



Peconic Estuary Partnership

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)/ Natural Resources Subcommittee (NRS) Meeting

February 26, 2020 10:00am

SCCC Culinary Arts and Hospitality Center

20 East Main Street Riverhead, NY 11901

Attendees: Sarah Schaefer (PEP), Joyce Novak (PEP), Lauren Scheer (PEP), Elizabeth Hornstein (PEP), Matthew Scalfani (CCE), Barry Udelson (CCE), Chris Clapp (TNC), Pat Aitken (PEPC), Kristin Kraseski (NYSDEC Region 1), Chris Schubert (USGS), Josh Halsey (PLT), Michael Jensen (SCDHS), Julie Hargrave (Central Pine Barrens Joint Planning and Policy Commission), Roger Tollefsen (Seafood Industry), Ed Bausman (Shelter Island Town), Corey Humphrey (SCSWCD), Kaitlin Shahinian (SCSWCD), Edward Compagnone (SCSWCD), John Needham (Shelter Island Town), Jason Havelin (CCE), Michele Golden (NYSDEC), George Bartunek (Riverhead Environmental Committee), Kathleen Fallon (NY Sea Grant), Rachel Neville (SSER), Brian Frank (Town of East Hampton), Roy Reynolds (EMPOA), Emily Hall (Seatuck), Kaitlyn O'Toole (SBU), Kim Manzo (CCE), Krista Stegemann Haas (NY Sea Grant), Nicole Maher (TNC), Sam Dickran (SBU), Kate Rossi-Snook (CCOM), Susan Filipowich (SCDEDP), Tom Iwanejko (SCDPW), Sean O'Neill (Peconic Baykeeper), Pete Topping (Peconic Baykeeper), Lisa Liquori, John Aldred (East Hampton Town Trustee), Scott Curatolo- Wagemann (CCE), Alyssa Stansfield (SBU), Brad Peterson (SBU), Camilo Salazar (SCDEDP), Lena DeSantis (Anchor QEA), Stephanie Larkin (NYSDEC), C. Theresa Masin (Southampton Town)

Phone: Aimee Boucher (USEPA), Alexa Fournier (NYSDEC), Cassandra Bauer (NYSDEC), Kathy Bunting-Howarth (NY Sea Grant)

1. **Welcome & Introductions** –Matthew Scalfani (TAC Chair)
2. **TAC Meeting Summary** – Matthew Scalfani
 - Review of the [December 4th TAC Meeting Summary](#) - approval of minutes by the committee.
3. **NRS Meeting Summary and PEP Habitat Restoration Plan nominations recommended from the NRS** – Elizabeth Hornstein (PEP State Coordinator/ NRS Chair)
 - Review of the [November 13th NRS Meeting Summary](#).
 - An updated Priority List of [PEP Habitat Restoration Projects](#) (new and revised projects are highlighted in yellow) and a [Habitat Restoration Project Ranking Spreadsheet](#) were distributed via email to the TAC and NRS for review on 2/24/20 by Elizabeth.
 - Elizabeth presented the new PEP Habitat Restoration Plan nominations approved at the November 2019 NRS meeting (included in the updated Priority List of PEP Habitat Restoration

Projects). See the link to the presentation here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_gFFeBpbDe3yWp68LXxfBUy9VRRJD6y/view?usp=sharing

1. Widow's Hole Preserve Living Shoreline/ Wetland Restoration Phase II
2. Restoring Natural Hydrology to Accabonac Harbor
3. Napeague Harbor Hydrodynamic and Water Circulation Study
4. Forge Road/ Peconic Lake Diadromous Fish Passage Restoration (Peconic River, Phase III)
5. Estuary-wide River Otter Habitat Protection Strategy, Estuary-wide Terrapin Monitoring and Habitat Protection Strategy, Estuary-wide Horseshoe Crab Monitoring and Habitat Protection Strategy.

The TAC approved the NRS's new PEP Habitat Restoration Plan nominations to be included in the update to the PEP Habitat Restoration Plan.

- It was recommended at the November 2019 NRS meeting that we have members rank the habitat restoration projects to further prioritize them. Elizabeth would like NRS and TAC members to rank the current Tier 1 and Tier 2 Habitat Restoration Projects using Habitat Restoration Project Ranking Spreadsheet. Projects for which implementation funding has already been secured are not included on the ranking sheet. Please email your ranking spreadsheets to elizabeth.hornstein@dec.ny.gov by March 13th.
- When the ranking spreadsheets have been submitted the PEP staff will review the feedback. The TAC and NRS will be provided the chance to review the ranking results before updates are made to the PEP Habitat Restoration Plan.

