

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK



STEVE LEVY
SUFFOLK COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Department of Planning

Thomas Isles, AICP
Director of Planning

NOTICE OF COMPLETION
of
Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement
and
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Suffolk County Shellfish Aquaculture Lease Program in Peconic Bay and Gardiners Bay

Lead Agency: Suffolk County

Capital Project #: 7180.110

Address: Office of the County Executive
100 Veterans Highway
P.O. Box 6100
Hauppauge, N.Y. 11788

Legislative Resolution #: 241-2007

Date: March 19, 2008

This notice is issued pursuant to Title 6 NYCRR Part 617 and Suffolk County Local Law #22-1985 of the implementing regulations pertaining to Article 8 (State Environmental Quality Review) of the Environmental Conservation Law.

Suffolk County, as lead agency has determined that the Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS) pertaining to the action described below is fully adequate and complete with regard to all applicable SEQRA regulations.

The Suffolk County Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), in conjunction with the Suffolk County Legislature as lead agency and the Suffolk County Department of Planning as the initiating unit, will conduct a public hearing on the DGEIS. The Suffolk County Department of Planning has prepared a DGEIS, which will be distributed to all Involved and Interested Agencies (copy attached) and made available for downloading at <http://www.co.suffolk.ny.us/shellfishaquaculture.html>. Hard copies will also be made available for viewing at The Suffolk County Department of Planning, H. Lee Dennison Building - 4th floor, 100 Veterans Memorial Highway, Hauppauge, New York, as well as east end local government offices and libraries as described on the attached list. The Suffolk County Department of Planning and CEQ will hold a public hearing on Thursday, April 17, 2008 at 7:00 pm at Riverhead Town Hall, 200 Howell Avenue, Riverhead, New York 11901 to obtain oral and written comments. Written comments will be accepted until May 1, 2008 and should be addressed to the contact person stated below.

Title of Action: Suffolk County Shellfish Aquaculture Lease Program in Peconic Bay and Gardiners Bay

SEQRA Status: Type I

Description of Action: SEE ATTACHED

Location: Peconic Bay (Great Peconic Bay, Flanders Bay, Little Peconic Bay, Southold Bay and Shelter Island Sound) and western Gardiners Bay in the Towns of Southampton, East Hampton, Riverhead, Southold and Shelter Island, Suffolk County, New York.

Potential Environmental Impacts: SEE ATTACHED

For Further Information:

Contact Person: DeWitt Davies, Chief Environmental Analyst
Address: Suffolk County Department of Planning
P.O. Box 6100
Hauppauge, New York 11788
Phone No: (631) 853-4865

Copies of this Notice Sent to:

Steve Levy, Suffolk County Executive
James Gilmore, N.Y.S. Dept. of Environmental Conservation
Peter A. Scully, N.Y.S. Dept. of Environmental Conservation
Roger Evans, N.Y.S. Dept. of Environmental Conservation
Charles D. Hamilton, N.Y.S. Dept. of Environmental Conservation
Karen Graulich, N.Y.S. Dept. of Environmental Conservation
George Stafford, N.Y.S Dept. of State
Environmental Notice Bulletin
Judith A. Pascale, Suffolk County Clerk
Thomas A. Isles, Director, Suffolk County Planning Department
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Gregory T. Greene, Cashin Associates, P.C.
William E. McGintee, Supervisor, Town of East Hampton
Philip J. Cardinale, Supervisor, Town of Riverhead
Joseph Hall, Environmental Planner, Town of Riverhead
James Dougherty, Supervisor, Town of Shelter Island
Linda A. Kabot, Supervisor, Town of Southampton
Scott Russell, Supervisor, Town of Southold
Timothy H. Hogue, Mayor, Village of Dering Harbor
Paul F. Rickenbach, Jr., Mayor, Village of East Hampton
David Nyce, Mayor, Village of Greenport
Mike Osinski, Trustee, Village of Greenport
Laura Nolan, Mayor, Village of North Haven
George M. Motz, Mayor, Village of Quogue
William Tillotson, Mayor, Village of Sagaponack

Gregory Ferraris, Mayor, Village of Sag Harbor
Mark Epley, Mayor, Village of Southampton
Conrad Teller, Mayor, Village of Westhampton Beach
Gary A. Vegliante, Mayor, Village of West Hampton Dunes
Department of Environmental Conservation

Shellfish Aquaculture Lease Program in Peconic Bay and Gardiners Bay Suffolk County, NY

Description of Action

Pursuant to New York's 2004 Leasing Law, the State of New York ceded the underwater lands in Peconic Bay and Gardiners Bay (seaward of 1,000 feet from the high water mark) to Suffolk County for the purposes of shellfish cultivation. The Peconic Estuary has approximately 158,000 acres of surface water area. The project study area consists of approximately two thirds of the open water in the estuary, about 110,000 acres, which is naturally divided by peninsulas (necks) and islands into a series of interconnected embayments. The 2004 Leasing Law also requires that the County adopt regulations governing: applications for leases; notices to be given; the form and term of leases; standards for the approval or denial of leases; administration of leases; the transfer or renewal of leases; marking grounds and testing; fees; recording of leases; and other matters as are appropriate to the lease program. If no leases for shellfish aquaculture are executed by December 31, 2010, the authority of Suffolk County to issue such leases shall terminate and the County will forfeit its title to the underwater lands.

