



PEP Citizen's Advisory Committee Meeting

Thursday, May 10th | 5:30-7:30pm

South Fork Natural History Museum

377 Bridgehampton-Sag Harbor Turnpike

Bridgehampton, NY 11932



AGENDA

- 5:30 PM *Introductions*
Kevin McDonald - CAC Chair
- 5:40 PM *Program Update / Introduce New Program Director, Dr. Joyce Novak*
Sarah Schaefer - Program Coordinator
- 5:55 PM *CCMP Update*
Sarah Schaefer - Program Coordinator & Elizabeth Hornstein - State Coordinator
- 6:25 PM *Town and County Septic Rebate*
Kevin McDonald - CAC Chair
- 6:40 PM *CAC Ambassadors: Ways you can be an active CAC member*
Lauren Scheer - PEP Outreach & Education Coordinator
Jenna Schwerzmann - PEP Outreach & Education Assistant
- 6:55 PM *Climate Change*
Dr. Alison Branco - Coastal Director of The Nature Conservancy
- 7:25 PM *Closing Remarks and Adjournment*

CONTACT

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PEP CAC Meeting Minutes

May 10th, 2018

Bridgehampton

Program Update

- Alewife training → happy to report that spawning populations in peconic river are increasing, we estimated 40-50,000 coming into the peconic river this year
- Diadromous fish restoration strategy released last week in collaboration with many long island organizations to identify priority fish passage projects on long island → great interactive map on seatuck environmental association website

CCMP Update - SARAH

- We are asking stakeholders, citizens, CAC, our partners, and anybody else from the east end that uses the estuary to provide us feedback on the CCMP
- **Question: Who is writing it? Answer: Contractor will help staff write it**
- Sarah gave an introduction to PEP, the estuary, and the reasons we need a CCMP revision
- She also covered some of the accomplishments that came out of the original CCMP and discussed past successful projects that PEP was a part of
- **Question from Kevin: If PEP didn't exist, would these projects have been completed and would we have achieved this long list of accomplishments?**
- **Question: a lot of our resources are focused on nitrogen, have you ever done any studies on the soil near marinas to test for the types of chemicals that may be there from boating activities, for example I am not able to grow things on the grass if his boat leaks oil over that area → potential CCMP point**
 - Answer from Joyce, this did exist at the state level as a rebate for marinas following best practices, but it didn't take off
 - A member (Sarah) mentioned a water quality study going on in sag harbor
 - Another member mentioned maybe some kind of catchment rule for boat effluent and asked about what happens when you power wash your boat
- Sarah explained our ongoing monitoring and research work
 - **Question: Where is the water quality data → Sarah said that the Suffolk county department of health services has their data available for download → further questions about how user friendly it is and whether or not there is a visualization of it available somewhere (apparently surf rider has a clear data system that is user friendly)**
 - **Send links for the usgs data because they do have a visualization graphic, apparently Montauk is trying to put one out there**
 - **Question about adding a radiation monitor to the USGS continuous data, regarding what is coming across the sound from CT; apparently there was a group in East Hampton that had one of those.**

CCMP Update - ELIZABETH

Questions: What is your view on CO2? How does that intersect with your mission?

I think it would be helpful to have metrics of progress on a more decadal scale to show the importance of the work of the project since it was created. → suggested using these tools and definable simple goals

She explained the timeline, and provided dates of the meetings, encourage your attendance

- **Provide link for the survey after the fact, and make some more stamped and addressed surveys**
- **Also remind people that if they cannot attend the meetings, they will be able to provide digital comments afterwards through website**

