



**Peconic Estuary Program  
Management Committee Meeting Summary**

**June 8, 2016, 10:00am**

SCCC Culinary Center  
20 East Main Street, Riverhead

Attendees: Seth Ausubel, Mark Woolley, Christie Pfoertner , Dawn McReynolds, Matt Sclafani, Julie Nace, Alison Branco, Kevin McDonald, , Sheri Jewhurst (phone), Sean O'Neill, Sarah Schaefer, Becky Wiseman, Al Krupski, Elyse Jay, Holly Sanford, Scoot Curatolo-Wagemann, Greg Blower, Laura Tooman, William Wise

1. Welcome and Introductions - **Seth Ausubel** (USEPA Region 2)

There have been some important management changes within the Clean Water Division of EPA Region 2:

- As announced at the April Policy Committee meeting, Joan Leary Matthews served as Director under a federal statute – the Intergovernmental Personnel Act – that allows movement of personnel between federal and state governments. Joan's four-year term is ended on May 6.
- Starting May 9, Jeff Gratz will serve as Acting Director. Rick Balla will serve as Acting Deputy Director. Prior to assuming this role, Rick served as the Chief for the Watershed Management Branch here in Region 2.
- Sheri Jewhurst, will be the Acting Director of the Long Island Sound Study, based in Stamford, CT and New York City.
- Mark Tedesco, the previous director of Long Island Sound Study estuary program, will be Acting Chief for the Watershed Management Branch.

2. March 9th Management Committee Meeting Summary - **Seth Ausubel**

No comments, approved.

3. Report on April Policy Committee Meeting - **Seth Ausubel**

Updates on PC meeting topics-Alison

- Suffolk County:
  - i. Press event on April 25<sup>th</sup> at Southaven County Park announcing Suffolk County water usage fee- \$1/1,000 gallons of water used per household. County Executive, Steve Bellone, is working to authorize referendum on November ballot.

- ii. Currently, 19 Innovative/Alternative Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (I/A OWTS) in the ground from Septic Demo lottery- Phase I. Septic Demo Phase II accepted applications until April 8th for homeowners and until April 22nd for businesses and has 6 companies proposing 8 different I/A OWTS technologies. Over 200 applications were received; around 20 sites are expected to be selected. SC is currently vetting company proposals and properties.
- iii. Update to septic sanitary code is planned to be discussed in May and approved in June or July the latest. Will set up approval process SCHS approval mechanisms. Monitoring planned for every 3 years. Approval of alternative technology is a continuous process involving receiving septic demo technology application from interested parties, testing technologies and determining if technology should be approved.
- iv. Subwatersheds Wastewater Plan and Generic Environmental Impact Statement Consulting Services- selected Camp Dresser & McKee, Inc.- May 16th scoping meeting
- v. MILESTONES AND EVENTS
  1. Harmful Algal Bloom Symposium (May 17th and 18th, 2016)-1 day large group and presentations and second day smaller group of experts.
  2. Wastewater GEIS Scoping (June 2016)
  3. I/A OWTS Sanitary Code Standards Meeting (June 2016)
  4. Design professionals and other stakeholders
  5. Approve Code and Standards
  6. Board of Health Review of Article 19 Sanitary Code Changes (June 2016)
  7. SC Legislature Reviews Code Changes (June 2016)
  8. SCDHS adopts Standards (after Code approval, as early as June 2016)
  9. Technologies that meet performance requirements become approvable on provisional basis through 2016.
  10. Subwatersheds Plan – Preliminary Map and Recommendations (October 2016)
  11. Possible additional Code changes
  12. Commercial flows; alternative leaching
  13. Requiring I/A technologies for new construction
  14. Cesspool Phaseout (Failure, and/or Property Transfer)
  15. Subwatersheds Plan and Final GEIS (April 2017)

3. CCMP Revision: Outreach Updates and Discussion of Management Committee Structure - **Christie Pfoertner** (PEP E&O Coordinator Assistant) and **Alison Branco** (PEP Program Director)

