

**MEETING OF THE
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
OF THE
NEW YORK/NEW JERSEY HARBOR ESTUARY PROGRAM**

February 9, 2000
Hudson River Foundation
40 West 20th Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY

A list of meeting attendees is included at the end of the meeting minutes.

Tom Wakeman of the Port Authority of NY/NJ gave a presentation on the Comprehensive Port Improvement Project (CPIP) being planned by the Port Authority and other agency partners. The CPIP was prompted by a desire to take a more comprehensive approach to Port expansion than would be allowed if planning took place on a permit-by-permit basis. World trade is predicted to increase by 10% annually, and the Port needs to be able to handle the associated increased cargo in order to remain a part of the booming economy. The \$6-10 billion program will consider how best to improve the distribution mechanisms for goods, including by improving existing infrastructure and developing other transport mechanisms (use of smaller distribution centers in the distribution network, for example) while stressing quality of life and protection of natural resources as well. The overall vision for the CPIP is the maintenance of a vibrant port and a healthy ecosystem. In order to achieve this vision, CPIP will develop specific strategies, goals and objectives and will closely monitor and measure progress using indicators. It was noted that the current proposed CPIP structure does not include citizen input as all the participants are agencies. Mr. Wakeman said that the structure is still being debated and citizen representatives may be included. There was concern expressed that the CPIP may duplicate efforts already undertaken by the Harbor Estuary Program, and that the HEP, which already has an articulated vision, a plan, an appropriate structure, and a 10-year track record, should be the forum in which these issues are discussed and resolved. Mr. Wakeman responded that the CPIP and HEP must work together to achieve common visions and assured the group that the two programs will be compatible.

Because of the importance of coordination and shared visions between the CPIP and the HEP, and because so many discussions have been taking place recently about the importance of environmental restoration in the Harbor's going hand in hand with Port development, Jim Tripp (Environmental Defense, Chair of the Dredged Material Management Integration Work Group) had expressed willingness to have an agency co-chair; Tom Wakeman had been suggested and will be recommended to the Management Committee. The Policy Committee has final approval over Mr. Wakeman's appointment. Both Gene Flatow (CAC Co-chair, NYC Soil & Water Conservation District) and Anne Galli (CAC Co-chair, HMDC) approve of Mr. Wakeman's appointment.

Bernard Blum (Friends of Rockaway) distributed an Army Corps update on the Jamaica Bay Ecosystem Restoration Project he obtained at a Jamaica Bay Task Force meeting. He does not favor recontouring the Bay to improve circulation and would like to see WRDA monies used to culvert a JFK Airport runway to that end. He is also glad to see that some progress is being made on Dubos Point.

Bob Nyman (EPA, HEP Director) provided an update on the progress of the joint HEP/Long Island Sound Study Nutrients Work Group (NWG). He distributed a progress report prepared by the group and said that they'd be meeting next week (Feb. 16th) at EPA to discuss endpoints and criteria for determining progress on nutrient loading issues apart from hypoxia. He stated that the "new" HEP/LISS NWG has met about five times and have formed a Model Evaluation Group (MEG) to review the SWEM which has met 3-4 times. They have given basic approval to the SWEM but have recommended that further data be collected for model calibration in New Jersey waters. New Jersey DEP has committed the necessary funds (\$150K) to conduct that work. Ms. Flatow expressed concern that the framework of the SWEM and many of the discussions about nutrients in the Harbor have focused on the contribution of NYC sewage treatment plants to problems in Long Island Sound while non-point source problems are not being discussed.

Mr. Nyman described a program he is involved in in which representatives from federal agencies in the mid-Atlantic region are working on addressing a variety of coastal environmental issues. One of the priorities for that program has become habitat protection in the NY Harbor/Hudson River region. Three priority restoration projects have been recommended for this initiative: Rondout Creek (a tributary to the Hudson), Spring Creek in Jamaica Bay, and Lincoln Park in the Hackensack Meadowlands. Ms. Flatow thought that this program might be a good opportunity to rekindle the interest of the National Park Service in the HEP.

Zoe Kelman (HEP office) described a HEP-sponsored conference she is working on with NJDEP personnel on the Phase II stormwater permit requirements that were promulgated in December. The conference will target mayors, planning boards, industries, and environmental groups from municipalities that discharge to the Harbor (which will not include NYC because the Phase II permits are for municipalities with populations of under 100,000). The conference is proposed for September. Mr. Blum said he is concerned about draining stormwater to Jamaica Bay from Kew Gardens and other northern Queens locations through the Carson Avenue storm sewer to Thurston Basin. Ms. Flatow said that she has recommended to the HEP that a nonpoint/rain event working group be convened to address some of these problems but that Kevin Bricke (EPA) has responded that the Pathogens Work Group will be addressing those issues.

Manny Russ (Environmental Policy Forum) expressed concern about the proliferation of proposals to site electric utilities on the waterfront since the deregulation of the industry.