus typing it in to a browser window.



In order to view the closed captions, you must have two browser windows open on your computer:

- Sign in to the Webex meeting and keep that browser window open in order to see the presentations and presenters.
- In a second window, enter the link to the closed captioning window.
- You can adjust the sizes of the two browser windows, so that you can see the slides and the closed captioning at the same time.

Attendee Guide to Using Webex

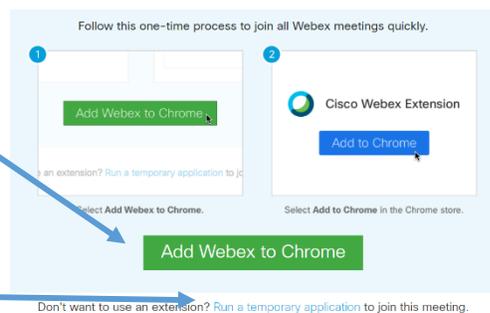
Three ways to join the meeting:

Please note – as an attendee at this event, you do not have access to your video camera nor can you unmute yourself. See guidance on next page for how to ask a question or make a comment.

Method 1: Join using your computer for visual and audio.

- go to: <https://uconn-cmr.webex.com/uconn-cmr/onstage/g.php?t=a&d=1200263550>
- Enter your name as you would like it to appear. If you do not want to provide an email address, enter temp@temp.com.
 - * Attendees submitting offensive user names (R-rated, discriminatory, etc.) will be expelled from the meeting and may rejoin with an appropriate user name.
- The event password is 1111**
- Join the meeting by clicking on the blue “Join Now” button. Choosing this option will allow you full access to the meeting features (you’ll be able to make comments).
 - * If you choose the “Join by Browser” option, you will not be able to ask a question verbally, though you will be able to submit a question by typing in the Q&A box. Your statement or question may be read aloud, if that is your intent. If one browser is not working (e.g. Chrome), try using a different browser (e.g. Edge, Safari, Explorer, Firefox, Opera, etc.).
- Enable Webex on your computer: The preferred option is to add Webex to your browser (large green button). You also have the option of adding an extension to your browser (blue button) or running a temporary extension that is automatically deleted from your computer at the end of the meeting.

Step 1 of 2: Add Webex to Chrome



Method 2: Join using your computer for visual and your phone for audio.

*If you are watching the broadcast on your computer or tablet and your sound quality is bad, you can call in to the event from your phone, allowing you to watch the broadcast but hear and speak through your phone. **This is a toll call, use your cell phone to avoid fees.***

- Follow Method 1, above, to join the event on your computer.
- In the Webex window, choose “Communicate,” found at the top of the screen.
- Select “Audio connection.”
- Select “Call in” – a pop up window will appear with the call-in number and access code, as well as an attendee ID number. The attendee ID number will allow your phone number to be linked to the log-in name you provided on the computer.

Method 3: Join using only your phone for audio, you will not be able to see the broadcast.

You will be able to “raise your hand” and verbally ask a question or make a comment but you will not be able to see the broadcast or ask questions by typing. Meeting documents are available at: <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Coastal-Resources/NERR/NERR-Home-Page> as well as on the Federal eRulemaking Portal: www.regulations.gov/docket?D=NOAA-NOS-2020-0089.

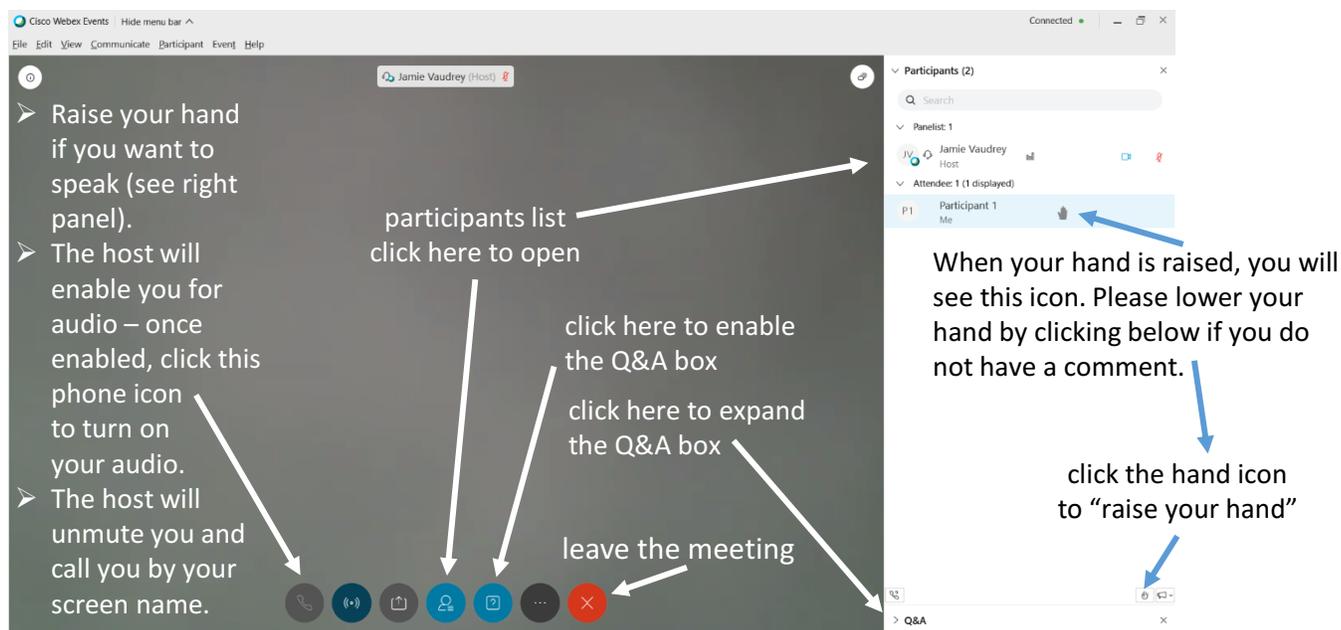
- Dial: 1-415-655-0002 (**this is a toll call, we suggest using a cell phone to avoid fees**).
- Enter the access code: 120 026 3550 #

Asking a Question or Making a Comment

Verbal Comment - Attendees Joining by Computer or by Computer + Phone (for audio)

To speak, raise your hand. The host will enable your audio and call on you by your screen name and will unmute your audio. * If you have “joined by browser,” you cannot make a verbal comment. *

- To raise your hand: locate the small hand icon in the side panel and click on it. A hand will appear next to your name in the Attendee window. (see image below)
- The host must activate your ability to speak. Once she does, the phone icon will be available to you. Move your mouse around the screen to activate the bubbles at the bottom and select the phone icon to connect to audio. You may do this as soon as you are able to. (see image below)
- The host will call you by your screen name and unmute your connection, allowing you to speak. (see image below)



Verbal Comment - Attendees Joining by Phone (no computer/tablet)

To speak, raise your hand. When you hear the confirmation on your phone and the host calls on you, you may speak.

- To raise or lower your hand: on your phone, type in: *3
- When the host allows you to speak, you will hear the message “Your line has been unmuted” and the host will say “we have a call-in user who would like to make a statement.” (The host cannot see your name or phone number, to call on you specifically.)
- You may begin your statement. Please feel free to ask, “can you hear me?”

Written Comments and Questions During the Meeting (only available on computer/tablet)

- If the Q&A box is not visible, activate it by selecting the question icon (see image above).
- Click on the “>” icon next to “Q&A” to expand the entry form.
- You may type a question to the panelists (please direct your question to “all panelists,” the default setting). The panelist will read your question aloud.

Troubleshooting Connection Issues

Can't hear the broadcast? Be certain that *your speaker on your computer* is unmuted – look in the lower right hand corner of your screen for a speaker symbol – if there is an “x” next to it, your speakers are on mute. Click the speaker icon to unmute. If that does not resolve the issue, check your sound settings by right clicking on the speaker icon.

Audio quality is bad: If you are watching the broadcast on your computer and your sound quality is bad, you can call in to the event from your phone, allowing you to watch the broadcast but hear and speak through your phone. Dial: 1-415-655-0002 (this is a toll call, we suggest using a cell phone to avoid fees), enter the access code: 120 026 3550 #
To raise your hand by phone in order to make a verbal comment, type in *3
The host will unmute you when it is your turn to speak.

