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## Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan (LINAP)- Newsletter

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## Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan (LINAP) - Newsletter Suffolk County Protection Committees

*In this issue of the LINAP newsletter, we highlight initiatives led by Long Island's Protection Committees in Suffolk County*

- Peconic Estuary Protection Committee
- Oyster Bay/Cold Spring Harbor Protection Committee
- Northport Harbor Water Quality Protection Committee
- Protection Committee Collaboration
- Grant Insights and Highlights

Protection Committees are inter-municipal coalitions that provide a coordinated and highly effective approach to improving water quality and solving watershed problems across Long Island. The Island is fortunate to have several Protection Committees that work to protect, restore, and enhance the watersheds that they serve. They develop and implement planning studies, capital improvement projects, educational outreach, water quality monitoring, information and technology sharing, coordination of enforcement, and collaboration. They also track and comment on proposed laws and regulations. Protection Committees also aid member municipalities in carrying out the federal and state-mandated municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) requirements. Long Island's Protection Committees collectively represent over 50 Long Island municipalities.

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### Peconic Estuary Protection Committee

In 2015, the [Peconic Estuary Partnership](#), having recognized the great success of the existing Protection Committees, initiated the creation of the [Peconic Estuary Protection Committee \(PEPC\)](#). The mission of the Peconic Estuary Protection Committee is to improve the water quality and habitats of the Peconic Estuary by leveraging the resources of municipalities and agencies on eastern Long Island. The vision is to improve the ecological health of the Estuary by addressing pollutant sources including stormwater runoff, septic system

discharges, agricultural and residential fertilization, groundwater flows, illegal dumping, floatable debris and boat waste.

To support their vision, PEPC has developed a [Quality Management Plan \(QMP\)](#) and Quality Assurance Project Plan template (QAPP) for water quality monitoring which were approved by the NYSDEC and the EPA. The data collected under the QMP and QAAP is intended to be used to accurately identify and prioritize subwatersheds in the Peconic Estuary that should be targeted for water quality improvement activities and help PEPC members and partners assess the current baseline in water quality and measure the effectiveness of water quality improvement interventions over time. The program will also encourage public involvement in stewarding the waters of the Estuary. The Committee also annually collates data on land use and outfalls in the Peconic Estuary watershed and publicly posts it on the [Suffolk County Open Data](#) website.

Another area of focus for the PEPC is grant opportunities. In addition to sharing information on grant programs, PEPC seeks opportunities to jointly apply for grants that will create efficiencies and cost savings for municipal water quality protection and restoration activities.

PEPC shares resources and exchanges information on public events, programming, and training sessions for compliance with the General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from MS4s. Training focuses on illicit discharge detection and elimination; regulatory enforcement on construction site run-off and post-construction stormwater management; and municipal facility and public parks best management practices to reduce pollutant discharges into the harbors and bays.



Peconic Estuary. Photo Credit: LIRPC

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### **Oyster Bay/ Cold Spring Harbor Protection Committee**

The [Oyster Bay/Cold Spring Harbor Protection Committee](#) was formed in 2010 to improve the health of Oyster Bay and Cold Spring Harbor by coordinating the efforts of 11 municipalities in the watershed. Since its beginning, the Committee has spearheaded multiple

programs to protect and improve the water quality of the watershed and its tributaries in a cost-efficient and effective manner.

The Oyster Bay/Cold Spring Harbor Protection Committee has developed a highly successful [community oyster garden program](#) which provides local property owners with the training, equipment, and ongoing support necessary to successfully “garden” juvenile oysters. Once grown, the oysters are placed in a spawner sanctuary—a protected area where harvesting is prohibited—allowing the oysters to grow, reproduce, and support natural reseeding of the bay. The program has engaged hundreds of residents in environmental stewardship and released 500,000 oysters in and around the spawner sanctuary. As part of their program, the Committee has facilitated Long Island Sound Study funded research to monitor the spawner sanctuary and identify locations for additional sanctuaries.

The Committee also provides guidance and assistance to member municipalities in carrying out the federal and state-mandated municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) requirements. This is critical as it saves municipal members time and money toward compliance as many of the activities (i.e., septic system education, geese and pet waste management, outreach/stewardship activities) undertaken by the Oyster Bay/Cold Spring Harbor Protection Committee can be counted toward each municipalities’ stormwater compliance requirements. Each year a report is provided to member municipalities detailing these activities in a format that can easily be incorporated into the State’s required annual reports.

The Oyster Bay/Cold Spring Harbor Protection Committee decided that a comprehensive watershed-wide [Resident Canadian Geese Management Program](#) was a priority to improve water quality. The program is helping to reduce the impact of waterfowl on water quality through a public education campaign and by various methods of population control.

The Protection Committee also supports the efforts of not-for-profit organizations protecting our local waters such as [Friends of the Bay](#). Their efforts include water quality monitoring, beach clean-ups, invasive species removal, marsh grass plantings, and rain garden installations.

The Committee is also involved in outreach and education campaigns including [Scoop the Poop](#), a pet waste management program, and the promotion of Nassau County’s [S.E.P.T.I.C. program](#). Bayville homeowners, in the Town of Oyster Bay, have submitted the most applications for S.E.P.T.I.C grants.



