



PEP Citizen's Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday May 18, 2016 6:00-8:00pm
Sag Harbor Village Hall 55 Main Street Sag Harbor, NY



AGENDA- SPRING 2016

- 6:00 PM Introductions and Program Office Updates
Kevin McDonald- PEP CAC Chairman
Dr. Alison Branco- PEP Director
- 6:15 PM The State of the Bays and a Vision for the Future
Discussion by CAC members
- 6:45 PM Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan Revision
CCMP Discussion by CAC members
- 7:15 PM New Topics of Concern Relating to Estuary Health and Water Quality
Let's Hear from You!
- 7:30 PM CAC Ambassadors- Ways you can be an Active CAC Member
Sherryll Jones- PEP Outreach & Education Coordinator
- 7:45 PM Closing Remarks and Adjournment

2016 CAC DATES TO REMEMBER

- ✓ Wednesday June 22nd Community Stormwater Stewardship Training Workshop
10am-12pm Suffolk County Marine and Environmental Learning Center
3690 Cedar Beach Road Southold, NY
- ✓ Regularly Scheduled CAC Meetings:
Tuesday September 12th 6-8pm *location to be determined*
Wednesday November 16th 1-3pm *location to be determined*
Special CAC Summer Sessions: Thursdays July 21st (NOFO) and August 4th (SOFO)
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CALL-IN INFORMATION

Web Conference <https://cornell.webex.com>

Teleconference: (855) 244-8681 Call-in toll free number (US/Canada)

WebEx meeting number and access code: 647 471 233

Password: springCAC2016

Attendee number: Not applicable

CONTACT

cac@peconicestuary.org

Sherryll Huber Jones, PEP Outreach Coordinator 631/727-7850 ext. 353

Kevin McDonald (TNC, CAC Chairman) gave introduction and started the meeting conversation by posing these two questions. Each CAC meeting member was asked to write down their answers to these two questions on index cards provided: (Answers to these questions found in the CCMP public input files)

1) What are 3 reasons/ inspirations for your involvement in Peconic water quality issues?

Some answers included:

- Enjoy a productive system for herself/boating
- Economically important to the area
- Aesthetically keep it beautiful
- Human preservation if the water isn't around then we can't survive.
- Water the most important commodity
- Seeing the bad changes in the water; cloudy, eelgrass gone, fish and shellfish gone.
- Tourists think it looks pretty (no sewage or garbage in the water) so they don't see the changes. Many people don't have the history to the area. "Resetting the norm"
- Recreational value- getting away from people means getting on the water
- Resiliency- some things are coming back: eagles, river otters, alewife, bunker that were whipped out in the 1960's. Now they are back, look toward optimism that the system can heal.
- People with the history can remember how it changed. Attitudes and differences between north and south forks. Coopershead Act → zoning
- Tell the children how to live with and appreciate the area. Diving in Fort Pond Bay clear to 10 ft. sea urchins, kelp and algae. Now rocks are covered with grey fuzz. Not just nitrogen issue- populations pressure.
- Roundup detected in local landscapers bodies.
- The feeling that PEP hasn't done much in the past twenty years.
- The Southampton College used to be a bigger player in the area.

2) What is your vision of a health/restored Peconic Bay in 5 years.

General topics of these answers included:

- Sewage treatment plants moved off the shorelines reduce the summer populations.
- Restoration/Undoing mistakes of the past/feed stream buffer.
- Education of land use practices of visiting persons/population
- Better planning-building odes. Soil structure and landscaping, native vegetation, mulch, the land is not permeable so the runoff is running off all the big estates.
- No regulation of water use and irrigation. Go against the Home Rule Law- gave up our rights to ban pesticides.
- Reduction of nitrogen levels in the water.

1988: Nitrogen was viewed as a problem but didn't have the technology to model or determine these things. What let it turn into a crisis? The retirement of county officials who played out their remaining years? Why have we been talking about this for so many years and nobody feels like anything changes? Change is hard.

There is much more awareness in the community now. Move the conversation from "as usual" to something needs to change. People who attend CAC meetings and think about these things are in the minority.

“Rainbow of HABS”: Art can reach people- the language we are using is dead. Use visual language. Use music- groundwater, eelgrass is invisible. Rosenthal Halt the Highway, Native American commercial about trash. Greed: The vision of the McMansion is what people sell and what people are interested in. Historical changes how the watershed works sinks clear cutting. Solutions with people’s jobs.

Puget Sound. The great flush out- dye tablets where the coastal water turned pink. Don’t forget about pharmaceuticals. Emotional contact- holding the resource close to your heart. Listening is subjective it just “goes away”, the land absorbs it. Logos and brands do not strike that chord. Muriel CAC member has an exhibit at a local gallery. Army Corp. sandbag pictures in Montauk, photos of pollution.

CAC Action Item→ Get in touch with local artists to get involved and lend their talents. Create new campaigns that are visually and emotionally impactful.

Alison Branco (PEP Director) updates form the program office, and a background on the current CCMP- comprehensive conservation and management plan in place for the Peconics.

