



## **Peconic Estuary Partnership**

### **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting**

**May 4, 2020 10:00am**

Zoom Conference Call\*

(\*Due to COVID-19)

Attendees: Sarah Schaefer (PEP), Joyce Novak (PEP), Lauren Scheer (PEP), Elizabeth Hornstein (PEP), Matthew Scalfani (CCE), Chris Clapp (TNC), Pat Aitken (PEPC), Chris Schubert (USGS), Josh Halsey (PLT), Michael Jensen (SCDHS), Julie Hargrave (Central Pine Barrens Joint Planning and Policy Commission), Roger Tollefsen (Seafood Industry), Corey Humphrey (SCSWCD), Debbie Aller (CCE), Kaitlin Shahinian (SCSWCD), Edward Compagnone (SCSWCD), Michele Golden (NYSDEC), George Bartunek (Riverhead Environmental Committee), Kathleen Fallon (NY Sea Grant), Rachel Neville (SSER), Brian Frank (Town of East Hampton), Nicole Maher (TNC), Kate Rossi-Snook (CCOM), Tom Iwanejko (SCDPW), John Aldred (East Hampton Town Trustee), Brad Peterson (SBU), Lena DeSantis (Anchor QEA), Aimee Boucher (USEPA), Alexa Fournier (NYSDEC), Cassandra Bauer (NYSDEC), Guy Foster (USGS), Julia Socrates (NYSDEC), Kyle Rabin (LIRPC), Marcus Beck (Tampa Bay Estuary Program), Mary Ann Eddy (Sage Harbor- Harbor Committee), Maureen Dunn (Seatuck), Nancy Pierson (SCDHS), Rich Batiuk (CoastWise Partners), Holly Greening (CoastWise Partners), Gerold Morrison (CoastWise Partners), Riley Behrens, Sally Kellog (SSER), Stephen Terraciano (USGS), Tristen Tagliaferri (USGS), Johnathan Wanlass (SCDHS), Kim Shaw (Town of East Hampton)

1. **Welcome & Introductions** –Matthew Scalfani (TAC Chair)
2. **TAC Meeting Summary** – Matthew Scalfani
  - Review of the [February Technical Advisory Committee/ Natural Resources Subcommittee \(TAC/NRS\) Meeting Summary](#) - minutes approved by the committee.
3. **PEP May Program Update Review** – Sarah Schaefer (PEP Program Coordinator) & Elizabeth Hornstein (PEP State Coordinator)
  - The committee was asked to come with any questions after reviewing the [May PEP Program Update](#).
  - PEP provided updates on the following items that have changed since March:

- The PEP Conference planned for September 25<sup>th</sup> 2020 has been postponed until spring 2021.
- PEP is continuing to provide results to our partners on the completed projects (Seagrass Bio-optical Model, Greenport Living Shoreline Demonstration Project, Critical Lands Protection Strategy and Climate Ready Assessment) and is working with our partners to implement the next phases of the Conceptual Habitat Restoration Design projects that were completed in 2019.
- PEP has been able to secure construction funding for the Woodhull Dam Fish Passage Project from the NYSDEC WQIP grant, Suffolk County WQPRP grant, and the USFWS, but did not secure the \$50K grant we applied for from the Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership Grant. We hope to put the project out to bid again this year, but we may need additional funding to complete the construction. If any of our partners know of any small grants or funding sources that are available please let PEP know.
- Spring 2020 Alewife Monitoring Update:
  - Video camera installed at Grangebel Park fishway on Peconic River for second year. Suffolk County College Professor (Kellie McCartin) and students are helping with video monitoring analysis.
  - Alewife Count Update: From 02/28/20-03/31/20, just over 34,000 fish are estimated to have passed through the camera. Last year's estimate was around 34,500, so we will definitely exceed last year's estimate. We plan to keep the camera running for the next couple weeks through May as the alewife migration season winds down.
  - 25 Volunteer River Herring Surveyors trained at two workshops in February 2020.
  - Alewife Monitoring QAPP under final review by EPA.
- E&O updates:
  - The PEP Citizens' Advisory Committee Meeting, "Native Plant Gardening with Long Island Native Plant Initiative" will be held on May 14th from 2-4pm through Zoom. Registration is required. The goal is to encourage people to plant low maintenance gardens that benefit water quality. The Homeowner Rewards Program will be featured.
  - PEP has developed new activities and educational resources for parents and teachers to utilize during this time of social distancing. <https://www.peconicestuary.org/protect-the-peconic/outreach-and-education-programs/resources-for-educators/>
  - An Alewife social media campaign showcased the efforts of PEP and partners to restore habitat and conserve the species.
- PEP is working on all of our projects to move them forward in light of the current COVID-19 related construction and field work restrictions, the EPA and PEP are considering an extension on current grant funds that are due to expire on September 30, 2020 to allow for delayed work to continue to be completed/funded.

