



**Peconic Estuary Partnership
Special Policy Committee Meeting/Management Committee Meeting Summary**

July 8th, 2020, 10:00 am – 12:30 pm
Microsoft Teams Conference Call

Attendees: Joyce Novak (PEP), Elizabeth Hornstein (PEP), Lauren Scheer (PEP/CCE), Sarah Schaefer (PEP), Julia Socrates (NYSDEC MC Rep), Kevin McDonald (TNC/CAC Chair and MC Rep), Matt Sclafani (CCE/ TAC Chair and MC Rep), Richard Friesner (NEIWPC MC Rep), Emma Gildesgame (NEIWPC), Javier Laureano (USEPA and PC Chair), Aisha Sexton-Sims (EPA and MC Chair), Aimee Boucher (EPA), Michael Collins (Town of Southold)(proxy for Local Government PC Rep Scott Russell who was not present on the call), Carrie Meek Gallagher (NYSDEC PC Rep), Peter Scully (Suffolk County PC rep), Peter Brandt (USEPA), Robert Nyman (USEPA), Walter Mugdan (USEPA), Rick Balla (USEPA), Holly Sanford (PLT), Al Krupski (SC Legislator District 1), Theresa Masin (Town of Southampton), John Sohngen (SCDHS MC Rep) (proxy for Suffolk County MC Rep Ken Zegel who was not present on the call), Jay Schneiderman (Town of Southampton Supervisor), Patricia Aitken (PE Protection Committee), Rob Carpenter (LI Farm Bureau).

10:00 am – 11:00 am: Special Policy Committee Meeting

Open to the public and/or any member of the Management Committee

Meeting Purpose: This is a special meeting of the PEP Policy Committee to address the memo submitted by the Management Committee dated May 29, 2020, recommending that the Management Conference begin exploring alternate host entities to suit the specific needs of the Partnership.

1. Opening: Meeting Purpose and Introductions- **Javier Laureano** (USEPA)
 - The Management Committee (MC) was thanked for providing an hour of the MC meeting for the Special Policy Committee meeting. Deputy Regional Administrator of USEPA Region 2, Walter Mugdan, will be leading this session of the meeting to discuss the host entity of the Peconic Estuary Partnership.
 - Role Call was conducted.
 - The meeting materials were identified:
 - Memo to PC from MC May 29th, 2020 (attached)
 - Example Host Entity Statement of Interest (SOI) (attached) - An example of the kind of information that EPA might seek from any potential new host organization.
2. Policy Committee Discussion on Host Entity Options- **Deputy Regional Administrator Walter Mugdan** (USEPA)
 - Walter Mugdan is the Deputy Regional Administrator standing in for USEPA Regional Administrator, Peter Lopez.

- On May 29th the PEP MC sent the PC a memo recommending that the Management Conference begin exploring alternate host entities to suit the specific needs of the Peconic Estuary Partnership.
- Walter suggested a two-step process for today's meeting discussion:
 - Step 1- To see if we can reach a decision about the MC's recommendation, he will ask whether any member of the PC wants to make a motion to accept the recommendation. In the event that we do decide to accept the MC's recommendation then we would move onto step 2.
 - Step 2- To determine how such an exploration for an alternative host can be carried out. There are a few options- reach out to one single entity, cast a wider net and accept expressions of interest from a few potential entities, or we could accept proposals from any interested entity. Our goal is to make decisions by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, then we can figure out how to proceed over the next couple of weeks.
- Walter asked the voting members of the PC if the suggested 2 step approach to today's meeting is acceptable. If so, we can proceed with step 1.
 - Carrie Meek Gallagher, Peter Scully and Michael Collins agreed with the approach.
 - Decision: PC approved the 2 step approach to the meeting.

Step 1:

- Peter Scully made the motion to accept the MC's recommendation to the PC, Carrie Meek Gallagher seconded the motion.
- Walter opened it up for discussion- no additional comments were made in regards to the recommendation. There was consensus among the voting members of the PC to accept the recommendation.
- Walter opened it up for discussion from voting members of the MC- no additional comments were made in regards to the recommendation.
 - Decision: PC accepts the MC's recommendation noted in the Memo to PC from MC May 29th, 2020.