Peconic Estuary Program Office Update:

- CPF funding (not guaranteed); Plum Island, National Estuary Program reauthorized since 2010 will keep money available.
- Efforts happening at the state and county level to keep the east ends needs met.
- LINAP development. Public input meetings will be shared via the CAC meeting email list.
- Subwatershed/waste water plan/county options for homeowners to voluntarily upgrade their system stop grandfathering cesspools especially ones that sit in the water table.
- Summer is the first time to change the Health code. New technology improvements/allowances. Fall digging and reduced? January funds are available for funding new systems. Residents could have access to money in early 2017.
- Plan, Local Law, vote, money, Money based per each town. How do villages access the money? Priorities, present and justify to ask towns for money. Be organized.
- HABS symposium management of N2 reduction and research needs giving those in charge good science to proceed with better management.
- Alewife ground in North Sea. Raingarden/native plant treatment area and viewing area for direct land or road input.
- Sag harbor village back parking lot using educational bioswales and raingardens. Will control water flow into the bay and improve parking
- Sag Harbor village- restoring wetlands and ponds, reducing bulkhead. Village in the flood plain. 1 out of 3 septic in the water table.
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Concerns from people about hiring experts from “away”. Mass water problems as an example. Benefit scientists not from here are under less political pressures to say something (or not). Brown tide of the 1980s killed the benthos which put the system out of recovery.

Rebecca from PLT has concerns about the 2014 data for the Ag N2 inputs on TNC’s map (see map attached to notes)

CAC Action Item→ Keep updates and information circulating to inform the public, PEP followers, and CAC members as these plans develop.

CCMP Revision:

Historical importance of the CAC in the creation of PEP and the input on the CCMP revisions. PEP was started by a citizen response to brown tide events in the Peconics. The plans were based on reactionary information. Commit to a long term plan the things that we have learned,



Peconic Estuary PROGRAM

Citizen's Advisory Committee Ambassadors



Photo: Cornell Cooperative Extension

New for 2016 is the Citizen Ambassadorship. CAC Members and Volunteers will help establish PEP as a leader in estuary protection by working in their own neighborhoods to gather data, educate, and inform.

Roles of ambassadors include:

Involving your local civic associations in the new management plan for the estuary (CCMP).

Distributing educational material on estuary issues and flyers promoting PEP sponsored events within your community

Staffing an educational volunteer table at a farmer's market or event this summer.

Being a Secret Shopper at local garden centers to assess the understanding of fertilizer use in the watershed.

Joining the Community Stormwater Stewardship Program to test water quality parameters.

To learn more about being a PEP CAC Ambassador

Email cac@peconicestuary.org or call
(631) 727-7850 ext. 353



Peconic Estuary Program Citizen's Advisory Committee Member Talking Points - Summer 2016

An **estuary** is an embayment or other shallow coastal body of water where fresh water from the land (rivers, streams, groundwater, etc.) meets the salt water from the ocean. The ecosystem is characterized by brackish water and a large diversity of finfish and shellfish in all life cycles (larval, juvenile, and adult). Estuaries are directly impacted by the human population living along the coast.

A true **watershed** is a basin-like landform defined by highpoints and ridgelines that descend into lower elevations and stream valleys that collect run-off. On Long Island, however, our sandy soils allow most water to infiltrate very quickly. Therefore, the groundwater contributing area, determined by subsurface geology rather than surface topography, better describes the freshwater input to surface waters. A watershed carries water "shed" from the land after rain falls and snow melts. Drop by drop, water infiltrates through soils into groundwater or is channeled into creeks and streams, making its way to larger rivers and eventually the sea.

The Peconic Estuary Program (PEP) is one of 28 National Estuary Programs around the country supported by section 320 of the Clean Water Act and administered by the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA). The program is responsible for creating a management plan to protect the estuary.

The PEP was established November 1992 after citizen groups formed in response to the Brown Tide algal bloom events in the mid 1980's and early 1990's. At that time, it became the 20th National Estuary Program in the country.

The PEP adopted its first (and current) Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP) in 2001.

The PEP is comprised of all stakeholders within the estuary. Committee members from each stakeholder group meet quarterly (always open to the public) to discuss concerns and solutions with the PEP program staff:

"CAC" Citizen's Advisory Committee- citizens, business leaders, community groups

"TAC" Technical Advisory Committee- scientists, environmental groups, researchers

"MC" Management Committee- program staff, USEPA, NYSDEC, Suffolk County, local towns and incorporated villages + chairs of TAC & CAC.

The PEP program office is located in Yaphank at the Suffolk County Dept. of Health Services, Office of Ecology. There is also PEP staff at NYSDEC Division of Marine Resources Public. Outreach and education is contracted annually, currently to Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County.

PEP receives funding from the EPA National Estuary Program, NY State, and Suffolk County. The current operating budget funds three staff members, the outreach and education contract, and Peconic Bay monitoring programs (atmospheric nitrogen deposition, eelgrass monitoring, and water quality monitoring). PEP and its partners also provide funding in the form of grants to local projects aimed at improving water quality and public education.

PEP has spent over \$11 million dollars on restoration projects in the Peconic Bay watershed over the past 20 years conserving critical marine habitat, restoring fish migration and spawning habitat, restoring bay scallop populations, developing fertilizer and nitrogen reduction laws and projects, engaging the public engagement and incentivizing green-infrastructure.

Citizens Advisory Committee of the Peconic Estuary Program



Wednesday May 18, 2016

6:00-8:00pm

Sag Harbor Village Hall

55 Main Street Sag Harbor, NY

Be a part of conservation plans for the Peconic Bays.

- ✓ Voice your concerns
- ✓ Express ideas
- ✓ Actively participate

in community and environmental discussion with a common goal of promoting clean water and healthy bays.

*For more information email cac@peconicesutary.org
Visit PEP's website PeconicEstuary.org*

