



Peconic Estuary Program Policy Committee Meeting Summary
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County
423 Griffing Avenue, Riverhead
May 18, 2018 12:30pm

Welcome and Introductions (Javier Laureano, US EPA)

See sign-in sheet (attached). Richard Friesner (NEIWPC) attended via conference phone.

- Introduction of new PEP Director, Dr. Joyce Novak.
- Review of Peconic Estuary Program 2017 Program Evaluation EPA findings letter and explained the impetus for the additional EPA assistance funding this year for conducting an Organizational Assessment (total funding available: \$25,000) and a Monitoring Strategy Update (total funding available: \$25,000). If the \$50,000 additional EPA assistance is awarded, the total EPA §320 Funds available to the program in FFY 2018 will be \$650,000.
- Shinnecock Indian Nation Wetland Restoration Project overview. Suggestion for PEP and the EPA to meet with the Shinnecock Indian Nation to learn about the project. A Wednesday in July was suggested.

Discussion and approval of May 2017 Meeting Summary (Javier Laureano)

No comments, approved.

Roundtable Updates from Members (US EPA, NYS DEC, Suffolk County, Local Governments, TAC, CAC)

1. Suffolk County (SC) (Peter Scully)

- Reclaim Our Water Initiative- 20 staff added to Suffolk County Department of Health Services, Division of Environmental Quality to manage the program.
- County Septic Improvement Program offers grant funding, of up to \$10,000, will be provided toward the purchase and installation of Suffolk County Department of Health Services approved Innovative and Alternative nitrogen removal onsite wastewater treatment system (I/A OWTS) and leaching structure, as well as toward attendant engineering and design services. An additional \$1,000 may be available toward installation of Pressurized Shallow Drainfields for a maximum grant of up to \$11,000. \$200,000 is available in this year and over 1,100 applications have been received so far to participate in the program. Hundreds of applications are completed and permits are being issued.
- On the morning of May 18th, 2018 a press conference was held at the Lake Ronkonkoma County Park for the “first flush” of the newly installed I/A OWTS at the site.



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- Suffolk County Executive, Steven Bellone, designated Peter Scully, Deputy County Executive for Administration, as his representative to the Peconic Estuary Program Policy Committee. Dorian Dale, Director of Sustainability and Chief Recovery Officer, will continue to serve as the Suffolk County representative to the PEP MC.
 - Walter Dawydiak: Suffolk County Subwatersheds Wastewater Plan- The plan is being prepared to provide early action recommendations for nitrogen load reduction goals and a recommended wastewater management strategy for the priority subwatersheds in Suffolk County. The County is using up to date water quality data sets and land use data to determine priority ranking for nitrogen management actions and load reduction goals.
 - The next Wastewater Plan Advisory Committee Meeting will be held on June 7, 2018 from 1:00 to 3:00 pm at the Suffolk County Water Authority Education Center to present on the surface water hydrodynamic modeling methodology and results, priority area ranking methodology and results, and nitrogen load reduction goals and status. The full draft SC Subwatersheds Wastewater Plan is expected by the end of 2018.
 - The Suffolk County Harmful Algal Bloom Action Plan was finalized in September 2017. Suffolk County worked with NY Sea Grant to develop two reports: The [Suffolk County Harmful Algal Bloom Action Plan](#) and the [Historical Occurrence and Current Status of Harmful Algal Blooms in Suffolk County, NY, USA](#). The Harmful Algal Bloom Action Plan is intended to be a living document and any comments on the Action Plan should be directed to Suffolk County Department of Health Services, Bureau of Marine Resources Supervisor, Michael Jensen. A HAB Symposium and Technical Session were held on May 16th, 2018 at the Mansion at Timber Point.
2. NYS DEC (Tony Leung- representing NYSDEC PEP Policy Committee rep. Carrie Meek Gallagher)
- On Tuesday, May 8th the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) sponsored a Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan (LINAP) meeting. Presentations were made by New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Long Island Regional Planning Council (LIRPC), Nassau County and Suffolk County.
 - NYS DEC Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP) Round 15 funding is now available. \$79 million is available for this program and the applications are due on July 27th, 2018. Eligible activities include: Wastewater Treatment Improvement, Non-agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control, Land Acquisition for source water protection, Salt storage, Aquatic Habitat Restoration, Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4).