4. Discussion of TAC and NRS draft roles and responsibilities – Matt Sclafani and Elizabeth Hornstein

- The PEP is developing roles and responsibilities for all of our Committees, Subcommittees, and Workgroups to improve our collaboration with our partners. This is part of the Peconic Estuary Partnership's Organizational Assessment process.
- Matt Sclafani and Barry Udelson (NRS Co-Chair) distributed the draft [TAC](#) and [NRS](#) roles and responsibilities documents for the committee review via email. Corresponding online questionnaires were distributed to gain feedback on the draft roles and responsibilities documents. As of February 26th, 17 people submitted responses to the TAC questionnaire and 6 people submitted responses to the NRS questionnaire. So far the responses indicate that people are generally in favor of a joint TAC/NRS meeting, the TAC holding meetings 4 times a year, and establishing a core group of TAC voting members to make decisions requiring a vote, with the core group having the ability to refer to input from the larger TAC group before determining their vote. The TAC and NRS roles and responsibilities documents will be incorporated into a larger Peconic Estuary Partnership Governance Document at the conclusion of the Organizational Assessment process.
- The TAC and NRS questionnaires will continue to be open and we encourage everyone on the TAC and NRS to fill out the questionnaires. The links to the questionnaires are below:

TAC questionnaire: <https://forms.gle/KZubvzbguEY63zvX7>

NRS questionnaire: <https://forms.gle/C3GB1BSMHqx3JThm8>

5. Update on the 2019 Peconic Bay Scallop Die-off – Joyce Novak (PEP Director)

- After the recent adult scallop die-off in the Peconic Estuary in fall 2019, the Peconic Estuary Partnership established the Scallop Technical Review Committee to discuss and review

scientific information with our technical experts to determine the possible causes of the die-off. As noted in the January 31, 2020 NYSDEC press release, a coccidian parasite was discovered in scallops sampled from two locations in the Peconic. The Scallop Technical Review Committee has outlined the factors that led to the recent die-off and our commitment to continuing to facilitate further investigation and resources towards the effort - summarized in the linked 02/21/2020 [Peconic Estuary Partnership press release](#).

- It is the Scallop Technical Review Committee's recommendation to conduct further investigation to determine the spatial extent of the parasite to better understand the impact that it may have on the scallop population. The Peconic Bay Scallop Technical Review Committee will continue to collaborate with researchers and resource managers across the region to develop recommendations on next steps for monitoring, research and restoration that will be shared with agencies and the public.
- John Aldred suggested that the PEP provide more detailed information on the Scallop Technical Review Committee's discussions.

6. **Presentation: Peconic Estuary Seagrass Bio-optical Model** – Kaitlyn O'Toole (Stony Brook University)

- In 2019 the Seagrass Bio-optical Model was developed by Kaitlyn O'Toole in cooperation with The Research Foundation of SUNY Stony Brook to provide site specific information on what areas of the Peconic Estuary provide suitable habitat for eelgrass to guide future eelgrass protection and restoration projects. See this link for Kaitlyn O'Toole's presentation: [Living on the edge: analysis of Z. marina and the potential restoration](#).

7. **Presentation: Peconic Estuary Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Long-term Monitoring Program** – Steve Schott (Cornell Cooperative Extension)

- The PEP has supported a Long Term Eelgrass Monitoring Program conducted by Cornell Cooperative Extension's Marine Program since 1997. This monitoring program, has focused on collecting data pertaining to the health of the eelgrass beds at various sites throughout the Peconic Estuary. Steve Schott presented an overview of the 2017- 2019 results and trends of the annual long-term monitoring program. See this link for Steve Schott's presentation: [2017- 2019 Long-Term Eelgrass Monitoring in the Peconic Estuary](#).
- The [2018 Peconic Estuary Program Long-term Eelgrass Monitoring Report](#) is linked here. The 2019 Peconic Estuary Program Long-term Eelgrass Monitoring Report is anticipated to be complete in spring 2020.

8. **Next Steps and Meetings** – Matthew Sclafani and Elizabeth Hornstein

Elizabeth announced:

- The PEP is working to set up a web map on the PEP website to share the results of the seagrass bio-optical model.
- The PEP and Long Island Sound Study are working together to conduct a coordinated aerial eelgrass survey of the Peconic Estuary and Long Island Sound in spring 2021.

Upcoming 2020 TAC meetings:

May 4th, 2020 10:00 am – 12:30 pm Maxine S. Postal Auditorium - Riverhead County Center

August 19th, 2020 10:00 am – 12:30 pm Suffolk County Community College Culinary Arts and Hospitality Center

November 18th, 2020 10:00 am – 12:30 pm Suffolk County Community College Culinary Arts and Hospitality Center

Tentative 2020 NRS meetings:

June 3rd, 2020 9:00 am – 1:00 pm Suffolk County Community College Culinary Arts and Hospitality Center

October 28th, 2020 9:00 am – 1:00 pm Suffolk County Community College Culinary Arts and Hospitality Center

9. **Public Comment Period-** meeting attendees were asked to sign up on the sign-in sheet at the beginning of the meeting.

- Brad Peterson- Commented that higher temperature resistant eelgrass seeds should be a priority research project that the PEP TAC/ NRS consider supporting.
- John Needham- Commented that in 2019 a lot of eelgrass washed up on the shore at the Coecles Harbor Marina and the amount of eelgrass in Coecles Harbor seems to fluctuate from year to year.
- Roger Tollefsen- The PEP distributed Roger Tollefsen's document to the TAC/NRS on 2/24/20 via email: "Anatomy of a Bloom of Harmful Algae in Peconic Bay". Roger commented that he would like the group to investigate whether the Peconic Bays are nitrogen starved and requests that the members of the TAC/NRS provide comment and feedback on his documents that he will distribute to the PEP TAC Chair for distribution in the meeting minutes. See here for a [link](#) to the documents. If you have comments please respond to Roger via the contact information listed on page 9 of the "Anatomy of a Bloom of Harmful Algae in Peconic Bay" document.

10. **Adjourn**