

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TO THE SOUTH SHORE ESTUARY RESERVE COUNCIL

CAC Meeting Minutes

May 10, 2022

7:00-8:30 p.m.

Fire Island Ferry Terminal

150 West Ave, Patchogue, NY 11772

Hybrid meeting via Zoom

Present:

Maureen Dolan Murphy, Citizens Campaign for the Environment/Chair CAC
Rob Weltner, Operation SPLASH/Vice-Chair CAC
Jeremy Campbell, NYS DOS/Reserve Coordinator
Alexa Annunziata, Peconic Bay Keeper
Judi Bird, League of Women Voters Brookhaven
George Costa, Trout Unlimited/Art Flick Chapter
Dorian Dale, Suffolk County
Alli DePerte, Atlantic Marine Conservation Society (AMCS)
Alan Duckworth, Town of Brookhaven
Maureen Dunn, Seatuck Environmental Association
Adrienne Esposito, Citizens Campaign for the Environment
Kathleen Fallon, Co-Chair TAC/NY Sea Grant
Rich Groh, Town of Brookhaven
Suzy Goldhirsch, Fire Island Association
Emily Hall, Seatuck Environmental Association
Sally Kellogg, NYS DOS/Reserve Office
Artie Kopelman, Coastal Research and Education Society of Long Island (CRESLI)
Bob Mozer, Speonk Remsenburg Civic Association
Chris Olijnyk, National Park Service (NPS)
Arielle Santos, Seatuck Environmental Association
Lou Siegel, NYS Marine Education Association
Lane Smith, NY Sea Grant

1. Introductions

M. Dolan Murphy called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. Introductions were made.

2. Meeting Minutes Approval

May 10, 2022 Minutes

Motion by A. Kopelman to approve; seconded by D. Dale; carried.

3. Presentation: Alan Duckworth, Town of Brookhaven SSER Projects

A. Duckworth described three Town projects focusing on: adapting to sea level rise, habitat restoration, and aquatic connectivity. The Southern Mastic Beach Ecological Restoration project area 147 acres of mostly salt marsh, but also some residential and commercial properties. The project area faces high tide flooding because it is such a low-lying area with high groundwater, unfortunately drains that are supposed to help the remove water from the area at times act as conduits and water can back up through the drains. Between 1920 and 2020 there has been a documented 11 inches in sea level rise which is slated to accelerate. The restoration plan calls for removing parts of the road and to encourage tidal creeks to allow for tidal draining and potentially increase mosquito predator habitat. Community engagement for the project included two large (100+) community meetings, online surveys that have shown support for removing phragmites, and posters providing details about the project. Public access is a core issue to the community, it has been proposed to remove the roads and replace with elevated boardwalks although the Town cannot pay for boardwalk installation. Fire Island to Montauk Point (FIMP) is investigating living shoreline design, USACE is working with the Town of Brookhaven on those designs. The plans should be completed in 2023 with implementation to occur after.

The Town of Brookhaven in partnership with Audubon New York was awarded a grant in 2021 from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) to restore and protect seabird nesting habitat on Long Island. Fewer terns are successfully nesting due to the spread of invasive plants that reduce good nesting habitat and the presence of gulls aggressively competing with terns, forcing them to use sub-optimal nesting sites that can be flooded. This project will protect and increase the number of nesting seabirds on Carters Island in Moriches Bay by: removing vegetation, like Phragmites australis, to open up habitat; installing nesting boxes to deter wildlife conflicts; and posting notices informing the public to not trespass in these sensitive areas during nesting season. Staff from the Town of Brookhaven and Audubon NY are implementing this project with help from the South Shore Estuary Reserve Program. In April, phragmites was removed and nesting boxes were installed.

A nature-like fish way at Swan Lake in Patchogue, which has not been accessible to alewife for more than 200 years, was installed this spring by Town of Brookhaven. This nature-like fish way will allow alewife access to important habitat upstream where spawning takes place. The project started in 2011 with funds through DASNY for planning and in later years by DEC for implementation. DEC staff found alewife using the passage 1 month after the passage was complete.

Question: Is lower lake passage a town or county project?

Answer: Suffolk County

Comment: Good work!

4. SSER Funding—Increased!

SSER funding is up to \$1 million with thanks to legislators Judy Griffin and Kimberly Jean-Pierre. M. Murphy asked the CAC what they think an expanded budget would look like, what would the CAC want to see? The final CMP should come out soon.

Comment: D. Dale: Suffolk County is identifying 25 projects and with the goal of finding realistic and implementable concepts and solutions that will make the County more resilient.

5. Jeremy Campbell, South Shore Estuary Reserve Office

S. Kellogg described current and past projects that the SSER office is involved with including the Brookhaven Seabird habitat restoration project, participating the LI Envirothon, coordinating HSC monitoring site with Peconic Bay Keeper, and the Community Science webinar series which should start in July. SSER is also working with Seatuck, LISS, Sea Grant, PEP, and LIISMA (Long Island Invasive Species Management Area) on the 2022 LI Coastal Bioblitz which will be June 4-11 which is Invasive Species Awareness Week, <https://seatuck.org/li-coastal-bioblitz/>. Stay tuned for more information about both programs. Additionally, the CFA has been announced and there are multiple grant opportunities available.

6. Public Comment/Announcements

Rich Groh – Wetland restoration at Geiger Lake Park will be complete in a few weeks with Suffolk County. The Bandit Litter Trap is working well in the Carlls River, there is a desire to install another, and the cost is \$27,000 and a DEC permit is required.

Kathleen Fallon – Sea Grant released marine debris curriculum.

Arielle Santos – Seatuck’s Re-Tern project is focused on two islands, Bamboo and Grouts, to move tern colonies from the island at a risk of sea level rise to an island with a higher elevation. Last year was the pilot project.

Alli DePerte – AMSEAS is hosting 1st responder training, if anyone is willing to host please contact Alli, adeperte@amseas.org.

The meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.