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- \$15 million is available through The Green Innovation Grant Program (GIGP) which provides grants on a competitive basis to projects that improve water quality and demonstrate green stormwater infrastructure in New York.
 - Annual informational workshop for the Regional Economic Development Councils Consolidated Funding Application will be on June 18th at the SUNY Stony Brook campus.
3. Local Government (Supervisor Laura Jens-Smith)
- Towns of Southampton and East Hampton have developed their own Septic Improvement Programs and the Town of Riverhead is working with Suffolk County to develop a similar program in the Town.
 - Kevin McDonald: New PEP Committee Local Government Appointments decided at the February 21st, 2018 East End Supervisors and Mayors Association Meeting:
 - i. Policy Committee, Local Government Committee Representative and voting member: Riverhead Town Supervisor, Laura Jens-Smith
 - ii. Management Committee, Local Government Committee Representative and voting member: Southampton Town Councilman, John Bouvier
 - iii. Local Government Committee, Chair: Village of Southampton Mayor, Michael Irving
4. EPA (Javier Laureano)
- Advanced Septic System Nitrogen Sensor Challenge Phase II: Prototype Testing-EPA selected Battelle Memorial Institute (Battelle) to support the Prototype Testing Program by developing a Test/Quality Assurance Plan (T/QAP) and Verification Plan and overseeing the testing of the sensors. Tetra Tech is being contracted to develop nitrogen endpoints for bodies of water.
5. NEIWPCC (Richard Friesner)
- New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission was founded in 1947 by an act of Congress, governed by its seven member states, each year fulfills its broad mandate to help the states preserve, protect, and advance the quality of their precious water resources.
 - NEIWPCC Annual Non-point Source Pollution Conference was held on April 25th – 26th, 2018 at the Queensbury Hotel in Glens Falls, NY. This was the 29th year of the conference which is a forum in our region for sharing information and improving communication on NPS pollution issues and projects. The conference brings together all those in New England and New York State involved in the management of NPS



pollution, including participants from state, federal, and municipal governments, the private sector, academia, and watershed organizations.

- NEIWPC is working with the Long Island Sound Study to develop a non-point source tracking tool.
 - NEIWPC is deeply involved in the Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan (LINAP) and employ the LINAP Coordinator working in NYSDEC Region 1 with Tony Leung.
6. TAC (Matthew Sclafani- Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County, TAC Chair)
- The Peconic Estuary Solute Transport Model will be developed by USGS, this was recommended by the PEP Technical Advisory Committee Nitrogen Workgroup. This 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 Solute Transport Model will be a dynamic model and will piggy back off the Suffolk County Subwatershed Wastewater Plan data and methods.
 - The Solute Transport Model is a tool for management towns, villages and local government. Preliminary model outputs are expected to be available in 2019. A hydrodynamic model for the Peconic Estuary is a major goal for the future of the PEP as the hydrodynamic model developed by Tetra Tech cannot be resurrected.
 - As the PEP Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan is going to be updated within the next few years. The Environmental Monitoring Plan for the program will need to be updated and a Water Quality workgroup is being developed as a subset of the TAC to advise and guide this process.
7. CAC (Lauren Scheer- PEP Education and Outreach Coordinator)
- PEP Citizens' Advisory Committee meetings are available online live via Zoom which is a video conferencing program that Cornell Cooperative Extension uses, to make the meeting available to those who cannot attend in-person. Zoom recordings will be available on PEP's vimeo page.