I want to make a verbal comment but cannot figure out how to raise my hand: You may type your comment in the Q&A box to be read aloud. Or call in by phone: Dial: 1-415-655-0002 (this is a toll call, we suggest using a cell phone to avoid fees), enter the access code: 120 026 3550 #
To raise your hand by phone in order to make a verbal comment, type in *3
The host will unmute you when it is your turn to speak.

Tip for people who want to make a comment: Prior to signing in to the meeting, set up your default audio (which speaker and which microphone you want to use, if you have multiple). Webex will revert to what you have set as the default and you will not be able to change the settings once you are in the meeting.

Other issues? Check out the guidance at:

<https://confluence.uconn.edu/ikb/communication-and-collaboration/webex-video-conferencing/troubleshooting-webex>

And for joining by phone & computer or by phone without a computer:

<https://confluence.uconn.edu/ikb/communication-and-collaboration/webex-video-conferencing/hosting-or-joining-a-webex-meeting/joining-a-webex-meeting/joining-a-meeting-using-a-phone-landline>

Guidelines for Submitting Additional Written Comments, After the Meeting is Over

Written comments may be submitted by:

- Electronic Submission: Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal eRulemaking Portal. Go to www.regulations.gov/docket?D=NOAA-NOS-2020-0089, click the “Comment Now!” button, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments. Written comments must be submitted no later than Tuesday, August 18, 2020.
- Mail: Submit written comments to Erica Seiden, Stewardship Division (N/OCM6), Office for Coastal Management, NOS, NOAA, 1305 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910; ATTN: CT NERR. Comments must be postmarked no later than Tuesday, August 18, 2020.

Instructions: All comments received are part of the public record and will generally be posted for public viewing on www.regulations.gov/docket?D=NOAA-NOS-2020-0089 with no changes. All personally identifiable information (e.g., name, address, etc.), confidential business information, or otherwise sensitive information submitted voluntarily by the commenter will be publicly accessible and maintained by NOAA as part of the public record. NOAA will accept anonymous comments; on the eRulemaking Portal, enter “N/A” in the required fields if you wish to remain anonymous. If you would like to provide an anonymous comment during the public scoping meeting, type your comment into the question box, and state that you would like to remain anonymous when your comment is read. Multimedia submissions (i.e., audio, video, etc.) must be accompanied by a written comment. The written comment is considered the official comment and should include discussion of all points you wish to make. NOAA will generally not consider comments, or comment contents, located outside of the primary submission sites or addresses (i.e., those posted on the web, cloud, or other file-sharing system). Please note, no public comments will be audio or video recorded.

Let's Get Started...

Proposed Connecticut National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) Draft Environmental Impact Statement Public Scoping Meeting

*CT Department of Energy & Environmental Protection Land & Water Resource Division
NOAA Office for Coastal Management,
University of Connecticut, Department of Marine Sciences,
Connecticut Sea Grant College Program*

Tuesday August 4th, 2020
7 – 9 PM
Webex



Good evening and welcome to the public scoping meeting. My name is Jamie Vaudrey, with the Department of Marine Sciences at UConn and I will be your host for the evening.

Before we get started with the formal introductions and presentation I'd like to take care of a bit of housekeeping:

*How to Use
Webex –
Tech
Guidance*

Download the full guide at the CT DEEP Proposed NERR website. To find the guide, conduct an online search for “CT DEEP NERR”
Look for “Invitation, Agenda, & General Information”

Right now, you cannot share your video or audio, by default.

But, we will enable your audio during the comment periods...

By default, you cannot turn on your video, nor can you unmute yourself.

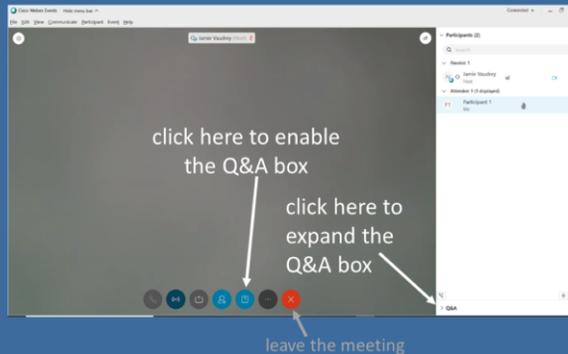
When we start the public comment period, you will be able to raise your hand and I will enable your audio.

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*Want to type
a question or
submit a
comment to
be read
aloud?*

Enable the
“Q&A” panel.



Notice in the yellow box, you can download technical guidance and troubleshooting tips from the CT DEEP NERR website. That guide provides more detail than what is shown here.

Throughout the event, you will be able to submit questions and comments verbally or through the Q&A box.

If the Q&A box is not showing on your screen, move your mouse around the screen to activate the bubbles at the bottom, click on the one with a question mark, and the Q&A panel will open on the right side of your screen. Click the little sideways arrow next to Q&A to expand the panel.

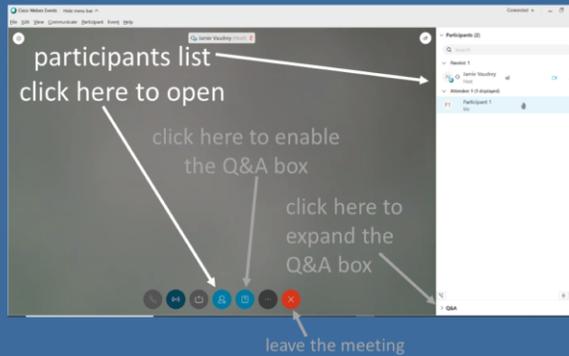
Only our panelists can see your questions. Feel free to post comments or questions in that box throughout the presentations. One of our panelists will read them aloud during the comment period, unless you indicate that you do not want the question or comment read aloud.

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Webex –
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Guidance*

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Look for “Invitation, Agenda, & General Information”

*Want to see
who has
joined the
meeting?*

Open the
“participants
list”



You can check out who else is online by opening the participants panel.
If it is not already open, click the bubble with the outline of a person in it.

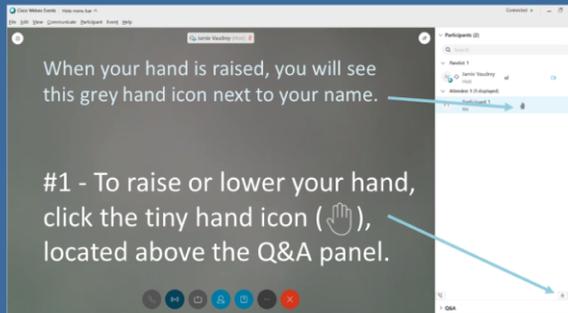
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Want to
VERBALLY ask
a question or
make a
comment?

Step
#1:
Raise
your
hand.

(give it a try, right now, if you want)



When we start the public comment period, you will be able to raise your hand and I will enable your audio.

Feel free to try raising your hand right now as I run through the process - I won't be calling on anyone and will clear the raised hands once we get started for the evening.

In short, you can find a small hand icon on the right of your screen. Click on that to raise your hand.

How to Use
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Tech
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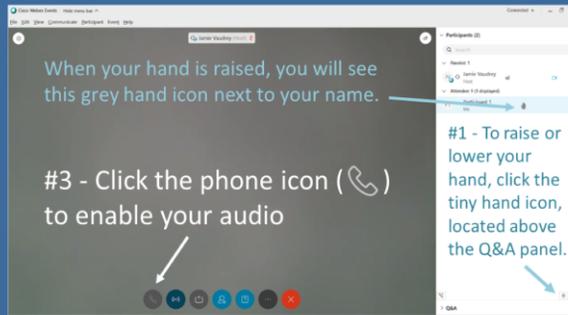
Step
#1:

Raise
your
hand.

Step #2: the host
will allow you access
to your audio.

Step #3: you
enable your audio
(see above).

Step #4: the host
will unmute you
& call on you.



