



**Peconic Estuary Partnership**  
**Technical Advisory Committee**  
**Meeting Agenda**

**February 4th, 2026, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm**

**Location:**

Suffolk County Community College -Eastern Campus  
121 Speonk Riverhead Rd.  
MLRC Room 107  
Riverhead, NY 11901

<https://stonybrook.zoom.us/j/97389337730?pwd=PiaUvsJ1EEo8bistpCu4kwXPQba4VW.1&jst=2>

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**10:00** - Welcome and sign in

**10:05** – Roll call : Marissa Velasquez (*PEP*)

**10:10** - Old business: vote to accept minutes from previous meeting

Dr. Matt Scalfani summarized minutes from November 5, 2025 TAC meeting for approval and opened for questions.

Motion to approve meeting minutes: first motion by Steve Heck, second motion by Brian Frank.  
Motion passed, minutes accepted.

**10:20** - Emilia Jankowska, Director of Ecology, Hourglass Climate, *Coastal enhanced weathering field trial of the intertidal shoreline of Peconic Bay, NY*

**10:40**- Questions

Steve Schott, CCE Suffolk: Has bioaccumulation of trace metals from olivine been assessed in macroalgae adjacent to treatment sites?

Emily: As far as they know there were not any at the study sites, there was floating macroalgae, unsure if they came from study sites

Matt Scalfani: Asked about carbon removal comparisons within the study and if the result could be

explained more

Grace Andrews: At the project site they found an increase of carbon removal at the olivine site compared to controlled nourished site. It may make sense to add alkaline material, If you are not planning on nourishing your beach.

Question: Is this being trialed in other places?

Grace Andrews: Yes (North Carolina, Massachusetts, etc.)

Steve Schott, CCE: Made a recommendation for future work that would include macroalgae testing by deploying seaweeds in cages or attached hard substrate.

Ed Warner: Made a recommendation that maybe a small kelp farm can be placed directly offshore in order to account for macroalgae assessments using olivine. .

Rob Tunstead, NRCS: Are there plans to continue monitoring/biochemistries at these nourished sites?

Emilia: The site has been nourished again with regular sand it would be difficult to do.

Any further questions on this presentation will be passed along to Emilia by Marissa.

**10:45** - Maxine Montello, Executive Director, New York Marine Rescue Center, *Tracking post-release movement patterns of New York's rehabilitated sea turtles provides insights into their utilization of New York Waters*

**11:05** - Questions

Matt: Is there any reason why you wouldn't release turtles back into the ocean on the south side beaches versus within the Peconic Estuary?

Maxine: This gives them the best opportunity and chances to head south.

Steve Heck: Population recovery question, why are we seeing more sea turtles now?

Steve Schott: The DEC would be interested in the utilization for the turtles. Areas that are designated would be highly valuable for these turtles; valuable in determining which seagrass meadows are important to preserve these habitats and if NYMRC ever needs groundtruthing to let him know.

Marissa Velasquez, PEP: This highlights another importance of the coordinated aerial survey work conducted between PEP and the other neighboring estuary programs. Future goals will be to overlay these turtle tracks with SAV maps to look at if seagrass meadows are utilized by these turtles when they migrate up north through the summer and into the fall months.

Steve Schott via chat stated: Satellite/Aerial mapping of seagrass in Red Seas was found to be 40% accurate. Green sea turtle tracking data was 100% accurate for identifying seagrass meadows. Could be a valuable tool for eelgrass meadows around LI that are not easily identified in aerial surveys.

**11:10** - PEP Program Office Updates

Marissa provided an overview of of PEP updates:

- PEP Horseshoe Crab Workgroup Timeline: January 7th 2026: Discussion of Final Action Plan with NRSC
- **Call for project site:** Water Access and Bulkhead Removal Assessment (IIJA year 3 funds)
- Clean Water
- HABs Priority Embayments Study
- Tracing Microplastics of the Peconic Estuary
- Aquaculture Impacts Phase 1 & 2
- Ecosystem-Based Model of the Peconic Estuary
- CHANGES project
- Eelgrass Next Steps
- SeagrassNet Rapid Partners
- Peconic Estuary Otter Surveys 2025
- River Otter Latrine Maps 2025
- Diadromous Fish eDNA Pilot Study
- FY26 PEP Projects Approved by TAC
- New PEP Staff: Hiring
- Septic Improvement Outreach 2025
- Homeowner Rewards Program
- Outreach: Partnership Program, 2025 Events highlights & upcoming events
- PEP Mini Grant 2025 Awardees
- Fish Guy Photos