## Northport Harbor Water Quality Protection Committee

The [Northport Harbor Water Quality Protection Committee \(NHWQPC\)](#) was established in 2010 to develop an action plan to restore water quality in the tidal areas of Northport Harbor, Northport Bay, and contiguous waters that contain all the estuaries fed by the waters in and around Northport Bay known as the "Northport Bay Complex." These waters fall within the jurisdiction and control of three municipalities: the Town of Huntington, the Village of Northport and the Village of Asharoken. In 2014, these municipalities signed an agreement to act jointly on measures that will improve and protect water quality in the Complex. The agreement created the Northport Harbor Water Quality Protection Inter-Municipal Council (IMC) which has the legal authority to apply for state and federal funds in order to conduct studies, develop management plans, provide educational services and coordinate water quality protection and enhancement programs. The IMC was one of the key recommendations in the NHWQPC's action plan.

The IMC works closely with the NHWQPC and together they have secured millions of dollars in state and county grants for a wide variety of infrastructure improvements, habitat restoration efforts and scientific studies aimed at improving and protecting the health of Northport Harbor. The most notable effort being the significant upgrades to the [Northport Sewage Treatment Plant](#) and upgrades to the [sewer lines](#) that serve Northport. The Northport Sewage Treatment Plant upgrades consisted of a denitrification filter, a new pH control building, and a Raptor Micro-strainer to remove inorganic solids. The principal reason for this project was to lower the amount of Nitrogen the facility discharges into the harbor. The New York State SPEDES permit limit on Nitrogen is 10 lbs/day. Average Nitrogen discharge since the facility improvements went online has been 6.6 lbs/day. The upgrades have also increased the available capacity at the Plant. NHWQPC supports the use of the extra capacity to connect more homes and businesses currently using cesspools and septic systems in the Complex.

The NHWQPC has also played a critical role in public education and outreach for the Suffolk County Septic Improvement Program (SIP), conducting several community forums for the program. The SIP is a program that provides grant funding to eligible recipients to replace a conventional or failing septic systems with an innovative and alternative onsite wastewater treatment system designed to remove nitrogen. For more information about the Septic Improvement Program, email [SepticDemo@SuffolkCountyNY.gov](mailto:SepticDemo@SuffolkCountyNY.gov) or call 631-852-5811.

NHWQPC also improves water quality through the use of green infrastructure. Last year, in partnership with the Citizens Campaign for the Environment, the Committee implemented 3 rain gardens along Bluff Point Road in Northport Village. The gardens capture and filter contaminants from polluted stormwater runoff before it enters Northport Harbor. These gardens are constructed to capture 15,000 gallons of rainwater with each rainfall and filter it before it flushes into the harbor.

NHWQPC continues to work with federal and state elected and appointed officials to advance the financing of projects critical to Northport Harbor.

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## Protection Committee Collaboration

All of the Protection Committees in both Nassau and Suffolk counties collaborate with each other to keep abreast of Island-wide water quality initiatives and legislation. The committees periodically convene to discuss regulations, legislation and funding, and jointly communicate to state and federal agencies on Island-wide issues.



They regularly review proposed regulations and permit requirements, as well as providing comments jointly. Collaboration also occurs on projects such as the Coordinated Environmental Solutions for Septic Problems Occurring On Long Island (C.E.S.S.P.O.O.L.) which is a joint effort by the Hempstead Harbor Protection Committee, the Manhasset Bay Protection Committee, the Oyster Bay/Cold Spring Harbor Protection Committee, the Friends of the Bay, the Coalition to Save Hempstead Harbor, and the Town of Oyster Bay. This project raises awareness around the problems with cesspools and septic tanks and provides tools for homeowners to properly understand and maintain them.

Visit [www.getpumpedli.org](http://www.getpumpedli.org) for more information.



**GET PUMPED!  
LONG ISLAND**

**TAKE ACTION:**

1. Know what your system is and how it operates.
2. Have your system pumped every three to five years.
3. Only put natural, biodegradable products down the drain.
4. Consider upgrades and enhancements depending upon the age of your system and the conditions of your site.

Proper maintenance of your home wastewater system not only ensures continuous function, extends the life of the system, and reduces the risk of contaminating the groundwater and nearby surface waters, it actually saves you money.

**BE \$MART!** Don't wait for a problem before having your system inspected and pumped.

[www.GetPumpedLI.org](http://www.GetPumpedLI.org)

C.E.S.S.P.O.O.L. Flyer. Photo credit: the C.E.S.S.P.O.O.L Project

## Grant Insights and Highlights-Assistance Opportunity

Looking to apply for a grant, but need help writing the grant?

2023 brings the first year of the [LIS Resilience Grant Writing Assistance Program](#), a funding opportunity open to municipalities and community organizations to facilitate the hiring of grant preparation and writing support to assist with the development of a grant application. Eligible projects are sustainability and resilience-focused and will impact a community within or partially within the Long Island Sound Coastal Boundary.

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis [here](#) until all available funding is allocated. Program details, including application methods by email or mail, are available on the [NY Sea Grant website](#).

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