Once you raise your hand, I will give you access to your audio controls. You will click on the phone icon in the bottom bubbles to enable your audio. Then I will unmute you and call on you by your screen name when it is your turn to talk. You will not be able to turn on your video.

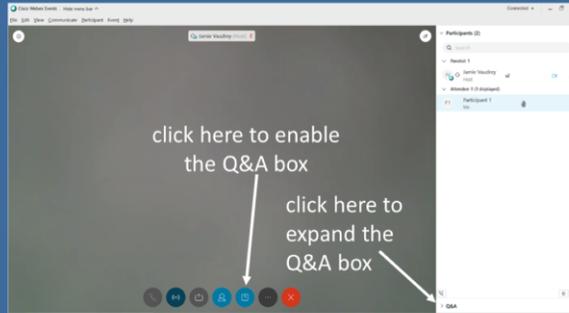
Once again, you can download technical guidance and troubleshooting tips from the CT DEEP NERR website. That guide provides more detail than what is shown here.

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Look for “Invitation, Agenda, & General Information”

Want access to
closed
captioning?

Request
CC/CART in the
Q&A box and
we will send you
a weblink you
can click on.



You will need to open the closed captioning in a separate browser window.
link: TBD

If you would like access to closed captions, type the web address shown at the bottom of the screen into a separate browser window. Or, you can send us a note through the Q&A box and we will answer with the link.

Public Scoping Meeting on a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Connecticut National Estuarine Research Reserve

*NOAA Office for Coastal Management
Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection
Land & Water Resource Division
University of Connecticut, Department of Marine Sciences
Connecticut Sea Grant College Program*

Tuesday, August 4, 2020
7 to 9 PM



NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

And now, we'll get started with our formal program for the public scoping meeting on the draft environmental impact statement for the proposed National Estuarine Research Reserve in CT.

I'll turn things over to the NOAA members of our team to welcome you.

Welcome

On behalf of NOAA OCM:

Erica Seiden

NERRS Program Manager

Office for Coastal Management
NOAA's National Ocean Service



Randall Schneider

Senior Coastal Management Specialist

Office for Coastal Management
NOAA's National Ocean Service



OFFICE FOR COASTAL MANAGEMENT
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Good evening, everyone, my name is Erica Seiden. I am the NERRS Program Manager in NOAA's Office for Coastal Management.

The purpose of tonight's meeting is to get input on what NOAA and the State of CT should consider as we develop a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed National Estuarine Research Reserve in CT. We will get into more details on that, shortly.

Throughout this process, we have had strong support from the CT Congressional delegation. We would like to welcome any members who are participating in tonight's meeting.

Hello, my name is Randy Schneider, also with NOAA's Office for Coastal Management.

Thank you for joining us. Due to ongoing restrictions on large gatherings and travel, we are holding this meeting online and by phone. It isn't quite the same, or as easy, as holding an in-person meeting, but we will do our best. There may be a few glitches along the way, but please bear with us.

Welcome

On behalf of UConn:

Dr. Radenka Maric

Vice President for Research,
Innovation and
Entrepreneurship
UConn/UConn Health
Professor in Sustainable
Energy



*On behalf of the
Department of Marine
Sciences, UConn and the
Avery Point Campus:*

Dr. J. Evan Ward

Professor and Head
Department of Marine
Sciences, UConn



*On behalf of Connecticut
Sea Grant College Program:*

Dr. Sylvain De Guise

Director, Connecticut Sea
Grant College Program
Professor, Department of
Pathobiology and
Veterinary Science, UConn



First, I would like to introduce our hosts for tonight's Webex meeting from the University of Connecticut.

We'll hear from Dr. Radenka Maric, V.P for Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, followed by Dr. Evan Ward, Head of the Dept. of Marine Sciences, and then Dr. Sylvain De Guise, Director of CT Sea Grant.

[Radenka's Welcome]

[Evan's Welcome]

[Sylvain's Welcome]

Agenda

- NOAA presentation on the NERR system and the process for federally designating a reserve
- Connecticut presentation on proposed site and alternatives
- Public comment



OFFICE FOR COASTAL MANAGEMENT
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Thanks for your remarks Drs. Maric, Ward, and De Guise.

Now, I want to quickly go over the agenda for the rest of the meeting.

First, I'll give a short presentation on the National Estuarine Research Reserve System or NERRS and a high level description of the process for federally designating a reserve and where we are in that process.

Then we'll hear from Kevin O'Brien of the CT Department of Energy & Environmental Protection on their proposed site, what the state will be doing to develop information for the DEIS, and alternatives that might be considered.

After CT's presentation, we will open the meeting for comment on issues and alternatives you think should be addressed in the DEIS.

People Available for Answering Questions

- **NOAA:** Erica Seiden, Nelle D'Aversa, Patmarie Nedelka, and Randy Schneider
- **CT DEEP:** Brian Thompson and Kevin O'Brien
- **UCONN:** Evan Ward, Sylvain De Guise, and Jamie Vaudrey



Participating from NOAA tonight to help answer question on the Reserve System and DEIS process are:

Erica Seiden, Nelle D'Aversa, and Patmarie Nedelka

Participating from CT who can answer questions on the their role in the DEIS process and site alternatives are:

Brian Thompson and Kevin O'Brien, CT Dept of Energy & Environmental Protection

Evan Ward, Sylvain DeGuise, and Jamie Vaudrey from the University of Connecticut

National Estuarine Research Reserve System Overview and Designation Process

*NOAA Office for Coastal Management
Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection,
Land & Water Resource Division
University of Connecticut, Department of Marine Sciences
Connecticut Sea Grant College Program*

Tuesday, August 4, 2020
7 to 9 PM



OFFICE FOR COASTAL MANAGEMENT
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Now I am going to give a short overview of the National Research Reserve System – what it is, how it works, and the designation process. I know many of you have seen or heard this information before, but we hope it will be a refresher and will inform those who haven't been with us in previous meetings.

A Network of 29 Protected Places

1



The NERRS was established by Section 315 of the Coastal Zone Management Act. It is a network of 29 protected areas representing different biogeographic regions of the U.S. You can see on the map that most of The U.S.'s coastal and Great Lakes states and territories have a reserve. CT, if designated, would become the 30th.

1st designated 1974- South Slough, OR – last designated in Hawaii in 2017.

Smallest is 573 acres at Old Woman Creek, OH and the largest is 366,000 acres in Kachemak Bay, Alaska.

Each reserve brings unique characteristics and opportunities to learn from each other – The reserve system truly operates as a system, not a collection of individual parts.

Over 1.3 Million Acres Protected

- Long-term research and monitoring
- Education and training
- Resource stewardship



Using a place-based system of protected areas to create resilient estuaries and coastal watersheds where human and natural communities thrive



The NERR System currently protects over 1.3 million acres across the country, with the system serving as a platform to increase research, education and resource stewardship in an integrated way to address habitat protection, water quality, and climate change.

The power of the system is having a network that uses the same approach at each reserve that allows for comparison among sites while building information that can be used regionally and nationally. But a reserve site also addresses specific, local issues.

We like to say that the NERRS is: Locally Relevant and Nationally Significant.

System-Wide and National Programs

- System-Wide Monitoring Program (SWMP)
- Coastal Training Program (CTP)
- K to 12 Estuarine Education Program – Teachers on the Estuary (TOTE)
- Margaret A. Davidson Fellowship (new in FY 2020)
- National Estuarine Research Reserve Science Collaborative



There are 5 national programs for the reserve system:

- System-Wide Monitoring Program, to identify and track short and long-term changes in the estuarine ecosystem.
- Coastal Training Program – that brings science to decision-makers.
- K to 12 Estuarine Education Program, including Teachers on the Estuary (TOTE) – which serve as living classrooms for students, educators, and the public, and
- The Davidson Fellowship – for research fellowships
- The NERRS Science Collaborative – funding for place-based science.

I'd like to note that SWMP, CTP, and the education programs occur at each reserve every year. Meanwhile, the Davidson Fellowship program is competitive, with each reserve having one opening for competition every two years. The Science Collaborative is a competitive program that individual reserves can apply for.

We think these programs will augment and bring benefits to many of CT's ongoing efforts. Kevin O'Brien will talk more about some of the specific potential benefits.