Septic Rebate - Kevin

- Adopted nitrogen as the killer threat priority pollutant problem in the estuary → Nitrogen Action Plan
- Reclaim our waters.com is useful and helpful
- County rebate program vs. the town programs, depending on the town you are in, if you fuse them together you almost get the total cost of doing a septic rebate covered, and this will significantly reduce your nitrogen load
- 1100 people interested in the county to do this (**how much money does the county have**), towns have a total of \$10 million combined
- Total prices under 20,000, you can get a rebate for 10,000, which is similar to what you would spend if your system broke right now, so might as well get a new one that will help the environment
- The program continues and is supposed to expand → **do we have flyers of this left?**
- Tell your friends
- **Question: I have heard people say some new systems require constant feeding, aka not ideal for seasonal homes? →**
 - They have control systems to mitigate this problem
 - There was some conversation about this concern, but essentially for the user returning from an absence, the system will be fully operational, but in terms of nitrogen removal, it may take a few weeks for the system to remove as much nitrogen as is desired, but this is still better than what we had before and since there has been no nitrogen loading for some time during the absence, it is really not a big problem
 - They should have maintenance once a year
 - **Follow-up question: Have these been tested in other communities?**
- Long island nitrogen action plan forthcoming soon
- It is a mandate for major renovation or new construction
- **Question: Thinking of putting one into a seasonal rental? Is that worth it?**
 - Kevin said that for the county it's actually pretty user friendly
 - And yes it definitely is
- **We need some kind of FAQ slash info sheet for people to look at for this septic rebate stuff**

CAC Ambassadors

Overall just share the word, come to CCMP meetings, and communicate relevant info within your networks

Climate Change

- In some ways it's too late, but we can do things to keep us from going into the angry red lines and instead get us into the lower levels
- Explained how scientists talk about an increase of 1-2 degrees, and explained that it's an average, not weather but climate

- We are in a hot spot for sea level rise in this area because of currents
- In our area, we will have lots of islands, the landscape will change
- She said that 6 feet rise is the best case scenario in 100 years. Some parts of L.I will become islands (orient).
- Salt marshes can do migration, but there is infrastructure in the way
- How do we make ourselves more resilient, we want to withstand the changes and bounce back without moving away
- Sea level rise can affect aquifers because groundwater will come closer to the surface, but if groundwater rises, septic systems might not be far enough away
 - Increased saltwater intrusion, if you have a private well, get it tested for pollutants and salt
 - Our health is at stake, not just the environment's health
- We need to work on the problem of shoreline hardening
- We don't know how soon these major impacts are coming, but we know they are coming, so we need to plan

Questions/comments:

- **When we showed the impact on human health involving our sole source aquifer, it really got the message across → recommended we make a chart to show how CO2, sea level rise, how all of that is a parent concern, relate it back to the people with how it directly impacts their health. It is a chilling tale. Feedback loops/tell a peer pressure story**
- **Is anything being done on coastal development restriction?**
- **Biggest thing he hears from the public → sometimes people don't want to hear that people are causing it and that it is CO2... so focus on the problem that is showing evidence that it is happening, aka sea level rise. It doesn't matter if it is our fault, it is an issue that needs to be addressed regardless**
 - **Another comment about how we can't forget to also target CO2 emissions, suggested simple solutions such as tree lined roads**
- **East Hampton has a grant to do a coastal plan, it should be done before the CCMP**
- **Mentioned subsidies for buying EV vehicles and solar installations, government has subsidy programs**

CAC AMBASSADOR TALKING POINTS

May 2018

CAC Ambassador Program

The more we inform the community, the more we can make a difference! As a CAC Ambassador, you can help us spread the message about the importance of healthy ecosystems, clean water, and how people can get involved to help protect and restore our Peconic Bays. We want to provide members information about the Peconic Estuary Program (PEP), upcoming meetings, and scheduled events, so that you can also share these points and get the community together to reach our common goal.

CCMP Public Input Meetings

This year, the Peconic Estuary Program is embarking on a revision of the Peconic Estuary Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP). It's been more than 15 years since PEP first released our plan to conserve and restore the Peconic Estuary. Much has changed since the first plan was written, and we want your input as we revise the new CCMP. Improving water quality in the Peconic Estuary is a complex issue and requires the cooperation and coordination of multiple groups. Help us refocus our efforts on the latest threats to the waterbodies of the Peconic by encouraging people to attend one of our public meetings.

- ◇ South Fork: Bridgehampton National Bank Meeting Room
May 23rd @ 6:30-9:00pm
- ◇ North Fork: Peconic Lane Recreation Center
May 24th @ 6:30-9:00pm
- ◇ Shelter Island: Shelter Island Public Library
May 31st @ 5:00-7:00pm

Share PEP's Posts on Facebook

This is an easy way to help PEP spread the word about what is happening in our estuary. When you share or like our Facebook posts we reach and educate more people.

