

Community Outreach Plan

For the Forge River Watershed Management Plan

MARCH 2010



The Town of Brookhaven

Prepared by

In Association with



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1 Community Outreach Plan

1.1 Introduction

Mastic and Shirley residents in cooperation with their community organizations have played a prominent role in the efforts to restore the Forge River and its tributaries. *Save the Forge River* was established specifically to address the condition of the River, its tributaries and the greater watershed. Environmental organizations such as *Ducks Unlimited*, *Peconic Baykeeper*, and others have contributed to the dialog. The *Poospatuck Indian Nation* borders the estuary. They too have a strong interest in the health of the waters. Waterways Homeowners Association, Mastic-Shirley Chamber of Commerce, Manor Park Civic Association, William Floyd Community Summit, and the Affiliated Brookhaven Civic Organization have all been involved in the efforts to address Forge River problems and discussions on the benefits of area-wide sewerage.



The *NYS Department of State, Division of Coastal Resources* published an important guidebook for the preparation of watershed plans in 2007, "*Watershed Plans - Protecting and Restoring Water Quality.*" The authors stress the importance of community involvement in the process. An informed public plays an instrumental role in the eventual implementation of any plan. The principles of a successful public outreach campaign are simply summarized as: communication, understanding, involvement and follow-up. The Cameron Engineering Team will communicate goals and objectives, build consensus, foster stakeholder involvement, and manage the project in cooperation with the Town and community.

1.2 Watershed Advisory Committee

The Forge River Task Force, formed in 2005 by the Town of Brookhaven includes local lawmakers, state and local officials, environmentalists and advocacy group representatives. The Task Force was instrumental in developing a strategy to restore Forge River health. It worked with the NYS DEC to place the estuary on the State's Impaired Waters List, it oversaw the mapping of drainage infrastructure, and, along with citizen-based group *Save the Forge River, Inc.*, played an advocacy role in securing federal funding for the river.

The Forge River Task Force meets monthly to discuss Forge River environmental issues and to assist in the development of a comprehensive watershed management plan. The Task Force is chaired by the NYS DEC Regional Director, Peter Scully, and provides oversight for watershed research activities including the SUNY Stony Brook sediment characterization, a stormwater remediation project along Montauk Highway, an illicit discharge reporting and response program, and, finally, the development of a watershed management plan. Watershed management strategies and education/outreach materials are reviewed and recommended for implementation by the Forge River Task Force. In its 2007-2008 year, the Forge River Task Force provided oversight for a hydrographic study and the continuation of various studies including river sediments and a nitrogen budget study. It produced a non-point source guide brochure that was mailed to residents in the summer of 2008.



As a result of its continued advocacy efforts and success, the Forge River Task Force has been designated as the Watershed Advisory Committee (WAC) for this project. The Cameron Engineering Team will work closely with the WAC throughout the study through periodic scheduled meetings, project progress reports, e-mails, and telephone contacts.

The WAC would act as a semi-autonomous entity, electing its own Chair and forming whatever subcommittees it chooses, including a Technical Advisory Subcommittee (TAS). It will advise the Town and the Cameron Engineering Team and will review project documents. During the course of the Project, draft documents would be circulated first to the Town and then to the WAC for their review and comments. The WAC members would be encouraged to attend all of the public portions of the project.

- FORGE RIVER TASK FORCE MEMBERS**
- NYS Department of Environmental Protection – Chair
 - NYS Department of State
 - Brookhaven Environmental Protection & Planning
 - SSER
 - SCDHS
 - SC Planning
 - SC DPW
 - SC Soil & Water Conservation Service
 - Suffolk County Legislator Kate Browning
 - Save the Forge River, Inc.
 - Peconic Baykeeper
 - Ducks Unlimited
 - Poospatuck Indian Nation

1.3 Meetings

1.3.1 Town Kickoff Meeting

An initial *Town Kickoff Meeting* will be held in early February 2010 with the Town, the US Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), and the Cameron Engineering Team. Project schedule, requirements, roles and responsibilities, this Community Outreach Plan, and data availability will be reviewed. Meeting minutes will be prepared and distributed to attendees.

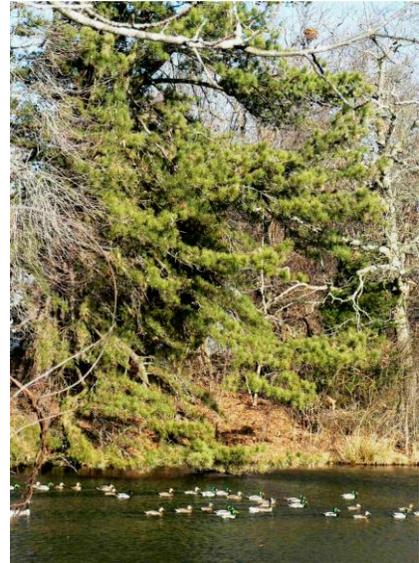
1.3.2 WAC Meetings

A formal *Project Scoping/Kickoff Meeting* will be held several weeks after the *Town Kickoff Meeting* (anticipated for March 2010). This meeting will include the same participants as the Town Kickoff Meeting as well as the members of the WAC and involved and interested agencies. The agenda will include a review of project requirements (scope), roles and responsibilities, schedule, and deliverables. Information needs and next steps will be identified. A draft project schedule will be discussed that will include milestones, dates for the three Public Workshops, and WAC meeting dates. The Cameron Engineering Team will prepare and distribute minutes following the meeting indicating the agreements and understandings reached. At the *Project Scoping/Kickoff Meeting*, the WAC will determine the need for and, if appropriate, the potential members of a Technical Advisory Subcommittee (TAS). If the WAC forms a subcommittee, its chairperson would be a member of the WAC and would report on the subcommittee's activities and findings during regular WAC meetings. -