4. **Presentation: Peconic Estuary Partnership Water Quality Monitoring Strategy** – Holly Greening and Gerold Morrison (CoastWise Partners)

- Holly and Gerold presented the [PowerPoint Presentation](#)
- Click here for the [DRAFT Peconic Estuary Partnership's Water Quality Monitoring Strategy](#)
- TAC members are asked to provide any comments and feedback on the PEP Water Quality Monitoring Strategy during the presentation.

Questions and Comments:

Resilient Communities Prepared for Climate Change CCMP Chapter-

- **Question** (Mary Ann Eddy): How does New York State compare with other states in terms of the state's enterococcus water quality criteria levels?  
**Answer:** New York's enterococcus criteria under consideration are consistent with many other states given these criteria are recommended by EPA. The EPA is encouraging the States to review the enterococcus criteria. The EPA is looking to make the standards more stringent, the criteria updates are not final at this time. Nancy Pierson and Michael Jensen with the Suffolk County Department of Health Services indicated in the chat window that they are available to answer any questions about the bathing beach monitoring program. The County is currently using the 104 enterococcus levels for the bathing beach monitoring program.
- **Question** (Mary Ann Eddy): Why is there so much green on the bacteria stoplight chart for beaches where we know there are still shellfish bed closures near those beaches?  
**Answer:** The stoplight chart is focused on suitable of beaches for swimming. There are separate criteria used to determine if shellfish can be harvested from specific shellfish beds.
- **Question** (Roger Tollefsen): Is it possible to calculate the amount of total chlorophyll a measured which is due to harmful algal bloom species based on the existing HAB and chlorophyll a concentration monitoring programs underway?  
**Answer:** This is exactly the type of question that the recommended Monitoring Cooperative could take on working with each of the different monitoring program partners, the County program is collecting this data currently so this analysis could be a possibility. Given total chlorophyll a concentrations are measured at the same time as the samples for enumeration of HAB species are collected, we should be able to make such a calculation.
- **Chat comment** (Brad Peterson): Bottom water continuous temp is important.

Clean Waters CCMP Chapter-

- **Question** (Brad Peterson): Does the list of toxins sampled include herbicides and pesticides coming in from groundwater?

**Answer:** Yes, Suffolk County's and USGS's groundwater monitoring programs do include the measurement of herbicides and pesticides and their degradants. We will still need to look at the specific lists of herbicides and pesticides and their degradants measured by both programs and determine if we are missing any critical pesticides (including herbicides, insecticides, fungicides and other chemicals used for control). Chris Schubert suggested in the chat window that we need a joint presentation by Suffolk County and USGS to fully understand the parent and daughter compounds which are being monitored now through both groundwater monitoring programs and determine what additional compounds we should be sampling for future use in the partnership's groundwater model.

- **Chat comment (Michael Jensen):** Regarding tracking cyanobacterial HABs in fresh water, the DEC maintains such a site: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/83310.html>. As far as reporting freshwater HABS: <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/66337b887ccd465ab7645c0a9c1bc5c0>
- **Chat comment (Debbie Aller):** Some factsheets and information on 'BMPs for Groundwater' produced by CCE and partners. <http://ccesuffolk.org/agriculture/bmps-to-protect-groundwater>. NYSDEC Long Island Pesticide Pollution Prevention Strategy: <http://ccesuffolk.org/resources/long-island-pesticide-pollution-prevention-strategy>. Updated presentation by the DEC: [https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/materials\\_minerals\\_pdf/17litracbg.pdf](https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/materials_minerals_pdf/17litracbg.pdf).

Tracking progress toward CCMP Goals-

Marcus Beck, Program Scientist with the Tampa Bay Estuary Program has been working with Holly and Gerold on developing the R-based data analysis and reporting package for the Peconic Estuary Partnership to produce the stop light graphics. The R-package can download data available online, like the Suffolk County Water Quality data, and create the graphics and data analysis graphs for reporting. Marcus offered to provide a training opportunity/webinar for anyone with the PEP that is interested; he included a link in the chat window to one of the TBEP webpages that provides a tutorial on the R-package functions: <https://tbep-tech.github.io/pepreporting/articles/Introduction.html>

- Any comments that the TAC has in addition to the comments noted during the TAC meeting will be incorporated in the Peconic Estuary Partnership Water Quality Monitoring Strategy to develop a revised draft before the final presentation to the Management Committee and Policy Committee on June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Please direct comments to the PEP office.
- TAC members voted on whether to approve PEP Water Quality Monitoring Strategy and make a recommendation on the document to the Management Committee. The document was approved by the TAC.

