



Peconic Estuary Program
Management Committee Meeting Summary
December 8, 2011, 10:00 – 12:30
Cornell Cooperative Extension Building, 1st Floor
423 Griffing Avenue
Riverhead, NY

1. Introductions – Seth Ausubel: General introductions around the table; Seth Ausubel acknowledged Alison Branco as the new Peconic Estuary Program (PEP) Director and Larry Penny (Town of East Hampton) as the new TAC Vice-Chair.

2. Minutes from September 2011 meeting – Seth Ausubel: Approved with no changes.

3. Program Office Update – Alison Branco, PEP Director:

- Summary of orientation and meetings attended (Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) regional workshop and Peconic Sustainability Institute).
- Contract Update: Most funds are now in contract, for detailed information, see handout – contract sheet. Highlighted Homeowner Rebate, Public Participation and Mini Grants (potentially as educational grants for schools) as contracts still to be let.
- New PEP webpage will be “live” around the new year.
- Verbal approval for a PEP facebook page (essential form of communication)

4. Natural Resource and Stormwater Update – Julie Nace, PEP Coordinator, DEC:

Eelgrass: Priorities include aerial survey (\$60,000), light and temperature research (\$50,000), pesticide research and outreach and education. 15% cost savings if aerial surveys are conducting this spring in partnership with Connecticut and Rhode Island. Previously allocated moneys for aerial surveys were put into long term monitoring program as other non-NEP were expected to be available for the aerial surveys (though this did not come to pass). Larry Penny suggested research where rafts of washed up eelgrass originate from, opening inlets promotes eelgrass growth and noted that East Hampton does not allow use of Round-Up. Dawn McReynolds added that there is a need to study pesticide input from groundwater. Camilo Salazar said Suffolk County is trying to extend their eelgrass management plan work.

ACTION → Find ways to move funds for spring survey or appropriate future FY funds. Appropriate future FY funds to eelgrass research, or begin to search for outside funding for eelgrass research.

Dredging: Summary document (Initiating the Discussion) is finalized and posted on the website. Next steps should address 5 priority areas: resources, master planning, funding, placement options and permitting. PEP needs to decide what role it will play in the overall topic of dredging. Once role is decided, a workgroup should be formed to advance it.

ACTION → PEP to convene small workgroup to determine role in dredging and form workgroup to advance that role.

Habitat Restoration Implementation Report (IPR): Draft document is ready for review.

ACTION → DEC to submit document shortly for review to PEP Program Office and the PEP Natural Resources Subcommittee (NRS).

Stormwater Workgroup Updates: Subwatershed management plans from Horsley Witten will be ready shortly for first review by towns. Inter-municipal Agreement Needs Assessment will be sent out to municipalities this week. Homeowner Rebate program advancing – met with Southold, will meet with Southampton; Suffolk County contract department will advise how to proceed with money distribution.

ACTION → Continue to support and manage contracts.

5. Update on Nitrogen Assessment – Rick Balla and Dana Greenlee: A report of the progress in achieving the Nitrogen Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) program is being prepared. Highlights of a preliminary assessment were presented. Current analyses indicate that the overall goals may not be met; additional focus is needed to address load reductions from residential and agricultural fertilizer use. A final document will be presented, draft in January 2012, outlining recommendations including monitoring and implementation.

ACTION → EPA to prepare draft and final assessment document; PEP participants to review draft document when it is ready and incorporate recommendations into planning.

6. Preliminary FY 2012 Workplan and Budget Discussion – Alison Branco:

- A preliminary budget was presented. In addition to the \$600,000 National Estuary Program (NEP) funds and \$600,000 match, PEP would like to find an additional \$800,000 of outside funding to make a total budget of \$2,000,000.
- Funding for Suffolk County water quality monitoring was explained. Noted that Long Island Sound Study (LISS) and South Shore Estuary Reserve (SSER) do not currently contribute to this effort. Dawn McReynolds noted the SSER is trying to establish a water quality monitoring program.
- Rick Balla – Federal government is still under Continuing Resolution. Budget is not yet determined. Hopeful for a similar budget funding as last year's. Annual workplan and strategy describes the budget cycle. Management Committee wants a budget presented at March meeting.
- Seth Ausubel – We need to coordinate on presenting a budget that emphasizes implementation.
- Member items for funding are due to legislators by the end of 2011.
- Suffolk County ¼% ideas to formulated in January 2012 and prepared for May 2012 due date.
- Any ideas for consideration in FY12 budget, please e-mail to Alison Branco.

ACTION → Submit member item ideas by end of 2011. Formulate and draft ideas for ¼% funds in January 2012. Incorporate any ideas submitted by stakeholders into FY12 budget, if applicable. SCDHS to inquire about getting funding to partially support monitoring efforts from the LISS and the SSER programs.

- Discussion: Stalled Conceptual Habitat Design Contract. Laura Stephenson offered to contact Jay Schneiderman to help with Suffolk County waiver committee.

7. Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Update – Larry Penny: The reconvened TAC met in November 2011, and adopted bylaws; Matt Scalfani was elected chair, Larry Penny, the vice-chair.

8. Local Government Committee (LGC) Update – Alison Branco: This committee will be reinvigorated starting in January 2012. PEP staff will try to attend meetings where members are already attending like the East End Supervisors and Mayors meetings and the newly formed Clean Water Coalition.

ACTION → Contact elected officials identified by the East End Supervisors and Mayors Association for this committee and reach out to other potential members.

9. Outreach and Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Update – Jen Skilbred: Summarized recent meetings of the CAC and the many guest speakers that have presented. Presented a summary report of all outreach and education activities. Report will be available on the website. Need to determine a clear direction for the CAC.

Discussion followed with following outcomes: Outreach and education contract options will be determined by January 2012 by PEP Program Office. PEP CAC or another committee should offer ideas to the Peconic Sustainability Institute “mission statement” committee.

ACTION → Program to determine method to fund future Outreach and Education services by January 2012.

10. New Business: Friends of the Long Pond Greenbelt came to voice their concerns over the stalled Conceptual Habitat Design contract. Ligonee Creek is part of that contract and of great concern to them. Laura Stephenson reiterated her offer to contact Jay Schneiderman to help with Suffolk County waiver committee.

ACTION → none

11. Next Meeting: Thursday, March 8, 2012