



PEP Citizens' Advisory Committee Meeting

Tuesday, November 27th | 3:00-5:00pm
Greenport Harbor Brewery & Restaurant
42155 Main Road
Peconic, NY 11958



AGENDA

- 3:00 PM *Introductions*
Kevin McDonald - CAC Chair
- 3:05 PM *Reinvigorating the CAC*
Dr. Joyce Novak – Program Director
- 3:20 PM *Program Update | Q&A*
Sarah Schaefer – Program Coordinator
- 3:45 PM *Habitat Restoration Projects | Q&A*
Elizabeth Hornstein – State Coordinator
- 4:15 PM *Public Education and Outreach | Q&A*
Lauren Scheer – Education and Outreach Coordinator
- 4:30 PM *Discussion and Opportunities*
- 5:00 PM *Closing Remarks and Adjournment*

CONTACT

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Peconic Estuary Program
Citizens' Advisory Committee Meeting
Tuesday 11/27/18
3 pm – 5 pm

Reinvigorating the platform of CAC

- Want to develop more powerful partnerships between environmental groups and citizens.
- We want to be the hub or catalyst to get citizens and environmental partners together to the table. Discuss our work to minimize overlap and to recognize partnerships in projects and funding opportunities
- We want to be the central voice of the watershed
- Come up with achievable goals
- Today we will give an update on what PEP is doing and will provide opportunity for our partners to showcase what they are doing → this way we are all on the same page and will know what we are all working on together

PEP Program Update

- CCMP Revision → last one was created 2001 and topics need refinement and updating
- Held public meetings this summer to get feedback
- Drafted an outline for the 4 chapters (climate change, habitat, outreach, water quality)
- 4 public workshops; had one in November on water quality
- There will also be a meeting in December, January and in February to gain specific feedback on the Draft CCMP Outline Chapters
- Peconicestuary.org/ccmprevision with meeting schedule and the outlines and agendas from past meetings → you can submit comments here or via e-mail to PEP staff at any point in this process
- Draft will be distributed for feedback once it is ready (some time in spring of 2019)
- This CCMP document lays out actions and targets that are achievable → if there are issues that you feel should be addressed (especially if you are aware of actions that fall under our blanket of jurisdiction) please let us know

Solute Transport Model

- Working with USGS
- This Solute Transport Model will be a tool to estimate time-varying nitrogen loading rates to the Peconic Estuary resulting from wastewater and fertilizer inputs to the groundwater. The overall objective of the study is to apply methods that will allow for the quantitative analysis of nitrogen loading rates to the Peconic Estuary resulting from wastewater and fertilizer inputs to groundwater in Suffolk County.
- Specifically, the objectives of the investigation are to

- 1) develop data sets representing current and historic land uses relevant to nitrogen loading in coastal watersheds
 - 2) incorporate these data as source terms in models capable of simulating transport processes to estimate current estuarine loading rates and nutrient concentrations in the aquifer, and
 - 3) use these current-condition models to simulate the response of estuarine loading rates to possible wastewater-management actions.
- The model will help us to understand how land use affects nitrogen in groundwater → how long until we see the benefits of improvement projects like new septic systems
 - Most recent project meeting was held on November 14th
 - Doing a lot of data collection of the historical data (from towns, farmers, partners)
 - Data sets represent current and historic land uses relevant to nitrogen loading in coastal watersheds.
 - These data can be used in models to simulate transport processes to estimate current estuarine loading rates and nutrient concentrations in the aquifer.
 - Can also help us estimate the potential response of estuarine loading rates to different potential wastewater- management actions.
 - Hoping to have a working model in a year and complete project by 2020
 - Regular updates at our quarterly meetings

CLPS Update and Climate Ready Assessment

- Working with Anchor QEA to do the assessment of the actions in the CCMP
- Identifying risks and areas where PEP can take action to address issues
- Helping to develop a menu of actions
- Working with Shinnecock Nation (portion of their property in the watershed) to formulate a new management plan to address Climate Change
- Looking at Critical Lands Protection Strategy (2004) to see priority parcels of land that we should be protecting → but these areas may be changing or expanding inland or into parcels that were not originally designated
- New CLPS will look at Climate Change as well → it is to assist nonprofits, municipalities, etc to protect priority land parcels (should be useful for all parties that are involved in the watershed)

Habitats/Living Resources Projects

- 2017 Habitat Restoration Plan outlines objectives and list of priority projects to implement and funding opportunities that are available. It was first published in 2000, updated in 2009, and then 2017.
- You can see the finalized plan on our website but we also have an interactive GIS map that allows you to learn more about completed, ongoing, and priority projects in the watershed
- Since 2000 and we have completed 27 projects, 4 partially completed, and 13 others in progress. 2540 acres of land protected since 2006.

