

## **South Shore Estuary Reserve Technical Advisory Committee Meeting**

**October 13, 2020 10:00am - 11:30am**

**Zoom Meeting**

In attendance:

### **South Shore Estuary Reserve Office:**

Jeremy Campbell  
Sally Kellogg  
Rachel Neville

### **TAC Members:**

Lane Smith, TAC Chair, New York Sea Grant  
Corey Humphrey, TAC Vice Chair, Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District

Cassie Bauer, NYSDEC  
Michael Bilecki, National Parks Service  
Jim Browne, Town of Hempstead  
Chris Clapp, The Nature Conservancy  
Maureen Dolan-Murphy, Citizens Campaign for the Environment  
Maureen Dunn, Seatuck Environmental Association  
Kathleen Fallon, New York Sea Grant  
Shawn Fisher, USGS  
Rich Groh, Town of Babylon  
Artie Kopelman, CRESLI  
Nicole Maher, The Nature Conservancy  
Emily Sweet, Town of Babylon  
Tom Wilson, SoMAS

### **Guests**

Chantal Collier, The Nature Conservancy  
Adrienne Esposito, Citizens Campaign for the Environment  
Michele Golden, NYSDEC  
Bradley Peterson, SoMAS

**Meeting called to order at 10:07am.**

### **SSER Office Updates**

Council meeting is scheduled for October 21<sup>st</sup> and will feature updates from Nassau and Suffolk Counties, a SAV workshop summary and discussion, and DEC regarding LINAP. The Bond Act was not added to the ballot this year due to Covid-19. The Climate Vulnerability Assessment letter will be discussed at the Council meeting.

**ACTION ITEM:** Any final comments or edits to the Climate Vulnerability Assessment are due by the end of the day Thursday, October 15<sup>th</sup>. Lane will send link to letter and copy of letter to TAC members.

Lane will give an update to the Council on the activities of the TAC.

### **Presentation by Chantal Collier of The Nature Conservancy on the SAV Workshop**

On July 23<sup>rd</sup>, a virtual workshop was hosted by TNC and DOS to discuss Seagrass in the Reserve. 98 people participated in the workshop. The ultimate objective of the workshop was to initiate a discussion on options for seagrass preservation in the Reserve. Three presentations were given. Mark Finkbeiner of NOAA Coastal Division discussed the seagrass mapping data and change in seagrass from 2002 to 2018. Brad Peterson from SoMAS discussed the status and trends of eelgrass in the Reserve, focusing on habitat fragmentation, climate change, nitrogen pollution, and shoreline hardening as main drivers of change in the system. Dr. Elizabeth McCance, co-chair of Fishers Island Seagrass Management Coalition discussed FISMIC and how the local community has taken action to protect seagrass around Fishers Island. After the presentations, 5 small break-out groups discussed a series of questions.

1. What additional information do you wish was being collected to enable better seagrass protection and management in the SSER?
2. Is it important for SSER communities to be involved in taking care of seagrass in their bays and estuaries?

Recommended actions from the discussion included:

- Obtain groundwater modeling, shoreline hardening/living shoreline, boating impact, commercial fishing impact data
- Improve monitoring frequency and use of standardized protocols
- Conduct social science to gauge public perceptions
- Form a community-based coalition to initiate local SAV conservation action
- Engage citizens in monitoring and outreach

### **Discussion on SAV in the Reserve**

Fishers Island Coalition are working on a management plan now and defining seagrass management areas. The Seagrass Act enables NYSDEC to create seagrass management areas and management plans for those areas.

Can use the new benthic habitat maps from 2018 to begin to define seagrass management areas and discuss how to manage those areas going forward. Local groups/municipalities who own the bay bottom should step forward to begin the management effort. We can use the maps to prioritize these areas for restoration.

Phil Colarusso from the EPA is working on carbon sequestration numbers for New England and this may inform information for Long Island.

Review of the Seagrass document provided to the TAC, pulled from the 2009 Seagrass Task Force Report.

- Temperature should be added as a threat
- Invasive species may no longer be relevant
- Climate change priority should be higher
- Groundwater issues should be added: Role of groundwater as a benefit to temperature should be addressed

M. Bilecki: How will the TAC fix this document, with a working group?

C. Humphrey: Suggestion to work on this as a group together, not a separate subcommittee.

- Plastic pollution (macro/micro) should be included – blocks light, toxic chemicals
- Concern over wording of fishing gear as a threat to SAV – don't want to negatively impact baymen

There is a lot diversity in SAV on Long Island (low clonality) but if we have heat resistant genotypes is unknown. Atlantic Brandt moved seeds from southern locations, but with decimation of habitat this seed dispersal has decreased greatly. Pollen and seed dispersal of SAV is limited in distance. All SAV populations on LI are connected to each other – no evidence of a bottleneck. There is a new fungus that attacks the seeds of eelgrass, polyphora (?), and impacts seed viability. This has been found on LI but the role it plays in seed germination here is unknown, but since seeds are a major method of reproduction it is a concern.

- Rising sea level and the ability of SAV to migrate into shallower waters
- Winter storm wave refraction and wave direction, along hardened shorelines
- Lack of sediment in the system is a concern: sediment budget and exchange

J. Campbell suggested the formation of a sub-committee to work in between TAC meetings to advance this effort. All who are interested can join in on this additional meeting to speak in more detail.

**ACTION ITEM:** TAC will set up a date and time to have a more detailed discussion on SAV focusing on restoration and protection.

Group will discuss a restoration goal to update the original goal of % increase set in the 2009 Seagrass Task Force Report.

**ACTION ITEM:** Members with add ideas to the SAV document in the next two weeks prior to SAV-focused meeting.

### **Partner Updates and Other Business**

N. Maher: TNC is putting final touches on Freshwater and Tidal Road Stream Crossings interactive map. Summary sheets will be out soon.

M. Bilecki: FIMP (Fire Island Montauk Point Reformulation Plan) is coming to a close. Actions that are being called for in FIMP are important for all to be aware of.

S. Fisher: Monitoring will be done for FIMP and additional gauges will be put in as part of it.

M. Dunn: Seatuck is working on the Trees for Tribs grant, have planted trees and shrubs. Have another native planting day coming up along Penataquit Creek, following Covid guidelines. Bats and Brews will be held virtually this year. Seatuck has a new updated website.

A. Kopelman: 17<sup>th</sup> year of monitoring seals at Cupsogue Beach is starting. Public educational trips will be held following Covid protocols with limited attendees.

M. Dolan-Murphy: CAC meeting will be held virtually in November, featuring Dr. Chris Gobler.

C. Humphrey: Suffolk County Soil and Water District has educational opportunities coming up. Wednesday, November 21<sup>st</sup> will be a workshop on compost. Series of webinars coming up focusing on biochar. Annual agriculture forum will be held the first week in January as a virtual event.

T. Wilson: SoMAS's research vessel, Sea Wolf, is back at sea. Going to be doing an offshore cruise soon.

J. Browne: Town of Hempstead finished its first year of funding through LINAP, LIRPC, Hofstra. Starting another round once contracts are signed. Lab is in process again after delays from Covid, beginning to process samples. Construction work in the lab is being restarted.

S. Kellogg: SSER participated in A Day in the Life this year with the Town of Brookhaven to collect water quality samples. Recordings of the collection were sent to participating schools. Estuary Day 2020 featured Seatuck and Operation SPLASH.

**Review/Approve August Meeting Minutes**

MOTION: pass August meeting minutes. Seconded. Approved.

Motion to adjourn meeting.

Seconded.

**Meeting adjourned at 11:27am.**