



Peconic Estuary Program

Natural Resources Subcommittee (NRS) Meeting on the PEP Habitat Restoration Plan

Meeting Summary

July 12, 2018 10:00am

**SCCC Culinary Arts and Hospitality Center, Room 211
20 East Main Street Riverhead, NY**

Attendees: Elizabeth Hornstein (PEP), Joyce Novak (PEP), Lauren Scheer (PEP), Barry Udelson (CCE), Alison Branco (TNC), Adam Starke (TNC), Nichole Maher (TNC), Jessie Marcus (Peconic Land Trust), Alexa Fournier (NYSDEC), Liana Simpson (NYSDEC), John Sepenoski (Southold), Jay Card (Shelter Island), Sean O'Neill (Peconic Baykeeper), Brittney Scannell (Peconic Baykeeper), Lauren Steinberg (Town of East Hampton), Kim Shaw (Town of East Hampton), Camilo Salazar (Suffolk County), David Wilcox (Town of Southampton), John Aldred (East Hampton)

Phone: Maureen Dunn (Seatuck), Mark Terry (Southold)

1. **Welcome & Introductions** – Elizabeth Hornstein (PEP State Coordinator)
 - a. This is the first meeting since the 2017 PEP Habitat Restoration Plan was published earlier in 2018. Two NRS meetings will be held each year to focus on implementing the Habitat Restoration Plan.
 - b. Barry Udelson was introduced as the new NRS Co-Chair - Barry has a bachelor degree in Marine Biology from Southampton College and a Master's degree in Biology from Long Island University. He is currently a Marine Resources Specialist with Cornell Cooperative Extension. Barry has experience with eelgrass and salt marsh ecology, fisheries biology, aquaculture and shellfish restoration.
2. **Habitat Restoration Project GIS Map** – Elizabeth Hornstein presented a draft of the interactive Habitat Restoration Project Map. The map was created with ArcGIS online and displays completed habitat projects in the Peconic Estuary since 2000 and the ongoing and proposed habitat restoration projects that were included in the 2017 Habitat Restoration Plan. The projects are categorized by habitat type. This map will be posted on the PEP website when finalized. Suggestions for improvements to the map included:

- Allow the public to be able to filter/select for additional attributes, such as by town and priority level.
- Allow the public to download a shape file with the information, so it can be added to other maps or modified (Elizabeth noted that we could send our partners a layer file to work off of. PEP will send TNC a shapefile of the relevant tidal and stream crossing projects).
- Utilize a platform called dashboard for statistical presentation info.
- Change the color scheme on the map (either bright neon colors or use a black and white map while zoomed out)

3. Habitat Restoration Updates and Funding Opportunities

- a. Elizabeth Hornstein updated the group on the Peconic River fish passage projects, Conceptual Habitat Restoration Design Planning of 4 sites in the Peconic, the Greenport Living Shoreline project, funds that have been secured for Paul Stoutenburgh Preserve Phragmites Control and Wetland Restoration, funds requested for Corey Creek Wetland Restoration, the Seagrass Bio-optical Model Project, the Coecles Harbor Eelgrass Project, Hardened Shoreline GIS Mapping Project, and the Critical Lands Protection Strategy Update and Climate Ready Assessment Services for the Peconic Estuary (**see attached Habitat Updates July 2018 Presentation Slides**).
 - John Seponoski noted that Southold has hardened shoreline maps from Laura Stephenson days that could be a useful starting spot for PEP. PEP will reach out to John to get this information.
 - There were several questions about the Coecles Harbor Conservation Mooring project and potential concerns with the moorings getting in the way of scallop fishing, if they cannot be removed. Elizabeth Hornstein explained that this a pilot project and that the funding should allow for the purchase and installation of six conservation moorings. Installation locations will be determined following discussions with the Town and Coecles Harbor Marina.
 - Participates also wanted to know if NYSDEC would be hiring another Seagrass Coordinator. Elizabeth Hornstein stated that NYSDEC is looking into various means to hire another coordinator. She explained that the Seagrass Coordinator was a contract position and that contract is almost up.

- b. John Seponoski provided an update on the Silver Lake/Moore's Drain Aquatic/Wildlife Passage project. The Town was awarded a NYS DOS LWRP Grant that will be used to fund the day lighting of Moore's Drain.
- c. Camilo Salazar gave an update on the Indian Island Wetland Restoration Project. Because of concerns about the contaminant levels in the sediments at Indian Island, the excavated sediment cannot be disposed of on Long Island. The new plan is to leave the sediment on-site, in the project vicinity. Camilo provided a handout of the latest design plans.
- d. TNC provided an update of their Road-Stream and Tidal Crossing Improvement Project. They are working to assess as many crossings as they can around Long Island.
- e. David Wilcox provided an update on Peconic River Shoreline and Wetland Restoration project. The Flanders, Riverside and Northampton Civic Association (FRNCA) in collaboration with the Town and County, have been awarded a \$50,000 New York State Environmental Justice Community Impact Grant that will fund the preparation of a plan for passive recreational use of the County property in addition to the restoration of the shoreline. The Town has entered into contract with Auryus Landscape Designs and will be holding a stakeholder meeting in the coming months. In addition to the ultimate restoration of the approximately 4,000 linear feet of County and Town owned shoreline, the Town also proposes to prepare a Wetland and Habitat Restoration Plan for the 15.5-acre Town property. The Town believes CFP funds could be used for this project.

4. Prioritizing Habitat Restoration Projects & Collaborating

- a. How can PEP work with the Towns and other partners to advance habitat restoration projects?
 - Identify which projects are best suited for funding opportunities that come up
 - Identify opportunities for regional collaboration, like the Regional Aquifer Protection Land Acquisition Program
 - Reach out to the Town Trustees and Town Board and get them more involved
- b. How should PEP further prioritize the habitat restoration projects identified in the 2017 Habitat Restoration Plan?
 - John Sep suggested furthering breaking down the High Priority Projects into two categories:

Category 1 - High priority habitat, good plan, proven methods, owners on board

Category 2 – High priority habitat but issues with plan, methods, or owners

There was general agreement that this made sense, since these are the things PEP considers when applying for funding opportunities.

5. **Presentation – *Surface Elevation Table (SET) Monitoring of Peconic Estuary Wetlands*, Adam Starke (The Nature Conservancy)** – See attached presentation slides
6. **Presentation – *Tidal Wetlands Rapid Assessment Protocol*, Alexa Fournier (NYSDEC)** – See attached presentation slides
7. **Next Steps**
 - a. PEP will reach out to the Towns and Partners to work on advancing habitat restoration projects
 - b. Elizabeth Hornstein will work on finalizing the Habitat Restoration GIS Map based on today's feedback
 - c. Another NRS meeting will be scheduled for Fall 2018 – Please email Elizabeth Hornstein with any topics you would like to hear about or issues you want to discuss.