



**Peconic Estuary Program
Management Committee Meeting Summary
September 9, 2015, 10:00am
SCCC Culinary Center
20 East Main Street, Riverhead**

- Attendees: Seth Ausubel, Mark Woolley, Tom Carrano , Grew Blower, Sherryll Jones, Becky Wiseman, Dawn McReynolds, Matt Sclafani, Al Krupski, Jay Schneiderman, Emily Bird, Julie Nace, Alison Branco, Kevin McDonald, Jessica Anson, Dana Flint, Camilo Salazar, Fred Thiele, Dorian Dale, Michael Collins, Jen Garvey, Sheri Jewhurst.
- Welcome and Introductions (**Seth Ausubel**, *EPA Region 2*)
- June 10 and July 29 Management Committee Meeting Summaries (**Seth Ausubel**)
No comments, both approved.
- Approval of the Action Plan and Roll Out(**Seth Ausubel**)

This plan is a living document and is editable as new issues arise. Motion for endorsement was approved.

ACTION: Ensure Action Plan is widely distributed including the TAC and CAC. The Executive Summary should be provided to participants at the East End Mayors and Supervisors meeting.

- CCMP Update: Schedule and Procedures (**Alison Branco**, *PEP Program Director*)

By revising the CCMP into a regional planning document, PEP will have updated goals and actions, and a strategy for funding. EPA has provided guidance on this process and PEP MC has determined the need for contract support. In the new CCMP, PEP could set priorities to ensure the most important tasks are funded and completed in a timely fashion. Committee make-up should also be examined.

NYSDEC has not made a formal decision on the \$200,000 State Budget Line Item project. State legislators have requested NYSDEC to use the funds for CCMP Revision, as recommended by the Management Committee.

- Home-Owner Rebate Program Reallocation (**Alison Branco; Emily Bird**)

Based on funds expended, targeted population and expiration of funds, NEIWPCCC recommends re-budgeting approximately \$122,000. Recommendation includes:

\$10,000 - \$20,000: Mini grants

\$102,000 - \$112,000: See Appendix 1 for potential projects and descriptions.

Ideally, NYSDEC will fund the CCMP Revision through the \$200,000 State Budget Line item. In the event that this does not occur, these unliquidated funds should be used to fund the CCMP Revision. Final decision postponed until CCMP Revision funding is resolved.

ACTIONS:

1. Create a draft workplan for a contract through NEIWPCCC (up to 1 year) to include technical support and outreach in CCMP development in case NYS funding falls through.
2. Complete workplan for CCMP Revision Support (potentially via Sea Grant) if NYS funding does come through (1 year out with DEC funding)

- Budget Discussion (**Alison Branco**)

ACTION: Draft 2016 budget for December MC meeting. FFY2016 planning target for Section 320 funds is \$600,000. Draft budget to be prepared assuming NYS and SC funding similar to last year.

- Program Office Updates (**Julie Nace; Alison Branco**)

- Christopher Scott resigned, Sarah Schaefer hired as PEP Program Coordinator

- Contracting Update:

- Eelgrass Bio-optical Study RFP has been completed, award announcement expected in October.
- RFPs currently in working draft stages: Climate Vulnerability Assessment, Climate Ready Critical Lands Protection Strategy Update, Habitat Restoration Conceptual Designs, Upper Mills Dam Fish Passage.
- Next up: "Nitrogen Assessment" and non-point source stormwater.

- NEP National Meetings are being held in December and February. Alison and Sarah will attend. Staff will continue to track NYS restriction of travel - Julie will attend if possible

- NEP Program evaluation due in February 2017 – preparation must begin in 2016, and be included in FFY 2016 workplan.

- EPA Film Crew came to Long Island to film a video for the Climate Ready Estuaries Workbook. A video will be released about the PEP and their Climate Ready Estuaries work.

- Fish Passage workshop was held July 9-10 – PEP co-hosted with Long Island Sound Study and Seatuck Environmental Association, 50 attendees, very successful event.