- This is important because protecting lands from further development help to reduce the stresses on PEP habitats.
- Recent project highlights: greatest success is in diadromous fish habitat restoration (alewife and river herring are blocked from accessing their protected, freshwater spawning grounds in upriver habitats from relic dams). The largest alewife run on Long Island is in the Peconic Estuary, but there are 6 dams and so far we have installed two fish passages:
 - One at Grangebel (rock ramp or nature like fishway, completed in 2010, cost \$1,000,000 opened 25 acres and 1.5 miles of river habitat → 40-80,000 fish using this ramp
 - And one upstream at Edwards avenue (Alaskan steppass and includes American els) → fish can't use this one yet because there are more barriers between it and Grangebel. Cost of this project was \$967,500 to construct. Will open up 35 acres of diadromous fish habitat once downstream projects are completed.
- These passages allow fish to go around or over or under the relic dams that are still there but are no longer used for their original purposes
- Goal is to restore 300+ acres of fish habitat and increase alewife population access
- Up next is Woodhull on little river (lots of fish that use Grangebel go this way and get stuck below the dam where they get stuck and end up spawning there instead of upstream where they would prefer)
 - Received a state grant. This will be installed within 1-1.5 years it will open up 95 acres (will be more structural like the one at Edwards)
- Upper Mills Dam and Weir (maintained by USGS, has a flow gauge, but it impedes fish passage)
 - It is in the design phase, considering nature-like or partial dam removal
 - Will restore 40 acres

Habitat Restoration

- Trying to restore and recreate lost wetland habitats
- Funding conceptual designs for 4 sites (contracting with Land Use Ecological)
 - 3 are wetland (narrow river (EH), iron point (SH), meeting house creek (RVRHD))
 - Lake Montauk is fish passage combined with wetland restoration
 - Have funding for LM and Meetinghouse Creek
 - These are the kind of partnerships we want to develop; if we can get designs made maybe other organizations can implement or partner with us to get these projects done
 - Question: Would like to see one marquee project in each town for the next five years. Come up with a suite of projects and propose that they be considered for funding and actively manage that project all the way through.

- Answer: Gather people from the towns to say this is where a great project would be in our municipality
 - Question: If we already submitted a project to PEP, what is the process to get it approved?
 - Answer: The goal of developing partnerships is not to hand out funding
 - Clarification: Citizen submitted project ideas as part of CCMP process
 - Answer: Habitat restoration plan has a list of all projects that were submitted as well as the ones that were included in the plan
 - List is on the website
- Living shorelines (LS): create habitat and decrease erosion, many benefits over hardened shorelines like bulkheads, which actually exacerbate erosion problems and prevent natural migration of shoreline and habitat
 - DEC's Tidal Wetland Guidance Document details how you would build your own, including information on the permitting process
 - PEP is helping to fund two pilot LS projects
 - Widow's Hole (Greenport) with PLT and CCE: planting salt marsh plants and beach restoration will begin in 2019. Should help to stabilize this site from erosion that has been occurring and will provide a public recreation area and habitat
 - SCMELC (Southold): partially funding it with CCE and the town of Southold → looking at the ability of LS to mitigate nitrogen and other pathogen pollution
- Seagrass bio-optical and habitat suitability model (contracting with The Research Foundation of SUNY Stony Brook)
 - Seagrass has declined greatly especially because of the wasting disease outbreak, have less than 1000 acres of seagrass left → map on our website
 - In 1930, there were 8,700 acres of seagrass. In 2014, <1,000 acres of seagrass.
 - Have tried restoration and it has been largely unsuccessful
 - Need to know more about the environmental requirements of seagrass so we can be more strategic about where we focus our efforts since some areas may no longer be suitable
 - Testing water quality around the estuary in current grass beds and elsewhere. Also looking at sediment characteristics.
 - Will build a model to combine temp and light requirements and wave and storm energy to produce a habitat suitability model for seagrass in the Peconic → will show where it has the best chance of survival will show us where suitable restoration projects should go

Education and Outreach

How we engage the public in what PEP is doing

- CAC, citizen science, volunteering, social media, newsletters, community projects, A Day in the Life program, partnerships, behavioral changes
- Want to provide Education and Outreach with clubs or classes in local schools (looking to build these partnerships in 2019) → provide education and engage with schools

Citizen Science

- Terrapin project: just completed the second year. This turtle population has declined and we know very little about them on the east end. Looking for evidence of them nesting in our estuary to determine nesting habitat and possible conservation management
- Horseshoe crab: partnership with NYSDEC and CCE; we tag and count them and host site at Squires Pond in Hampton Bays
- Alewife monitoring: people go out and look for evidence of alewife spawning activity, record data
- Other events: hikes, salt marsh restoration workshops, artistic activities, variety of events for people to get outside and gain first hand experience, tabling at greenport maritime festival is an example of large festival outreach

Community Projects

- Native plant gardens
- Planting rebate program
- Monofilament receptacles

Print and digital outreach including the PEP Talk videos are highly viewed.