Step 2:

- Walter laid out three possible options to carry out the search for an alternate host. The following options would be permitted under the applicable federal rules governing the National Estuary Programs:
 - Option A- We could identify a particular entity that we think might be well suited for our purpose. We could ask that entity to respond to a couple of questions about its vision for the program which would help us reach an initial decision about the suitability of that entity. The group has all received a copy of a document that USEPA used a few years ago for a similar purpose in connection with the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary Program where we asked potentially interested entities to answer a series of questions that would help us to evaluate their suitability (see Example Host Entity Statement of Interest (SOI) (attached)).
 - Option B- We could cast a wider net and identify a limited number of targeted entities, maybe 2- 4, of whom we would ask those entities to respond to a couple of questions about its vision for the program which would help us reach an initial decision about the suitability of those entities.
 - Option C- We could cast the widest possible net, by issuing a request for proposals and allowing any interested entity to make a submission.

- Walter asked if there was a preference of the PC members- Carrie Meek Gallagher, Peter Scully and Michael Collins did not have a preference.
- Walter asked if the PC voting members have a view they would like to express among the 3 options or if there is an additional option that the group would like to discuss.
 - Decision: Peter Scully and Carrie Meek Gallagher's preference is option B and Michael Collins supports the option. Walter stated from EPA's view we are comfortable with option B.
- Walter now opened the discussion up to the MC to ask them if they would like to weigh in on this issue before we reach a conclusion.
 - Kevin McDonald asked about the relative timeline of the options being considered.
 - Walter responded, he believes the time period for Option A and B are similar. In terms of the timing the first thing we would have to do if we went with option B would be to ask the MC to identify a couple of entities out there that might be interested and it would be good to ask the MC to come back in a short period of time with an identified 2- 4 total entities that we might ask. At the same time we need to look at the document - the Example Host Entity Statement of Interest (SOI), this was used for a similar purpose to find a new host for the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary Program. Page 2 has a series of questions that would need to be satisfied of the new host but these would need to be modified for the PEP situation. We might want to ask the MC for either option, option A, B or C, to look at this document and identify any other questions that they would want to ask or remove questions that are not applicable and develop a 1 or 2 page document like this one that we could be provided to those few entities. We would probably need to give those entities at least a month to respond which puts us at the end of August of early to mid-September. Then the information that they would provide would come back to the MC and PC and give 2 to 4 weeks for the MC and PC to make a decision on the specific entity.
- Rick Balla stated that we would want to circle back to the Management Conference, MC and PC, review the response that came in and discuss our recommendation with the MC. If the entity that is recommended is one that already has an established track record already receiving federal grants or EPA grants will move more quickly than if the entity was not one that has previously received federal or EPA grants. The timeline is less than 6 months' time. The other thing that comes into play is that we typically don't have federal funds in place until early in the calendar year; this would typically be around the earliest that we would have federal funds that we could even begin with the application process. Even if the process was completed quicker, we would not be able to get federal funds out the door any quicker and of course the whole federal budget process is determined by Congress, so we don't often have funds until much later in the spring.
- Walter added that he knows the House of Representatives Committee that manages our budget came back with a Committee vote two days ago that the budget for the place-based programs, like Peconic Estuary Partnership and the other National Estuary Programs, were certainly not going to be cut and might actually be enhanced a little bit.
- Javier Laureano noted that the Program Director needs to begin working with the workplan and the budget between early months of the calendar year, January/ February usually. The Program needs to be working with this new host entity around that time.
- Walter summarized the targeted milestones: No later than September to have the submissions from potential entities and select the entity by late September or early October. By December/January timeframe have the new host entity selected.

- Walter asked the members of the PC, if they agreed that a good next step is to turn back to the MC to ask them to do 2 things (1) to identify a limited number of organizations that might be good candidates to then whom we can send an inquiry, and (2) prepare an inquiry.
 - **Decision:** Carrie Meek Gallagher, Peter Scully and Michael Collins are agreeable with the approach and agreed the MC should select 3 to 5 potential entities to ask to respond to the SOI. Walter stated we have consensus and EPA agrees with this approach.
- Walter asked the MC if they were comfortable accepting this task.
 - **Decision:** MC Chair Aisha Sexton-Sims responded yes.
- Walter exited the Teams Meeting and ended the Special Policy Committee Meeting session.