- CAC Update (**Sherryll Jones, PEP Outreach Coordinator; Kevin McDonald, CAC Chair**)

- East Hampton CAC Meeting on June 15th at East Hampton Town Hall, Easthampton, NY (30 attendees), Presentations given by Peconic Estuary Protection Committee, Preserve Plum Island Coalition, the Peconic Baykeeper, and Peconic Green Growth. Next CAC is Nov 18th at Cornell Cooperative Extension in Riverhead 1-3pm
- Public opinion poll given to the CAC members via email over the summer. Questions included preferred times and format for future CAC meetings, topics CAC would like to address as a committee, voting on a slogan for the PEP CAC. (20% response findings will be presented in final report to NEIWPC in December)
- LIS Dredge opposition letter was written by the CAC Chair, circulated to CAC members via email, and accepted by PEP CAC. CAC Chair then distributed it to the appropriate people.
- Social media continues to grow. In the third quarter there were a total of 545 email contacts on Constant Contact, 497 Facebook followers, 196 Instagram followers, and 337 people on Twitter. This represents a growth of 44%, 131%, 96%, and 12% in each social media platform respectively.
- Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County/ Peconic Estuary Program *Back to the Bays 5K* event held on September 5th at Cedar Beach Southold, NY (outreach conducted to over 90 attendees) to raise awareness to the estuary and provide an educational opportunity for participants.
- Rain barrel painting event held on August 22nd on the banks of the Peconic River during East End Arts Artist in Residence weekend. Participants were 8-10 school children who were educated on Stormwater pollution and runoff into the river and how rain barrels can be helpful to prevent it. The barrels will be placed around Riverhead's downtown to educate the general public on the same. The event was also filmed for a segment on PEP's Homeowner Rewards program that will be broadcast online and on TV public access.
- PEP currently participating in the #CelebrateTheCoast ANEP campaign which includes hashtags and photos on social media for the entire month of September.
- Call to Action conference scheduled for Tuesday September 22nd. See postcard for agenda, meetings places, and times.
- Eelgrass Restoration Workshop planned for Saturday, October 10th at the Canal Café in Hampton Bays, NY 1-3pm. Participants will weave plants into burlap disks to be planted by CCE divers in the Peconic Bay near Sag Harbor. This event was included in the E&O budget for 2015.
- Next newsletter, October 2015

- TAC update (**Matt Sclafani**, *PEP TAC Chair*)

- Karen Chytalo presented the NYS Ocean Action Plan at the August 19 TAC meeting
- TAC prepared to review the PEP Action Plan
- September 17 there will be a Nitrogen workgroup meeting with a final presentation from USGS Don Walter, and wrap-up of this workgroup.
- TAC will review eelgrass monitoring needs in order to inform new Monitoring Plan in Revised CCMP

- New Business

No new business.

Appendix 1 - Home-Owner Rebate Program Reallocation

August 31, 2015

Peconic Estuary Program Proposed Implementation Projects & Reprogramming of Funds

NEIWPC was awarded funds to administer rebates to homeowners for the installation of rain barrels, rain gardens, or conservation landscaping on their property. This rewards program has been promoted and administered with support from the PEP education and outreach contractor since spring 2014. These funds have been spent down slower than anticipated. PEP proposes reserving \$10,000 per year to maintain the program (enough for 20 rebates annually at the maximum rate of \$500 per rebate) through September 2017, when the NEIWPC grant is expected to expire. Here is the breakdown of current funds and funds proposed to be reprogrammed:

Total Direct	\$145,944
Expended as of 7/30/2015	\$7,717
Balance as of 7/30/2015	\$138,227
Rain Garden Demonstrations 2015	\$3,045
Rain Barrel Painting Event 2015	\$700
Reserve for 2015	\$2,710
Reserve for 2016	\$10,000
Reserve for 2017	\$10,000
Total Reserve for Rebates	\$26,455
Total Direct Funds Available to Reprogram	\$111,772

The PEP proposes reprogramming the remaining funds to support some combination of implementation projects depending on project cost and PEP priorities. Those proposed projects are summarized in this document (in no particular order). The PEP is seeking feedback from the Management Committee to prioritize these implementation projects.