Important to share PEP's social media posts and materials as it helps to widen our footprint and brand visibility.

Comments and Questions:

- Question: Is there a specification or a design for a homemade water quality monitoring station? Citizen wants to design a project at home to show that water quality is improving. Do we have a simple water quality test we can design so that we can increase the number of stations? If we are being asked to be ambassadors then citizen wants to step up the game. Citizen is asking if they could design that for PEP.
 - Answer: It has to go through EPA quality assurance plan in order to use the results
 - Question: How do we ensure that our results meet the criteria?
 - Answer: There are EPA standards, the quality is behind the methodology and has to be approved before the data is used and disseminated
 - Answer: We would like to chat about this afterwards.
- PEP: Additionally, PEP will be working with planners to do a more high level education and outreach with the municipalities to tell them what we want to see moving forward. We are working to create a strategy for reaching those planners.
 - Question: Can't we just sit down with them to design this stuff?

- Answer: We must develop a large scale plan for public outreach and initiatives that takes time and can map out what the strategy is for the next 10 years
- Question: If we design a water quality monitoring system with town's approval, can it be accepted?
- Answer: We take existing data that is accepted on state or federal level and then use it to implement projects or justify projects

Open Discussion

- Question: Lots of projects and management plans may involve invasive species. LIISMA is happy to assist as needed on management activities on those types of projects. Ludwigia surveys and purple loosestrife removal.
 - PEP: do they have maps of where priority areas are to do that work?
 - Answer: DEC made maps for the ludwigia work
 - They are having a workshop/conference on development and implementation of management plans and a conference in spring on long island invasives
 - Restore for native species, which falls into what PEP does
- Question: Is there consensus on what to tackle and what is better or easier to deal with or remove as far as invasive species go?
 - Answer: There is not because each town has different priorities and localized management. The stakeholders decide what option to pursue. Sometimes it needs to be more local. LIISMA provides options and assistance. They can provide the options and do the research and provide it to help incorporate it into a management plan
- Question: Does LIISMA recommend or have any info on alternatives for herbicides?
 - Answer: No but LINPI might have that. They provide suggestions into the plan and then Education and Outreach can share that info
- Question: The CAC should be used as this forum to collectively work together. Other organizations forwarding PEP goals in the CCMP. If they have a project that falls under the CCMP workplan. Would be good to have ability to present idea to larger audience and to say let's partner on this or how can we increase collaborative involvement
 - Answer: PEP wants this CAC platform to do just that
 - Question: Can PEP be the gel and the glue to bring this all together?
 - Comment: Big issue is communication - LIISMA uses a listserv to post events or potential projects. Some form of centralized form of communication would work.
 - Answer: That is a great suggestion and will look into that form of communication
- Question: Do you have relationships with private entities like Peconic Land Trust.
 - Answer: They are one of our strongest partners and we are quite involved with them

- Question: Homeowner rewards program?
 - Answer: We are looking for additional money, but 2018 and 2019 budget is tight. We will have more to open it up next year. The program was so successful that it depleted the funds for it
- Comment: CAC for Long Island Sound Study accomplish a lot of that in person
- Question: If funding is the same how do you expand and prioritize?
 - Answer: We get additional grants and partnerships to accomplish this
- Question: I came because there is something called the drawdown project to drawdown CO2 from the atmosphere, started about 2 years ago and wants to introduce the concept around here. Citizen wants to get people involved to start having the community implement a project of this sort.
 - Answer: Leave us your e-mail to chat more about it.
- Question: How can we tie in the solute transport model?
 - Answer: Can run scenarios and use it to test or identify priority areas and then the model will tell us how long it will take to see the benefits → model will be eventually accessible for our partners (will take a bit longer to get this platform available)
 - Question: Can this model be used to inform policy?
 - Answer: We hope so but we are not sure that the timing will work out
- Question: 5 models for septic systems. Are they all ok? How are they dealing with systems that are inundated? (department of health services)
 - Answer: They constantly test all these new systems
 - Has grown from 5
 - All the approved technologies that the county has approved are on the clean water website
 - Mention that in Southampton, changing hands of properties requires denitrification process. There is an issue of education on the importance of this
 - This second part is a whole separate conversation in the climate chapter
 - They won't approve applications for systems that won't work in certain areas → there are preferred options for certain situations i.e. the inundation example that was discussed