

Peconic Estuary Partnership
Management Meeting
January 31, 2024
10am – 12:30pm

LOCATION:

NEW Town of Riverhead Town Hall
[4 W 2nd St, Riverhead, NY 11901](#)

[Google maps link](#)

Hybrid Zoom ID:

Join Zoom Meeting:
(US) +1 646-931-3860

Passcode: 957848

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://stonybrook.zoom.us/j/94824677887?pwd=NDlrc25sVnFnM2JxdzUzSGRuYVlqZz09>

Briefing Materials for Review:

October Joint Meeting Minutes
January 31, 2024 Meeting Agenda
PEP Habitat & Nat. Resource Monitoring Strategy
PEP State of the Bay Report
EPA Program Evaluation Letter

[Link to Briefing Materials Folder](#)

Attendance: * in person, otherwise zoom attendance

PEP Management Committee members:

***Chair: Sue Van Patten**, Watershed Section B, Section Chief; NYS LINAP Coordinator (NYSDEC, Division of Water)

***Vice-Chair Lisa Broughton**, Water Quality and Energy Director (Suffolk County Dept of Economic Development and Planning)

***Cassie Bauer**, Bureau Chief, Marine Habitat (NYSDEC, Division of Marine Resources)

***Jeremy Campbell**, South Shore Estuary Reserve Director (NYS Department of State)

***Ken Zegel**, PE, Chief - Office of Ecology (Suffolk County Dept of Health)

***Corey Humphrey**, District Manager (SC Soil and Water Conservation District)

~~Catherine Stark~~ & ***Ann Welker**, (Suffolk County Legislators, Districts 1 and 2)

Jim Colligan/TBD (Chair of PEP Local Government Committee)

***Matt Sclafani**, PhD, Cornell Cooperative Extension (Chair, Technical Advisory Committee)



***Chris Clapp**, (Vice-Chair, Citizens Advisory Committee)

Paul Shepson, PhD, Dean SoMAS, Stony Brook University (Host representative)

TBD (Local Government Representative)

***Elizabeth Butler**, Watershed and Estuary Protection Section Supervisor (EPA)

Note: Paul Shepson left the zoom at 11:57a and Jeremy Campbell left room at 12:30p each did not vote in any motions that took place after that point.

Additional in person attendees: Becky Shuford (NY Sea Grant), Josh Halsey (Peconic Land Trust), MaryAnn Eddie (Sag Harbor), Shauna Kammath (NYDEC) Tommy John Scivoni (Town of Southampton), Kevin McDonald (CAC Chair), Nora Catlin (CCE)

Additional online attendees: Theresa Masin (Town of Southampton Planning), Bob DeLuca (Group for the East End), Scott (unknown), Irene Donohue (Office of Ann Welker, Suffolk County), Mary Ann Eddy (Sag Harbor), Gavin Cohen (Shinnecock Nation Environmental Department), Aimee Boucher (US EPA Region 2), Shavonne Smith (Shinnecock Nation)

Agenda:

10:00 Welcome & Management Committee Roll Call – Sue Van Patten – Management Committee

Chair Welcome to: Liz Butler, Watershed and Estuary Protection Section Supervisor in representation of EPA.

10:05 Review and approval of Management Committee meeting minutes from October 11th, 2023

A quick review of Policy Committee representation changes:

PEP Policy Committee members:

Chair: Jennifer Juengst, SC Representative (Suffolk County Executive Office)

Cathy Haas, Regional Director (NYS DEC, Region 1)

Al Krupski, Supervisor, Town of Southold (Local Government Representative)

Kevin McDonald, (Community Advisory Committee Chair)

Javier Laureano, Water Division Director (EPA Region 2)

ACTION: Management Committee vote to recommend approval of October 11th, 2023, minutes to the Policy Committee,

*Vote held: All in favor, no members abstained, none opposed- **Motion Approved***

Introduction of the new Peconic Estuary Protection Committee Coordinator, Eileen Keenan



Eileen described her 22 years of experience in stormwater management including liaison for DEC Region 2 office, stormwater management implementation, and compliance experience. She described the history and current role of PEPC as an organization and its goal to leverage the protection of the estuary together across towns. She described the recent (December 2023) changes to MS4 regulations and the MS4 regulations being comprehensive watershed management actions in line with PEP CCMP. Eileen noted burdensome record-keeping and recording requirements under MS4 system and the value of sharing technical expertise and resources. Notes Southold's work to eliminate outfalls.

Eileen expressed the need for storm sewer system mapping and identification of outfalls connecting to impaired water bodies to prioritize outfalls that need to be eliminated with infiltrated practices.

10:15 In Recognition of Agricultural Stewardship Discussion of subcommittee/working group (Joyce Novak, PhD, PEP Executive Director)

Lead: Corey Humphrey District Manager, SC Soil and Water Conservation District - See Program Evaluation Letter

ACTION: The Management Committee discusses the Agricultural Stewardship Working Group potential agreement and identifies its purpose, technique, and novelty.