11:10 am – 12:30 pm: PEP Management Committee Meeting

1. Opening of the Management Committee Meeting - **Aisha Sexton-Sims** (USEPA)
 - Aisha thanked everyone who participated in the Special Policy Committee meeting and for those that are still on the line for the Management Committee meeting.
2. Discussion and Approval of the [April 8th Management Committee \(MC\) Meeting Summary](#) – **Aisha Sexton-Sims**
 - Richard Friesner stated that he has a comment on the meeting summary- in the section that discusses NEIWPC's indirect rate; it says we don't negotiate the indirect rate with EPA, but it should be corrected to say that we do in fact negotiate the rate with EPA but it's not different among different programs.
 - Aisha stated that we can make that correction, and asked if anyone else had comments.
 - Richard Friesner stated that was the only comment he had and he moves to approve the minutes.
 - Kevin McDonald seconded the motion to approve the minutes.
 - The meeting summary from April 8th was approved by the MC.
3. PEP Updates – Joyce Novak (PEP Director), **Sarah Schaefer** (PEP Program Coordinator) & **Lauren Scheer** (PEP Education and Outreach Coordinator)
 - PEP distributed the [PEP July Program Update](#) with the meeting materials. PEP will be going through all of our ongoing and new updates. This will include all delays in projects and funding as a result of the coronavirus.
 - Joyce Novak provided the PEP CCMP Revision updates (slide 2 of presentation).
 - We are finishing up final review of the PEP CCMP and are awaiting final comment from the EPA hopefully sometime this week, and are ready to print the Full CCMP document, the Summary CCMP document and the post card document that has a link the CCMP document on the PEP website which will be distributed widely.
 - PEP had originally scheduled a conference for September 25th to launch the CCMP and kick-off the biennial conference that will serve as a State of the Estuaries conference. Unfortunately that conference was cancelled, but the new date will be April 14th, 2021 at the Long Island Aquarium.
 - Since the CCMP will be released this summer we had been discussing holding a press event to launch the CCMP and a "Pledge for the Peconic" recommitment event tentatively in early September outside at the Indian Island Golf Course. The list of

who we would like to have at the event, including all the signatories, is long. We would like to reach out to the MC to get their feelings in light of current restrictions for COVID-19, Long Island is now in Phase 4 of reopening but we do not know what September will be like. Joyce asked the group if they thought holding an in-person press event in September is something we should still plan to do, or should we just focus on doing a press release in September and during the April 14th Conference have the “Pledge for the Peconic” recommitment event.

- Decision: The group advised that we should still plan to try to have a press event even if it has been structured to be smaller and have the ability to quickly pivot to a press release with a virtual event. Noted that we might be able to do something that is both in-person and virtual because no matter what the regulations are at the time people may be uncomfortable attending the in-person event. Joyce stated she will take all of this feedback on board and we will keep planning.
- Sarah Schaefer continued through the PEP Completed Projects and updates on current projects (Slides 3- 24 of presentation). See presentation for detail.
 - Kevin McDonald noted that the Hardened Shoreline GIS Mapping project results should be distributed to the public when we can release final results. We should discuss as a group how we can best roll out this information to the public.
 - Al Krupski asked if we could get the information on the hardened shorelines sooner rather than later because this information would be helpful for the Coastal Erosion group he is working with.
 - Joyce responded that the linear feet of bulkhead increase is the only data set that has been thoroughly reviewed by multiple people and we would be comfortable sharing. The other structures, docks, jetties, etc. have not been reviewed as thoroughly at this time. She stated she would be happy to pass the linear feet of bulkhead result to Al Krupski and have a conversation at a later time.
- Lauren Scheer continued through the Education and Outreach highlights (slides 25-30 of presentation). See presentation for detail.
 - PEP is developing a Wildlife Monitoring Network for Long Island. This is a branding together of island-wide citizen science wildlife monitoring programs that will increase collaboration among partners and participation of citizen scientists for multiple species. This reaps benefits that include (among others) less overlap and more data. There will be a kick-off meeting on July 15th which the group will be discussing the place the Wildlife Monitoring Network should be housed online- options that might be discussed are for the Network to be housed on the NYSDEC website, on the PEP website, or managing a new website created for the Wildlife Monitoring Network. We do not have to make any decisions now; we just wanted to put this discussion on your radar. Lauren will be sending the MC emails over the next few weeks about what the group discussed and any cost and time scenarios for these options. We can discuss this information at the next MC meeting.
 - Discussion: The group noted there could be complications keeping the information on the NYSDEC website up to date, although this could be a more appropriate website to host this long island-wide information and Joyce noted that the NYSDEC has not been asked yet if hosting this Network on their website would be approved. Hosting the Network on the PEP website could increase direct exposure of the PEP website to more people and showcase the PEP as the lead collaborator in the LI Wildlife Monitoring Network. PEP would be open to hosting the Network on their website. Matt Sclafani suggested PEP reach out to Cornell University for their

experience managing the citizen science program managed by their ornithology lab. Theresa Masin suggested PEP reach out to iMap Invasives.

