

South Shore Estuary Reserve Technical Advisory Committee Meeting

**June 7th, 2022, 10:00am – 11:30am
Zoom Meeting**

In attendance:

South Shore Estuary Reserve (SSER) Office:

Jeremy Campbell
Sally Kellogg
Rachel Neville

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Members:

Tara Schneider-Moran, TAC Chair, Town of Hempstead
Kathleen Fallon, TAC Vice Chair, New York Sea Grant

Cassie Bauer, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC)
Derek Betts, Nassau County Soil and Water Conservation District
Elizabeth Cole, Long Island Regional Planning Council (LIRPC)
Maureen Dolan-Murphy, Citizens Campaign for the Environment
Maureen Dunn, Seatuck Environmental Association
E. Christa Farmer, Hofstra University
Michele Golden, Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan (LINAP)
Rich Groh, Town of Babylon
Josh Halsey, Peconic Land Trust (PLT)
Corey Humphrey, Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District
Artie Kopelman, Coastal Research and Education Society of Long Island (CRESLI)
Tom Wilson, Stony Brook University SOMAS

Guests

Sam Apgar, US Fish and Wildlife Service
Jim Browne, Town of Hempstead
Phoebe Clark, Audubon New York
Maureen Correll, US Fish and Wildlife Service
Cassidy Freudenberg, Town of Hempstead
Arielle Santos, Seatuck Environmental Association
Lane Smith, New York Sea Grant
Cassidy Stevens, Seatuck Environmental Association Intern
Matt Swain, Peconic Land Trust
Alexandra Caputo, Town of Babylon intern
Greg Gaxiola, Town of Babylon intern

Meeting called to order at 10:00am.

Review and vote in edited bylaws to include information on voting in new members.

MOTION (A. Kopelman): pass updates to TAC Bylaws. Seconded (R. Groh). Approved.

Approval of April 5th, 2022 Meeting Minutes

MOTION (M. Dunn): pass February meeting minutes. Seconded (A. Kopelman). Approved.

Peconic Land Trust Membership Presentation - Josh Halsey, Peconic Land Trust

PLT is a land conservation organization on the East End of Long Island who partners with Towns, the County, and other groups to work on restoration and acquisition efforts. Works to collaborate with partners with similar goals. PLT has several preserves within the SSER including Forge River Preserve.

MOTION (R. Groh) to vote PLT in as an SSER TAC member. Seconded (C. Humphrey). Approved.

SSER Local Assistance Grant Project: Survey of Diamondback Terrapins – Cassidy Freudenberg, Town of Hempstead (TOH)

Project was inspired by Jamaica Bay study by Dr. Russell Burke. The study area includes Middle Bay. Study began in 2018 and included 2019 and 2021. Observations are done by watching nesting locations and putting out modified crab pots. Observations are done during two phases: the spring nesting season and the trapping season. Turtles are tagged and released. Database is mainly females as males are only caught in crab pots. Process terrapins by taking photos and counting scute rings and collecting data on shedding, plastron length, etc. Inject PIT tags using injection needle, scan, and record PIT tag number. Second phase is terrapin trapping and processing and tagging turtles on a boat. Town also collaborated with Brooklyn College and Hofstra University to analyze fecal samples and collect information on feeding and microplastics. Golf course was a popular nesting location. Analyzed a 22-year capture-release data set.

Suggestion that the microplastic research be presented at a future TAC meeting when it is ready.

Question about pesticides being a concern for turtles at the golf course. Not thought to be an issue because the turtles do not spend a significant portion of their lives there. There are not significant pesticide concentrations in Hempstead Bay.

Engaging the Salt Marsh Community– Phoebe Clark, Audubon New York

Salt marsh working group gathers professionals in all fields from New York, Connecticut, Maryland, and Rhode Island. The group works to bring the attention of restoration and coastal resilience to high marsh habitat and the most threatened bird species like the Saltmarsh Sparrow. Previous meeting topics have focused on restoration, management, and conservation. Meetings are held quarterly. Future topics include monitoring techniques, restoration projects in NY, permitting streamlining, community outreach, thin layer placement, and partnership opportunities.

Question on thin layer placement. This is placing 7-10 cm of sediment on top of marshes to let the vegetation continually grow in an effort to keep level with sea level rise.

Poll for Next Meeting Plan

Questions: "Do you want to meet in-person during the August 2nd meeting?" Answer choices: yes or no. "Our in-person meetings pre-COVID used to be 2 hours. What is your meeting length preference for an in-person meeting?" Answer choices: 10-11:30 or 10-12.

The "in-person" and "10:00am-11:30am" poll choices had the highest votes (not all members voted).

SSER Office Updates – Jeremy Campbell, South Shore Estuary Reserve Office

Update on the seagrass action plan. Hoping to have something soon, currently working out details with NYSDEC. Will share with the group when able. J. Campbell was contacted regarding identifying sentinel sites for monitoring ocean acidification within the SSER. Will have a follow up meeting to go over this. A response is needed by the end of the month.

Question on criteria for a sentinel site. This will likely be left up to the group.

Saltmarsh Science and Restoration Priorities for the Saltmarsh Sparrow– Maureen Correll and Sam Apgar, US Fish & Wildlife Service

Tidal marshes provide habitat for many birds, including Saltmarsh Sparrow. High marsh is the Saltmarsh Sparrow habitat. Nests are built on the ground and flood only during extreme tides. Eggs have risk of floating away or young being flooded from the nest with sea level rise. Period between flooding events is shrinking due to climate change. Saltmarsh Sparrow populations are declining due to factors including nest loss. The Atlantic Coast Joint Venture (ACJV) is a regional partnership of state, federal, non-profit, and private conservation groups focused on conserving coastal habitat. The group has population and habitat goals. Techniques to reach these goals include ditch remediation, runnelling, sediment placement, and facilitated marsh migration to restore salt marshes. State prioritization documents were created for each state in the breeding area to outline priority marshes for restoration for in the next 10-15 years. Used a habitat prioritization tool. Plans are available on the ACJV website. Developed the priority marshes into an interactive map.

Region-wide bird surveys were done from Maine to Virginia from 2011-2012. Recorded all birds seen or heard using salt marsh habitat in a 0 to 50-meter distance band. This is being resurveyed in 2021 and 2022 for updated population numbers. Using updated survey numbers, the population estimates and trends will be updated to see where populations hot spots are, where numbers are declining, where numbers are not declining.

Other Business: Partner Updates

On behalf of M. Murphy: SSER budget was increased from \$900,000 to \$1,000,000, the first increase in over 20 years.

Town of Babylon finished SAV signage. They can be printed and displayed in Towns within the SSER. Contact T. Schneider-Moran, K. Fallon, or SSER office for access.

Meeting adjourned at 11:42am.