- Bill Wise:
  - CCMP Revision Writing Support RFP, CCMP Revision Support Facilitation Support RFP should be advertised as early as this week.
  - NY Seagrant will contract three separate contracts, \$188,000 total available for the writing support, facilitation and graphic design services.
  - MOU between NY Seagrant and NYSDEC expires in late 2018.
- Christie:
  - CCMP Outreach Meetings held so far with the Association of Marine Industries, Peconic Bay Sailing Association, Riverhead Rotary Club, Peconic Bay Power Squadron.
  - Public Input Survey distributed to all participants of CAC meetings and CCMP Outreach meetings to get public feedback.
- Alison:
  - NEP CCMP Revision and Update Guidelines updated in July 2015 and will be used as guidance throughout the revision process.
  - At future MC meetings the group should discuss changing the Management Committee Structure to a structure similar to other NEPs (ex: student representative, town supervisors, etc.)
- Laura:
  - Changing the structure of the MC could provide a mechanism for PEP to guide the towns develop of their Water Quality Plans that would collaborate with PEP spending of 10% of the 20% allocated to water quality improvements.
  - Alison: PEP has been involved in preliminary discussions with towns about CPF water quality plans and has attended monthly Intermunicipal Agreement meetings.
- Seth:
  - **ACTION:** At next Policy Committee meeting, in April/ May 2017, have a finalized list of MC members for PC approval.
- Deciding match for the federal grant should be a more formal process to figure out Suffolk County and NYSDEC match. Could make an official process in the CCMP revision that is dependent upon the new MC member list- CPF could match SC, State and Federal funds.
- **ACTION:** Develop 2 or 3 match process proposals to discuss at next MC meeting

#### 4. Peconic Land Trust Habitat Restoration Site Discussion - **Julie Nace** (PEP State Coordinator)

- The Widow's Hole Preserve is a property currently owned by the Peconic Land Trust. The property was commercial developed and used as a petroleum product storage facility since the mid-1920s which has resulted in the alteration and degradation of the shoreline at the Widow's Hole Preserve. Due to the disturbances experienced at the site during its development and use as a commercial property, and its

subsequent return to a more natural state, the Widow's Hole Preserve supports several species of non-native, invasive plant species.

- The Services requested to be performed are to return the Widow's Hole Preserve property to a more natural state, increasing both its habitat value and resiliency to natural disturbances. Tasks involved to achieve this goal include the manual/mechanical removal and special management of non-native, invasive plant species on the property and restoring the degraded salt marsh and shoreline communities. PEP is supporting only the living shoreline portion of the restoration, specifically the design and creation of the living shoreline. This project will showcase some of the important elements of living shoreline design and serve as an educational resource as one of the first living shorelines within the Peconic Estuary and Long Island. The project will also restore critical wetland habitat that has been lost in the Peconic Estuary. Helping Long Island communities become more resilient to coastal storms and sea level rise. The project aligns with the PEP CCMP and it also fulfills a priority action from the 2015 PEP Action Plan.
- PEP has \$150,000 tasked to Habitat Restoration Implementation, originally programmed for Forge Road Dam Fish passage which later received grant funding. These funds are due to expire September 30, 2016. PEP staff recommends partnering with the Peconic Land Trust to fund the coastal restoration project to serve as a demonstration of living shoreline implementation.
- Matt: At the next TAC/NRS meeting discussing the pilot living shoreline technique should be on the agenda.
- Management Committee approved PEP funding this project.

5. Update on PEP Grants - **Sheri Jewhurst** (USEPA Region 2)

- Grant waiver request finalized by Sheri 6/8/16. Final comments and edits will be submitted by PEP staff on 6/8/16.
- If this waiver to amend the cooperative agreement to extend the budget and project periods of the cooperative agreement is approved, Region 2 will revise the sufficient progress condition (i.e., Programmatic Condition Number 9) in the award to include specific milestones that must be satisfied for SCDHS to demonstrate satisfactory progress. The condition will also stipulate that if progress is not made by the end of 2018, SCDHS will not be authorized to continue work in the final year and the cooperative agreement will be closed. The following is the proposed condition:
  - EPA may terminate the assistance agreement for failure of the recipient to make sufficient progress so as to reasonably ensure completion of the project within the project period, including any extensions. EPA will measure sufficient progress by examining the performance required under the workplan in conjunction with the milestone schedule, the time remaining for performance within the project period, and/or the availability of funds necessary to complete the project.
- At September MC meeting the PEP Revised 2016-2019 Workplan will be presented progress of the grant spend down will be tracked at all future MC meetings.