4. Review and Approval of Environmental Justice Statement for Release - **Joyce Novak**

- Joyce review the Draft PEP Environmental Justice Statement for Release (attached) with the group. She stated the PEP office has been looking to release a statement surrounding the current racial tensions in the United States and to work to improve the PEP's work in the watershed. The statement will be coming from the members of the Management Conference of the PEP.
- Joyce asked the MC for edit and contribution on the statement and want to reach out to the divisions and individuals in their organizations responsible for policy and public outreach that might be able to advise edits on the statement. Joyce would like the MC to pass along the statement to the PC representatives and to take it up the chain where agencies need to. Joyce will also be reaching out to the PC directly for their feedback. Joyce requests amendments so that we can release the statement, or a version of the statement, within 30 days on behalf of your organizations as partners in the Peconic Estuary Partnership.
- Joyce stated the next step in our "Environmental Justice Endeavor" is to form an environmental justice workgroup and she would like each organization to nominate the appropriate individual who would be best suited to help us reach out to our minority communities and people of color in our watershed. She would also like to reach out to members of the public who are not already associated with PEP committees or workgroups. We want to get them together onto a workgroup to develop an environmental justice strategy for PEP.
- Joyce noted that she, Adelle Molina (PEP Education and Outreach Assistant) and Aimee Boucher (PEP EPA Program Coordinator) will be attending the national virtual forums held by the National Estuary Programs on this topic to assist us in this process. She stated we are reassessing how we are responding to this critical issue and our first step is to form a workgroup to form a strategy. We are looking to all of our partners to help us work with communities.
- Action: MC to respond within 30 days for comments and response to the statement, including passing the statement along to members of the PC for their input.

5. New Business, Next Steps and Next Meeting Dates – **Aisha Sexton-Sims**

- Next steps:
 - As part of the Special Policy Committee meeting the MC is being asked to provide 3 to 5 entities to request statements of interest for hosting and the MC is being asked to develop a draft statement of interest that has criteria that we will be looking for from the host entities. Further discussions on this topic can continue on the PEP MC Bi-weekly calls.
 - Joyce stated she can send out an email asking the MC for their suggestions after this MC meeting so that we have a list to go through on the next PEP Bi-weekly call. Joyce also stated she would go through the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary Program SOI example document to create a draft SOI for the MC to comment as they see fit before the next PEP Bi-weekly which is on 7/21/2020.
 - Aisha stated that the Water Quality Monitoring Strategy is now with the EPA to be reviewed and EPA will bring that up to management so that can be incorporated into the CCMP.

- Next Meetings:
 - 2020 MC Meeting Schedule: October 14th, 2020

6. Adjourn



MEMO: ACCOMPANYING MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE PEP FY20 WORKPLANS & BUDGET

May 29th, 2020

The Management Committee of the Peconic Estuary Partnership, on April 28th, 2020 voted unanimously to approve recommending the Peconic Estuary Partnership FY20 Suffolk County and NEIWPCC Workplans and Budget to the Policy Committee with the following recommendations:

The Management Committee recommends the PEP Suffolk County FY20 Workplan and Budget without incident.

The Management Committee recommends the PEP NEIWPCC FY20 Workplan and Budget while also recommending that the Management Conference begin exploring alternate host entities to suit the specific needs of the Partnership.

An alternate host may be better suited to meet the needs and challenges of the PEP, including the limited financial resources that are available to the Program and program autonomy to ensure the Program is run efficiently. Specific needs and challenges that can't be accommodated by NEIWPCC include:

- (1) Detailed description of staff salary and indirect costs and how they are applied to the program;*
- (2) The ability for the MC and PEP committees to agree on how all monies are spent in the program;*
- (3) Detailed description of host agency policies and how they impact the PEP; and,*
- (4) Program management should be maintained locally and should be the responsibility of the Program office, the Director, and the PEP MC; not the program host.*

Cover note:

The attached is an example of the kind of information that EPA might seek from any potential new host organization.