Fiscal Year 2020 Funding

Operations, Research, and Education: \$27.5 Million

- Operations and management: \$728K per reserve
- Davidson Fellowship: \$1.6M
- Science Collaborative: \$3.9M
- Centralized Data Management Office: \$631K

Acquisition and Construction: \$4.5 Million

- Buildings, boardwalks, signage, interpretive displays
- Land acquisition



Congress appropriates federal funding for the Reserve System each year

Last year, the NERRS received \$27.5 million for basic programmatic operations, including research, education and stewardship activities.

You can see some of the basic breakdowns of the \$27.5 million in operations – the major portion goes to the individual reserves while other funds go to national programs to support the system.

There was also \$4.5 million for land acquisition and facilities development, which individual reserves develop a plan for and which is competitive funding.

A State-Federal Partnership

State role:

- Land ownership and management
- Reserve staff members
- Program implementation
- Funding (30 percent match for operations)

Federal role:

- National policy, program guidance, and coordination
- Technical assistance
- Funding (70 percent for operations)



OFFICE FOR COASTAL MANAGEMENT
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

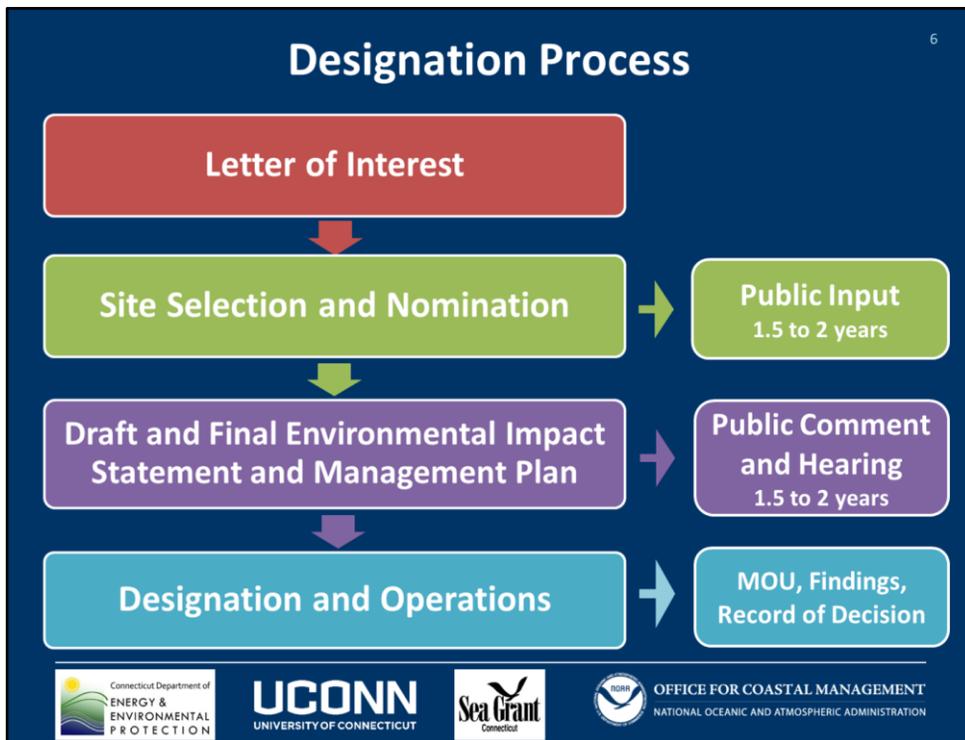
Designating a reserve means that NOAA and the state form a partnership to protect and manage the site. A reserve can be managed by a state resource agency or a university.

In this partnership, the state is responsible for:

- The land and facilities are owned and managed by the states using existing State protections. NOAA relies on those protections. One of the things I want to emphasize, and that Connecticut will emphasize as well, is that there are **NO NEW REGULATIONS on existing uses** when a reserve is designated. NOAA and the state establish a memorandum of agreement that relies on these existing authorities to manage a reserve.
- Program staff
- Implementing research, education, training and stewardship programs, and
- Providing matching funding for the federal share of operations awards. State must provide 30% match , but most leverage much more than this.

On the federal side, NOAA provides:

- National policy and program guidance, system-wide coordination, and oversight
- Technical assistance- each reserve has a liaison specifically for their program that can leverage OCM and NOAA services and opportunities
- And 70% of the operational funding
- Two things to emphasize are that management of human uses is addressed in a management plan and that management of a reserve is an ongoing endeavor, it isn't static once designated. There are regular opportunities for public input on evolving or emerging issues. One example is that reserves typically have an advisory committee.



Here is the typical process to federally designate a National Estuarine Research Reserve. It involves many steps and many individuals.

Step 1: The state sends a letter to the NOAA identifying its interest in developing a reserve program and nominating a site. CT sent a letter of interest back in 2004 and that interest was reaffirmed in subsequent years.

Step 2: the Site Selection and Nomination Process. State develops site selection criteria and a process for selecting a site in consultation with NOAA and key partners, and getting public input on the preferred site. The governor then submits to the NOAA administrator a site-selection document and a nomination letter. NOAA reviews the site-selection document and sends a letter to the governor accepting or rejecting the nomination. NOAA received the state's nomination in January 2019, reviewed the nomination to meet NERRS requirements, and formally accepted the nomination in September 2019.

Step 3: We have now started the third phase, the light purple box in the slide. NOAA, in collaboration with the State, prepares a Draft Environmental Impact Statement, and the state develops a Draft Management Plan. We'll get into more specifics on that in the next few slides.

Development of the DEIS requires initial public comment on the issues to be addressed, which is what this meeting is. Once the DEIS and DMP are completed, there will be an additional opportunity for public comment. Then NOAA and the State will prepare a Final EIS and Final management plan, as well as an MOU identifying state and NOAA roles in managing the reserve, and the appropriate MOUs among reserve partners establishing their respective roles and responsibilities.

Once all that is completed, NOAA prepares designation findings and a record of decision and the reserve is officially designated .

Keep in mind that this won't happen overnight. Once the DEIS phase starts, it typically takes ~ 1.5 – 2 yrs to officially designate a reserve.

Draft Environmental Impact Statement

CHAPTER 1: National context

CHAPTER 2: Purpose of and need for action

CHAPTER 3: State context

CHAPTER 4: Alternatives including the proposed action

CHAPTER 5: Affected environment

CHAPTER 6: Environmental consequences

CHAPTER 7: Compliance with other environmental review requirements

CHAPTER 8: List of preparers

Literature cited

Appendices



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This slide shows the major sections of the DEIS. Some of the information is fairly routine, covering information about the reserve system and compliance with other environmental laws. The state helps develop information on why the state wants a reserve, alternatives to be considered, and on the human and natural environmental issues. You'll hear more about some of these specifics later on.

Chapter 4: Impact Statement Alternatives

- No action (i.e., don't designate a reserve)
- Nominated site
- Boundary alternatives
 - Additions or subtractions to extent of site
 - Different core and buffer areas
- Other sites previously considered but eliminated
- Alternative management strategies



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One of the biggest issues in developing a DEIS is to consider the various alternatives for designating a reserve. They range from:

No action (no designation) to a preferred alternative (which may be exactly what was nominated or a variation of that), and then different boundaries, other sites, or different management strategies.

Boundary alternatives may include changes to the size or areas covered by the proposed site, or changes to the core and buffer areas within the proposed site.

Connecticut will talk more about the alternatives they are considering and requesting input on.

Reserve System Core and Buffer Concepts

Core Areas

- Key land and water areas representing diversity of the estuarine ecosystem
- Core must be under a level of control sufficient to ensure long-term viability of reserve

Buffer Areas

- Areas adjacent to or surrounding core areas
- Protect core area's integrity and provide additional protection for estuarine-dependent species
- Areas where facilities may be located



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With respect to core and buffer alternatives, here is what NOAA and the State must consider.

Core areas are the key land and water areas that represent the ecosystem being considered for designation. The core must have adequate federal, state, or local control to ensure the reserve can be maintained for the long term, and is especially viable for research activities.

