

South Shore Estuary Reserve Technical Advisory Committee Meeting

**December 4, 2018 10:00am- 1:00pm
Town of Islip
Long Island Maritime Museum
86 West Avenue, West Sayville, NY 11796**

In attendance:

South Shore Estuary Reserve Office:

Jeremy Campbell
Christie Pfoertner

TAC Members:

Lane Smith, Acting TAC Chair, New York Sea Grant
Corey Humphrey, TAC Vice Chair, Suffolk County SWCD
Tom Wilson, Stony Brook University, School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences
Chris Schubert, U.S. Geological Survey Alt. for Shawn Fischer
E. Christa Farmer, Hofstra University GES
Maureen Dunn, Seatuck Environmental Association
Terry Lister-Blitman, Long Island Maritime Museum
Tara Schneider-Moran, Town of Hempstead
Richard Groh, Town of Babylon
Michael Bilecki, Fire Island National Seashore
John Turner, Town of Brookhaven
Kathleen Fallon, New York Sea Grant
Nicole Maher, The Nature Conservancy
Kristen Kraseski, Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan
Enrico Nardone, Seatuck Environmental Association
Cassie Bauer, NYSDEC
Kyle Rabin, LINAP/LIRPC
John Tanacredi, Molloy College/CERCOM

TAC Guests:

Andre Matthews, U.S. Geological Services
Alexa Marinos, Town of Babylon
Breanna Perso, Town of Babylon

Review/Approve October Meeting Minutes

It was noted to change Christa Farmer to E. Christa Farmer on the October meeting minutes.

Chris Schubert and any USGS representative cannot be a voting member due to USGS

guidelines.

MOTION: October meeting minutes approved.

Review of SSER TAC Bylaws

A google doc was created and sent to TAC members before the December meeting.

Comment: It should be formally stated in the bylaws how the TAC and CAC will communicate and coordinate. (The TAC chair attends CAC meeting and the CAC Chair attends TAC meetings)

Comment: "Responsibilities" was left blank, this should be removed or filled in.

Comment: Other estuary TACs have responsibilities listed.

Comment: We may want to look back at the original CMP to take some of the responsibilities under the STAC.

It is discussed whether to include responsibilities or if it is redundant since the mission statement is similar.

The group agrees to include responsibilities as it states how the mission statement will be carried out by the TAC. It is also agreed to provide the Long Island Sound Study and Peconic Estuary Program bylaws on the google drive to refer to during the process of developing the SSER TAC bylaws.

Round Table and introductions were conducted. See above "in attendance".

Q: How do the bylaws become formalized?

A: Jeremy Campbell will check with DOS to make sure there aren't any formal procedures to follow however he anticipates they will be voted on by the TAC.

A discussion occurs on how to handle new memberships. A written request needs to be made by the interested party. It was determined an email would be sufficient.

Comment: Voting vs. non-voting members is a good idea but how will we go about determining who will be voting or non-voting?

Q: Is there a need to vote within the TAC? Will situations arise that need to be voted on?

A: Any recommendations to the Council should be voted on by the TAC, having a general consensus with a vote is important.

Comment: There is concern that the members who disagree won't get a fair say. It is determined that the TAC can make recommendations and note if there is any opposition by other members.

MOTION: Voting will be a part of the TAC meetings. 1st Rich Groh, 2nd Jeremy Campbell.

Approved.

Q: How will recommendations be presented to the Council?

A: If the issue or recommendation is formal, a written report will be provided. On less formal matters, the TAC Chair can report orally at Council meetings.

There was discussion on making sure all major groups are represented at the TAC and to be cautious with how many voting members from each group (non-profit, local government etc.) since this could sway votes in one direction.

Suggestion: One member from each group (towns, non-profits, academia etc.) can represent all other similar parties that are not on the TAC.

Members decided it would be beneficial to have Alison Branco give a short presentation on how the Peconic Estuary Program formed their bylaws, what their membership process is and any lessons learned. It was also decided a Governance Sub-Committee would be established to take on most of the work for creating the bylaws, which can later be reviewed and approved by the TAC. Enrico Nardone, John Tanacredi and Kyle Rabin volunteered to participate in the Governance Sub-Committee.

