



**Peconic Estuary Program
Natural Resources Subcommittee (NRS) Meeting Summary**

**November 30, 2018 10:00am
Stony Brook Southampton Marine Station
8 Little Neck Rd, Southampton, NY 11968**

Attendees: Elizabeth Hornstein (PEP), Joyce Novak (PEP), Sarah Schaefer (PEP), Barry Udelson (CCE), Bradley Peterson (Stony Brook), Kaitlyn O'Toole (Stony Brook), Adam Starke (TNC), Dawn McReynolds (NYSDEC), Cassie Bauer (NYSDEC), Soren Dahl (NYSDEC), Liana Simpson (NYSDEC), Kathleen Fallon (NY Sea Grant), Chris Schubert (USGS), Kate Rossi-Snook (CCOM), David Wilcox (Town of Southampton), John Aldred (East Hampton)

1. **Welcome & Introductions** – Elizabeth Hornstein (PEP State Coordinator)
 - This is the second meeting since the 2017 PEP Habitat Restoration Plan was published earlier in 2018. Two NRS meetings will be held each year (spring and fall) to focus on implementing the Habitat Restoration Plan.

2. **Habitat Restoration Updates from PEP** (see attached Presentation Slides) – Elizabeth Hornstein
 - Elizabeth Hornstein noted the GIS Habitat Restoration Project Map is now publicly available on the PEP and DEC websites. The [map](#) provides information on completed, ongoing, and priority habitat projects in the Peconic Estuary. This map complements the [2017 Peconic Estuary Program Habitat Restoration Plan](#) and serves as a tool to track habitat restoration progress. The map will be updated at least once a year and will eventually be combined with other information (e.g., new Critical Lands Protection Strategy map, marsh migration, hardened shoreline features). Further suggestions for improvements to the map are welcome.
 - Conceptual Habitat Restoration Design Planning in the Peconic Estuary for 4 sites (Narrow River Wetland Restoration, Southold; Meeting House Creek Wetland Construction/Restoration, Riverhead; Iron Point Park Wetland Restoration,

Southold; Lake Montauk Alewife Access and Habitat Enhancement, East Hampton) – Working with Land Use Ecological Services. QAPP has been approved; site surveys and development of schematic designs are underway. Aiming to hold another stakeholder meeting in January.

- Upper Mills Fish Passage Project – Working with LK McLean Associates on Engineering Design and Permitting Services. Two conceptual design plans were presented at stakeholder meeting in November. A third conceptual design is being developed based on stakeholder feedback. Another stakeholder meeting will be held in 2019 to review/compare all three options.
- 2019 Alewife Monitoring – Partners are encouraged to participate in and help promote the Volunteer Alewife Monitoring Program. PEP will host two trainings in late February/early March, to train volunteers to visit their local stream/tributary to look for signs of spawning alewife. PEP is also working with partners to install a Smith Root Counter at the Grangebél Park fishway for the spring 2019 alewife spawning season to get a better estimate of the number of spawning alewife coming up the Peconic River.
- Widow’s Hole Living Shoreline Project – Volunteer event held this past summer to prepare Spartina plants. Construction will begin March 2019. Keep an eye out for additional volunteer opportunities to help with beachgrass and Spartina plantings.
- Coecles Harbor Conservation Mooring Project – NYSDEC awarded \$32,000 from NOAA/USFW to conduct pilot conservation mooring project in Coecles Harbor, Shelter Island. The purpose of the project is to investigate the efficacy of conservation moorings to reduce damage to eelgrass and promote recovery. Kick-off meeting held with Shelter Island Town and Coecles Harbor Marina in October. Next steps: NYSDEC will facilitate information sharing between mooring installers and marina owners that have experience with conservation moorings and Coecles Harbor Marina/Shelter Island Town.

3. Habitat Restoration Updates – Southampton Town

- 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. David presented the 90% conceptual design plans. The plans include four water access points, stabilization of eroded shoreline using coir logs and native plants, removal of invasive Phragmites in some areas, and the creation of

tidal channels to restore flow in Phragmites dominated marsh. The Park also includes recreational trails, fitness areas, a dog park, a permeable parking lot with bioswales, and informational kiosks. FRNCA and the Town have applied for funding for the development of full construction plans. In addition to the ultimate restoration of the approximately 4,000 linear feet of County and Town owned shoreline, the Town is also looking to prepare a Wetland and Habitat Restoration Plan for the 15.5-acre Town property.

4. **Presentation – *Seagrass Bio-Optical and Habitat Suitability Model for the Peconic Estuary*, Bradley Peterson and Kaitlyn O’Toole (Stony Brook University)** – See attached presentation slides

- Model will be finalized February 2019

5. **Review/Discuss Re-prioritization of Habitat Restoration Projects –**

- Elizabeth Hornstein presented the re-prioritized list of habitat projects. In the original Habitat Restoration Plan, projects were classified as either high priority or secondary priority. To further prioritize the numerous projects listed in the plan, three tiers were created:
 1. Priority habitat (SAV, Tidal Wetland/Shoreline, or Diadromous Fish Habitat), good/proven methods, and supported by land owners/stakeholders
 2. Priority habitat, but some concerns with the methods OR additional baseline info is needed OR still need to get support of owners/stakeholders
 3. Not a priority habitat but still aligns with overall habitat restoration goals. *Phragmites* control projects that do not include a wetland restoration component are also included in this tier.
 - Suggestions to further prioritize/determine which tier 1 projects to seek funding for included: Having each Town select their top 1-2 projects, evaluating project benefits, and overlaying with sea-level rise scenarios or marsh migration maps. It was also noted that available funding opportunities may dictate priorities.
 - Please review the re-prioritized list of projects and send Elizabeth the top 1-2 projects that your Town or organization would like to focus on by January 10th.

6. **Habitat Restoration Funding Opportunities Spreadsheet**

- Elizabeth created a habitat restoration funding opportunities spreadsheet to help PEP, towns and partners identify funding opportunities for projects.
 - Current Grant Opportunity: [NOAA’s Community-based Restoration Program Coastal and Marine Habitat Restoration Grant](#). Pre-proposals due January 14, 2019.

- It was suggested that non-profit/philanthropic organizations may be another source of funding.
- Please review the attached funding opportunities spreadsheet and send any suggestions for improvement to the spreadsheet or additional funding opportunities to Elizabeth Hornstein by January 10th.

7. Next Steps

- a. PEP will work with the Towns and other partners to identify projects from the tier 1 category to seek out funding for in 2019.
- b. In the next iteration of the habitat restoration project map PEP will consider adding a specific attribute on project benefits and additional available data layers (such as projected wetland migration, protected lands, hardened shorelines, etc.)
- c. The next NRS meeting will be scheduled for May or June 2019 – Potential topics for the next meeting include living shorelines, hardened shoreline mapping, TNC culvert assessments, Critical Lands Protection Strategy/Climate Vulnerability Project). Please email Elizabeth Hornstein with any topics you would like to hear about or issues you want to discuss.