

South Shore Estuary Reserve Technical Advisory Committee Meeting

August 2nd, 2022, 10:00am – 11:30am

Hybrid Meeting

Seatuck Environmental Association

550 S Bay Ave, Islip, NY 11751

In attendance:

South Shore Estuary Reserve (SSER) Office:

Jeremy Campbell

Sally Kellogg

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Members:

Tara Schneider-Moran, TAC Chair, Town of Hempstead

Michael Bilecki, National Parks Service (NPS)

Elizabeth Cole, Long Island Regional Planning Council (LIRPC)

Maureen Dolan-Murphy, Citizens Campaign for the Environment

Maureen Dunn, Seatuck Environmental Association

Rich Groh, Town of Babylon

Josh Halsey, Peconic Land Trust (PLT)

Corey Humphrey, Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District

Mike Jenson, Suffolk County Department of Health Services

Artie Kopelman, Coastal Research and Education Society of Long Island (CRESLI)

Vicky O'Neil, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC)

Lane Smith, New York Sea Grant

Adam Starke, The Nature Conservancy (TNC)

Tom Wilson, Stony Brook University SOMAS

Guests

Henry Bokuniewicz, Stony Brook University SOMAS

Jim Browne, Town of Hempstead

Enrico Nardone, Seatuck Environmental Association

Arielle Santos, Seatuck Environmental Association

Cassidy Stevens, Seatuck Environmental Association Intern

Meeting called to order at 10:04am.

Approval of June 7th, 2022 Meeting Minutes

MOTION (C. Humphrey): pass June meeting minutes. Seconded (M. Dunn). Approved.

SSER Local Assistance Grant Project: Mechanical Harvest of *Trapa natans* - Water Chestnut - Dan Fucci, Nassau County DPW

Speaker was unable to present. Presentation will be rescheduled.

South Shore Re-Tern Project – Arielle Santos, Seatuck Environmental Association

Seatuck is undertaking a long-term effort to reestablish and safeguard tern nesting sites on the South Shore of Long Island. This work includes mapping historical, current, and potential nesting habitat, conducting surveys at targeted sites, and collaborating with experts to learn how we can protect and/or re-establish suitable nesting sites for seabird populations. This project began in winter 2021. The priority sites include the Grouts in Town of Babylon which is a current tern rookery but is facing flooding and is threatened by imminent sea level rise. Bamboo or Ox Island in Town of Babylon is the nearest island with appropriate elevation, 3.13 ft. Potential obstacles at Bamboo Island include beach traffic from humans during the summer and no nesting terns had been observed there. Bamboo Island was used for the social attraction study where 30 decoys were placed (in singles and pairs) and calls were played in the pilot plot area. There has been some interest in the plot but no nesting to date. Reach out to Arielle Santos asantos@seatuck.org if interested in helping survey. For additional information see: <https://seatuck.org/protecting-birds/>

Question: Will this be expanded to the east?

Answer: Initially the study was focused in the Great South Bay but there is interest to expand.

Question: What was the criteria for priority sites?

Answer: Tern population of an island was used to identify the initial site. Grouts clearly had the largest population compared to other islands in the Great South Bay.

Coastal Acidification Update – Henry Bokuniewicz, Stony Brook University School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences

The mission of Ocean Acidification Task force is to identify “the causes and factors contributing to ocean acidification (OA) in the marine waters of NYS and to evaluate ways of addressing the problem by applying the best available science as to OA and its anticipated impacts.” How the OA Task force was formed, and a timeline of events was reviewed. The next draft will go out for public comment in fall 2022 with final revisions being complete at the end of 2022. Professor Bokuniewicz described the goals of the task force including mitigating current effects, research and monitoring, engaging with stakeholders to implement best management practices, educating groups on the issue, and legislate where appropriate to enact an action plan. See slides for additional details.

J. Campbell recapped how the OA task force reached out to the SSER office in June to ask for recommendations for sentinel site locations within the SSER. A subcommittee was formed from the TAC to respond to the request by the deadline. The recommendations were submitted. J. Campbell noted a public comment can be provided about the OA report at the appropriate time.

SSER Updates: Council Meeting update and Draft Seagrass Action Plan document - Jeremy Campbell, SSER/NYS DOS; SSER CAC updates

J. Campbell recapped the major highlights of the 2022 July SSER Council meeting including that the Council was provided an update on the SSER Coastal Acidification subcommittee recommendations made to the taskforce. He announced that the office is engaged with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County to develop a seagrass management and restoration project. The project will develop a model for restoration within the estuary and is looking at several parameters including temperature, light, and sediment to identify viable restoration areas. The contract has not yet been executed but will have a 5-year contract period. On August

9th, there will be a vote to adopt the new SSER CMP, the final document will be posted on the DOS website. He also informed the membership that R. Neville left the SSER office in July 2022.

Question: Will Dr. Brad Peterson be involved in the seagrass project?

Answer: Cornell will be funded by DOS but Dr. Peterson will be involved.

Question: What is the status of the climate vulnerability assessment letter?

Answer: That is still on the radar to be pushed forward.

J. Campbell also provided a brief CAC update. The SSER line item was increased by \$100,000 in the most recent state budget.

Other Business: Partner Updates and Ideas for Future Meetings TAC summary document and prioritization of future projects

T. Schneider-Moran brought up that the Council asked for a document that includes the SSER mission statement, membership list, overview, and summary of accomplishments and wanted to have this for the TAC. She also noted that having a list of prioritization projects would be advantageous.

J. Campbell, SSER: An action plan will be created for the SSER after the CMP is adopted.

M. Bilecki, FINS: Will be retiring in December 2022.

J. Browne, Town of Hempstead: Hempstead submitted a grant with support letter from Seatuck for salt marsh restoration.

Meeting adjourned at 11:45am.