PEP Talk Monthly

PEP creates a monthly video segment discussing environmental issues such as plastics, habitat restoration, nitrogen loading and more. Each month, the video is uploaded to our Vimeo page and posted on Facebook.

Suffolk County Septic Improvement Program

Long Island is home to thousands of cesspools and septic systems that are causing poor water quality. Reversing this degradation will depend on replacement of these existing systems with new, individual Innovative and Alternative Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (I/A OWTS). Suffolk County has devised the Septic Improvement Program consisting of both a grant and low-interest financing program as a way to assist residents to transition to systems that better protect water quality. (www.suffolkcountyny.gov/Departments/Planning/ReclaimOurWaterInitiativeUpdate.aspx.)

Fishing Line Receptacles

In December 2016, volunteers helped assemble monofilament fishing line receptacles to be installed around the Peconic Estuary. We are now looking for all fishing line receptacles to be included on an interactive map for the recreational fishing community to utilize. Please e-mail cac@peconicestuary.org to inform us of locations you are aware of.

Encourage Homeowner Rewards Program Participation

The Peconic Estuary Program offers up to \$500 reimbursement for residents of the Peconic Estuary watershed who plant native vegetation on their properties or install a rain barrel or rain garden. This program will only be available until 2019 so be sure to encourage your community to apply soon! Check out PEP's website where you will find a helpful Native Plant Database and suggestions as to where people can purchase these native plants. (www.peconicestuary.org/plant)

Tools and Resources on PEP's Website

We have plenty of tools and resources to help people learn more about the Peconic Estuary and how they can be involved. You will find the native plant database, online submission for the Homeowner Rewards Program, downloadable kid's material, best management practices, quizzes to test your estuary knowledge, responsible boating practices, and more!

Horseshoe Crab Monitoring

You can help scientists learn more about the population of the Atlantic Horseshoe Crabs by joining PEP at our horseshoe crab monitoring sites. Every spring, Atlantic Horseshoe Crabs come to shore during the new and full moon high tide in the evening to spawn. As a part of the Horseshoe Crab Monitoring Network, PEP is hosting a monitoring site at Squires Pond in Hampton Bays starting on May 13th at 10:15pm. Volunteers are encouraged to come learn about horseshoe crab biology and get hands on experience tagging the horseshoe crabs, measuring their size, and more. This data is used to assess the status of horseshoe crabs in NY State and will help determine the management and conservation of this important species.

Diamondback Terrapin Monitoring

Volunteers can help PEP monitor the Diamondback Terrapin by assessing areas of salt marsh for terrapin activity. This terrapin is the only turtle that is native to Long Island's salt marshes, and they are now listed as a threatened species due to unregulated harvesting. Our program is in collaboration with Friends of Flax Pond and The Jamaica Bay Terrapin Research Project. Keep an eye out for monitoring dates on our website's Events section.

About the Peconic Estuary Program

The Peconic Estuary Program (PEP) is one of 28 National Estuary Programs around the country under section 320 of the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA) Clean Water Act. 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 is comprised of all stakeholders within the estuary. Committee members from each stakeholder group meet quarterly to discuss concerns and solutions with the PEP program staff: "CAC" Citizen's Advisory Committee- citizens, business leaders "TAC" Technical Advisory Committee- scientists, environmental groups "MC" Management Committee- program staff, USEPA, NYSDEC, Suffolk County, local townships and east end incorporated villages. The PEP program office is located in Yaphank at the Suffolk County Dept. of Health Services, Office of Ecology. Public outreach and education is contracted annually, currently to Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County.

PEP Accomplishments

- Development of Critical Lands Protection Strategy and implementation of Community Preservation Fund to protect land from development
- Riverhead Sewage Treatment Plant effluent to irrigate Indian Island Golf Course
- Enactment of the Suffolk County Fertilizer Reduction Law (Local law 41-2007)
- Development and implementation of sub-watershed specific management plans
- Continuous long-term monitoring of water quality and sea grass distribution
- Peconic River Rock ramp passage in Grangebél Park, Riverhead and installation of eel and fish passage Edwards Avenue, Calverton
- Implementation of Peconic Estuary nitrogen and pathogen pollution reduction plans and upgrades of Sewage Treatment Plants

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Protecting and Restoring Long Island's Peconic Bays.