



Peconic Estuary Program Policy Committee Meeting Agenda

October 27, 2015 1:00pm
SCCC Culinary Arts and Hospitality Center
20 East Main Street, Riverhead

Call-In Number: 1-844-633-8697
Meeting ID: 643-724-604

- 1:00 PM Introductions (Seth Ausubel, US EPA)
- 1:05 PM Discussion and approval of May 2015 Meeting Summary (Seth Ausubel)
- 1:15 PM Updates from Policy Committee Members (5 minutes each)
- US EPA
- NYS DEC
- Suffolk County
- Local Governments
- 1:45 PM Presentation and Discussion (Alison Branco, Program Director):
Final Draft **2015 Action Plan**
- 2:30 PM Update: CCMP Revision schedule and funding (Alison Branco and NYSDEC PC Rep)
- 2:45 PM New Business
- 3:00 PM Adjourn



Peconic Estuary Program Policy Committee Meeting Summary
May 28, 2015

Introductions (Joan Matthews) (See sign in sheet)

Discussion and approval of May 2014 Meeting Summary (Seth Ausubel) – SUMMARY APPROVED

Discussion: FY15 Budget Review and Approval (Alison Branco) – BUDGET APPROVED

Long Term Funding: Community Preservation Fund Amendment
Short Term Funding: NYSDEC Member Item \$200,000.00

Action: Provide Management Committee with proposals for Member Item funds within 2 weeks.

Action: Must review monitoring and costs for next year.

Presentation and Discussion: Action Plan (Focus: Nitrogen section – Seth Ausubel) – ENDORSED

This plan focuses on short term actions and the major concerns for the estuary. PEP would like endorsement of the Nitrogen section from the Policy Committee. The Nitrogen section establishes a modeling and monitoring framework at the subwatershed level. This plan will be a pathway to a Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP) revision.

Action: Reconvene Policy Committee in Fall 2015 to endorse entire Action Plan

Action: Develop CCMP revision timeline

Action: Schedule a “Lessons Learned” from Long Island Sound Study

Action: Solicit broader review of Action Plan

Program Office Update (Alison Branco)

- National Estuary Program re-authorization update: Programs funded at \$600K level with updated CCMP’s
- A Day in the Life of the Peconic Estuary: Very successful annual outreach program
- Eight (8) Suffolk County ¼% Projects totaling \$728,000.00 (potential match for federal grant)



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- Riverhead Sewage Treatment Plant Effluent Re-use project is under construction
 - Shellfish restoration research project?
 - Aerial seagrass survey completed in 2014 (loss of 50% of seagrass since 2000)
 - Four (4) mini grants awarded
 - Current RFP – Bio-optical model
 - Future RFP's – Climate Ready Estuaries, Fish Passage and Habitat Restoration designs
 - PEP participated in workgroups for Suffolk County Comprehensive Water Resource Plan, Agricultural Stewardship, Harmful Algal Blooms, EPA Long Island Groundwater, 3VS, EPA Trash Free Waters, Long Island Embayment Study, WQIP and other partner efforts.
 - Inter-municipal Agreement
 - Cornell Cooperative Extension is now the PEP Outreach contractor

* EPA Clean Water Rule just issued.

Advisory Committee Update

- **Local Government Committee**
 - New Coordinator of Peconic Estuary Protection Committee (Rachel Gruzen) provided mission statement and overview
 - Anna Throne-Holst (Southampton): Update on NY Clean Water Center and associated efforts
 - Kevin McDonald (CAC): East Hampton Wastewater Plan, Nitrogen loading and septic issues
- **Technical Advisory Committee & Nitrogen Workgroup**
 - Matthew Sclafani summarized recent TAC meetings and efforts of N Workgroup
 - ACTION:** Need travel funds for last groundwater specialist to speak to N Workgroup
- **Citizens Advisory Committee & Education & Outreach Program**
 - Summarized efforts under new contract
 - Two CAC meetings
 - Social media focus has led to 110% increase in contacts
 - 500 e-mail contacts which is up by 37% since January
 - 21 events with over 350 attendees

3:05PM

New Business



3:15PM

Adjourn



Call-In Information:
 Dial 1-877-359-1417
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SIGN-IN SHEET: Policy Committee
 SCCC Culinary Arts and Hospitality Center
 20 EAST MAIN STREET
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 May 28, 2015
 1PM

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2015 Action Plan for the Peconic Estuary

Executive Summary

The Peconic Estuary Program (PEP) 2015 Action Plan outlines short-term actions to improve the ecological health of the estuary. Action Plan initiatives are prioritized as immediately implementable projects (“Actions Now”) that will lead into follow-up actions in 3-5 years (“Actions for the Future”). In 2016 PEP will launch an update to the Peconic Estuary Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP), which will build upon short-term actions identified in this Action Plan and incorporate additional actions identified by PEP communities and stakeholders. The Action Plan serves to facilitate discussion on strategic regional goals and to prioritize the pursuit of additional funds.

