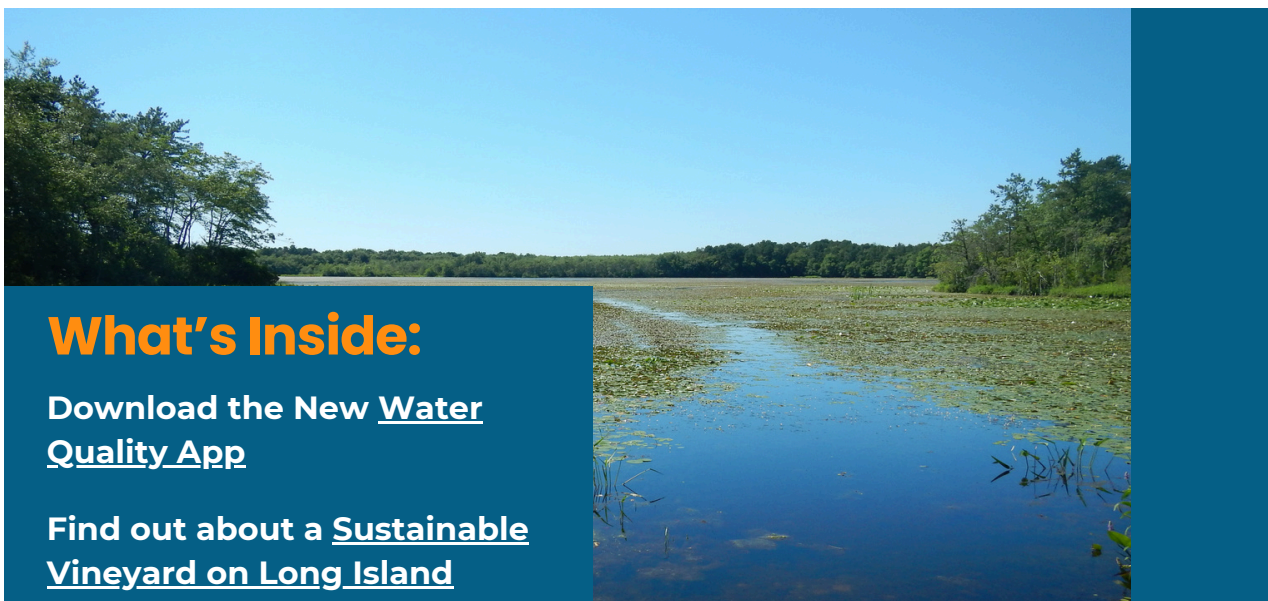


THE PECONIC ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP

NEWSLETTER



What's Inside:

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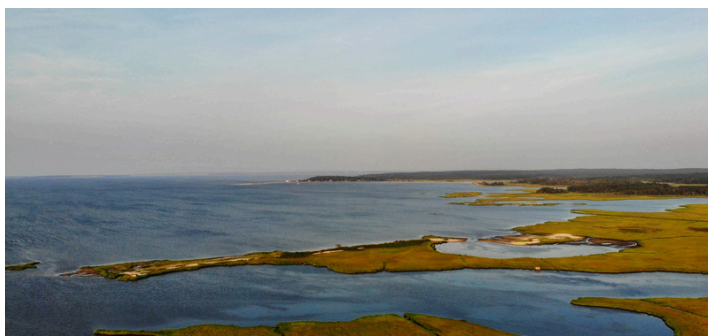
● About PEP

The Peconic Estuary Partnership (PEP) is a [National Estuary Program](#) that acts as a backbone organization, bringing together partners from different sectors around common goals. PEP staff and our partners support monitoring, research, collaboration, and education to address priority issues within the [Peconic Estuary Watershed](#). PEP acts as a bridge between science and policy, ensuring that informed citizens along with all other stakeholders have a voice in the decision-making process.



Peconic Estuary
Partnership

PROTECTING AND RESTORING LONG ISLAND'S PECONIC BAYS



Water Quality App

PEP has partnered with the Stony Brook University Geospatial Center to create an app for easy access to water quality information on Long Island. The app utilizes PEP-funded water quality data, as well as data from partners. All data collected adheres to the highest standards of monitoring protocol and covered under quality assurance plans approved by the Environmental Protection Agency and NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.

Water Quality Information displayed:

- Coastal Beach Water Quality - NYS Department of Health
- Water Quality Index (Gobler Lab, SoMAS, Stony Brook University)
- PEP USGS Water Quality Stations (U.S. Geological Survey)
- SCDHS Peconic Estuary Stations (SCDHS Bureau of Marine Resources)
- Other NYS web map services
 - Harmful Algal Blooms



Scan the QR Code to Download the App!



Horseshoe Crab Monitoring

Each summer, PEP hosts a horseshoe crab [monitoring site at Squires Pond](#) in Hampton Bays, in partnership with the [NY Horseshoe Crab Monitoring Network](#)!

Each year, PEP staff is joined by volunteers to survey and tag spawning horseshoe crabs, collecting important data on abundance, size, sex, and tag returns. This long-term monitoring efforts helps researchers and resource managers better understand horseshoe crab populations to support their conservation and management!