The Cameron Engineering Team will hold four additional meetings with the WAC. The meetings will serve as project progress meetings and opportunities for discussion in advance of the three Public Workshops. The Cameron Engineering Team will present the preliminary results of the Watershed Characterization (including the Regulatory and Programmatic Environment) at the second WAC meeting, anticipated for early June. Preparations for the first Public Workshop will also be discussed. The third WAC meeting, anticipated for early September, will include a presentation of the preliminary Subwatershed Prioritization and preparations for the second Public Workshop. Discussions at the fourth meeting of the WAC, anticipated for early November, will focus on draft Management Strategies, SEQRA Compliance, the draft content of a TMDL RFP, and preparations for the third and last Public Workshop. The Cameron Engineering Team will present the draft final Forge River Watershed Management Plan for WAC input and discussion at the fifth and final meeting of the WAC, anticipated for early December.

1.4 Public Workshops

The Cameron Engineering Team will hold three Public Workshops in cooperation with the WAC. At the first workshop, the Team will present a Watershed Assessment that will include all information gathered to date – summarized in text, tabular, map, and diagrammatic form – on the existing environmental, socioeconomic, and regulatory conditions that govern the Forge River watershed. The presentation will include an overview of general watershed issues, the causes and effects of the recognized ecological impairments, the specific problems affecting this watershed, the role of government agencies in water quality protection, and the use of a TMDL to restore this aquatic system to acceptable water quality standards. After an initial PowerPoint presentation, attendees will be given an opportunity to break into smaller issue-focused groups where Project Team and Advisory Committee members will be available for discussion and recording of public sentiment. Boards will be set up to make it easy for attendees to record their opinions on particular issues. Feedback mailer forms will be available including the project website and email addresses.



The Cameron Engineering Team will hold a second Public Workshop to solicit input in advance of the preparation of the management plan and to review watershed prioritization results. The event will begin with a presentation of the findings that led to the watershed prioritizations and the implications to the stakeholders before breaking into smaller issue-based groups.

The third Public Workshop will serve as a forum for the presentation by the Team of the draft final Watershed Management Plan and the proposed elements of the TMDL to be developed at a subsequent phase. The event will begin with a presentation of the findings that led to the Management Plan and the elements of the Plan itself. After an initial PowerPoint presentation by the Team, a number of stations will be established with presentation materials detailing the Plan. A member of the Team will be positioned at each station to engage in discussion with the public and record comments. Easels will be made available to record comments and forms will be made available to the public for additional mail-in commentary. Public Workshops will be advertised through the project website, local papers, the library, and through email contact with stakeholder organizations. The notices will direct potential Workshop attendees and other interested parties to the project website and will suggest that they email their contact information to the project email address to stay informed.

1.5 Electronic Communication

Use of the internet will facilitate better communication between the Town, the WAC, the Cameron Engineering Team, stakeholders, and the public. Project document sharing will be facilitated through the use of either dedicated pages on Cameron Engineering's website, a third party web-based application (*e.g.* [Google Docs](#) or [Basecamp](#)), or simply through email. The electronic communications method will be finalized at the initial *Town Kickoff Meeting*.

The Cameron Engineering Team will develop information for Project specific web pages that will be posted on the Town's server. Information will include Forge River reports, maps, publications, news article links, and other background information. Additional project information will be posted including: the project RFP, the Cameron Engineering Team proposal, WAC committee and subcommittee (if any) member lists, a project calendar, meeting minutes, and announcements.

1.6 Outreach Schedule

A preliminary schedule is outlined in the following chart. Given the number of members of the WAC, it is important to schedule its meetings well in advance. Similarly, public meetings are better attended when advertised well in advance. Preliminary dates for the WAC and public meetings are as follows:

- WAC meeting 1 – Wednesday April 5, 2010 (Project kick-off)
- WAC meeting 2 – Monday July 12, 2010 (Review draft watershed characterization)
- Public Meeting 1 – Monday July 26, 2010 (Introduce project, review draft watershed characterization)
- WAC meeting 3 – Wednesday September 20, 2010 (Review draft watershed prioritization)
- Public Meeting 2 – Wednesday September 22, 2010 (Input on draft management plan)
- WAC meeting 4 – Wednesday November 3, 2010 (Review TMDL, draft final management plan)
- Public Meeting 3 – Wednesday November 17, 2010 (Input on draft final management plan)
- WAC meeting 5 – Wednesday December 15, 2010 (Review revised draft final management plan)

FORGE RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN - PROJECT SCHEDULE														
TASK	TASK	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	
1	Town Kickoff Meeting	■												
2	Community Outreach Plan	■												
3	Characterize Watershed		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
4	Prioritize Subwatersheds				■	■	■	■	■	■				
5	Regulatory & Programmatic Environment		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
6	TMDL RFP						■	■	■	■	■	■		
7	SEQRA Compliance						■	■	■	■	■	■		
8	Management Strategies						■	■	■	■	■	■		
--	WAC meetings			■			■	■	■	■		■		■
--	First Public Meeting (>Characterization)						■							
9	Second Public Meeting (input on Management Plan)									■				
--	Third Public Meeting (Present draft Final Plan)												■	■
10	Final Management Plan												■	■