



PROTECTING AND RESTORING LONG ISLAND'S PECONIC BAYS

Peconic Estuary Partnership Management Committee Meeting Agenda

July 13, 2022
10am – 12:30pm
Zoom

Meeting recording can be shared upon request

10:00 Welcome and Roll Call – Bob Nyman, EPA – Management Committee Chair

Committee Organizations	Individual
US EPA Region 2 (Chair)	Bob Nyman
DEC Division of Marine Resources	Julia Socrates -official MC representative not in attendance, designated representation to Alexa Fournier
DEC Division of Water	Sue Van Patten -arrived after roll call
New York State Department of State	Jeremy Campbell
Suffolk County Dept of Health, Office of Ecology	Ken Zegel
Suffolk County Dept. of Economic Development and Planning	Sarah Lansdale -official MC representative not in attendance, designated representation to Castelli
Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District	Corey Humphrey
Suffolk County Legislator District 1 & 2	Al Krupski
Bridget Fleming	official MC representative not in attendance, office represented by Irene Donohue; vote proxied to Al Krupski
Local Government Rep to the MC	Councilman John Bouvier
PEP Chair Local Government Committee	Jim Colligan -official MC representative not in attendance
PEP Chair Technical Advisory Committee	Matt Sclafani, PhD
PEP Chair Citizens Advisory Committee	Kevin McDonald
Stony Brook University (SBU)	Paul Shepson, PhD (limited availability after 10:30am)

Additional Attendees:

Joyce Novak (PEP), Sara Cernadas-Martin (PEP), Jade Blennau (PEP), Valerie Virgona (PEP), Mark Woolley (Congressman Zeldin’s Office), Irene Donohue (Office of Legislator Fleming), C. Theresa Masin (Southampton Town), Rebecca Shuford (NYSG), Abigail Costigan (SBU student fellow), Holly Sanford (Peconic Land Trust), Christopher Gobler (SBU), Gwynn Schroeder (Office of Legislator Al Krupski), Aimee Boucher (US EPA)

10:10 Review of Minutes from April 13, 2022 meeting – Bob Nyman

ACTION: Management Committee approved April 13, 2022 Management Committee minutes.

10:15 PEP Water Quality Report 2021 – Sara Cernadas-Martin, PEP Water Quality Program Manager

- A presentation and discussion of the new Water Quality Report, the results of recent changes with data processing, and a preview of the report.

ACTION: Management Committee provided comments and/or recommendations to the report.

Sara Cernadas-Martin presented water quality updates with her intention to focus future monitoring within embayments.

Chris Gobler questioned whether the data represented total dissolved nitrogen or total nitrogen (TN). TN will be higher than Total *dissolved* nitrogen due to measuring nitrogen in the particulate phase. Continued explanation of seasonality: In winter inorganic N is not being utilized; in summer it moves to particulate

matter. Total (not dissolved) takes both into account and is less sensitive to temporal fluctuations. Sara Cernadas-Martin confirmed that the data is total nitrogen, not total dissolved nitrogen. PEP receives 1 data point per month and she is in the process of reanalyzing data on west end of bay by cutting the previously western-most segment in to 2 separate segments.

Chris Gobler noted that Accabonac Harbor does have consistently high levels comparable to areas in far west of Peconic Bay near river.

Sara Cernadas-Martin expressed we are looking forward to working together through the Embayments collaborative to create best practices for reviewing this data

Legislator Al Krupski called to attention the definition of “Embayments” and if this applies to local creeks. Joyce Novak responded that this definition is area dependent.

Bob Nyman (EPA) noted that focusing on embayments, in addition to the open waters, is consistent with the Long Island Sound Study’s more recent approach. He and Kevin McDonald asked to be included in embayment collaborative meetings.

Legislator Al Krupski asked about possible pathogen source tracking such as septic, wildlife or pet waste. Sara Cernadas-Martin notes the possibility of source tracking via eDNA barcoding.

Ken Zegel noted that he is hopeful that Suffolk County will have a QPCR machine to start source-tracking in the future.

Sara Cernadas-Martin and Chris Gobler express concern about the County’s equipment choice and suggested that it consider a Digital PCR machine. Chris Gobler said his work using Digital PCR or 3rd generation PCR, based microbial source tracking in Peconic Bay since 2017 to identify source tracking to birds, deer or humans – Digital PCR works very well. It has the ability to pick up signals from seasonal bird migration and the technique is sensitive. He is happy to share information with the County and perform targeted studies, as he has been doing in Sag Harbor and East Hampton.

Sara Cernadas-Martin also noted the ability for digital PCR to measure true abundance instead of relative abundance and limited thresholds associated with QPCR.

Ken Zegel said he would appreciate collaboration and would like to set up a meeting to share thoughts and known capabilities of digital PCR vs QPCR for the county to make best equipment decisions. Chris Gobler & Sara Cernadas-Martin said they are happy to assist.

10:45 PEP Outreach updates – Valerie Virgona, PEP Outreach Coordinator

- An outline of on-going outreach progress and plans

Valerie Virgona and the committee called attention to honoring Byron Young’s work on the Woodhull Fish Passage. Byron is retired from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and has been a strong advocate for diadromous fish passage work.

Legislator Al Krupski recommends Town Trustees be included in future shoreline work

11:00 PEP Climate Adaptation Workgroup update – Jade Blennau, PEP Program Support Specialist

- An update on the PEP Climate workgroups discussed approved in the workplan as the program office moves to have these ready to go on October 1, 2022.
- An update on the Peconic Land Trust acquisition at Broad Cove and how PEP can partner on making this site a model in the estuary.