● **East End Agriculture and Aquaculture Spotlight**

Paumanok Vineyard

Established in 1983, Paumanok Vineyard is committed to practicing sustainability! They are Certified Sustainable by [Long Island Sustainable Winegrowing](#), and have been using 100% solar powered since 2017! Paumanok also operates two fully electric tractors, cutting down on diesel consumption. To reduce the carbon footprint of their wines, they have switched the majority of their production to the lightest glass bottles suitable for wine. For over fifteen years, Paumanok has offered its wine in kegs, eliminating at least one full tractor trailer of conventional bottles, cardboard boxes, labels, corks, tape, and plastic wrap from the waste stream. These are just some examples of Paumanok's commitment being as sustainable as possible.

Scan the QR code to learn more about [Paumanok Vineyard](#).



Homeowner Rewards

Homeowners within the Peconic Estuary are eligible to apply for the Homeowner Rewards Program! This program provides an up to \$500 reimbursement to qualifying homeowners who install green alternatives to their homes, such as rain barrels, native plant gardens, and rain gardens!

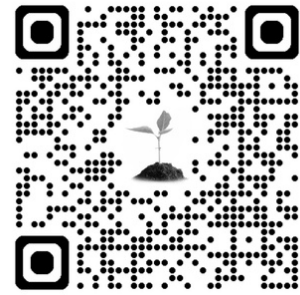
● Peconic Friendly Plant Database

To find native plants eligible for reimbursement, we encourage you to utilize our PEP Native Plant Database! You can utilize this database to search for New York native plants that are perfect for your property by applying the various filters, including soil type and deer resistance!

● Tips for using the Peconic Friendly Plant Database

Please remember when using our [Native Plant Database](#) to search for Homeowners Rewards eligible plants:

- Just because a plant appears in the database does not mean it is native!
- To see a complete list of only native plants, take this easy step: On the left hand side, toggle and check “Native Plants Only”
- When searching for a plant by name (without “Native Plants Only” checked), you must click on the plant to view plant details, then scroll down until you see “New York Native: yes/no” to verify that the plant is actually native.



Scan the QR code to visit our webpage to learn more about the [Homeowner Rewards Program](#) and apply!



Monofilament Fishing Line Recycling

PEP has installed monofilament fishing line receptacles at various locations around the estuary to provide a place for fishermen to discard their excess fishing line and help combat marine plastic debris.

To see a map with receptacle locations, scan the QR code!



● Construction Under Way!

Meetinghouse Creek Wetland Restoration: Green Infrastructure for Stormwater Management, Coastal Vulnerability, and Resiliency.

Construction has begun on the [Meetinghouse Creek Wetland Restoration project](#), in Aquebogue, Town of Riverhead. This constructed wetland will mitigate flooding, as well as capture and filter stormwater pollution to prevent contaminants from entering Meetinghouse Creek and Flanders Bay. Thank you to all of the partners and stakeholders that helped make this project possible!

Scan the QR code to visit our [Meetinghouse Creek website page](#) and learn more about the project!



Meet The PEP TEAM

The PEP staff has grown!
Let's meet PEP's full team!



Joyce Novak

Joyce has served as the Executive Director of the Peconic Estuary Partnership since 2018, working closely with federal, state, and local partners to create and carry out strategies for clean water and healthy habitats in the Peconic Estuary watershed. Planning for the future of the Peconics involves an understanding of the communities that reside in the watershed, the natural systems that surround us, and its rapidly altering processes and conditions.



Valerie Virgona

Valerie Virgona has worked with the Peconic Estuary Partnership since November 2021. As PEP's Outreach and Communications Manager, she works to educate and engage the public and local government representatives. The goal of this outreach is to expand knowledge and appreciation, and create beneficial change within the Peconic Estuary and watershed. Always feel free to contact her to increase your general awareness or participate in PEP's rewarding citizen science opportunities!



Jade Blennau

Jade's role with PEP involves supporting any and all projects and programs we take on. Jade works to create and support local partnerships, secure funding for future projects, manage, and develop new project contracts as well as assist in field assessments for future resiliency initiatives. You can find her and her amateur birding skills in her favorite Peconic habitat, our coastal salt marshes.



Rachel Friedman

Rachel is PEP's Water Quality Outreach Specialist, focusing on reducing nitrogen pollution from outdated septic systems and fertilizer usage. Rachel is a LEED Green Associate and is currently pursuing a Masters of Science in Sustainable Management, along with certifications in ESG and Climate Leadership, through the University of Wisconsin Green Bay.

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Marissa Velasquez

Marissa is the Natural Resource Project Manager for PEP. She has spent the majority of her career working on a wide variety of marine restoration projects in the Peconic Bays. She hopes to utilize her previous hands-on experience to aid in the development of current and future projects that continue to protect and preserve the Peconic Estuary and its watershed.



Jill Moretto

Jill is our Grants Manager, bringing over a decade of public service experience. An avid outdoors enthusiast, she loves being outside and frequently spends time on Noyack Bay. She is passionate about improving environmental conditions and is excited to have her professional role align more closely with her personal interests. She is thrilled to join a program whose mission resonates deeply with her passions and looks forward to making a meaningful impact.