The buffer areas are adjacent to core areas and help protect the core's overall integrity. This includes protections for the overall ecosystem, including threatened and endangered species. For example, a buffer may help accommodate shifts to the core as a result of changes in the environment, such as what may happen as a result of sea level rise.

The buffer areas also are the areas where research, educational, and other facilities are located. In Connecticut's case, this might include the University of Connecticut's Avery Point campus and CT DEEP Marine Headquarters.

Public Comment

- Connecticut will describe some alternatives
- We want to hear your thoughts on these and others
- Ways to comment:
 - Tonight's meeting – chat box or phone
 - Submit comments to *Federal Register*:
[regulations.gov/docket?D=NOAA-NOS-2020-0089](https://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=NOAA-NOS-2020-0089)
 - Submit comments by mail:
Erica Seiden, Stewardship Division, Office for Coastal Management, NOS, NOAA, 1305 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, Maryland, 20910; ATTN: CT NERR
- Written comments due by Tuesday, August 18, 2020



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This slide reviews ways to comment on preparation of the DEIS.

It is a lot to read here, but the basic information will be repeated at the end of tonight's presentation and is available in the Federal Register and on CT DEEP's NERR website.

Clarifying Questions?

Two Ways to Ask a Panelist a Question:

- Verbal question: raise your hand
- Written question: type a question into the Q&A box

Refer to the guidance document for detailed instructions

Next on the Agenda:

- Connecticut presentation on proposed site and alternatives
- Public comment



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With that, NOAA can take a couple of clarifying questions and then we'll turn things over to our CT partners.

This is Jamie Vaudrey, your host. If you would like to ask a question to clarify anything just presented, now is the time. Please hold general comments and questions about the proposed NERR until after the presentation by Connecticut.

If you called in using a phone line, press *3 to raise your hand.

If you are on a computer or tablet, you can type your question into the Q&A chat box or you can raise your hand and I will unmute you.

[questions and responses]

Proposed Connecticut National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) Draft Environmental Impact Statement Public Scoping Meeting

*CT Department of Energy & Environmental Protection Land & Water Resource Division
NOAA Office for Coastal Management,
University of Connecticut Department of Marine Sciences,
Connecticut Sea Grant College Program*

Tuesday August 4th, 2020
7 – 9 PM
Webex



Thank you for your questions, at this point, we'll move on with the presentation from Connecticut.

Our next presenter is Kevin O'Brien, Supervising Environmental Analyst in CT DEEP's Land and Water Resources Division.

Proposed CT NERR Overview – CT Players

1

CT NERR Steering Committee: CT DEEP, UConn, CT Sea Grant, CT Audubon Society

Functions: Project Management,
Coordination, Communication,
Outreach.



Federal Team: NOAA OCM-NERR

Functions: Advisory / Guidance
(from National System level)



Numerous topical experts / volunteers / meeting attendees

Functions: Evaluation of site locations / Recommendation; provided
guidance, input, expertise



I'd like to begin by acknowledging some of the project partners and roles. First, the CT NERR Steering Committee, made up of representatives from DEEP, the University of Connecticut, CT Sea Grant, and CT Audubon Society. These represent the key leadership organizations from the state-side responsible for managing all aspects of the overall effort. For example, DEEP is currently the lead agency for coordinating the designation effort, and CAS is coordinating our communication and outreach efforts. A particular point to note is that at such a time when the designation is successfully completed, UConn will take over and manage the Reserve.

I'd also like to recognize our Federal Partners from NOAA, who continue to provide advice and guidance as we navigate through the designation steps.

And last but certainly not least, all of the individuals here in CT and from other Reserves regionally and across the country who have volunteered their time to help with selecting sites, reviewing materials, providing guidance, attending meetings, and graciously sharing their expertise.

Proposed CT NERR Importance

2

Protected Places:

CT has locations that can benefit from NERR programs and resources, while at the same time bringing our State's unique contributions to the national NERR system.

Science:

A NERR can provide complementary support / resources, & the addition of national expertise for existing CT efforts, many of which align with NERR Strategic Goals

People:

Every year reserves attract more than a half a million visitors, and educate approximately 85,000 students and 3,200 teachers. Decision makers from over 2,500 communities and 570 businesses benefit by reserve-based science and technical expertise nationwide each year.



Although many of you have heard rationales for why we're proposing to establish a Reserve it's worth revisiting:

The national system reflects and supports numerous exceptional places and natural resources. To describe such a system that doesn't include aspects of Long Island Sound or coastal CT would seem somewhat incomplete. And on the flip side, Connecticut can benefit from a program with a 40+ year track record of innovation and success in ensuring resilient and thriving estuaries.

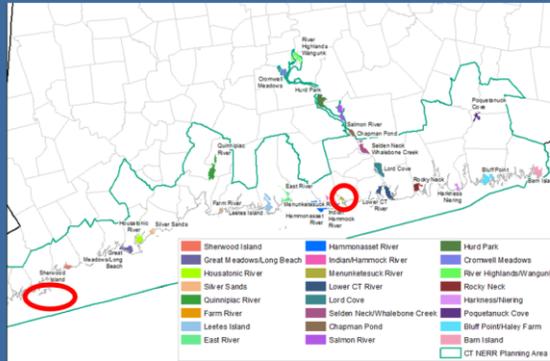
There is an incredible amount of science, research, and monitoring that occurs in Reserves around the country, and existing expertise, funding, and knowledge transfer can complement many areas of emphasis here in CT such as Water Quality science, Fisheries/aquaculture management, coastal observation and monitoring, wetland restoration efforts, etc. Further, CT can ADD valuable local data and knowledge from decades of work to help expand System-wide programs.

Lastly – and perhaps most importantly – NERRs provide an excellent way to engage people of all levels (students, teachers, public officials, business owners, etc.) through vehicles like TOTE and the Coastal Training Program. In a time where resources for education and training programs are often stretched thin, there is incredible value in leveraging the programming and potential a NERR can offer.

Proposed CT NERR: Site Selection beginning...³

Preliminary Inventory:

- Well distributed;
- Potential to support NERR goals;
- State or Federally owned:



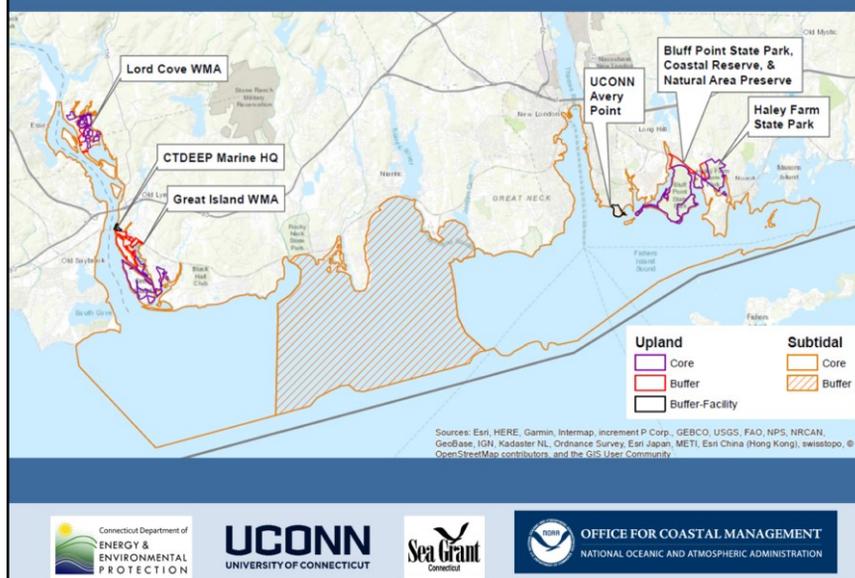
- ✓ Streamlines number of properties to assess;
- ✓ Provides a reasonable array of well documented habitats;
- ✓ Not an attempt to “land grab”



To provide some context on how we selected the proposed site, I want to briefly describe how we explored the universe of potential options. I will not be going into the details of this process, but for those interested, the presentation from the 2018 selection meeting and the subsequent report to NOAA is available for review on the DEEP project website. To begin we looked across coastal CT and within major riverine systems to find locations that could most likely support Reserve goals. To limit this effort to manageable scale, we focused exclusively on state or federally owned properties. This also ensured that the properties being evaluated had established levels of existing protection, and would not be construed as any type of land grab or jurisdictional expansion.

