

Draft to be approved Oct 2026

**Peconic Estuary Partnership
Management Committee Meeting
SAG HARBOR SITE VISITS**

July 22, 2026

11 am – 1:15pm

@ [Sag Harbor American Legion](#)

26 Bay St, Sag Harbor, NY 11963

Agenda & Location(s):

9:30: Pickup [SBU Southampton Campus](#) parking lot, 39 Tuckahoe Rd., Southampton, NY 11968 *Van leaves 9:45

Attendees are welcome to take the SBU Van transportation to Sag Harbor - confirm RSVP with Jade.blennau@stonybrook.edu

11:00: [Sag Harbor American Legion](#) 26 Bay St, Sag Harbor, NY 11963

Welcome & Introductions: *Joyce Novak Ph.D, PEP Executive Director*

11:05: Review of April 15, 2026, Meeting Minutes

Action: *MC approval of meeting minutes from April 15, 2026*

Vote: *Jeremy Campbell made a motion, seconded by Matt Sclafani. All members voted in favor. None opposed. Motion approved.*

11:10: Presentation by Reuben Kline, PhD - Associate Professor of Political Science and Interim Provost for Climate and Sustainability Programming, SBU
- The Use of Social Science in Conservation

Reuben Kline, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Political Science and Interim Provost for Climate and Sustainability Programming at Stony Brook University, presented on the application of social science to conservation.

Dr. Kline discussed the use of behavioral science to improve conservation outcomes through intentional program design, highlighting three approaches: leveraging social norms, providing feedback, and reducing barriers to participation.

Briefing Materials Package:

[Link to Google Briefing Materials Folder](#)
or [DataHub Materials](#)
[Ninevah Beach](#)
[Havens Beach](#)

April 2026, MC [Minutes](#)

Draft to be approved Oct 2026

Committee discussion focused on opportunities to apply these approaches to environmental outreach and education. Jeremy Campbell asked how behavioral science could improve conservation outreach, and Matt Sclafani discussed the potential to build on previous economic valuation studies of the Peconic Estuary. Dr. Kline emphasized the value of developing localized data and measuring program outcomes.

No action was taken.

11:30: Workplan Update, Joyce Novak Ph.D, PEP Executive Director

Dr. Novak presented an update on proposed amendments to the FY26 Workplan.

She explained that the Policy Committee approved the use of existing and new funds in April to support oyster aquaculture following significant industry losses. Since then, New York State announced a Fishery Disaster Program that will provide financial assistance directly to growers. As a result, PEP is proposing to redirect approximately \$260,000 toward development of concept plans for Plum Island.

Novak noted that no action was requested at this meeting. Instead, a briefing package will be distributed to Management Committee members, followed by a special meeting approximately two weeks later to consider the proposed amendment. Committee members were asked to submit any questions to the Program Office during the review period.

Discussion focused on the future ownership, conservation, and planning of Plum Island.

Discussion focused on PEP's coordination with organizations involved in Plum Island conservation planning, the anticipated property acquisition process, and potential legislative considerations associated with future ownership. Novak explained that the federal government will have the first opportunity to acquire the property, followed by New York and Connecticut, before local governments and organizations may be considered. Doroski noted that proposed conservation zoning by the Town of Southold would apply regardless of ownership and that the disposition timeline has accelerated, with transfers expected to begin by the end of the year and conclude by 2031. Doroski also discussed anticipated annual operating costs and reiterated that PEP's role is to support conservation planning rather than property acquisition. Committee members were informed that the Save Plum Island Coalition briefing materials were included in the meeting briefing package.

Discussion also included the anticipated acquisition cost of Plum Island and coordination with the Long Island Sound Study. Novak noted that acquisition costs could approach \$1 million, although no final estimate is available, and stated that PEP would not be coordinating directly with the Long Island Sound Study. Save the Sound and the Plum Island coalition remain actively involved in the conservation effort.

No action was taken.

Draft to be approved Oct 2026

11:45: PEP Presentation context of project sites being visited:

- Seagrass Signage
- PRFCT Earth
- Havens Beach
- Ninevah Beach

12:00: Seagrass Signage @ [Long Wharf, Sag Harbor, NY 11963](#) - visit not possible due to time constraints but discussion occurred.

- Speaker: Marissa Velasquez, PEP Natural Resource Program Manager, Seagrass Signage

Marissa Velasquez, PEP Natural Resource Program Manager, presented ongoing work to establish eelgrass management areas throughout the estuary. She described efforts to develop management criteria, coordinate with other National Estuary Programs and NOAA, and improve public access to aerial imagery, mapping products, and monitoring information.

Velasquez also reported that four SeagrassNet monitoring sites are currently maintained by Stony Brook University, while four additional sites are monitored through citizen science volunteers.

12:10: Public Portion / Additional Comments
Leave for a walk to Seagrass signage

12:15 Action: Motion to adjourn the formal section of the meeting.

Vote: Jeremy Campbell made a motion, seconded by Michael Iasilli. All members voted in favor. None opposed. Motion approved.

12:15: Transit to Havens Beach Rain Garden

[Haven's Beach Road](#), Sag Harbor, NY 11963

Havens Beach Garden and PRFCT Earth Project

- Speaker: Joyce Novak, PhD., PEP Executive Director, Havens Beach Rain Garden
- Speakers: Tim Wheeler, Director of Living Lands & Sam Adams, Living Lands Program Specialist, PRFCT Earth Project\

12:45: Ninevah Beach Property Owners Association Rain Garden

[Corner of Harding Terrace and Taft Place](#), Sag Harbor, NY 11963

- Speaker: James Boyd, Secretary, Ninevah Beach Property Owners Association

1:30: Adjourn meeting, Leave Sag Harbor

2:15: Return to [SBU Southampton Campus](#)



Draft to be approved Oct 2026

In Person Attendees: Ann Welker (Suffolk County Legislature, District 2), Sarah Heeley (NYSDEC Div. of Water), Jennifer Yelveton (Suffolk County Department of Economic Development and Planning), Della Campbell (NYS DEC), Michael Flood (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency), Greg Doroski (Suffolk County Legislature, District 2), Michael Iasilli (Southampton Town Council; Local Government Committee Chair), Matthew Sclafani (Technical Advisory Committee Chair), Reuben Kline (Stony Brook University), Becky Shuford (New York Sea Grant), Stephen Baines (Stony Brook University, Department of Ecology & Evolution), Mary Ann Eddy (Village of Sag Harbor; Environmental Advisory Committee), Lynn Mendelman (Association of Marine Industries), Carlos Rodriguez (Office of Suffolk County Legislature, District 2), Marissa Velasquez (Peconic Estuary Partnership), Valerie Virgona (Peconic Estuary Partnership), Jade Blennau (Peconic Estuary Partnership), Hannah Collins (Peconic Estuary Partnership), Rachel Friedman (Peconic Estuary Partnership), Stephanie Reifschneider (Peconic Estuary Partnership), Jill Moretto (Peconic Estuary Partnership), Joyce Novak (Peconic Estuary Partnership).