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 2
290 BROADWAY
NEW YORK, NY 10007-1866

JUN 10 2013

Dear HEP Stakeholder:

On behalf of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 2 (EPA) and the New York-New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program (HEP) Policy Committee, I am writing regarding the opportunity to host the HEP office.

Background of the National Estuary Program and the HEP Transition

Congress recognized the significance of preserving and enhancing coastal environments with the establishment of the National Estuary Program (NEP) in the 1987 amendments to the Clean Water Act (CWA). The purpose of the NEP is to promote the development and implementation of comprehensive management plans for estuaries of national significance threatened by pollution, development or overuse. At the request of the Governors of New York and New Jersey, the HEP was accepted into the NEP in 1988. There are 28 nationally recognized estuary programs. In the 25-plus years since the Harbor & Estuary was selected as an estuary of national significance, the HEP has proven to be an effective partnership for advancing regional efforts to achieve the fishable and swimmable goals of the Clean Water Act. The EPA will continue to work to attain these goals while also engaging the public through environmental justice and citizen science efforts. For further information about the national program and about the 28 NEPs, please visit <http://water.epa.gov/type/oceb/nep/index.cfm>.

The EPA and the HEP Policy Committee are seeking to move the HEP office outside of the EPA to a new non-federal host entity that will be the recipient of an EPA assistance agreement. This assistance agreement will be awarded as either a grant or a cooperative agreement. The HEP is currently housed at the EPA Region 2 office in New York, NY. The new host entity may be a state, interstate or local government agency; a college or university; or a non-profit organization. The host entity must be able to avoid conflicts of interest between administering the program and the regulatory requirements of federal, state and local agencies. The new HEP Director and staff will administer the program under the direction of the HEP Management Conference, which includes the EPA, numerous stakeholders and the host entity. While the Program Director and staff will be employees of the host entity, they must, first and foremost, represent the HEP Management Conference. Administering the HEP outside of EPA will increase program flexibility, provide access to funding opportunities and enhance partnerships with HEP stakeholders. Information regarding the HEP committee structure, work products, committee proceedings, planning documents and other details can be found at www.harborestuary.org.

Clean Water Act Section 320 assistance agreements must be cost-shared or matched dollar for dollar. The host entity must either provide this match, which can be either cash or in-kind services, or secure a commitment from partners to provide this match. The

match will be documented in the assistance agreement. We anticipate that \$512,000 will be available in the fall of 2013. Future year allocations are subject to Congressional appropriations.

The EPA will continue to participate on the Policy and Management Committees, and will generally participate in all other committees and work groups along with the new host entity.

Host Entity Responsibilities

The EPA is seeking a non-federal host entity whose responsibilities would include the following:

1. Meet the EPA eligibility criteria for an annual Clean Water Act Section 320 assistance agreement. This topic is more fully addressed under the section of this letter entitled "Submittal of the Statement of Interest" (see below).
2. Administer the Clean Water Act Section 320 assistance agreement that supports the HEP for the purposes and activities approved by the Management Conference.
3. Provide a HEP Director, program staff, and space and support services for these individuals.
4. Provide, or receive a commitment from its partners to provide, an acceptable 1:1 match for all Section 320 funds received. Cash or in-kind services are eligible as match.
5. Provide strong bi-state leadership and equally represent the states of New York and New Jersey.
6. Secure and leverage financial and technical resources to support HEP priorities.
7. Implement the actions identified in the HEP Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP), Action Plan and other strategic documents approved by the HEP Policy Committee.
8. Implement HEP activities through the administration and performance of an annual work plan under the EPA assistance agreement.
9. Provide technical and administrative support to Program work groups and committees.
10. Provide leadership and work with stakeholders through the existing HEP structure to carry out Program objectives for this unique bi-state program.
11. Provide expertise to the HEP Management Conference in the areas of water quality improvement, regional sediment management, habitat restoration and protection, climate change, environmental justice, environmental stewardship, research needs and citizen science.
12. Produce documents geared toward non-technical audiences, including periodic State of the Estuary Reports on status and trends.
13. Conduct outreach activities with citizens, resource managers and elected officials on environmental issues. Produce multilingual outreach materials, as needed.