The County is proposing an action to institute a shellfish aquaculture lease program in Peconic Bay and Gardiners Bay that will support existing aquaculture activities, as well as promote a moderate growth of the industry. The program components have been designed to insure that any negative impacts on the environmental, socio-economic or historic resources have been identified and either eliminated or mitigated.

The establishment of a County aquaculture lease program will provide people with the opportunity to obtain access to underwater lands of Peconic Bay and Gardiners Bay for culturing shellfish. Such a program will help encourage private investment in aquaculture and supporting businesses. At the same time, the establishment of a program must assure that the other bay user groups are considered and appropriately protected, and that environmental protection of the coastal waters and their natural resources is maintained to the fullest extent possible.

The proposed shellfish aquaculture lease program will support current shellfish aquaculture businesses operating in the Peconic Estuary, as well as allow the opportunity for new growth of the industry. Currently, approximately 6,000 acres of underwater land are available for aquaculture activities (comprised of private underwater oyster grants and NYSDEC Temporary Marine Area Use Assignments). In addition to these underwater lands, the lease program will accommodate small growth by allowing for lease access to approximately 600 acres, or about 10% of the underwater land currently available, over the next 10 years. The program will be reviewed every five years, and modifications to the program may be made after 10 years based on environmental and/or socio-economic conditions.

Potential Impacts

- Introduction of shellfish pathogens;
- Introduction of exotic/invasive species
- Harvest method impacts;
- Impacts on sediment characteristics and benthos;
- Changes to phytoplankton composition and nutrient cycling;
- Restricted access to public underwater lands;

- Changes in maritime traditions;
- Changes in employment opportunities/incomes;
- Impacts on wild fisheries;
- Navigation hazards;
- Impacts on aesthetic values;
- Increased economic benefits from expansion of shellfish aquaculture;
- Increased employment opportunities for baymen;
- Restoration of maritime tradition;
- Beneficial ecological impacts associated with increased shellfish stocks, including increased water column filtering, spawning stock and habitat for other marine species;
- Potential contribution to wild shellfish stocks;
- Secondary impacts to support sectors including shellfish buyers/shippers, marinas, and seed hatcheries; and
- Increased seafood production to compensate for declines in products from wild stocks.

DGEIS Viewing Locations

Town Clerk Southold Town Hall P.O. Box 1179 Southold, NY 11971	Town Clerk Riverhead Town Hall 200 Howell Avenue Riverhead, NY 11901	Town Clerk Southampton Town Hall 116 Hampton Road Southampton, NY 11968
Town Clerk East Hampton Town Hall 159 Pantigo Road East Hampton, NY 11937	Town Clerk Shelter Island Town Hall P.O. Box 970 Shelter Island, NY 11964	Village Clerk Village of Sag Harbor P.O. Box 660 Sag Harbor, NY 11963
Village Clerk Village of East Hampton 86 Main Street East Hampton, NY 11937	Village Clerk Village of West Hampton Dunes P.O. Box 728 Westhampton Beach, NY 11978	Village Clerk Village of Greenport 236 Third Street Greenport, NY 11944
Village Clerk Village of Dering Harbor P.O. Box 3010 Shelter Island Heights, NY 11965	Village Clerk Village of Southampton 23 Main Street Southampton, NY 11968	Village Clerk Village of North Haven 335 Ferry Road Sag Harbor, NY 11963
Village Clerk Village of West Hampton Beach 165 Mill Road Westhampton Beach, NY 11978	Village Clerk Village of Sagaponack P.O. Box 660 Sagaponack, NY 11962	Village Clerk Village of Quogue P.O. Box 926 Quogue, NY 11959
Library Director The Hampton Library P.O. Box 3025 Bridgehampton, NY 11932	Library Director Amagansett Free Library P.O. Box 2550 Amagansett, NY 11930	Library Director Floyd Memorial Library 539 First Street Greenport, NY 11944
Library Director Southold Free Library P.O. Box 697 Southold, NY 11971	Library Director Westhampton Free Library 7 Library Avenue Westhampton Beach, NY 11978	Library Director East Hampton Library 159 Main Street East Hampton, NY 11937
Library Director Hampton Bays Public Library 52 Ponquogue Ave Hampton Bays, NY 11946	Library Director Cutchogue-New Suffolk Free Library P.O. Box 935 Cutchogue, NY 11935	Library Director Rogers Memorial Library 91 Coopers Farm Road Southampton, NY 11968
Library Director John Jermain Memorial Library 201 Main Street Sag Harbor, NY 11963	Library Director Quogue Library 90 Quogue Street Quogue, NY 11959	Library Director Riverhead Free Library 330 Court Street Riverhead, NY 11901
Library Director Mattituck-Laurel Library P.O. Box 1437 Mattituck, NY 11952	Library Director Montauk Library P.O. Box 700 Montauk, NY 11954	Library Director Shelter Island Public Library P.O. Box 2016 Shelter Island, NY 11964