



## New York - New Jersey Harbor Estuary Program

### **HEP Habitat Workgroup Meeting Minutes**

**January 17, 2007**

The Urban Divers' Harlem River/Hudson River North Marine  
Station and Ecology Center, Bronx, NY

10:00 AM

### **New York State Wildlife Grants Program**

Jason Smith (NYSDEC) presented NYSDEC's State Wildlife Grants Program, which is a federal program to prevent species from becoming endangered. NYS will be looking at their Species of Greatest Conservation Need statewide, but by watersheds. NYS has \$2.94 Million from Fiscal Year 2005 for grants. Smith announced today the Requests for Application for this grant cycle. Some criteria are that the project has been in NYS; identify a species from the State Wildlife Grants; and identify a species goal, priority or strategy from the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy. A match is required for this grant. Projects that are not eligible are ones that focus on education and outreach, land acquisition, and invasive species. These three areas can be part of the project, but it cannot be its focus. NYS will be developing watershed teams to obtain input from stakeholders. The Applications are due on March 31<sup>st</sup> (postmarked).

For more information: [www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dfwmr/swg/cwcsmainpg.html](http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dfwmr/swg/cwcsmainpg.html)

### **Target Ecosystem Characteristics for the Hudson Raritan Estuary Study**

An update was given by Bob Nyman (EPA) and Alex Brash (NPCA). There was a handout from the Hudson River Foundation (HRF) that was passed out to the group by the HEP Office. Information from the handout is found below:

#### **Deliverables and Schedule**

HRF/Cornell expects to complete the Target Ecosystem Characteristics (TEC) Report by the end of February.

##### Current TECs

- Coastal Wetlands
- Oysters & Oyster Reefs
- Shallow Water & Shorelines
- Habitat Connections
- Islands for Waterbirds
- Habitat for Fish and Crustaceans
- Enclosed Confined Waters

- Sediment Quality
- Eelgrass
- Public Access
- Maritime Forests

Using the TEC as the basis for the Comprehensive Restoration Plan (CRP) the USACE expects the CRP to be complete by the end of 2007.

**March Restoration Stakeholders Meeting – Invitations will be sent later this month.**

HRF/Cornell, USACE, NY, NJ, NY City, PANY/NJ, Non Profit Groups, HEP (Habitat WG, CARP WG, Public Access WG/ Regional Sediment Management WG) and Others

Large group meeting presenting the TEC and the transition to the Corps lead Comprehensive Restoration Plan. The intent of the meeting is to:

- Broaden stakeholder involvement in the CRP
- Assure stakeholder support for the plan elements
- Gain an understanding of stakeholder concerns (both on the planning level (target setting) and the implementation level.
- Learn about specific restoration projects or ideas
- Establish specific partnerships for developing and implementing the various TECs and the overall CRP

Once the TECs have been completed in February, they will be passed on to the Corps for incorporation into the CRP. HEP restoration sites, along with others, will be included in the CRP as project opportunities. Once the CRP has been completed, the Corps will initiate a feasibility study for the sites that they are interested in proceeding with. Other sites will be available for other entities to tackle.

David Burg (Wild Metro) would like to see more upland areas represented in the TECs. For inclusion of other ecosystems into the TECs, Brash suggested to write 1-2 pages on the ecosystem and then give it to Jim Lodge (HRF).

RPA's Needs and Opportunities Report has been included in the CRP.

There was a question about how the CRP will be used. Chris Zeppie (PA) said that it could be used as a regulatory plan that can be an obstacle of development and he hopes that both NY and NJ's Coastal Zone Management Offices adopt the CRP.

**Envisioning Gateway**

Alex Brash talked about the Envisioning Gateway Project that National Parks Conservation Association, Van Alen Institute, and Columbia University has been working on. They are encouraging the National Park Service to create a new vision for the Gateway National Recreation Area (GNRA). There are 2600 acres of recreational and historical areas as well as wildlife preserve in GNRA that could be turned into an iconic national park. A conceptual paper

is being developed that will look at what GNRA was, is, and what it could be. A symposium (Nature Now) was held in the fall of 2006 and now Columbia students are looking into different ideas for the park in terms of transportation, recreation, and nature. The Van Alen Institute will hold an open design competition for GNRA that will be juried. Van Alen Institute and the National Park Service will look at the finalist and see what can be turned into a practical solution for GNRA. The conceptual paper will be posted to Van Alen's website ([www.vanalen.org](http://www.vanalen.org)) on January 29<sup>th</sup>.