6. PEP Program Office Updates - **Sarah Schaefer** (PEP Program Coordinator)

- Nitrogen Assessment RFP drafted: The nitrogen assessment services will implement action 7N from the Action Plan and assess potential usefulness of nitrogen mitigation techniques through the implementation of two (2) to three (3) pilot projects that evaluate innovative technologies and practices to reduce the impact of existing contaminated groundwater on the Estuary, including but not limited to: Permeable Reactive Barriers; Agricultural pilot projects to be identified by the Management Committee; and Bioharvesting (e.g. shellfish, algae aquaculture). The intent of the nitrogen assessment services is to quantify nitrogen load reduction to groundwater entering the Peconic Estuary with experimental pilot projects. These assessments will provide information for policy and management tools to reduce nitrogen in the Peconic Estuary and will result in information to help determine cost-effective management actions to reduce nitrogen loads to the estuary. Long term benefits of the Services will be to improve water quality in the estuary, optimize eelgrass habitat and allow for recertification of closed shellfish areas.
- PEP Website Redesign and Development RFP advertised, five proposals submitted, and one contractor was selected to start work on July 11<sup>th</sup> 2016.
- Peconic Estuary Climate Ready Assessment RFP is finalized with increased available budget from other unallocated funds (~\$98,000) and is expected to be advertised through Suffolk County soon.
- The Draft PEP 2015 Environmental Indicators Report was reviewed by the TAC members and at the February and May TAC meeting. Comments and edits have been incorporated into the draft and is expected to be finalized within the next couple of weeks.
- Consolidated Funding Agreement (CFA) opened request for applications on May 3<sup>rd</sup> and applications are due July 29<sup>th</sup>. The DEC is accepting applications for the [Water Quality Improvement Project \(WQIP\) program](#) and the [Engineering Planning Grant](#). These grants are part of the [NYS Regional Economic Development Councils CFA](#). The WQIP program has \$25.9 million available and the Engineering Planning Grant has up to \$2 million available. Multiple workshops are being held where presentations will be given on both grant programs. East end applications are encouraged.

7. Habitat Restoration and Stormwater Updates- **Julie Nace**

- Suffolk County Water Quality Protection and Restoration Program (WQPRP) open-applications due July 1<sup>st</sup> 2016
- Fish Passage Projects to restore river connectivity to the Peconic River as a whole:
  - Grangebelle Park Diadromous Fish Passage Restoration (Peconic River, Phase I): complete.
  - Upper Mills Diadromous Fish Passage Restoration (Peconic River, Phase II): needs final engineering and construction, PEP is currently receiving proposals

for Upper Mills Dam final design and permitting services- Applications due June 27<sup>th</sup>.

- Forge Rd/Peconic Lake Diadromous Fish Passage Restoration (Peconic River, Phase III): funded by Suffolk County and Town of Brookhaven – in final engineering and construction phase.
- Edwards Ave Diadromous Fish Passage Restoration (Peconic River, Phase IV): complete supported by NYS DEC
- Byron Young's data shows Alewife population since Grangebelle Dam Fish Passage construction (*Summary Report for the Peconic River Alewife Spawning Run 2010 to 2016* attached).
- The Town of Southampton plans to complete Stormwater remediation projects on property cleared by NY Rising Program.
- NYSDEC MS4 Permit Update- Eric Swenson and Alison Branco are representing Long Island MS4 programs at four to five meetings this summer in Albany to discuss the permit update. Intermunicipal Agreement towns have provided their input on the update.

#### 8. Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) Updates - **Kevin McDonald** (CAC Chair), **Christie Pfoertner**

- CAC Special Topic Summer Meetings will be held on July 21<sup>st</sup> on the North Fork and August 4<sup>th</sup> on the South Fork. Regularly scheduled CAC meetings will be held September 13<sup>th</sup> and November 16<sup>th</sup>.
- Horseshoe Crab Events on May 19<sup>th</sup> at East Landing Road , Hampton Bays and South Harbor Road, Southold - 18 people total at Horseshoe crab monitoring events.
- World Fish Migration Day- PEP World Fish Migration day video reached 10,000 people on social media.
- Long Island Native Plant Sale- June 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> at Suffolk County Community College Eastern Campus. PEP will have a table both weekends.
- Summer Newsletter and events are available.
  - Trash Your Line Workshop-June 15<sup>th</sup>
  - Community Stormwater Stewardship Water Quality Training Day- June 22<sup>nd</sup>
  - Ludwigia Removal Event- July 12<sup>th</sup>
  - Kayak Tour of Peconic Bay in Coecles Harbor- August 16<sup>th</sup>
  - PEP will also be at Peconic Paddle Battle and the Riverhead Cardboard Boat Race, and Riverhead Alive on 25 events
- Homeowner Rewards Program- 13 new applicants
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC) *Our Island, Our Water, Our Future* videos- viewed one at meeting and will share with MC and on PEP Facebook. (<http://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/unitedstates/newyork/places-preserves/long-island-water-quality-videos.xml>)
- TNC water quality issue polling on the east end will happen soon.

#### 10. Technical Advisory Committee Updates - **Matt Sciafani** (TAC Chair)

- Environmental Indicators Report- reviewed document with TAC and accepted comments via February and May TAC meeting. Finalizing document now.

