



**Peconic Estuary Program
Management Committee Meeting
December 12, 2013, 10:00am**

4th Floor Conference Room, Dept. of Economic Development and Planning
H. Lee Dennison Building, 100 Veterans Memorial Highway
Hauppauge, NY 11788

Meeting Summary

1. Welcome and Introductions (Seth Ausubel, *EPA Region 2*)
2. Discussion and Approval, June Management Committee Meeting Summary (Seth Ausubel): Meeting summary from September Management Committee meeting approved with clarification to Habitat Restoration section. Changes made to summary.
3. Update from November's ANEP Tech Transfer meeting in Mobile, Alabama (Sheri Jewhurst, *EPA Region 2*)
 - a. No discussion about budget cuts, most other NEP's have supplemental funding to offset EPA budget cuts.
 - b. App – Storm Drain goalie
 - c. Mussel restoration in Delaware used concept of “restoration ready corridors.”
 - d. Puget Sound – presented on fixing the cause of problems before restoration.
 - e. Other programs seem to lack the strong monitoring program that PEP has.
 - f. NEP's use outside groups for monitoring programs, but these groups often have their own, different goals for monitoring.
 - g. When NEP's give funds to groups, NEP's need to ensure that these groups are representing the NEP Program, especially with name recognition.

ACTION: Provide abstracts and summaries to the Management Committee

ACTION: Develop method to pay our ANEP dues

4. FY 2014 Budget Presentation and Long-term Sustainability of Budget (Alison Branco, *Director of PEP* and Sheri Jewhurst)
 - a. Budget tables presented, showing trends from 2001 – 2013.

- b. Budget broken down into four general categories (Implementation, Monitoring, Outreach and Education, and Program Office).
- c. Blue line – assumed budget for 2014.
- d. The averages over time represent the historical allocation of NEP funds to the different categories – different from current distribution. The current allocation to each category in the budget is not representative of what has been historically used. For example, monitoring costs are more than double the historic average, while implementation is at historic lows.
- e. Base is defined as basic needs (program staff, monitoring and outreach). PEP is currently above the goal and exceeding the baseline budget. PEP has solved this problem in the past with using unspent “old” funds.
- f. There is currently a \$96,000 deficit in the 2014 budget.

DISCUSSION:

- Without federal sequestration, there is a chance that the NEP budget may be restored to \$600,000.
- EPA supports workplans and budgets that include implementation with NEP funds.
- With state and county match, direct and indirect funding, this program can have a strong influence.
- A strategy to gain support and funding through Watershed Improvement Districts at the county and municipal levels. This idea can be presented at the next Supervisors and Mayors meeting. A discussion regarding the need to diversify sources of funding in order to enhance program capability and financial stability took place.
- A summary was presented on the structure of the other NEP’s (there are 28 total). Some are housed at non-profit organizations, universities, state government, or have a fundraising arm/partnership.
- But to balance the current budget, the committee agreed that USGS monitoring should be cut for 2014 with direction from the TAC. Cuts from the Outreach budget should also occur with direction from the CAC. This decision can be reversed for 2015.
- A suggestion was made to partner with other groups for monitoring because PEP needs implementation.
- Suffolk County strongly encourages implementation and an evaluation of the success of the USGS stations. TAC should identify implementation project.
- The Management Committee agrees that implementation is a critical portion of the program.
- Alison Branco summarized discussion: In order to balance the budget at the anticipated \$512,000 NEP allocation, it is recommended to cut USGS stations funds in some manner, Suffolk County should incorporate some costs, CAC/TAC should set priorities and provide recommendations for cuts across the program.

ACTION: CAC and TAC consider budget cuts and recommend an implementation project.

5. CAC Update (Jen Skilbred, *PEP Outreach Coordinator*; Kevin McDonald, *CAC Chair*)
 - a. Third digital Newsletter
 - b. Social media, 3-4 posts per week, 150 followers
 - c. Citizen's Action Network activities
 - d. Workshop – March 8th
 - e. Homeowner Rebate program
 - f. Coastal Clean Up
 - g. Gold Course Greening Event
 - h. Field Days with students
 - i. Summer Field Ecology
 - j. A Day in the Life of the Peconic Estuary Program
 - k. Open Space Stewardship Program

6. Program Office Updates (Alison Branco, *PEP Program Director*)
 - a. SC WQPRP Meeting is today (Proposing funding for IMA and HAB).
 - b. Priority projects
 - c. Annual report is delayed, will be available for March meeting
 - d. State member items

7. TAC (Matt Sclafani, *PEP TAC Chair*)
 - a. Developed a nitrogen strategy for the nitrogen workgroup, with an approved nitrogen charge.
 - b. Elections
 - c. Dates

8. Habitat Restoration and Stormwater Updates (Julie Nace, *PEP NYS DEC Coordinator*)
 - a. PEP Habitat Restoration Plan: 2013 Implementation Progress Report completed, towns all gave very complete updates
 - b. Stormwater Workgroup: Inter-municipal Agreement (good progress, initiate it in 2014)
 - c. Environmental Indicators Report: Goal is to have a draft by Spring 2014