In recognition of the HEP's status as an NEP, and its charge to work cooperatively and collaboratively with diverse partners, the HEP shall provide an open, neutral forum for debate, discussion, and problem-solving of priority issues within the watershed. The Program Director shall refrain from taking any legal or regulatory action, on behalf of the HEP, against a regulatory agency or other entity represented within any standing committees.

We encourage all entities interested in submitting a Statement of Interest to review the most recent annual program guidance at <http://www.harborestuary.org/reports/NEP-FY2012-FundingGuidance-Dirs013112toRegs.pdf> and the National Estuary Program Evaluation Guidance at http://water.epa.gov/type/oceb/nep/upload/2011_final_pe_guidance.pdf to make sure that they have the skills and experience to serve as the host entity. The Evaluation Guidance contains the criteria for determining if an NEP is making progress in implementing its CCMP, and lays out performance measures that must be met to ensure continued funding from EPA.

Submittal of Statement of Interest

If you are interested in submitting a Statement of Interest, we encourage you to visit the EPA Region 2's grants webpage (<http://www.epa.gov/region02/grants/>), which includes a grant application kit (<http://www.epa.gov/region02/grants/kit.htm>). You are not required to submit a grant application with your Statement of Interest. Non-profit entities are encouraged to review the last two items on the kit webpage entitled "Information for Non-Profit Organizations" and "Mandatory Grants Management Training for Non-Profit Recipients." Non-profit entities should also review the EPA's Non-Profit Guidance webpage (<http://www.epa.gov/region02/grants/nonprofit.html>) and the EPA Administrative Capability Questionnaire (http://www.epa.gov/region02/grants/pdfs/omb_pre-awardform0412.pdf).

Your Statement of Interest should address all of the topics contained in the attachment to this letter, should not exceed 15 pages, and must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. EST on August 26, 2013. It may be submitted via certified mail, hand-delivery, or email. Facsimiles will not be accepted.

Statements of Interest submitted via certified mail or hand-delivery must be accepted by EPA and signed for by the Chief of the Watershed Management Branch or his designee. Statements of Interest should be addressed as follows:

Richard P. Balla
Chief, Watershed Management Branch
U.S. EPA, Region 2
290 Broadway, 24th Floor
New York, NY 10007-1866

Statements of Interest submitted by email must be sent to WatershedManagement.Region2@epa.gov.

The EPA expects to make a final selection by September 30, 2013. The host entity that the EPA selects will be invited to submit an application for the annual Clean Water Act Section 320 funds.

Informational Meeting – June 26

The EPA will conduct an informational meeting on June 26, 2013. This meeting will start at 10 a.m. and will be held in Room 27A at the EPA office at 290 Broadway, New York, NY. Please email WatershedManagement.Region2@epa.gov, by June 19, 2013, if you plan to participate in this event in person or via webinar. Call-in and webinar information will be provided. The EPA will discuss eligibility requirements to serve as a host entity, assistance agreements and match requirements, and will answer questions.

Please forward this letter to any other entities that might be interested in submitting a Statement of Interest. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joan Leary Matthews".

Joan Leary Matthews, Director
Clean Water Division

Request for Statements of Interest – NY/NJ Harbor & Estuary Program
Attachment

In your Statement of Interest to serve as the host entity¹ for the NY/NJ Harbor & Estuary Program, please address each of the following items in the order presented, using the headings and numbering system below.

Alignment with Mission:

1. Your interest in hosting the program.
2. The relationship between your organization's mission to that of the HEP.
3. Your vision as to how the hosting arrangement will be established to ensure that the HEP will have relative autonomy and an identity distinct from that of your organization, if appropriate.

Leadership and Partnerships:

1. Your ability to provide strong bi-state leadership and expertise in the areas of water quality improvement, regional sediment management, habitat restoration and protection, climate change, environmental stewardship, research needs and citizen science.
2. Your ability to foster interaction, establish new partnerships, enhance existing partnerships and work together with diverse stakeholders, including underserved communities, throughout the HEP's designated study area in New York and New Jersey. (See <http://harborestuary.org/geography.htm>).
3. Your organization's experience and capacity to support and manage effective partnerships and collaborative relationships with federal, state, interstate, regional and local regulatory entities and non-governmental organizations.
4. Information about the financial and technical resources that you will provide to support the HEP office. If you are submitting a Statement of Interest with other partners, clearly define the role of each partner.
5. Your plan to staff the HEP office, including the process for selecting the director.
6. Letters of support from partners that substantiate their specific roles and a commitment to partner with you as the host entity. Letters of support do not count toward your 15-page Statement of Interest.