The Ag industry in Suffolk County has an opportunity to reduce nutrients entering our waterways. In reference to our last Management Committee meeting, Joyce asked Corey Humphrey to lead the needed Ag subcommittee. Direction and tasks: increasing nutrient management plans, and showcasing successful changes, third, technical assistance for farms.

Corey Humphrey noted the need for cooperation, openness as well as the complexities of Agriculture on Long Island, and specifically the Peconic Estuary. He added the need for a component of leadership, the opportunity for education, and his open-door policy. He expressed that if you see potential partnership and want to reach out, please contact Corey Humphrey as this is a community effort.

In relation to representation in the subcommittee, there will need to be technical assistance and educational aspects to this group. Cornell Cooperative Extension is a resource for this education. Government representation also needed. Nora Catlin suggested the need for farmers to be in the room, either appointed from soil & water, CCE, or farm bureau with additional need for across sectors.

Together the group discussed varying sectors from: Vegetable, horticulture, greenhouse, nursery, Viticulture(vineyards), Animal production, atypical crop, representation from specific organic or regenerative small farms, less than 20 acres, land trust, preserved land- noted they work with beginner farmers and steward lands that used for agricultural purposes. Suggested the addition of success stories from farmers that have made changes. It was noted that this will be a public meeting and encourage participation.



There was a question if this is subgroup of TAC to report back, Corey agreed that this group can provide reports to TAC, Management, or CAC depending. Because this came from the EPA program evaluation, we see lots of overlap with all committees.

Meeting schedules: every other month, quarterly and add more as we find specific tasks at hand. Program office point person for the organization will be Valerie Virgona.

It was noted that the specific tasks at hand are land-based but will keep the group open to the inclusion of LIOGA as aquaculture is agriculture.

The committee added the inclusion of an environmental group if they are interested.

The group discussed metrics of success and meaningful improvements must be tangible measurable and definable. Metrics of success need to be evaluated, pollution reduction capabilities. The quantitative discussion as well as embracing an adaptable process moving forward.

Tasks and purpose agreed upon with no objections. Initial meetings will include tasks being broken down into deliverables. Nora Catlin noted the need for nuance of language in the tasks can be worked on by the subcommittee.

Timing: It was agreed for the subcommittee to report on progress at the next MC committee: April 17th, 2024.

It was noted that this is the first step for PEP to be a more engaged partner in agriculture. Tommy John Scivoni added that from the Town perspective, Towns Community preservation funds are to be expended on efforts relating to this subgroup's work.

Sue Van Patten voiced the motion to form the subgroup and recognize the purpose as stated above.

Corey Humphrey abstained from the motion in his role as potential subgroup chair.

Vote held: Rest of Committee in favor, none opposed- Motion Approved

10:40 Review and Discussion of Habitat & Nat. Resource Monitoring Strategy and State of the Bay

Report - Habitat & Nat. Resource Monitoring Strategy discussion & approval process - State of the Peconic Estuary Report discussion & approval process

ACTION: Management Committee vote to approve & recommend Habitat & Nat. Resource Monitoring Strategy & State of the Bay Report to the Policy Committee

Sue Van Patten voiced the motion for approval.

Vote held: All in favor, no members abstained, none opposed- Motion Approved



Liz Butler added that the EPA region will approve, provide comment. It was noted the next State of the Bay conference will be 2025.

11:00 Amendment of FY21/22 Suffolk County Workplan

No Action - Management and Policy have already approved this action for the use of funds for Indian Island wetland restoration. A Workplan amendment is in process to move forward.

11:10 Presentation FY24 potential Workplan activities (Joyce Novak, PhD, PEP Executive Director) - Initial presentation of program office and projects to potentially include in the FY24 Workplan

In relation to suggested training budget, because of the staff size and needs it was suggested for planned amount to be increased from \$10,000 to \$50,000 for executive leadership training courses as there are potential additional expenses of course fees, lodging, and more depending on how serious the level of development the organization's goal is.

Sue Van Patten raised questions on potential for additional EPA for training for Environmental Justice initiative. Liz Butler responded that the EPA is creating a division within the office to focus on this initiative. EPA can look into this as they have internal resources for this.

There was discussion of if there were funds available to piggyback other organization's training. There will need to be continued discussion on whether this is possible across estuary programs as these are internal budgets. Joyce Novak noted the National NEP equity workgroup that was created but meetings paused. There is the potential for that group to assist on this front.

It was noted that when hiring staff, we are in need of training to educate hires on PEP mission, and focus in on employee vision for self, and vision for the organization.

NYSG included that they went through similar process internally and can share consultant used pricing as well for reference.

