

**North Fork Public Meeting
Peconic Lane Recreation Center
Thursday, May 24 2018**

Public Comments

Water Quality
Within shellfish waters there is a need to correctly assess and test to confirm nature and level of issues. Also, there is a need to focus on residential sources of nitrogen. - John Sep
Riverhead waste treatment flows treated materials to the Peconic. It seems that material should go to an upland site to filter through the sand and clay, plus recharge the aquifer.
Reduce micro plastics going into shellfish and humans.
Some waterfront owners with old cesspools (usually on the waterside) are last to investigate the new septic technology but are afraid they will get on a list and suffer for it.
Suggest clearing standards, maximum fertilizer dependent on vegetation and other standards to be applied to development projects on the watershed which will protect habitat and water resources. I.e. no clearing standards in Shinnecock Hill and in other communities along the shoreline, usually they are applied on other sites.
Engage the youth population more by creating a program, water quality protection warriors.
Develop a homeowner emblem program.
Integrate town Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs into the PEP plan.
Don't use 2% transfer tax money for water quality. Find other forms of funding.

Habitat
Pollinators are a keystone species. Reduce deer population to increase bee populations. Deer eat flowers and without flowers bees are malnourished (land use dangers compounded by pesticides hurt bee populations). Eradicate feral cat populations by neutering and release. They kill birds protected by the Migratory Bird Act as well as Endangered Species Act. USFWS did a great review paper on this. Ensure habitat connections between protected parcels. Ban onetime use plastics. Hampton Beach just passed legislation this week. A Peconic study addressing the uplands - plant more oaks. Urban forest is changing height. More oaks are needed to keep habitat for large birds (i.e. bald eagles) as well as more insect protein for 96% of terrestrial birds to feed their young. Oaks are lost to over 500 species of moth and butterfly caterpillars (see Doug Tally's book Bringing Nature Home).
There needs to be a connection on the value of setbacks and vegetated buffers, composition, width, and maintenance. Also, address the removal of non-functioning bulkheads, promoting low sill where needed, and promoting natural materials that work. Additionally, audit town clearing limits and other protection measures; are they working?
Be aware of waterfront and marine dredging, including projects that are proposed that may impact natural resources.

Outreach

Create leverage with citizen science. Connect the public with the estuary and remind them of the benefits.

Coordinate with Long Island Commission for Aquifer Protection (LICAP), Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan (LINAP), Suffolk County's Health Impact Assessment on estuary systems with the EPA, HABs study, and other current and ongoing water quality related studies in the region.

Consider the River Star Homes example from Chesapeake Bay. Protect the watershed and display on the lawn that the property is not fertilized and they are protecting the watershed.

A holistic approach is needed, incorporating comprehensive policy approach. How will the policies reduce Nitrogen from atmospheric deposition?

Prepare an updated and current inventory of habitat and living resources in the watershed. Share the data and species community with New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) Natural Heritage Program, and USFWS Significant Habitat.

Connect better with seasonal homeowners by highlighting functions and values of the estuary.

Climate Change

Suggest to municipal and regulatory agencies to require greater buffers that account for sea level rise and flooding to minimize damage and protect resiliency, which will directly and indirectly protect habitat and water quality.

Use Conflict

Identify unprotected, private land. Protect land left in the watershed which will protect habitat in the watershed. This will directly and indirectly protect water quality.

I am concerned over the large area proposed for aquaculture by Suffolk County. I would favor grouped areas as to not impede recreation and navigation.

We need to focus on protecting the existing habitats so that we do not have to restore them.

I am concerned about the increasing number of seaplanes landing in Great Peconic Bay and off the north shore of Shelter Island. While noise pollution is obvious, the introduction of invasive species and attaching to the pontoons of these craft which have flown from NY City waters is a terrifying prospect.