



Here we are. We finally made it to the end of 2020: a year full of challenges, uncertainty, and isolation. But for us here at CCOM, our 50th Anniversary year was also full of compassion, generosity, and progress.

Because of our outstanding staff, board, sustainers, members, partners, and community, we were able to prevail and end our Anniversary year on a high note, making incredible progress on our environmental initiatives. Now more than ever, science is leading the way.

I invite you to take a moment to review CCOM's highlights of 2020 in our December newsletter below. While we may not be together in person, we are together in spirit.



Wishing you and your loved ones a happy holiday season!

With thanks,

Laura Tooman

President

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2020

ADDRESSING MONTAUK'S COASTAL VULNERABILITY THROUGH COASTAL RESILIENCY PLANNING

Since Superstorm Sandy in 2012, CCOM has been helping lead the scientific understanding of our local coastal dynamics and the impact of climate change and sea level rise. In 2020 this has resulted in detailed focus on the 5 coastal areas in Montauk most at risk and a series of planning options for their protection.

These options were outlined in a public meeting in June 2020; the slides can be viewed [HERE](#), or you can watch



the entire recorded meeting [HERE](#). In addition, our Coastal Resiliency webinar on December 16th as reported this week in [The East Hampton Star](#) saw overwhelming interest from almost 100 local participants and can be viewed [HERE](#).

PROGRESS ON WASTEWATER PLANS FOR DOWNTOWN MONTAUK

Numerous properties in the Downtown area of Montauk have antiquated low to non-functioning septic systems that pollute groundwater and surface waters like Fort Pond. Additionally, most of these commercial lots are small and do not have sufficient space to install individual nitrogen-reducing systems themselves.

With CCOM's active participation on the Town's Montauk Wastewater Committee, the Town Board has now hired an engineering contractor to develop plans for a centralized system for Downtown Montauk. The contractor, H2M, has extensive experience and has designed other wastewater districts and systems similar to what will be required in Montauk.

SCIENCE-BASED ADVOCACY ROLE IN OFFSHORE WIND

Advocating for sustainability through clean energy and energy conservation is one of CCOM's key environmental initiatives, and we have applauded the Town of East Hampton's [ambitious sustainable energy goals](#), with the significant inclusion of offshore wind energy.

In 2020, after first achieving "party status" in the comprehensive environmental and legal approval process of the South Fork Wind Farm project, we have now also joined Wind Works Long Island (WWLI), a labor/environmental/community coalition whose mission is to educate Long Island communities with science and fact-based information about the benefits of renewable energy and responsibly sited offshore wind.



[CLICK HERE & GIVE THE GIFT OF CCOM MEMBERSHIP](#)

PROGRESS IMPROVING LAKE MONTAUK'S WATER QUALITY

Working with Gurney's Star Island Resort & Marina and Cornell Cooperative Extension Marine Program, CCOM celebrated the installation of a new [spat-on-shell oyster reef](#) at Gurney's Star Island property on Lake Montauk in July. This will help improve water quality while also enhancing the natural oyster populations in the harbor, provide important underwater habitat for local fish species and offer significant protection from storm surge.

Since its inception in 2017, CCOM has held an active role on the East Hampton Town CPF WQI Technical Advisory Committee and in 2020 we saw approval of the Committee's recommendations for Lake Montauk: a new pump-out boat for the Trustees and two contractors for stormwater remediation projects at the West side and South end of Lake Montauk. These [projects](#) will help ensure meaningful improvements to Lake Montauk's water quality.

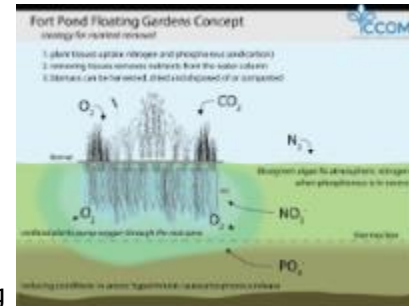
CCOM has partnered with the US Geological Survey (USGS) as part of our initiative

to restore water quality in Lake Montauk through scientific tracking of the sources and significance of pollutants, including nitrogen, entering Lake Montauk. As part of our webinar series, we reported in September 2020 that an early phase of data analysis suggests that boat discharge might be a key contributor of bacterial and nutrient pollution in the Lake. You can view the recorded webinar presentation [HERE](#).

