



Joint meeting of PEP TAC & NRSC Spring 2024: Highlighting Habitat Value & Wildlife.

*NRSC Minutes to be approved
next meeting, November 2024*

June 5th 2024; 10:00 AM

Riverhead Library, Basement stage room

▶ PEP TAC & NRSC Spring 2024: Highlighting Habitat Value & Wildlife.

10:00-Welcome, sign in, name tags:

10:05-Theresa Masin (NRSC Chair), Matt Sclafani (TAC CoChair), Jade Blennau (PEP) PEP Natural Resource Subcommittee Overview, Background, Bylaws, Voting Members, Habitat Report

Process of NRSC was re-introduced. Committee will meet two times a year (one joint meeting and one standalone), leadership (Co-chair & Natural Resources Program Manager), new Co-chair due in September 2025 (2 year position).

Timeline:

- *June 2024: Reset meeting; review 2023 progress*
- *Early November 2024: plans for implementation, accomplishments, and discussion & finalization of land acreage goal*
- *February 2025: habitat plan updates, confirm project map interactiveness*
- *August 2025: joint meeting, share updated habitat plan, subcommittee + TAC chair nominations*

10:20: PART 1- Horseshoe Crabs & Connection to Natural Shorelines:

Matt Sclafani opened with the importance of the TAC and NRSC. Reviewed the projects and previous success of the committee. Group looking to reconvene and further develop new projects partnered with PEP. Shoreline hardening will be a major focus, as well as engaging the public so they can appreciate intertidal species. Presentation theme is shoreline hardening and its impacts and how it concerns horseshoe crabs and diamondback terrapins, and migratory bird species as well.

10:30- Enrico Nardone (Seatuck) & M. Sclafani (CCE): Horseshoe Crab Workgroup

10:40- Questions/comments:



The topic of artificial bait became a focal point of discussion. Specifically addressing if it is an attractive alternative to benefit horseshoe crab fisheries. Bait was stated to need a more development.

Correlation between declining whelk population and horseshoe crab populations were discussed. Unsure of if there is a direct correlation. Whelk decline was a result of lack of regulations, similar to horseshoe crabs. Also stated that Connecticut has banned horseshoe crab harvest, therefore putting pressure on NY populations and any existing fishery in the region. Fluctuation of these fisheries has not been determined.

Group discussed horseshoe crab breeding (i.e. areas, tidal impact, sediment quality, hardened shorelines). Hardened shorelines looped into discussion of the legal navigation of eliminating hardened shorelines on purchase homes. What can new homeowners do to help with these issues?

10:35- Matthew Sclafani (CCE): PEP Shoreline Assessment Ground-truthing, Shoreline Hardening & Habitat

10:45- Questions/comments:

Group discussed the importance of ground truthing and finding the boundaries and areas of hardened shoreline. The group discussed the importance of this as it relates to habitat, especially horseshoe crabs.

Goal: *To confirm PEP's hardened shoreline boundaries surveyed in 2019, in addition to new data. Goal is to have a completed map by November, followed by reports and results that will be incorporated into PEP's planning.*

10:55- Matthew Sclafani (CCE): Horseshoe Crab and Diamondback Terrapin Telemetry Tagging

11:05- Questions/ Comments

Group lightly discussed the importance of telemetry tagging in both terrapins and horseshoe crabs. Discussion followed with relationships between marsh islands and terrapins in relation to migration. Discussed utilizing oyster reefs to create "islands" as well as support natural build up of sediments. Idea is to be considered in future projects.

Group also conferred about the status of the horseshoe crab industry and the dynamics of horseshoe crabs being used for bait and for biomedical purposes. Questions arose concerning the demand of harvest of horseshoe crabs in NY waters. The role of local



law enforcement in townships was also mentioned, highlighting the success of these officers with fishing, collection of horseshoe crabs, and unregulated harvesting.

11:30 : Quick Break

11 :45- PART 2- Sea Turtles & SAV

11:45- Maxine Montello, Executive Director, NY Marine Rescue Center (NYMRC) : Tracking post-release movement patterns of NY's Rehabilitated sea turtles provides insights into their utilization of NY waters

11:55- Questions/Comments
N/A

12:00- Jonah Muriel, PhD Candidate, SBU: Discussion of SAV regional efforts and state of SAV in Peconics

12:10- Questions/comments:

Sediment analysis and its variability were mentioned in relation to core sampling. A lot of variability will need to be accounted for moving forward. A discussion involving temperature differences between the Great South Bay and Peconic Bays in relation to reciprocal planting was mentioned. Temperature difference can play a role but also factors such as seed survival, intolerance of mold, and ground water reviews would need to be incorporated.