Proposed CT NERR: ...Site Selection ending

4



After a 2-year process, a team of site selection experts, with the steering committees review and approval, proposed the following land and offshore areas for a CT NERR. These include: Lord Cove WMA, DEEP Marine HQ and Great Island WMA, the Bluff Point complex, Haley Farm State Park, and portions of the CT River, Thames River, and LIS. The legend defines areas within these boundaries as either core or buffer. In making these distinctions, the team relied heavily on the concepts of core areas reflecting ecosystem units of land and water areas and selecting buffers as areas where we might expect habits or species could expand into as environmental conditions change over time.

It is also important to note that although this represents a specific set of locations chosen among many outstanding options, the sphere of influence of the proposed Reserve – its programming capacity, ability to transfer of knowledge, support and engage citizens, etc. do not end with a line on a map. That is, the benefits that a Reserve brings are not limited to just these areas.

Proposed CT NERR Overview – Proposed Site ⁵

Brings Uniqueness to the National System:

- Different environmental characteristics from other Reserves in Northeast

Contains Diverse & Important Habitats:

- Variety of different habitats support numerous species across all life stages

Broad canvas for science/research topics:

- Opportunities to address historic, current and emerging research needs

Well situated to engage various types of environmental education/training:

- K-12, adult/professional ed., CT Sea Grant, Mystic Aquarium, CT River Museum, Project O, Roger Tory Peterson Center, etc.



Although there were many locations assessed, the proposed site proved exceptional because it provides examples of offshore characteristics such as rocky hard bottom areas and different habitats and species that occur over shallow to deepwater depths that are not currently found in Reserves within the Northeast. Further, these areas, as well as their upland partners provide a diverse mosaic of land and seascapes where a host of species - including many that are threatened or endangered - live and breed.

Not surprisingly, there is a robust body of historical science and research, and a broad range of current and emerging themes that these land and offshore areas can help support and expand upon.

Of course none of this really matters all that much if these aren't used to help preserve the balance between the environment and the human uses that depend on them for economic, recreational, or aesthetic purposes, or to help educate and train people young and old in science based decision making and environmental awareness.

Relationships with Human Uses

6

Reserves **do not** prevent activities because of lines on a map. **They are** designed to coexist with current and anticipated uses.

Future uses within Reserve boundaries **do rely** on the application of existing state and local authorities to ensure that both the Reserve needs and the needs of uses are balanced.

How the proposed CT Reserve will function vis-à-vis human uses will be developed as part of the public processes of the Management Planning effort.



Reserves are sometimes met with confusion and skepticism on what they are perceived to do (or not do.) . Reserves do not prevent existing activities within their boundaries. So for example: using state park land to hike, birdwatch, bike ride, etc., would not be prohibited simply through the designation of a NERR. Likewise, boating, fishing and shellfishing – both recreationally and commercially - are still allowable.

When considering future uses, Reserves do not create additional regulatory burdens. Rather, they rely on the regulatory requirements, jurisdictions, and enforcement policies within the state to ensure a functional balance exists. To take a practical example of proposed expansion of shellfishing aquaculture that has been brought up before in previous meetings:

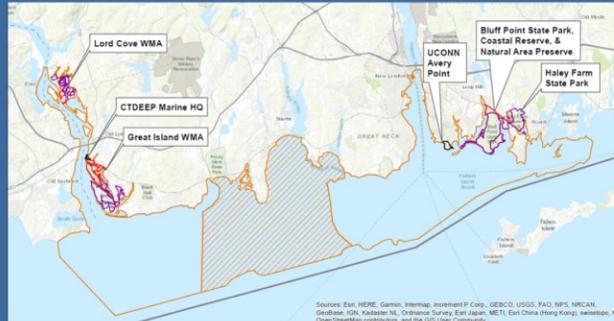
- A Reserve would rely on the existing regulatory policies and coordination of CT DABA, CT DEEP, and local shellfishing boards/commissions to make responsible decisions on the placement, scope, and type of operations allowable.
- Given that CT has the regulatory framework in place, and has demonstrated a long standing commitment to ensuring a thriving shellfishing industry that is not detrimental to the environmental quality of LIS, there is little reason for a Reserve to be concerned that this would prevent it from carrying out its goals. Similarly, the aquaculture community would not need to be concerned that a Reserve carries the regulatory power to block any activity it wants.

One of the required elements of the EIS component is to develop a Reserve Management plan. This document will serve as the operational blueprint for the Reserve and its programs and will also address the important relationships between it and various other activities that occur within the boundaries. The process for developing this plan will happen during the Fall/Winter and, like the Blue Plan process that many of you may be familiar with, will seek engagement from various sectors to ensure that Reserve operations and the surrounding activities exist and operate in complementary ways.

Proposed CT NERR – EIS

7

- Goal is to analyze actions whose effects are expected to be significant.
- To achieve this goal, we need to define what is unique and potentially at risk within the area
- Then, we define the expected impacts of establishing a NERR on these resources.



Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NGS, NRCAN, GeBCO, IGN, Kabstar, NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



Now we'll transition the presentation to discussing some of the EIS requirements described earlier. The goal of the EIS is to analyze actions whose effects are expected to be significant. To achieve this goal, we need to define what is unique and potentially at risk within the area. Then, we define the expected impacts of establishing a NERR on these resources.

Proposed CT NERR – EIS

8

National Context

Purpose of and Need for Action

State Context

Alternative Boundary Configurations

Describe the Affected Environment

Describe the Environmental Consequences of Each Alternative Boundary Configuration

Describe the Affected Environment

Describe the Environmental Consequences of Each Alternative Boundary Configuration

Natural Environment

- Physical Environment
 - Climate
 - Water Resources
 - Geology
- Biological Environment
 - Terrestrial Habitats
 - Riparian & Freshwater Hab.
 - Estuarine Habitats
 - Offshore Habitats
- Living Resources
 - Flora
 - Fauna
 - Special-Status Species & Hab.

Human Environment

- Human and Economic Setting
 - Population
 - Employment
 - Regional Economics
- Cultural and Historic Setting
 - Land Use
 - Resources
- Current Human Uses
 - Agriculture
 - Aquaculture
 - Fishing
 - Tourism & Recreation
 - Transportation
 - Education
 - Research & Monitoring
 - Military



In this slide, you see the chapters included in the EIS on the left and the topics touched on them on the right. Tonight, we are looking for feedback on alternative boundaries to the proposed Reserve and insights on any of these areas shown on the slide. Once alternative boundaries are established, we will evaluate their impact on the natural and human environment. The Blue Plan for Long Island Sound provides insight into many of these topics and is being used to help describe our region and evaluate the potential impacts of establishing a Reserve.

Proposed CT NERR – Potential Alternatives

9

Many possibilities, but the EIS can only deal with a practical number of compelling cases such as:

1. No action
2. Unselected site that was a high scoring alternative
3. Boundary changes to upland and subtidal areas
 - Expand/contract
 - Re-delineate core and buffer



As you might imagine, there are potentially limitless possibilities although at a practical level we can only consider a handful, focusing on what are considered the most compelling. What I'd like to do now is share what the Steering Committee, in consultation with NOAA, has come up with as possible options. We've based these on the general types of things that other Reserve EIS processes have used, and provided some examples of what they might mean here in CT.