Stephanie Reifschneider

Stephanie serves as the PEP Outreach Assistant. With eight years of experience in environmental education and a focus on fisheries ecology, she has striven to bring awareness to the public regarding environmental issues and has promoted sustainability in local communities. She hopes to use her experience to advance environmental stewardship around the Peconic Estuary to increase community conservation efforts.



Hannah Collins

Hannah serves as the Project Specialist for PEP, bringing a decade of experience working in aquatic ecosystems. She received her PhD in marine science with a focus on shellfish and contaminants in estuaries. Hannah hopes to use her experience to facilitate current and future projects with PEP's partners, protecting and preserving clean waters and healthy habitats across the Peconic Estuary.

Join PEP's Citizens' Advisory Committee!

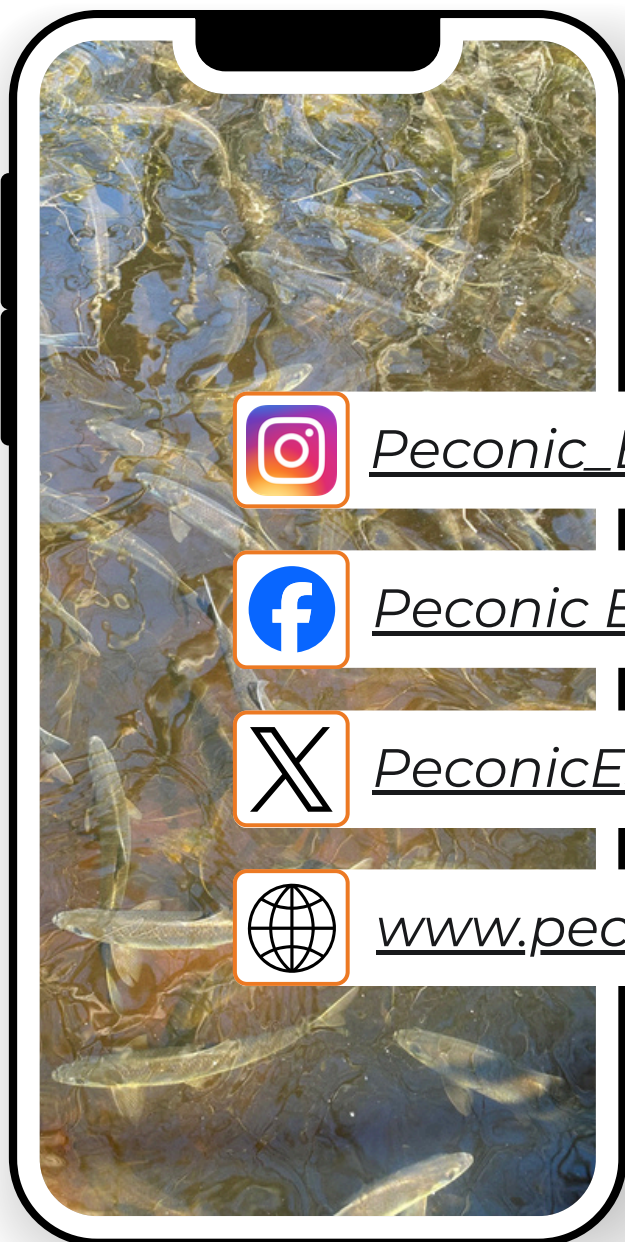
Citizen involvement, support, and awareness of environmental issues in the Peconic Estuary are the foundation to the success of the Peconic Estuary Partnership, since the program was established in 1992. The Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC), consists of members of the public that have interest in preserving and protecting the estuary and watershed. Involvement of the CAC is vital in the success of the PEP as the citizens who are involved act as PEP ambassadors to the communities and groups within the Peconic Estuary watershed.

Check out our website calendar for upcoming CAC meetings, as well as many other PEP events open to the public!

Check out PEP's website calendar to see our upcoming events!



www.peconicestuary.org/events



Keep up with the latest PEP projects and events!



[Peconic_Estuary](https://www.instagram.com/Peconic_Estuary)



[Peconic Estuary Partnership](https://www.facebook.com/PeconicEstuaryPartnership)



[PeconicEstuary](https://www.x.com/PeconicEstuary)



www.peconicestuary.org



Thank You To Our Partners

Thank you to all of our partner organizations for working with us to protect and restore the Peconic Estuary. We truly could not do this work without your collaboration!



Broad Cove Unveiling



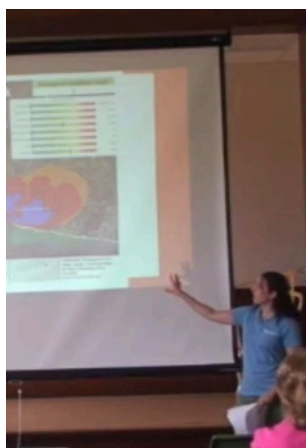
SeagrassNet Transect Set Up



Community Garden Installation with Rewild North Fork



Earthstock



Septic Improvement Presentation



Grangebel Fish Camera Installation



Homeowner Rewards Program



Peconic Estuary Partnership

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