#### **11:30 - Public Comment**

CCMP 5 year review: Matt Sclafani mentions to the TAC to reach out to the program office as PEP undergoes its 5 yr CCMP review. Mention items that would like to be seen included in the CCMP, using the HSC workgroup as an example with the HSC action plan.

Joyce Novak: Asked for members help - look at CCMP tracking tool to see what projects are fulfilling CCMP requirements for review. Which projects have/have not moved forward. What is your organization doing to fulfill CCMP? Let PEP know.

CCMP tracking tool can be found on the PEP website [here](#).

Alexa Annunziata, PBK: Peconic Baykeeper would like to create a shellfish working group. If you are interested in partaking please reach out to Alexa or Marissa.

Theresa Masin, TOSH: Town of Southampton has scheduled a public hearing to update the water quality improvement plan. Supplementing recommendation for existing water quality plan. If there are any questions they would love to hear it at the town board. Invites all.

#### **12:00 - Adjourn**

## Attendees

**In-person:** Marissa Velasquez (PEP), Matt Sclafani (CCE), Steve Heck (SBU), Chris Clapp (SSER), Maxine Montello (NYMRC), Alexa Annuziata (Peconic Baykeeper), Alex Corporale (Suffolk County Parks)

**Zoom:** Jordan Russo (NYSDOT), Rob Tunstead (USDA), John Aldred (Town of East Hampton Trustees), Grace Andrews (Hourglass Climate), Sarah Healy (NYSDEC Division of Water), Braden Fleming (USDA), Nicholas Cormier - Suffolk County Department of Public Works, Alexa Fournier, NYSDEC, Emilia Jankowska (Hourglass Climate), Andrew Walker (NYSDEC), Sam Apgar (USFWS), Theresa Masin (Town of Southampton), Kay Tyler (CCOM), Lynn Mendelmann (AMI), Steve Schott (CCE), Pete Topping (PBK), Jennifer Yeltekina (Suffolk County), Nicole Maher (TNC), Brian Frank (Town of East Hampton), Sarah Topping (Town of Southampton Trustees), Hannah Pell-O'Farrell (Town of Southampton Trustees), Ed Warner, Jill Moretto (PEP), Joyce Novak (PEP)

Peconic Baykeeper would like to put forth the idea of establishing a Shellfish Restoration Working Group for the Peconic Estuary composed of technical experts, current restoration practitioners, and commercial shellfishers/baymen.

This group would specifically focus on restoration efforts for bay scallops, hard clams, and oysters with an end goal of creating a shellfish restoration plan for the Peconic Estuary inclusive of shellfish sanctuary/management areas.

**Objective:**

Establish a Peconic Estuary Shellfish Restoration Work Group to streamline further shellfish restoration efforts and implement shellfish spawner sanctuaries in the Peconic Estuary.

**Tasks:**

- *Identify current and past shellfish restoration efforts in the Peconic Estuary*
- *Identify current restoration practitioners in the estuary*
- *Identify relevant restoration permitting entities in each township*
  - *Trustees, state, town*
- Compile stakeholder (baymen, recreational, anecdotal) current and historical information
  - \*\* Invite Baymen \*\***
    - DEC should have commercial digger permits and towns should have information on permits \*no permit required for recreational harvest in state waters

**End Goal:**

- Create a shellfish restoration plan for the Peconic Estuary with designated shellfish spawner sanctuaries in each of the East End towns to support current and future shellfish restoration efforts by various restoration partners.

If you are interested in this working group, have questions, or anything else to communicate please email Alexa Annunziata [alexa@peconicbaykeeper.org](mailto:alexa@peconicbaykeeper.org) and Marissa Velasquez [marissa.velasquez@stonybrook.edu](mailto:marissa.velasquez@stonybrook.edu)