

Shoreline Adaptation Summit Fact Sheet

PECONIC ESTUARY

The Peconic Estuary, an Estuary of National Significance, requires a forward-thinking approach to shoreline management. As our coastal communities face evolving environmental conditions, a collaborative effort is underway to enhance resilience and protect our shared natural resources. This fact sheet provides an overview of ongoing initiatives and key recommendations emerging from the Peconic Estuary Shoreline Summit, designed to help municipalities streamline regulations and foster sustainable shoreline adaptation.

THE CHALLENGE & THE OPPORTUNITY

Traditional shoreline management practices are being re-evaluated to address coastal hazards more effectively. The Peconic Estuary Partnership and its partners are leading an initiative to facilitate the use of nature-based features (NBF) for shoreline adaptation. This presents a significant opportunity for municipalities to:

- Enhance natural defenses against coastal hazards
- Improve water quality and critical habitat
- Streamline regulatory processes for more effective and ecologically-sound projects



**Peconic Estuary
Partnership**

PROTECTING AND RESTORING LONG ISLAND'S PECONIC BAYS



RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT:

Providing municipalities with the data, tools, and guidance needed to implement NBF in shoreline resilience projects.

Peconic Shoreline Viability Assessment:

A town-level assessment and literature review that identifies the feasibility and benefits of various shoreline adaptation strategies.

Shoreline Management Model:

Developed with the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS), this tool will help identify and prioritize areas suitable for different shoreline management techniques, including NBF.

Bulkhead Removal Study:

A PEP-funded study to document lessons learned from bulkhead removal projects, providing practical insights for replacing aging hard structures with natural alternatives.

NY Sea Grant Law & Policy Fellowship:

A dedicated legal and policy review to identify regulatory barriers and opportunities. Key deliverables for municipalities include a Code Assessment Report.

Shoreline Adaptation Website & Story Map:

A centralized online hub for information, data, and case studies related to shoreline adaptation in the Peconic Estuary.

Guidance & Process Road Maps:

Documents to address data gaps, guide site evaluations for NBF, establish standardized monitoring protocols, and provide clear "road maps" for project permitting.



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations, derived from expert panels and stakeholder discussions, are designed to improve the regulatory process for implementing shoreline projects with NBF.

1. Internal Agency Procedures

- **Early Engagement in Permitting:** Encourage pre-application meetings where regulators can provide clear feedback to applicants on the viability of NBF and project design.
- **Communication & Coordination:** Establish a single, primary point-of-contact within the municipality for shoreline projects to guide applicants through the local permitting process and coordinate departmental reviews.
- **Regulatory Knowledge Transfer:** Develop internal training and standardized review procedures for staff to ensure consistent interpretation and application of codes related to shoreline management and NBF.
- **Code and Policy Updates:** Utilize the forthcoming Code Assessment Report and Code Amendment Factsheet from the NYSG Law Fellow to identify and implement updates to local laws that remove barriers and encourage innovative shoreline solutions.
- **Incentivizing Resilient Shorelines:** Explore and implement incentives, such as expedited permit reviews or fee reductions, for projects that utilize preferred NBF designs or remove unnecessary hardened structures.
- **Adaptive Management & Regional Learning:** Participate in regional monitoring efforts and workshops to incorporate lessons learned from completed projects into future regulatory decisions and guidance.



www.Peconicestuary.org/shoreline-adaptation



2. Interagency Coordination

- **Communication and Coordination:** Actively participate in and communicate with state (e.g., NYS DEC) and federal (e.g., USACE) agencies, ensuring local concerns are heard and addressed.
- **Permit Submission Sequence & Decision:** Sequenced alignment of applications can provide local governments with federal authority backing.

Recommended sequence for township with NO Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP):

- Applicant submits to the municipality
- Municipality reviews against local law
- In case of non-permissible project, a “soft denial” is issued and logged with NYS DOS and USACE to prevent permit issuance from the federal entity.
- Changes made based on feedback and recommendation for NBF
- Following a local permissible determination, the applicant submits to state and federal agencies

Recommended Sequence for the township with an LWRP:

- Applicant submits Joint Permit to NYS DEC, USACE, and NYS DOS for initial review
- NYS DOS Coastal Zone Management reviews for consistency with approved (and updated) LWRP
- Following consistency confirmation and joint permit issuance, the applicant submits to the municipality for local review and approval



3. Estuary-Wide Priorities

- **Preservation of Natural Shorelines:** Prioritize the protection of existing natural shorelines (beaches, bluffs, wetlands) in local planning, zoning, and project reviews, as these are low-cost and the most effective form of coastal resilience.
- **Strategic Land Acquisition with Structure & Bulkhead Removal:** Collaborate with local land preservation programs to strategically acquire vulnerable properties where the removal of structures and bulkheads can restore natural shoreline processes and create community resilience benefits.
- **Contractor and Practitioner Support:** Support the development of local expertise by connecting shoreline contractors and engineers with training opportunities (e.g., NYS DEC's contractor training) on the design and installation of NBF.
- **Tools, Resources, and Expertise:** Utilize the Shoreline Management Model, Viability Assessment, and other PEP-supported tools to inform project review and long-range planning. Provide this information to applicants to guide better project design.