Legislator Al Krupski notes background of Indian Island project. Original regular creek dredging procedure used dredge material to fill in wetlands at Indian Island for decades. Once the sediment was tested, DEC did not allow the dredge material to be used to cap the Brookhaven landfill or any NYS landfill because the levels of legacy DDT from mosquito spraying and arsenic exceeded disposal criteria. These are the same concentrations that are currently in the creek bed. It became cost prohibitive to move dredge material anywhere else. The decision was made to make the wetland project smaller as dredge material had to be kept on-site.

Joyce Novak agrees that Indian Island is a great example of lessons learned and opportunity to build upon this work.

Kevin McDonald notes major win but warns of overly ambitious restoration projects. Suggestions reaching out about lessons learned from Community Protection Fund managers – Marty Shea (Town Southampton).

Joyce Novak recognizes Holly Sanford (Peconic Land Trust) on the call. Holly Sanford shared her excitement for Broad Cove Acquisition and notes the work of Julie Wesnofske and John Halsey to accomplish this acquisition.

11:15 New funds – Joyce Novak, PEP Executive Director

PEP was contacted by the NYS Attorney General's (AG) office regarding a remainder of funds that were originally given to the East End Economic and Environmental Institute as part of a pollution settlement on the East End. The AG's office has approved funds to come directly to PEP as is allowable under the original agreement. The total amount is \$175,000.

A Scope of Work will be presented to the MC for these funds. Due to the timing of these funds, MC approval needs to be acquired in a timely manner. Any changes discussed at this meeting will be incorporated in the final SOW and circulated for approval. A follow up vote for approval of the Scope of Work will be carried out via email. The PC will have the opportunity to provide input concurrently with the MC.

Comments on the funding devoted to outreach work:

Sue Van Patten asked how many people PEP reaches & interacts with. Joyce Novak said her understanding was that the number is between 100 and 1,000 individuals.

Kevin McDonald brought up the need for modern communication to get the public to act. It is up for conversation what that action is to bring about the most impact. Joyce notes to model after other successful NEPs.

Corey Humphries suggested reaching out to local/regional organizations that have gone through this process and seeking their advice on successes and failures. He also warned of budgeting funds for upkeep and ongoing need. Corey also suggested performance-based compensation when writing the Request for Proposals. Joyce noted that she will reach out when developing tasks and contract details.

John Bouvier, as local government representative, agreed municipalities do not advertise their environmental successes. John Bouvier noted CPF water quality funds and if PEP can join in on actively stewarding land that has been acquired. Expressed that he is hopeful to talk more about this possibility.

Theresa Masin suggested expanding the scope of who we reach out to and the value of SBU students who are motivated as well as high school student that are interested. She noted that these educational points are important as they are motivated and populations that are most impacted by our work. John Bouvier noted that CPF funds are being used with schools in mind with the goal of creating access to nature. Kevin McDonald hopes for Theresa to join the Outreach Committee's next meeting.

Joyce Novak agreed with John Bouvier and noted that additional towns want us to do this work in their name. This interest leads to possibility of extending funding opportunities moving forward for the continuation of this work.

No one on the MC voiced reservation in moving outreach plans forward.

Comments on the funding devoted to microplastics work:

Sara Cernadas-Martin adds that more information will be available after meeting with researchers and we will keep MC updated.

Robert Nyman noted that he would like additional information on methods as information becomes available.

John Bouvier added that he is in total support. Mentioned town of Southampton banned the use and sale of lighter than air balloons, based on analysis of material in waste-streams. Informed decisions can be based on track material sources backwards from waste in beaches and waterways. Kevin McDonald added his support for this project and the need for public communication of this initiative.

*Note: Joyce Novak sent an email to the Management Committee asking for any additional question or comments on the scope of work for East End Economic and Environmental Institute funds with the full scope of work attached on 7/15/22.

11:45 Presentation by the 2021 PEP Fellow, Abigail Costigan, from the Marine Conservation and Policy Master's Program at Stony Brook

- Priority habitats for horseshoe crab breeding in the Peconic Estuary

Joyce Novak noted this work's value in the prioritization of natural shorelines and bulkhead removal.

Matt Sclafani noted the lack of statistical significance is in relation to sample size. He added that protected areas with exposed tidal flat areas/sand terraces are being built up as sediment transport changes with shoreline development and they are seeing the same trends on the south shore. Therefore, it is not only hardened shorelines affecting habitat, but also these ecosystem changes in relation to sediment build up. Sclafani noted an event in Tiana Bay in which a strong high tide led to horseshoe crabs moving over a built-up gabion into the field behind. As tides went out; horseshoe crabs were stranded in the field unable to get back to the shore. Volunteers threw >700 crabs back into water. Now there is a movement to take this gabion field down.

12:00 Public Portion / Additional Comments

- Next meeting October 12, 2022 – the Joint Policy & Management Committee meeting will take place IN PERSON. Joyce Novak said PEP is hopeful to find a venue to accommodate hybrid meeting option for our next meeting.

Joyce Novak noted progress in projects and delays in Paul Stoutenberg Wetland Restoration, contract issues with USGS Shelter Island Station, and delays in Upper Mills Dam permitting process. Al Krupski invites Joyce to reach out to him about assisting with these delays.

12:07 Adjourn- Bob Nyman