PEP Mini Grants

The PEP has historically offered Mini-Grant opportunities to local entities to carry out small scale projects as they relate to PEP CCMP priorities. The Mini-Grant Program was offered with funding from 2004, 2006, and 2009. In each round, local municipalities, civic groups, academic institutions and non-profits carried out an array of projects in support of PEP objectives. Contracted Mini-Grant projects include development of signage for a publically accessible informational walking trail; development of an educational eelgrass brochure; installation of a video fish counter to monitor fish migration through the Grangebél park rock ramp fishway; and development of educational brochures for individuals seeking Town Trustee license or permits. The PEP proposes offering another round of Mini-Grants as follow up to the 2015 PEP Call-to-Action Conference providing engaged civic and environmental groups with a means of implementing the recommendations from the conference. **PEP staff recommendation:**

re-reprogram \$10,000-\$20,000 to mini-grants and the rest to one of the options below, listed in order of preference:

1. PEP Media Support and Website Update

To improve the public awareness and participation in the program, the PEP proposes investing in media support above and beyond the current education and outreach scope of work. These funds may be used to fund public service announcements, the production of educational videos, and to advertise opportunities for the public to volunteer and engage with the PEP Citizens Advisory Committee. This will enhance public awareness at this critical time, and facilitate public engagement and input during the CCMP Revision.

In addition to media support, the PEP is limited in its ability to communicate with the public through the current PEP website. The website is limited in the type of media that can be posted and creation of additional webpages. The PEP proposes hiring a contractor to assist in the update and redesign of the PEP website that would modernize the website functionality with social media, provide user-friendly navigation, allow interactive exploration of PEP resources, and allow the program staff to more easily and efficiently update the website content. This will allow better use of the website during the public engagement phase of the CCMP update.

2. Interactive Online Peconic Estuary Indicators Report Card

The Environmental Indicators Report gauges the health and function of the estuary. These indicators are effective in highlighting signs of environmental stressors and bringing attention to pressing environmental issues. However, public engagement of the current format of the report is limited to those individuals willing to make the effort to read the PDF document. We are proposing to enhance the ways this report is communicated to the public by distilling the information found in each chapter into interactive maps and figures. Other estuary programs have done this effectively by integrating their indicators into their website (e.g. <http://longislandsoundstudy.net/research-monitoring/long-island-sound-environmental-indicators/>). Where possible, it would be best for PEP to maximize the use of [ArcGIS online story maps](#) on the website to present the information from the chapters in an engaging, intuitive and geographically relatable format. This format would not only allow PEP to present information about environmental indicators, but also allow the public to track PEP and partner efforts to restore and protect the estuary. Furthermore, information from the environmental report card could also be included in each of the associated sections to give the user a better idea of the status of that resource.

3. Economic Valuation of the Peconic Estuary

In 1995, the Peconic Estuary Program (PEP) initiated an economic valuation of the Peconic Estuary System, which was valuable for garnering support for development and implementation of the CCMP. An update at this stage, as we prepare to update the CCMP, will allow comparison to the status at the inception of the PEP and will provide information to help prioritize restoration efforts and guide management decisions. The selected contractor will provide an updated profile of the

nature and scale of market-valued, estuarine-related economic activities, such as the number of establishments, employment, and wages in marine-related (or water-dependent) activities including commercial fishing, marinas, eating and drinking establishments, accommodations, and ferries. The selected contractor would assess comparative trends in the estuarine-related economy, update information on outdoor recreational uses, and re-estimate economic values associated with recreational uses and natural resources, including amenities (e.g., open space). They would also provide methods for assessing alternative development and preservation policies. In addition the contractor would estimate the economic value of the non-market resources (ecosystem services) to allow for comparison of the costs of management alternatives to the holistic costs of continuing degradation of the resource.