ADDRESSING WATER QUALITY IN FORT POND

CCOM has secured a \$25,000 grant from East Hampton Town and NYS

DEC approval to install our innovative pilot Floating Wetlands Project in Fort Pond. This seasonal installation of native vegetation is designed to remove nitrogen and phosphorus and mitigate some of the nutrient pollution in the Pond, thus reducing the extent and severity of the harmful algal blooms that have plagued the Pond for the last few years. This mitigation pilot project will work in tandem with our other efforts aimed at reducing pollutant loadings in Fort Pond, including septic replacements and open space preservation.



In 2020, CCOM's 3-year partnership with the Gobler Lab at Stony Brook Southampton to test for Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) in Fort Pond and Big Reed Pond resulted in important findings that can advance the understanding and remediation of the water quality issues in Fort Pond. This work was presented by Dr. Gobler at our [November webinar](#).

Our ongoing weekly water quality sampling work, now seven years running, provides an incredibly rich dataset of Enterococcus bacteria testing results from all types of waterbodies throughout East Hampton Town, including Fort Pond, and spanning from Montauk to Northwest Creek. You can view all of our Water Testing Results Press Releases, which include our HAB results, [HERE](#).

INCREASING SEPTIC SYSTEM UPGRADES IN MONTAUK

Our colleagues in the East Hampton Town Natural Resources Department reported to us that as of this month, they have 101 approved eligibility applications from properties in Montauk to utilize the Town incentive for upgrading to a nitrogen-reducing septic system. Out of those, 39 have completed their installations and received their incentive.



We have been working closely with Town and Suffolk County to help get these new systems in the ground, and we celebrate these numbers as a step toward cleaner water!

If you are interested in more information about these incentives, click [HERE](#) for our Resources page, or email NaturalResources@EHamptonNY.Gov

CCOM'S ONGOING ROLE IN MONTAUK'S LAND PRESERVATION

CCOM began in 1970 leading the fight to protect Montauk's unique and beautiful open spaces. Since 2000 alone, over 500 acres of woodlands, wetlands and beaches have been preserved in Montauk through the East Hampton Town Community Preservation Fund (CPF), many of which can be found on a trail map [HERE](#).

CCOM fought hard for the creation of the CPF and continues to be a strong advocate in the purchase of Montauk's land parcels for the environment and our community. In just the past 18 months this has resulted in CPF acquisition of [11 Montauk properties](#) representing 18 acres in highly sensitive environmental areas, acquired for approximately \$13 million.

CCOM MONTHLY WEBINAR SERIES

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...

December 2020:

Montauk's Coastal Resiliency & the Future of Our Beaches

Almost 100 local participants joined our Zoom webinar on December 16th with Laura Tooman, CCOM's President and CARP Committee member, Aram Terchunian, Environmental Consulting Engineer, and Peter Van Scoyoc, East Hampton Town Supervisor, to review and discuss the progress in understanding and protecting our beaches since Superstorm Sandy in 2012. [CLICK HERE](#) to watch the recorded webinar.

WHAT'S NEXT...

January 2021:

Renewable Energy & the South Fork Wind Farm

We would like to invite you to attend this webinar on Thursday, January 14th from 4-5pm, the first of several focused on renewable energy, to hear from leading experts providing local and historical context, and about our role in helping achieve New York State's renewable energy goals.

PARTICIPANTS:

Laura Tooman, CCOM President

Gordian Raacke, Renewable Energy LI Executive Director

Julie Tighe, New York League of Conservation Voters President

[Please register prior to the meeting by following this link](#)

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