Healthy estuaries and coasts are integral to the lifestyle of Long Islanders and draw visitors to the East End from all over the world. Unfortunately, nitrogen loading from human activities is causing widespread disruptions in Long Island’s coastal ecosystems, including in the Peconic Estuary. From harmful and toxic algal blooms to low dissolved oxygen and degraded aquatic habitats, coastal waters are showing serious symptoms of nitrogen pollution that require action. The Peconic Estuary Program (PEP) and its partners have determined that addressing nitrogen is the strategic priority for the Program due to the far-reaching impacts of nitrogen on all aspects of the Estuary.

Nitrogen pollution is an extremely complex issue to manage, and requires actions by all levels of government, the public, and the agricultural and business communities. Careful evaluation of the management options available can lead to more cost-effective ways of reducing nitrogen to levels required in the Peconic Estuary Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). This is the main goal of the Nitrogen Management portion of this Action Plan. In addition to the reduction of nitrogen loading, protection and restoration of critical habitats, reduction of pathogen loading, and development of a better understanding of the causes of harmful algal blooms (HABs) and HAB management strategies are immediate priorities in the Plan.

Nitrogen Management:

Excess nitrogen loading is the most serious problem affecting water quality on Eastern Long Island, causing harmful and toxic algal blooms, low dissolved oxygen and degraded aquatic habitats. PEP is accelerating the implementation of the Peconic Estuary Nitrogen TMDL which requires reducing nitrogen loads by 30-50%. PEP will work to identify sources of nitrogen and work with local governments and other stakeholders to implement cost effective management actions to reduce nitrogen loads to the estuary.

Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) Management:

Harmful algal blooms have plagued the Peconic Estuary since at least the mid-1980's and pose a public health threat. PEP will focus on reducing nitrogen loading and will be heavily involved in the Suffolk County 2016 effort to develop a county-wide HAB research, monitoring and management plan to aid in understanding HABs and to help focus future actions and management strategies.

Pathogen Management:

Stormwater runoff, wildlife, waterfowl and nearshore onsite waste water treatment can be the source of contamination by bacteria and other pathogenic organisms which may result in closure of shellfish beds and bathing beaches in the Peconic Estuary; thus impacting economic and recreational activities on the East End. PEP plans to implement 12 existing subwatershed management plans, review pathogen load information to improve TMDLs and management plans, and develop a citizen monitoring workplan and participate in the NYS DEC "Long Island Embayment Study" to enhance pathogen management activities.

Habitat Restoration:

PEP protects and restores priority habitats; including critical areas that support submerged aquatic vegetation, tidal wetlands and fish habitat, that are threatened by the alteration of the natural landscape from factors such as development, pollution and climate change. PEP will take into account the effects of climate change while implementing ongoing projects in the PEP Habitat Restoration Plan (HRP) such as fish passage construction, updating the HRP based on new information and monitoring, and developing plans for seagrass management and living shoreline projects,

Climate Adaptation:

As projections for the Long Island region include weather pattern changes and sea level rise, PEP will ensure climate change is considered in all PEP decision making, including the prioritization and selection of sites for restoration, construction and acquisition. Maintaining and increasing living shorelines, updating the critical lands protection strategy, and educating stakeholders about the impacts of climate change on estuary resources will be priorities.

Education and Outreach:

Citizen involvement has been critical to PEP's foundation and success. Moving into the future, PEP needs to build and maintain public understanding and support for estuary protection and restoration to achieve long term support for the revision of the CCMP and its continued implementation.

Monitoring:

PEP's monitoring of water quality parameters, seagrass health and extent, and atmospheric deposition, and partnership through additional monitoring projects is vital to inform management decisions, to assess the response of the estuary to management actions, and to spot emerging threats. PEP will publish an "Environmental Indicators Report" that will evaluate and recommend indicators of estuarine health, use monitoring data to report state of the estuary and to improve monitoring plans included in the CCMP with a goal to develop methods and mechanisms to share data among academia, nonprofit organizations and government.

Program Management and Financing:

The success of PEP is dependent on the stable and dedicated financing to implement the restoration plans of the Estuary. The financing section outlined in the Action Plan is targeted at short-term actions to develop long-term stable funding sources and financing plans that will be incorporated into the updated CCMP.

For the full text of the Draft 2015 Action Plan, please visit: <http://bit.ly/1itnxXv>