5. **Presentation: Presentation: Water Quality Monitoring Equipment for New USGS Station at South Ferry Shelter Island** –Tristen Tagliaferri, Chris Schubert, and Guy Foster (USGS)

- Tristen Tagliaferri presented the presentation USGS Monitoring Capabilities for the Mid-Peconic Estuary. Link to presentation: <https://www.peconicestuary.org/usgs-shelter-island-tide-gage-options-presentation-2020/>. She provided an overview of the monitoring capabilities of the new USGS monitoring station at South Ferry Shelter Island. The gauge will be sited to the north side of the South Ferry dock on Shelter Island.
- Since 2012 USGS has operated two USGS Continuous Water Quality Monitoring Stations in the Peconic Estuary, one at Highway 105 in Riverhead, NY and one in Orient Harbor in Orient, NY. Both monitor tide elevation, water temperature, specific conductance/salinity, dissolved oxygen, pH, turbidity, and nitrate. In addition, the Riverhead station monitors chlorophyll concentrations.
- The new mid-Peconic Estuary flood warning gage is centered in a narrow channel and is outfitted to monitor tide elevation with a non-contact radar level. There will be a data collection platform installed near the site above the 100 year flood level, the electronics and base station are housed in this data collection platform.
- The USGS has 18 tide gages across Long Island, two additional sites are on the way which include the mid- Peconic Estuary station and the Rye Playland station in Westchester. Half of the stations have some type of water quality and or meteorological parameters attached to the tide gage monitoring capabilities.
- List of reasons USGS monitors at these stations:
  - Flood warning
  - Coastal resilience and wetland health
  - To understand short-term, and long-term effects
  - Coastal resources management- habitat and living resources
  - Harmful Algal Blooms- warning an mitigation
  - To understand hydrodynamics and flux (sediment, nutrients)
  - To inform regulatory standards and TMDL development
  - To establish baselines from which to ascertain change
- All of the water quality parameters are collected with two sondes, the EXO2 (1. collects water temperature, 2. specific conductance/salinity, 3. dissolved oxygen, 4. pH, 5. turbidity, 6. chlorophyll) and the SUNA V2 which is the nitrate analyzer. The order in which you would need to add the parameters to the sondes are indicated by the listed number, since many of these parameters are dependent on other parameters to collect accurate data. All parameters are collected half a meter off of the bottom. The most commonly measured parameters are numbers 1-5.
- Two parameters which USGS is looking to add in the monitoring network are Phyceorythrin, a pigment in cyanobacteria, and fDOM, the fluorescent dissolved organic matter.
- The USGS is planning to do a spatial survey for dissolved oxygen at the mouth of the Peconic River near the Highway 105 USGS station.

- A parameter that would be possible to collect at the new South Ferry site is index velocity using an acoustic velocity meter, due to the fact that the new station will be located in a narrow channel. Stage and velocity can be used to compute discharge-bathymetry would need to be collected first in the channel to calculate the cross sectional area. Index velocity measurements would enable the calculation of flux for sediment, nutrients, salt, etc. The mid-peconic estuary station is an ideal station for index velocity and flow data collection could offer an important calibration point for hydrodynamic models.
- The USGS station data is best used in coordination with the Suffolk County water quality monitoring data. Comparing the data directly can be difficult though due to differing time of collection and depth of the monitoring locations.
- This presentation and conversation today will be used guide the station equipment installation as time progresses and will be dependent on the budgeted funds available to the PEP for the project.
- Kate-Rossi Snook asked in the chat window when the target installation would be. Tristen and Chris stated the installation was planned for spring 2020, the USGS is ready to install the station, but the land agreement is still being finalized with South Ferry and has been delayed due the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### 6. **CCMP Revision Update and Next Steps** – Joyce Novak (PEP Director)

- Joyce reviewed the status of the final CCMP development. PEP is still awaiting the EPA comments on the final CCMP document.
- PEP is working with the graphic designer to develop the chapter pages and thanks everyone who contributed pictures for the document.
- We hope to have the CCMP completed in the summer/ early Fall 2020, we will have a formal release of the document in spring 2021 at the PEP conference.

#### 7. **Next Steps and Meetings** – Matthew Sclafani

##### Upcoming 2020 TAC meetings:

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

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

- #### 8. **Public Comment Period**- meeting attendees were asked to indicate in the Zoom chat if you would like to speak.
- No comments.

#### 9. **Adjourn**