Ability to Leverage Additional Resources:

1. Your ability to secure and leverage financial and technical resources to support HEP priorities, including items in the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan and subsequent planning documents. Please provide your specific plan for leveraging these resources.
2. Your past performance in applying for and receiving funding from government agencies and non-governmental entities.

¹ If an applicant indicates in the Statement of Interest that it intends to create a new entity, e.g., non-profit, to host the HEP, the applicant should partner with an existing entity when submitting the Statement of Interest. The Statement of Interest should indicate that the existing entity would be the grant recipient and program host until the new entity is eligible to receive a grant from EPA.

Communication and Outreach:

1. Your past performance in conducting outreach activities with the general public, resource managers and elected officials on environmental matters.
2. Your plan for expanding the conversation on environmentalism and working for environmental justice, including outreach and protection for communities that have been historically underrepresented in decision-making.
3. Your ability and plans to produce written and web-based documents and presentations geared toward non-technical audiences. One example would be producing periodic State of the Estuary Reports on status and trends of the Harbor and Estuary.

Programmatic Capability and Past Performance:

1. Your knowledge and understanding of federal, state, interstate and local environmental statutes and regulations pertaining to water quality, sediment quality, and coastal zone management.
2. Your experience in successfully administering grants or cooperative agreements especially from EPA, other federal entities, or the States of New York and New Jersey.
3. The location(s) where the HEP Director and program staff will be physically housed and where HEP meetings will occur. Applicants must provide meeting locations that are reasonably accessible for both New York and New Jersey participants.
4. Discuss how you would potentially use the \$512,000 of federal fiscal year 2013 Clean Water Act Section 320 funding for HEP activities, including the amount used to support projects, program staff, the day-to-day activities of the program staff, and the environmental outputs and outcomes resulting from the activities undertaken.²
5. Your organization's financial and human resources capabilities, including the following:
 - a. Experience in managing budgets.
 - b. The indirect rate that your organization has negotiated for federal funds. Indirect rates can include rent, utilities, information technology support, etc.
 - c. Fiscal controls and capacity to manage federal assistance agreements.
 - d. Experience with EPA assistance agreements and EPA fiscal procedures including reporting and auditing.
 - e. Human resource management capacity to attract and retain qualified persons.
 - f. Ability to provide the required 1:1 non-federal match. Describe the non-federal sources and types of match that you will likely provide along with an assurance as to how the match will be provided each year.

² The final workplan must be approved by the HEP Policy Committee, must contain well-defined outputs, and to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined outcomes. Definitions and related documents are available at <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/assistance.htm>



Peconic Estuary Partnership Statement

Over the past weeks, we have witnessed the collective pain of a nation as a result of the killings of people within the Black community, such as George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery; deaths resulting from the long and painful history of racism in the United States. Tragically, these acts of appalling racism are not new, nor are they isolated. The injustices that Black, Indigenous, and People of Color have experienced in our nation have persisted since its inception and it is time for change. The work that we do as watershed protectors affects all of us; but it is clear that there is a disproportionate burden of pollution and negative climate change impacts on these communities.

We at the Peconic Estuary Partnership (PEP) have taken time over the past few weeks to reflect on how we, as a partnership of scientists, educators, public and private institutions, can act to change the racial disparity in our own small corner of the world and contribute to this change in the wider world. As a partnership-based organization, we strive to include members that represent all of our communities. In response, PEP is coming together to develop a plan of inclusivity and environmental justice that will have integration in all of our communities. As a team, we are engaging in conversations throughout our partnership about issues of equity and race and hope that we can advance these conversations throughout the East End of Long Island.

We are challenging ourselves to do more. We will reassess all of our work in all of our communities to respond to this critical issue. We are forming a workgroup to formulate and implement a strategy of inclusion and environmental justice, both pillars of our organization that have yet been realized to their full potential. We ask members of our community who wish to join us in this endeavor to reach out (info@peconic-estuary.org) and let us know of your interest in being involved in this workgroup; including all of your voices is important to us. We will keep you informed on the progress of this and announcements will be made throughout the process.