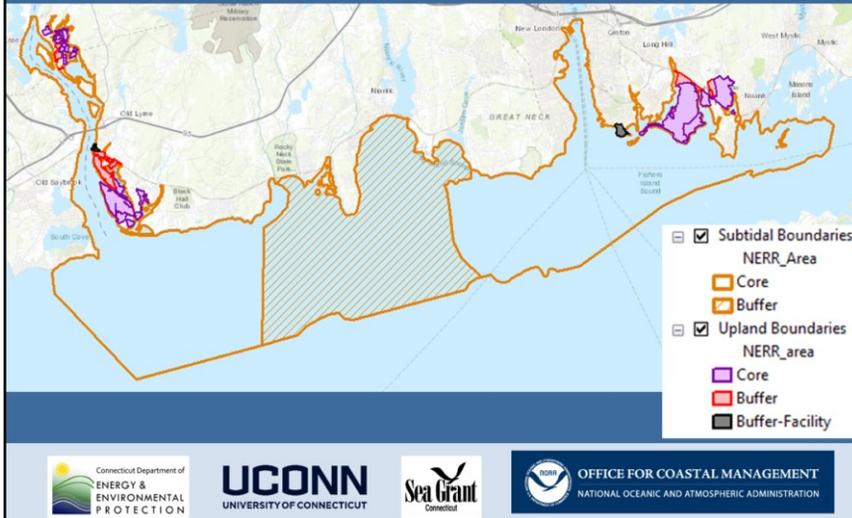
They are: no action (don't try and establish a Reserve); re-examine a high scoring site not selected; and examine potential upland and offshore boundary changes. The no action alternative is typically included in all EIS efforts, and is generally the easiest to understand. The other listed have some associated visuals to help stimulate thoughts.

The comments on these will be reviewed by the Steering Committee and the NOAA team and we will decide on a final slate to be included within the draft EIS we hope to complete in the first half of next year.

Proposed CT NERR – Potential Alternatives

10

For context: current proposed site



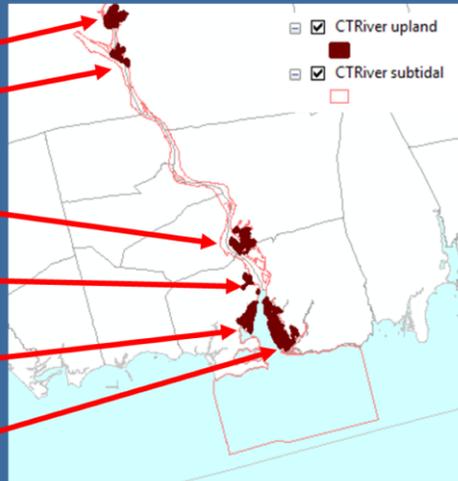
The next series of slides will show some maps. As a reminder, these are included in the “Invitation, Agenda, and General Information” document available for download at the DEEP NERR homepage, so they can be referred to after this evening’s presentation. Further, we will be able to circle back to these or any other slides later during the comment period – so don’t worry if you miss something or need to see it again. To set the stage – here is the proposed Reserve, showing the upland and offshore areas with core and buffer areas.

Proposed CT NERR – Potential Alternatives

11

Connecticut River:

- Machimoodus State Park
- Haddam Neck Wildlife Management Area
- Lord Cove & Nott Island Wildlife Management Areas
- Ferry Point Wildlife Management Area
- Ragged Rock Creek Wildlife Management Area
- DEEP Marine Headquarters / Great Island Wildlife Management Area



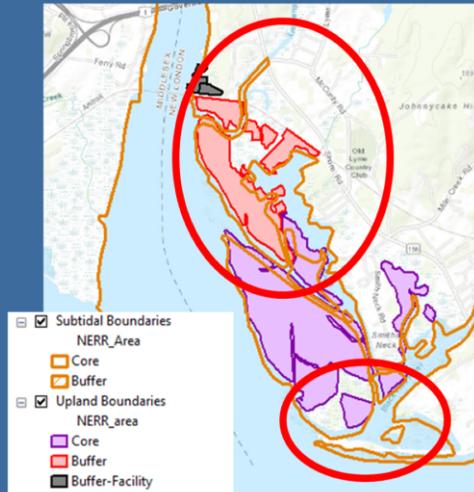
Shown here is an example of a high scoring site that was not chosen as the proposed Reserve. It focused solely on the CT River from Haddam/East Haddam south to an offshore zone extending to just short of the CT/NY state line. This option included several properties on either side of the CT River including: Machimoodus State Park, Haddam Neck Wildlife Management Area, Lord Cove & Nott Island Wildlife Management Areas, Ferry Point Wildlife Management Area, Ragged Rock Creek Wildlife Management Area, and DEEP Marine Headquarters / Great Island Wildlife Management Area.

Proposed CT NERR – Potential Alternatives

12

Are there areas adjacent to existing boundaries that may include Land Trust or other lands held for conservation?

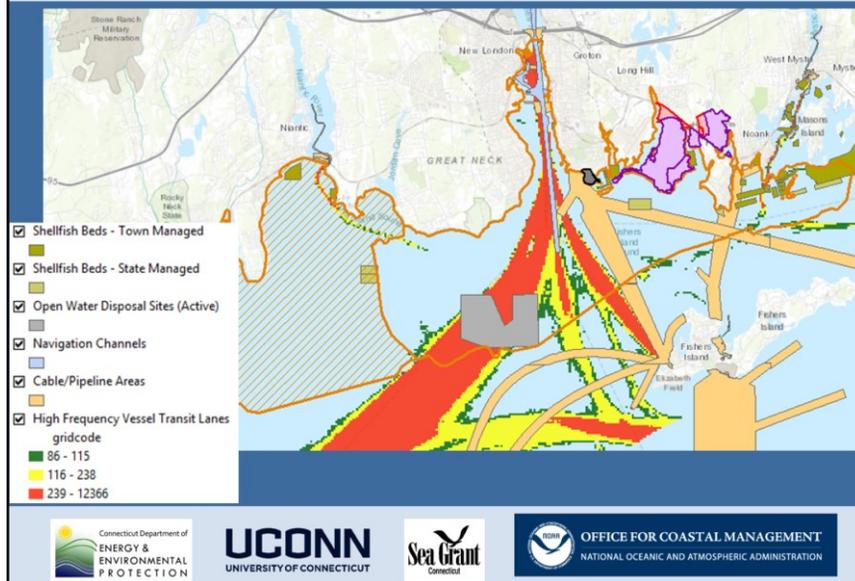
Lower CT River is an example, but applies to Lord Cove, Bluff Point/Haley Farm locations as well.



Another option to consider is to examine any other potential land that may be under some form of conservation/protection that was not considered at the outset. While the Steering Committee and the selection team deliberately avoided this type of assessment at the macro scale, now that we have a refined area it may be advantageous to see if these warrant a closer examination. In the interest of time we are showing an example from the lower CT River area where we know there are conservation lands adjacent to the proposed Reserve. If there are other such examples adjacent to the other proposed upland areas (e.g., Lord Cove, Bluff Point/Haley Farm) we are interested in hearing about those as well. A note of caution - any expansion alternative would not simply look to make a larger footprint, but to make a meaningful environmental improvement, such as to provide a better buffer area.

Proposed CT NERR – Potential Alternatives

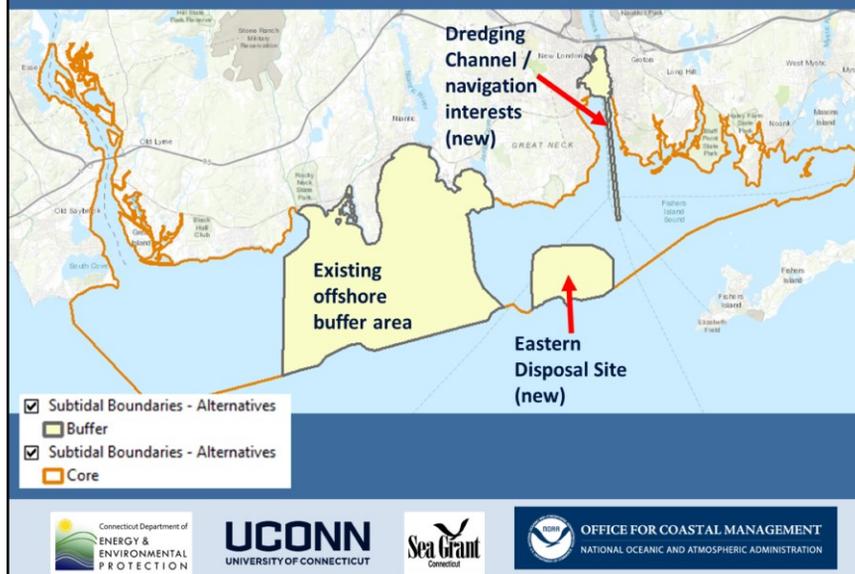
13



When considering options for offshore boundary adjustments, we note that the areas in the eastern end of the proposed Reserve are heavily used. Leveraging the work of the LIS Blue Plan, we can display some of those uses. Note that this is not an exhaustive look (it would make for a difficult slide to interpret) but rather a means to illustrate the scope and location of human uses, from aquaculture to transportation, to dredging, and submerged infrastructure. In assessing these and bearing in mind the roles of Reserve core and buffer areas, we might consider an alternative that would place dredging related interests such as navigation channel improvements and disposal areas in the buffer category. While recognizing these are not activities prohibited in a Reserve – and in fact may serve as useful areas to either study outright or serve as points of contrast for other research – the fact that there is likely to be ongoing and large-scale modifications of the sea bed over time suggest that designating these as a buffer may be a worthwhile alternative.