A change was made regarding the agenda. Discussing changing the SSER boundary will be tabled for a later time.

Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) Draft

A copy of the draft CMP was sent to TAC members before the December meeting.

Overview given by Jeremy Campbell: Some priorities and suggestions stay in the new CMP from the original 2001 CMP however, new recommendations have been added. A major change in the new draft CMP is the addition of a Resilience chapter. The focus of this chapter is on ecosystem resiliency and focuses less on community resiliency. The recommendations and actions in the CMP draft are kept general to allow for longevity of the document. The Reserve Office will want to follow up by having the TAC help create 3-5 year action agenda.

Q: Will offshore wind energy be a priority of the TAC and CMP?

A: No, the DEC and Ocean Action Plan have a focus on offshore wind energy.

It is anticipated that two new Reserve Office Staff will be starting in early January. After this point in time the Office will be looking for more details from the TAC to recommend action items.

ACTION ITEM: TAC members are to review the CMP before the next meeting in February.

Solute Transport Model

Chris Schubert Overview: USGS has a project with the Peconic Estuary Program and NYSDEC to develop a numerical modeling tool. Suffolk County is doing similar modeling to look at nitrogen from wastewater and agricultural uses but with a tight timeframe. Suffolk County is

focused on current activities and land uses to prioritize sub-watershed management areas. USGS is using similar tools but is looking at the changing uses over time (time varying nitrogen loading). USGS is also doing this work island-wide at a coarser scale and seeing how those changing nitrogen loads manifest in groundwater. The south shore is now highly developed, however in the early-mid 1900's, the land use was primarily agriculture. The south shore could get a better understanding of nitrogen trajectory with past land use data included in the modeling.

Q: Is atmospheric deposition being considered in the modeling?

A: USGS is taking a higher-level approach and using remote sensing data to incorporate atmospheric deposition in the modeling. The Peconic Estuary Program project is approximately 2 years away from being completed.

Q: Are sediments being incorporated?

A: The modeling ends in the surface water of the estuary, so the sediment column is not included.

Q: Who funded the PEP project?

A: PEP funded it themselves with additional funding from the NYSDEC to focus on drinking water and the estuary.

Q: How much does this project cost?

A: \$702,000 over three years.

Q: Was the denitrification process considered in the modeling?

A: The model starts at the water table and goes through the discharge boundary. This project focuses on what has already reached the water table. Once it hits the water table, not much changes from there with some exceptions (e.g. at the discharge boundary) but we would ultimately need good information on where those areas exist.

Q: Where would the money come from if the Reserve decided to have the modeling done?

A: It would come from the Reserve appropriation funds. An RFA would be created for such projects. *Note that the USGS can't compete with the private sector, and in most cases can't respond to RFP's etc. So, if there was interest in having USGS do the work, it would have to be done under a sole source arrangement.

Q: How much will the 2019 allocation be?

A: Based on what we have received in previous years it will probably stay consistent at \$900,000 but we will have a better idea in a few months about any additional funding.

Comment: It would be beneficial for the TAC to make recommendations on projects that stick within a budget for the year.

Discussion on finding a balance between recommending realistic projects that can be completed based on funds and proposing projects that may need additional funding is had.

Q: Has Long Island Sound Study expressed interest in conducting a solute transport model in their watershed?

A: Discussions have been had but there has not been any official answer.

ACTION ITEM: Provide a project web page for TAC members to view.

Comment: Should someone come to a TAC meeting to give an in depth presentation or should we wait a few years until the Peconic Estuary modeling is completed to decide if the cost is worth the return?

Suggestion: It would be good to get Ken Zegel to present at the TAC to have a better understanding of what the county is doing and decide if there is a need to do further modeling including previous land use data.

Comment: We should keep presentations shorter within 20-30 minutes to allow for questions and discussions.

Conducting a Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment

A climate change vulnerability assessment would help prioritize adaptation action items. Fire Island did a climate change vulnerability assessment, they used data that already existed and related to natural coastal resources and facilities. The final report will be out in January 2019. This assessment focused on the current situation including sea level rise, temperature changes and was completed for 202, 2050 and 2100. This will help Fire Island determine what actions need to be taken given climate change impacts.

Q: Will this be useful for the south shore?