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- Over the next year there will be a continued focus on citizen science programs and attracting a more diverse and broader age group to the PEP CAC meetings. The next CAC meeting will be held on September 7th at the Long Ireland Brewery in Riverhead.
 - CCMP surveys are available on the PEP website for stakeholders to provide input on the PEP CCMP revision.
 - The new PEP website was launched in September 2017 and provides many new resources such as Spanish language resources, a native plant database and other interactive features.
 - PEP has been producing “PEP Talk” videos every month and posting them on the website, social media and Vimeo to educate the public on a certain topic.
 - Kevin McDonald (CAC Chair): Provided updates on current Bills:
 - i. Bill to prohibit the use of high-nitrogen, water soluble lawn fertilizers on Long Island (Senate bill # 8170). Bill was passed by the NYS Assemble and now needs NY Senate support.
 - ii. Bills have been introduced in both New York State legislative houses to make new advanced septic systems more affordable to homeowners. The aim is to encourage the installation of state-of-the-art systems that reduce the amount of nitrogen entering bays and ponds. State Senator Kenneth LaValle and State Assemblyman Fred Thiele Jr. sponsored the three-bill package, the first bill, if approved, would mean installing a nitrogen-reducing system will no longer need an engineer’s sign-off—as long as the system meets manufacturing guidelines, like designed for a flow of less than 1,000 gallons per day, and are on Nassau or Suffolk counties’ pre-approved lists. The change in law is projected to shave \$3,000 off the cost of the installation process for each house. Another bill will allow municipalities to establish a Septic System Replacement Loan Program, for homeowners to repay the price of the project over a maximum of 10 years on their property tax bill. The third bill will allow for the five East End towns to use Community Preservation Funds to finance those loans.
 - iii. A coordinated campaign is being conducted by Concerned Citizens of Montauk (CCOM), Group for the East End (GFEE), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and others to work together to direct the public to useful information about nitrogen pollution and the financial incentives offered to homeowners to replace old septic systems by the Towns and County.
 - iv. Community Preservation Fund (CPF) money is being proposed to be used for payment directly to contractors for the installation of I/AOWTS so that the homeowner does not have to claim the grant award as income on their tax return.



Implementing PEP's Nitrogen Action Plan in Concert with LINAP and SC Reclaim Our Water Initiatives (Sarah Schaefer- PEP Program Coordinator)

- In 2015, the Peconic Estuary Program, with input from the Management Committee and Policy Committee, developed the 2015 – 2018 Action Plan. It includes goals, objectives, and specific implementation actions to guide the PEP's work, and is serving as a backbone for the CCMP update. The Action Plan also serves as a "menu" for selecting implementation projects. Part of the Action Plan was a section on Nitrogen, the priority pollutant for the PEP (Nitrogen Management section of the PEP 2015-2018 Action Plan handed out at meeting-attached).
- Since there are many partner activities surrounding Nitrogen occurring on Long Island (LINAP, Suffolk County Reclaim Our Waters Initiative), this is an opportunity for the PEP to discuss its implementation goals and get input from the other partners on how those activities fit in with the broader context. This helps ensure the PEP is filling gaps and promoting synergy and avoid duplication of efforts, and that all partners are aware of PEP activity.
- PEP reviewed the actions listed in the Nitrogen Management section with the group to discuss how each action is either completed, funding secured/ in-progress, Not in-progress, or Not in-progress, but identified as an Action for the 2018 CCMP Revision.
- Suggestions from the group included making sure more specific actions are identified to achieve nitrogen management goals and establishing increased outreach to the community to help the public understand the purpose of the nitrogen management actions and the steps that are necessary to reaching that goal.
- PEP program staff noted that the CCMP revision process will be an opportunity to refine goals and objectives for nitrogen management in the Peconic Estuary.

Budget Approval and Federal Budget Update (Sarah Schaefer)

- The FFY 2018 Peconic Estuary Program Proposed Budget was presented and discussed with the Policy Committee. Refer to attached PEP Proposed FFY 2018 Budget.
- The FFY 2018 PEP budget is different than in year's past due to Unliquidated Obligations (ULOs) for personnel at the NEIWPCC and Suffolk County. The NEIWPCC ULOs will be used to fund FY 18 personnel costs for the PEP State Coordinator and PEP Program Coordinator who are NEIWPCC employees. No salary or fringe will be requested from the EPA §320 Funds this year for these positions. Only travel and supply money will be requested for those two employees.
- The Suffolk County ULOs will be used to fund FY 18 personnel costs for the Suffolk County Boat Operator and Chemist salary and fringe. No salary or fringe will be requested from the EPA §320 Funds this year to fund these positions.