### **Harlem River**

Ludger Balan (The Urban Divers Estuary Conservancy) gave a presentation on the Harlem River. The Harlem River is the only river in NYC that does not experience significant commercial boat traffic. The only commercial traffic is the Circle Line. Some of the problems affecting the Harlem River are dry weather discharge, runoff from impervious surfaces, and CSOs. Some of the opportunities for the Harlem River are to re-establish wetlands and soften edges; the State Park Roberto Clemente received \$22 million for restoration; waterfront development at Yankee Stadium; Bronx Harlem River Greenway; High Bridge Aqueduct being reopened; and waterfront development in planning of the West Side of the Harlem River.

### **Nature Network**

David Burg told the HWG about a small grant that they (Wild Metro) received to conduct a mitigation project. It will focus on a literature review; trajectory of population changes; and history of land protection. Their geographic scope will overlap with RPA's metro area. Wild Metro has hired a new conservation biologist, Catherine Burns, who will be working on this project. Any studies or papers that people may know about that could benefit their project please send them to [cburns@wildmetro.org](mailto:cburns@wildmetro.org).

Chris Zeppie (PA) was expressed that the Wild Metro project should be consistent with the CRP and HEP. David Burg said that their study will include uplands and aquatics so it will overlap with the CRP.

### **Port Authority (PA) Acquisition**

Chris Zeppie (PA) announced that the PA has acquired the North Mount Loretto Property (HEP Site ID: A-AK14) in Staten Island.

### **Climate Change**

NYCDEP and Columbia University (the Goddard Institute) have developed a task force on climate change.

### **HEP HWG Related Projects**

Bob Nyman (EPA) announced that there is a RFP out for doing conceptual habitat design and planning. Proposals are due January 31<sup>st</sup>. For more information: [www.harborestuary.org](http://www.harborestuary.org).

Bob Alpern would like to see collaboration between HWG and the LISS Stewardship Program. He would like to see joint meetings between the two. Alex Brash said that the HWG had agreed to conduct joint meetings with HEP's CAC and that has happened. Alex felt that the HWG and the LISS Stewardship Program are too different to have joint meetings.

Habitat Work Plan items are the key species list, CRP and TEC development, and the continuation of moving HWG meetings around the harbor.

**Next Meeting:** March 22, 2007

Mary Arnold (Teaneck Conservancy) offered to host the next meeting. This will be looked into by HEP.

**Attendees**

Alexander Brash, NPCA, 212-617-2989  
Anna Kheyfets, Teaneck Creek Conservancy, 201-461-6522  
Bob Alpern, 718-789-7692  
Bob Nyman, USEPA, 212-637-3809  
Catherine Burns, Wild Metro, 203-915-2823  
Cathy Yuhas, NJSG/HEP, 212-637-3792  
Chris Villari, NYCDEP, 718-595-5565  
Chris Zeppie, PANYNJ, 212-435-4415  
David Burg, Wild Metro, 212-308-9453  
Ellen Kracauer Hartig, NYC DPR NRG, 212-360-1481  
Jennifer Curran, HDR/LMS, 845-735-8300 ext. 293  
John McLaughlin, NYCDEP, 718-595-4458  
Kerry Dawson, HRPT, 917-661-8740  
Mary Arnold, Teaneck Creek Conservancy, 201-836-2403  
Mary Ann Colon, SUNY Maritime/Harlem River Ecology Center, 646-491-6946  
Michele Bakacs, NJDEP/DWM, 609-292-9247  
Rosalie Siegel, PANYNJ, 212-435-4405  
Sarah Ralph, NYCDEP/BEPA, 718-595-6959