11. New Business

No new business

12. Adjourn

## Summary Report for the Peconic River Alewife Spawning Run 2010 to 2016

Byron Young

NYSDEC Retired; Peconic River Fish Restoration Commission; Seatuck Environmental Association; and ASMFC Citizen Advisory Panel Member to the Shad and River Herring Board

The Alewife (*Alosa pseudoharengus*) is found in a number of streams on Long Island, with major spawning runs found in the Peconic River, Alewife Creek, and the Carmen's River. This report provides a brief summary of the 2016 alewife sampling in the Peconic River and compares the results with previous years efforts.

The first evidence of alewives entering the Peconic River was on March 2, 2016 when two sets of alewife scales were found along the bank of Woodhull Dam. The first alewives were captured on March 9, 2016 by cast net. Alewives were caught on each subsequent visit until May 16, 2016, just over 10 weeks. This represents the earliest documentation of alewives entering the system and the second latest departure date.

The 2016 spawning run was disrupted by two major weather events during the Spring of 2016. The first was a sharp drop in water temperature that occurred in early April just as the spawning run was beginning to peak. This sharp drop in air and water temperature caused the alewives to drop back into the Bay. Once the weather warmed again the alewives returned and continued their spawning run. The second event was a major rain event in April that raised the water levels in Little River by nearly 6 inches for several days. This rain event occurred during the peak of spawning. Alewives were present with an undetermined impact on the spawning event.

The 2016 Peconic River spawning run appears to be above average with an estimate of 40,000 to 55,000 fish entering the system. The 2016 alewife spawning run was more protracted than previous spawning runs due to the highly variable weather pattern seen during the spawning period. In addition, the numbers of alewives seen at the USGS gauging station near Upper Mills dam was the highest observed in several years, indicating were spread out over the area between Grangabel Park and the USGS gauging station. Table 1 presents my first order estimation of the spawning run size. Three unsuccessful attempts have been made to deploy and operate a video camera system that would provide a more accurate and reliable count of spawning alewives. The system failed to provide a complete estimate of the spawning run due to excessive fouling of the camera and inconsistent power to the system.

Alewives were captured with a four foot diameter by  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch stretched mesh cast net and on a few occasions with a crab net with a 14 inch ring bearing  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inch stretched mesh. The cast net was the most effective gear for capturing alewives. A total of 998 alewives were captured for the collection of biological data. Table 2 presents a summary of the data collected from 2010 to present. In addition, 179 scale samples were collected for age analysis.

In summary, these data provide positive proof that the Rock Ramp fish ladder at Grangabel Park is operating effectively allowing spawning alewives access to that portion of the Peconic River immediately upstream of the fish ladder (approximately 35 acres). A new fish ladder and American eel passage have been constructed at Edwards Avenue that will be waiting for the alewives and eels when passage efforts are completed on three other blockages along the main stem of the Peconic River. More importantly, the fish passage project at Woodhull dam is progressing with hopes of having the permits in hand by 2017. Once the permits are in hand a contractor can be solicited to complete the project that will allow alewives access to Wildwood Lake and the spawning habitat between Willdwood Lake and Woodhull dam (approximately 100 acres).

Table 1. Estimates of annual spawning alewife counts at the base of Woodhull Dam.

| Year | Low   | High  |                 |
|------|-------|-------|-----------------|
| 2010 | 25000 | 40000 | First Year      |
| 2011 | 20000 | 35000 | Below Average   |
| 2012 | 50000 | 75000 | Above Average   |
| 2013 | 60000 | 80000 | Highest Average |
| 2014 | 50000 | 75000 | Above Average   |
| 2015 | 20000 | 35000 | Below Average   |
| 2016 | 40000 | 55000 | Near Average    |

Table 2. Alewife Size Distribution by year.

| Year | Males<br>Mean TL | Range   | Number | Females<br>Mean TL | Range   | Number |
|------|------------------|---------|--------|--------------------|---------|--------|
| 2010 | 236.1 mm         | 235-300 | 356    | 273.2 mm           | 243-313 | 256    |
| 2011 | 260.5 mm         | 232-289 | 252    | 272.2 mm           | 234-298 | 158    |
| 2012 | 257.7 mm         | 224-305 | 654    | 277.2 mm           | 241-325 | 413    |
| 2013 | 268.8 mm         | 236-304 | 515    | 281.0 mm           | 256-318 | 320    |
| 2014 | 276.6 mm         | 216-307 | 580    | 289.0 mm           | 252-325 | 501    |
| 2015 | 275.3 mm         | 232-317 | 410    | 287.4 mm           | 246-324 | 306    |
| 2016 | 268.6 mm         | 227-320 | 556    | 283.2 mm           | 248-327 | 442    |