Comment: The assessment for Fire Island was difficult and is a small study in comparison to the south shore.

Comment: Long Island Sound Study did a climate change vulnerability assessment for 2050 and 2100. Nicole Maher will share document, it is currently up for public review.

Suggestion: Alison Branco gave a 10-15 minute presentation on sea level rise and the impacts on towns, biological impacts and infrastructure. She was part of the Fire Island assessment. Let's ask her to come to the SSER TAC and give the presentation.

The Peconic Estuary Program is also doing a climate change vulnerability assessment but are just getting started on the study.

Comment: A comprehensive assessment would be beneficial for the south shore especially considering the low lying areas but it would be a huge undertaking.

Comment: There is always new data coming out, every report that comes out is already

outdated but the study may be worthwhile, the results can be sobering for communities to recognize that they need to take action now.

Suggestion: Maybe contract out someone to look at what has been done in the Reserve already by other organizations. The scopes of each assessment may be different but it could be useful.

Q: What would the assessment focus on?

Comment: LISS focused just on the clean water act. The SSER would want to go slightly beyond this but would want to be careful on what the scope is for vulnerability. It would be more related to water quality issues, habitat and ecosystem vulnerability instead of focused on facilities.

A discussion on what the scope of the assessment would include is had.

Q: Aren't the towns responsible for the community issues?

A: The towns are responsible for both the community and ecosystem aspects.

Comment: It would be a mistake to restrict the assessment to ecological and natural resources. Elected officials will want to know all the impacts to infrastructure and water treatments plants too.

Comment: Superstorm Sandy went to infrastructural vulnerability assessments. People are already concern about this and this part is a bit easier because you have an actual structure. Ecosystem assessment is much more difficult, what is the value of an ecosystem?

Comment: Infrastructural vulnerability is already covered by other organizations such as the Army Corp. of Engineers and deals with other issues such as erosion etc. We would have to first define what infrastructure is. Looking at the scope of the CMP, is this even in the mission of the program?

Comment: It is right clarify the scope but human responses to climate vulnerability must also be taken into account.

Suggestion: Should we break up the Reserve into geographic sections and pick one to start with?

Suggestion: Many climate change vulnerability assessments have a bird's eye view without much detail. Maybe we should look at other assessments to determine what we want to do here.

Suggestion: Maybe we should take a look at the estuary and figure out which areas are more vulnerable than others and start there?

Q: How important is it to event conduct an assessment? Is this a priority to the Towns?

A: This is important to the Town of Babylon but we would want to include infrastructure.

Q: Is conducting an assessment important to the Reserve Council?

There is a general consensus that this is important but would like to see what the Council's priorities are.

There is considerable discussion as to whether the human community should be included in the assessment. Seawalls, buildings etc., it is difficult to separate natural and human.

Q: Are there other studies that should be done first beforehand that will point us in the direction of a climate change assessment?

This topic will be continued at the following TAC meeting in February.

Updates

E. Krista Farmer: I am teaching a fields methods class next semester. If anyone has a project they need help on please let me know. The time frame is from February to early May.

Terry Lister-Blitman: There is a holiday kids event at the LI Maritime Museum on December 8th from 4-7pm.

Enrico Nardone: Seatuck is having a holiday party on Friday December 7th if anyone wants to join.

John Turner: The terrapin workgroup will meet in January. Let Seatuck know if you would like to be included.

Maureen Dunn: I attended an ocean acidification workshop last month (November 2018). Another meeting will occur but unsure exactly when. Will make sure this is distributed to the TAC when announced.

Rich Groh: The Town of Babylon is having a meeting on December 11th on the sewer projects that will occur in Babylon. This will be the last public meeting before a vote in January.

Nicole Maher: Suffolk County is working on a salt restoration project at Timber County Park and Gardiner County Park. Implementation will likely start in late winter.

Mike Bilecki: Fire Island National Seashore has several winter events. On New Year's Day there will be a breach hike starting from the Wilderness Center.

Mike Jensen: The Water Research Foundation will have a webinar on Thursday December 13th from 3-4pm on microplastics.

Vice Chair:

MOTION: Corey Humphrey nominated for Vice Chair of the Reserve TAC. Seconded. Passed.

Meeting Adjourned: 1:01pm