



Scope of Work for Southampton Town Community Preservation Funds 2023

The Peconic Estuary is one of 28 estuaries in the country designated by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as an “estuary of national significance” under Section 320 of the Federal Clean Water Act. The National Estuary Program (NEP) was established to protect and restore nationally significant estuaries threatened or impaired by pollution, development, and overuse. The Peconic Estuary was formally accepted as part of the NEP in 1992. Officially commenced in 1993, the Peconic Estuary Partnership (PEP) includes numerous stakeholders, representing citizen and environmental groups, businesses and industries, academic institutions, and local, county, state and federal governments. PEP seeks to carry out the Goals and Actions of their Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP) <https://indd.adobe.com/view/201ca273-3278-44ee-b907-a8308ec3d4a5> in partnership with the East End Towns of Long Island. As part of their commitment to PEP, the Town of Southampton has agreed to contribute Community Preservation Funds (CPF) 2021-2023 as outlined and agreed to by the Town Board. For the Town of Southampton, these funds in 2023 are \$413,700.

The Following three tasks will be carried out using the **total \$413,700**

1. Program Office Support: \$234,256

- Staff salary as follows:
 - Executive Director (35%): \$99,050
 - Communication and Outreach Coordinator (25% salary): \$35,375
 - Climate Resilience and Community Coordinator (50% salary): \$45,492
- Staff travel as follows:
 - Travel for staff is required for site visits and job related meetings such as Town government meetings, Association of National Estuary Program meetings, PEP Committee meetings, Civic Association meetings, and other community meetings: \$3,000
 - Supplies for outreach: \$3,000
- IDC (26%): \$48,338

2. Peconic Eelgrass Strategy, Restoration education, training, and Marine GEO protocol: \$92,560

History of Eelgrass in the Peconics

Once bountiful throughout the Peconic Estuary, eelgrass has declined significantly over the last century. In 1930, there were more than 8,700 acres of eelgrass beds in the estuary. In 2014, less than 1,000 acres remained—a decline of more than 85 percent. Aside from a meadow in Bullhead Bay, no eelgrass persists in the Peconic Estuary west of Shelter Island. Loss of eelgrass beds affects the many commercial and recreational fish and invertebrate species that rely on them for food and shelter. Globally, seagrasses have decreased dramatically in the last few decades, and climate change is believed to play a major role.



Warmer water temperatures stress eelgrass and may render historical locations of eelgrass beds no longer suitable for eelgrass growth. Rising sea level is another important climate-related threat to eelgrass survival in locations where seawalls and other types of shoreline hardening make it impossible for eelgrass beds to shift landward to remain in a favorable water depth. In addition, nutrient enrichment, algal blooms, water quality, boating and fishing practices and shoreline stabilization structures are all collectively threatening the health and extent of eelgrass.

Workplan Details for eelgrass

To date, eelgrass restoration with net, quantitatively PEP has been working regionally with NEPs from Maryland to Maine and with the Smithsonian Institute and Natural Parks Service to collectively develop an SAV Management Strategy for PEP and Coordinate the North East Regional Collaboration for SAV Management and Preservation. This task will:

1. Convene a PEP SAV workgroup and provide training to PEP and partners for emerging techniques of management and monitoring.
2. Migrate PEP annual monitoring to the Marine GEO Protocol
3. Work with Drs Brad Peterson and Joe Tamborski, co-recipients of the 2022 EPA Coastal Watershed Grant with PEP, as they develop results and use this for informed management decisions an potentially assist in Common Garden pilot research.
4. Work with NYSDEC Eelgrass Coordinator to assist NYS in adherence of the Sea Grass Protection Act and the development of eelgrass management areas.

3. Water Quality App and Database : \$27,720

The development of an application to get water quality data easily from a phone, tablet or computer app. This will be an outreach tool used for teaching and community engagement as well as a way to share important water quality data. HABs will also be included in the App and will serve as a public outreach tool for HAB waters and human health.

4. PEP Mini-Grant: \$31,500

To provide funding to our communities to allow for the implementation of the 2020 CCMP Goal for Clean Water. To engage with our communities and empower them to take action toward clean water and healthy habitats in the watershed and prepare for a changing climate. These funds will combine with \$94,500 of federal funds for a robust mini-grant program.

5. Nutrient Reduction Education: \$23,808

A communication initiative around nutrient reduction. Coordinate civic engagement about septic improvement and fertilizer use. Develop materials for distribution specifically focused on septic improvement and fertilizer reduction. Develop social media campaigns and update website regularly. Public education about the benefits of natural shorelines for water quality.



Peconic Estuary Partnership

PROTECTING AND RESTORING LONG ISLAND'S PECONIC BAYS

6. Eelpass: \$1,966

Bridal Veil Falls in Grangebél Park has a very small spillway that discharges into a small tidal pool surrounded by grassy lawn and connected to the river by an 18-inch diameter plastic pipe (see cover photo). This is referred to as Bridal Veil Falls.



7. Community Fishing Program: \$1,890

Actively reaching out hispanic/latino communities to connect them with a love of fishing and appreciation of the Peconic waters. Supply transportation to bring families and community members to the Peconic River and shoreline for an afternoon of fishing and education. Partnering with NYSDEC, who supplies fishing equipment, this will bring Hispanic communities together and foster a love and appreciation of the water.