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- The use of the ULOs allow there to be room in the budget for an EPA §320 Fund Implementation project and a State Funded project:

EPA §320 Fund Implementation Project:

- The Peconic Estuary Program has approximately \$174,900 in our budget this year to use for project implementation and the PEP proposed to use those funds for implementation of the 2017 Habitat Restoration Plan and Habitat Restoration Action 7 in the 2015-2018 Action Plan: “Conduct feasibility, design, and construction of priority wetland restoration projects.” Currently, the PEP is contracting with Land Use Ecological Services for Conceptual Habitat Restoration Design Planning for 4 sites.
 - a. Southold: Narrow River Road Wetland Restoration
 - b. Southampton: Iron Point Wetland Restoration
 - c. East Hampton: Lake Montauk Alewife Access and Habitat Enhancement
 - d. Riverhead: Meeting House Creek Main Road Wetland Construction/Restoration
- Of those sites, the Meetinghouse Creek Main Road Wetland Construction/Restoration project in Riverhead does not have implementation funding secured and could likely be completed with the available funds. A detailed memo to the Policy Committee on EPA §320 Fund Implementation Funding is attached.

Extra State Funds Project:

- The Peconic Estuary Program has received \$200K from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to fund the USGS Continuous Water Quality Monitoring Program. Because the actual cost of the USGS Continuous Water Quality Program is only \$115K, there are left over funds from FY16 and FY17. These left over funds will be used to pay for the USGS Continuous Water Quality Program in FY18. The FY18 State Budget once again includes \$200K for the Peconic Estuary Program, so we need to identify another use for these funds. However, there are only a few easy mechanisms for spending this money. These mechanisms include an MOU with Stony Brook University, an MOU with USGS, or a purchase order for contracts under \$50K. The Peconic Estuary Program proposes to use these funds to complete Future Habitat Restoration Action 1 from the 2015-2018 Action Plan: “Construct ecosystem-based model of Peconic Estuary to facilitate



better understanding of system-wide dynamics and impacts of pollution and other stressors on the entire ecosystem.” NYSDEC would contract with Stony Brook University to complete this project. A detailed memo to the Policy Committee on Utilizing Extra State Funds is attached.

- The PEP was awarded additional EPA assistance funding this year to conduct an Organizational Assessment (total funding available: \$25,000) and a Monitoring Strategy Update (total funding available: \$25,000). If the \$50,000 additional EPA assistance is awarded, the total EPA §320 Funds available to the program in FFY 2018 will be \$650,000 which will require a 1:1 match. A detailed memo to the Policy Committee on the additional EPA assistance is attached.
- The Policy Committee approved the proposed PEP FFY18 budget.

Previous Grant Spending Status (Sarah Schaefer)

- Refer to attached PEP Grant Spending Analysis document.

PEP 2017 Highlights (Sarah Schaefer)

- Refer to presentation. Slides 1-15: https://www.peconicestuary.org/policy-committee-meeting-presentation_5-18-18/

CCMP Revision Update and Discussion (Sarah Schaefer)

- Refer to presentation. Slides 16-19: https://www.peconicestuary.org/policy-committee-meeting-presentation_5-18-18/
- Peconic Estuary Program Comprehensive Conservation & Management Plan (CCMP) Revision is underway. The two CCMP Revision Support Services contracts have been finalized with the Writing Support Consultant, Waterview Consulting, and the Facilitation Support Consultant, Lighthouse Consulting. Information and links to the two contractor’s websites are provide on the PEP website in the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan page (<https://www.peconicestuary.org/protect-the-peconic/ccmp/>).
- The proposed CCMP Revision Schedule was presented and reviewed by the Policy Committee. The Schedule outlines a timeline for the development of the CCMP Revision Public Engagement Strategy (hard copies were made available at the meeting- attached), the Stakeholder Input Phase I, Draft CCMP development, Review of the draft CCMP, Stakeholder Input Phase II and the Finalization of the CCMP.
- The CCMP Public and Stakeholder Engagement Schedule was presented to the committee which includes the soon to be scheduled meetings for Stakeholder Input Phase I. CCMP Revision



public meetings will be held in May through June. Three public meetings will be held, one on the North Fork, South Fork and Shelter Island. PEP will also be targeting specific user based groups for meetings, such as recreational fisherman, farmers, aquaculturists, fisherman/bayman, Environmental Justice groups and minority groups, and businesses and environmental organizations.

- Comments and suggestions from the Policy and Management Committee members and our partners on the CCMP Revision should be directed to the Peconic Estuary Program staff. PEP plans to hold a meeting specifically for the Policy and Management Committee members to discuss the CCMP revision in the near future.

New Business

Adjourn



SIGN-IN SHEET:
 PEP PC Meeting
 Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County
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 May 18, 2018

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