12:15- Joe Tamborski, Old Dominion University & Brad Peterson (SBU): Coastal Watershed Grant Progress, Groundwater Refugia for Eelgrass Restoration

12:30- Questions/comments:

Questions concerning watershed parameters were raised. Group discussed stormwater runoff and how it is accounted for, as well as nitrogen monitoring in groundwater areas. It was explained that stormwater should not have radon in it, but groundwater does. Data is still being analyzed, however nitrate, ammonium, and trace metals are present. Researchers looking into how this relates to plant demand. Research teams are moving forward to plant eelgrass in these areas as it can lead to the mitigation of groundwater and nitrogen pollution to the estuaries. Ground water influence and eelgrass planting is also being observed, as well as herbicide and pesticide impact. Investing in proper site suitability is key.

12:30- PART 3- NRSC Next steps & Discussion



12:30- Theresa Masin, NRSC Chair: Review of 2020 Habitat Plan, Review proposed habitat acreage goals, 2022 Site Nomination confirmations, timeline for drafting Plan Update, Plans for Ongoing Project Map

Group shared PEPs Habitat Plan Goals, plan will be updated and finalized by February 2025. Confirmation of 2023 Habitat Restoration Sites; Address 10 year goals,

- *SAV Targets: increase eelgrass shoot density and net increase in Peconic Bay eelgrass*
- *Wetland/Shoreline Targets: restore 250 acres of wetland habitat (currently at 105 acres), net increase in high marsh habitat, decrease in phragmites, no net increases in hardened shorelines*
- *Diadromous Fish Targets: restore 242 acres of diadromous fish habitat, restore additional 60 acres in other parts of Peconic watershed, increase alewife population from current levels*

Target: to determine the acres of protected land

To Do's : work with NYSDEC GIS department to confirm acreage updates, voting organization to review info sent to them to be discussed and finalized by November 2024 meeting, review current sites in 2020 plan.

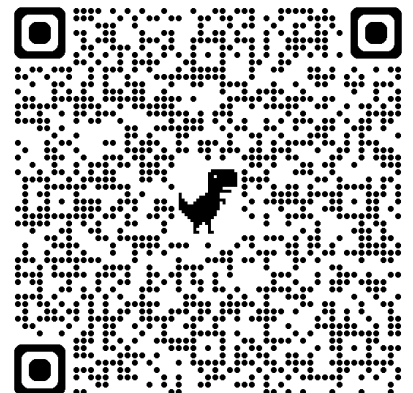
Voting organizations must update site/project process, project viability, and potential project consolidation

12:45- Additional Work in PEP Boundary: Ongoing projects & Map ID.

See and add to this interactive map here:

<https://earth.google.com/earth/d/1MWCbWLeptEv6gC3QfcmIF1Z8GgOSNkxA?usp=sharing>

Group deliberated about the ongoing PEP boundary project and Map ID. Habitat plan will be updated in the next six to nine months. Opinions on the usage of acronyms or full names were mentioned. Benefits of stating names provide accurate representation of who is responsible for mentioned projects and what townships they are affiliated with and funding source. This is extremely important as it determines how this information is reported to the EPA.





Instructions for additions for Map ID were reviewed. Statement of goal was reiterated as to utilize GIS and create a more interactive map. Submissions need to be continued by users. This form of documentation is necessary to keep habitat plans up to date and in line with future funding. Link and instructions sent out via email post meeting.

New Natural Resources Program Manager and Grants Administrator starting mid-June for PEP. Next summer meeting, new chairs will have to be nominated for the TAC and NRSC. Next TAC meeting will be held on August 15th.

1:00 Wrap Up Discussion- Thank you !

Attendees: *zoom

Theresa Masin (Town of Southampton), Matt Sclafani (CCE), Della Campbell (DEC)*, Shauna Kamath (DEC), Sara Healy (NYDEC)*, Alexa Fournier (NYSDEC)*, Aimee Boucher (EPA)*, Josh Halsey* (Peconic Land Trust), Maureen Dunn (Seatuck)*, James Duryea*, Enrico Nardone (Seatuck)*, Patrice Dalton (East Hampton Trustees), Joyce Novack (PEP), Jade Blennau (PEP), Rachel Friedman (PEP), Bob Nyman (EPA)*, Scott Horowitz (President Southampton Town)*, Mary Ann Eddy (Village of Sag Harbor), Ann Welker (Suffolk County Legislator)*, Lynn Mandelman (Association for Marine Industries)*, Joe Tamborski* (Old Dominion University), Gavin Cohen* (Shinnecock Environmental Department), Maxine Montello (NY Marine Rescue Center), Andrew Walker (NYDEC), Glenn Goldsmith (Town of Southold Trustees)*, Corey Humphrey (Soil and Water District)*, Jonah Muriel (Peterson Lab, Stony Brook University),