Kevin McDonald added that the Vessel pump-out updated maps section is in need of new technology. It was recommended to explore how we bring this program into the modern day from paper maps to an agreement with navigation equipment to direct the public to pump-out stations. There was discussion on if this exists, how the geospatial center can assist in map-making. Joyce Novak added the vision for brainstorming what this update looks like.

Chris Clapp suggested not limiting kelp on farms to LI sustainable wine growers. Joyce noted that the organization's relationship with Bedell Vineyards needs to be developed and connected to the CHANGES project.

Theresa Masin added that Southampton Town adopted the Climate Change Action Plan and Southampton



town is happy to be part of this outreach campaign connected to PEP.

Jim Coligan added that the Shelter Island WMAC continuously discusses is need for bay constables across towns to be connected and have a unified effort to be sure enforcement is key to keeping water clean. Joyce Novak notes that PEP is not involved in enforcement but can assist in education on this.

Ann Welker added that the East Hampton town harbor master Ed Michaels coordinates East End Marine Task force, a great collaboration opportunity for this initiative. It was suggested to attend this meeting and find what they need to succeed.

Nora Catlin added that in relation to the Bio-extraction initiative, CCE is a resource for information on the use of kelp on field crops and ornamentals as Alice Wise wrote the sustainable winegrowers guide. It was suggested for PEP and CCE follow up on this together.

11:30 Presentation Year 3 BIL Workplan (Joyce Novak, PhD, PEP Executive Director)

Tommy John Scivoni added that Southampton town RFP went out for bid on Southampton Riverside Wetland BIL project.

Bulkhead removal assessment will be explored as these funds are for site selection and start discussion with DEC on how we go about this work. Noted governors "blue boarders" initiative and the need to set ourselves up for future funding of implementation.

Kevin McDonald noted the current regulations are set up to build stuff not to restore nature. He is hopeful there is a new way forward as the process of restoring nature should not be harder than a permit to destroy it. These are not the same processes so new discussions need to be had.

Cassie Bauer (NYDEC) added that the DEC is actively discussing this issue.

Ann Welker added there is litigation around the removal of a bulkhead in the town of Southampton, but trustees have discussed bulkhead removal permits extensively. There is a need for technical information on how to do remove a bulkhead as well as what is the system of permits for removal. It was suggested that there may need to be a subcommittee of with acknowledgement of very long confusing process.

Cassie added that the need to come early to regulatory agents to have permit that has minor changes instead of large-scale issues that cause delays. The regulatory agencies need to be deeply involved including USFWS and Army Corps.

Joyce noted that the need for a standard contact list from each regulatory agency.

Cassie Bauer noted the standard email address provided by DEC permits.

Tommy John Scivoni added that CCE to create a living shoreline in Hampton bays area with lessons learned.



NY Sea Grant north shore erosion task force is also speaking about this.

Theresa Masin noted the CPF funds were used to buy parcels and remove bulkheads on the bay side of Dune Road and many ecological benefits are recognized. Joyce Novak suggested another field trip to the area although it is not in the watershed, a notable example with lots to learn from.

11:50 A Look Back: Key Accomplishments of 2023 (PEP Program Office)

The committee described the need for cooperation. Citizen science data may not be QAPP-able. We need to be sensitive to those partners for why the data cannot be included to the same degree as data with a QAPP.

12:10 A Look Forward: PEP 2024 Calendar (Joyce Novak, PhD, PEP Executive Director)

Note: TAC date is February 15th, 2024

Sue Van Patten: In relation to a PEP management committee executive session that took place, there are work capacity issues and there is concern that without changes there could be severe funding issues. To address the program needs Sue Van Patten bring the following 3 **motions for vote**:

Motion 1: Rehire Natural Resources position that sits in DEC offices as soon as possible.

Vote held: All in favor, no members abstained, none opposed- **Motion Approved**

Motion 2: At or around June 1st, 2024, the program will hire a full-time grants manager.

Vote held: All in favor, no members abstained, none opposed- **Motion Approved**

Motion 3: The Water Quality Manager's workload will be re-allocated, and that position will end on or around June 1st, 2024.

Vote held: All in favor, no members abstained, none opposed- **Motion Approved**

Additional comment:

Kevin McDonald: CAC is planning to visit Albany to add funding to the program budget.

Cory Humphrey: LI regional enviro-thon is being held April 17th, volunteers needed and registration for high school student is open: <https://www.longislandenvirothon.org/>

Liz Butler: Thriving in communities technical assistance grant around capacity for finding federal funds that are available. Send out links to Thriving Communities Technical assistance program to be circulated: <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-thriving-communities-technical-assistance-centers>



12:25 Adjourn Public Portion / Additional Comments

Thank you!

2024 Management Committee meetings:

- ~~January 10, 2024~~ rescheduled Jan 31, 2024
- April 17, 2024
- July 10, 2024
- October 2024 Joint Meeting: RESCHEDULE