Proposed CT NERR – Potential Alternatives

14



Here is a cleaner look at what putting dredge area interest into a buffer may look like when considering the offshore component. Note the additions of the eastern disposal area in LIS and the dredged channel & navigation interests in the Thames River.

Proposed CT NERR Site – Next steps

15

- Use the feedback received tonight and during the comment period to develop a Draft EIS (DEIS)
- DEIS shared for review and comment via public hearing.
- Comments to be addressed in a Final EIS (FEIS)
- FEIS available for review during a 45-day comment period. NOAA to review FEIS.
- As part of the DEIS/FEIS, CT will develop a Reserve Management Plan; public input will be taken this Fall/Winter and incorporated into both DEIS and FEIS.
- If FEIS approved, hopeful designation in late 2021 or early 2022.



So, to briefly lay out the next steps:

We will use the feedback received tonight and during the comment period to develop a Draft EIS which will be shared for review and comment via public hearing next year at or around this time. Any comment received at that time will be processed and addressed as part of a Final EIS (FEIS)

The FEIS will then be available for review during a 45 day comment period. Once concluded, NOAA will begin their review of the document.

As part of both the DEIS/FEIS, CT will develop a Reserve Management Plan; Input from the public as well as key partners will be taken during this Fall/Winter and incorporated into both of those documents.

If the FEIS is approved, then we are hopeful the designation process will complete in late 2021/early 2022 and CT will join the Reserve system as the 30th NERR.

Proposed CT NERR – Wrap up

16

7 minute break, then return for comment period.

During the break we will be showing a slide with the instructions for providing input via Webex. Since this is more difficult to do in a virtual environment, please bear with us as we try to proceed in an orderly manner.

If you would prefer to provide written comments (either in addition to anything tonight or as an alternative) you may do so as well. The addresses to provide written feedback are in the document available on the CT DEEP NERR webpage, referenced in the yellow box on the “Break” slide.



This concludes the formal presentation part of the meeting. After a short break we will return to take comments and answer questions. During the break we will provide a slide with instructions for providing input via webex. Since this is more difficult to efficiently do in a virtual environment, please bear with us as we try to proceed in an orderly manner.

If you would prefer to provide written comments (either in addition to anything tonight or as an alternative) you may do so as well. The options to provide written feedback (electronically or via hardcopy) will be included on the slide as well.

To Submit Additional Comments After Tonight

- Instructions on submitting comments are available in the Federal Register Notice or from the CT DEEP NERR website.
- Comments are due August 18, 2020.

Contact info:

(NOTE: Please use these for general communication, and not for sending formal comments regarding the EIS.)

*nelle.daversa@noaa.gov
randall.schneider@noaa.gov
erica.seiden@noaa.gov
kevin.obrien@ct.gov
jamie.vaudrey@uconn.edu*



For general questions on the Reserve system or the CT effort, feel free to contact us via the emails provided. We ask however that you please do not email us directly with comments, instead use the addresses for the regulations.gov website or US mail. This will ensure they do not get lost or overlooked.

Thank you, and we will return shortly.

7 ** Minute ** Break

Full instructions for submitting a comment during this meeting and once the meeting is over are available on the CT DEEP NERR webpage.

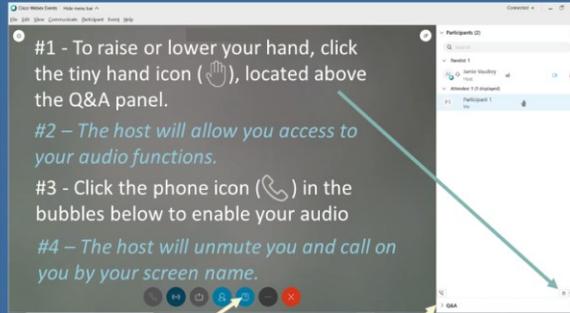
- Conduct an online search for “CT DEEP NERR”
- Look for “Invitation, Agenda, & General Information”

Verbal Comments & Questions

From a computer/tablet, follow the steps in the diagram to the right.

From a phone (with no computer connection):

1. Raise your hand by typing on your phone: *3
2. When you hear a message that you are unmuted, the host will call on you as a “phone-in caller.”



click here to enable Q&A

click here to expand the Q&A dialogue box

Written Comments & Questions

Type into the Q&A box. (Please direct your comment to “all panelists,” the default.) Your comment will be read aloud.

We’ll take a short break and begin the public comment period at XXpm, in 7 minutes.

Public Comment Period

Verbal Comments & Questions

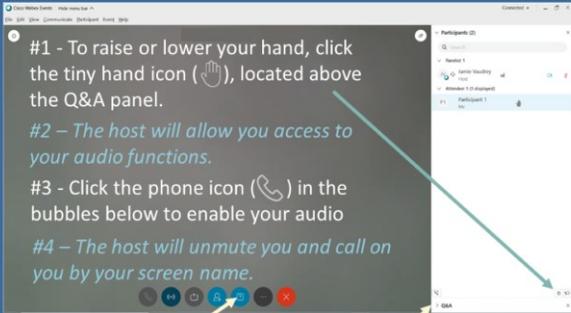
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- Conduct an online search for "CT DEEP NERR"
- Look for "Invitation, Agenda, & General Information"



Written Comments & Questions

Type into the Q&A box. (Please direct your comment to "all panelists," the default.) Your comment will be read aloud.

Welcome back.

As a reminder, you can download a guide to raising your hand or using the Q&A box at the CT DEEP NERR website.

Comments and questions typed into the Q&A box will be read aloud by our panelist from NOAA, Nelle D’Aversa.

People attending only by phone, without a computer, can raise their hand by pressing *3.

If you joined by browser versus installing the Webex app on your computer, you will not be able to make verbal comments, but you can still comment by typing in the Q&A box.

Everyone else, you can raise your hand and I will allow you access to the audio functions. You will then need to enable audio from your end by clicking on the bubble at the bottom of the screen with the phone icon in it. When it is your turn to speak, I will unmute you and call you by your screen name.

As a final direction, please limit your comments to 3 minutes or less. If you reach that mark, I will break in and indicate that we need to move on.

Let’s get started by going to Nelle D’Aversa to take a few questions from the Q&A box. While we are doing this, I will begin enabling the audio function for anyone who raises their hand, but will not unmute you until it is your turn to speak. Nelle?

To Submit Additional Comments After Tonight

- Instructions on submitting comments are available in the Federal Register Notice or from the CT DEEP NERR website.
- Comments are due August 18, 2020.

Contact info:
(NOTE: Please use these for general communication, and not for sending formal comments regarding the EIS.)

<i>nelle.daversa@noaa.gov</i>
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Thank you all for attending tonight and for participating in this process.

You can visit the Federal Register Notice website or the CT DEEP NERR website to find a copy of these presentations and guidance on submitting additional comments.

All comments related to the scoping process for the draft EIS are due by August 18, 2020.

As noted earlier by Kevin O'Brien, you will have additional opportunities to review and comment on the draft EIS, once it is complete and again on the final EIS and draft Management Plan.

Thank you again for participating, we look forward to hosting a National Estuarine Research Reserve in CT and your participation and support is critical to the process.

Good night.