

**Meeting of the Management Committee of the
New York New Jersey Harbor Estuary Program**
September 18, 2007, 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Attendees:

Management Committee Members or Alternates Present: Walter Berry, Carter Craft, Eugenia Flatow, Kerry Kirk-Pflugh, Keith Mahoney, Jeff Myers, Bob Nyman, Michelle Doran McBean, Jim Olander, Boris Rukovits, Dennis Suzkowski, John Tavolaro. James Lodge, Ashley Pengotire, Stephanie Wojtowicz (via telephone). Facilitator: Bill Logue

Observer: Manny Russo.

Meeting

Opening Remarks:

Bob Nyman opened the meeting and noted that the Policy Committee was meeting on October 4th and had ask the Management Committee to review the Targets and Goals (T&G) to determine if and how they might be revised and updated and to suggest related priorities for work to be undertaken.

The facilitator, Bill Logue, noted than he had interviewed about 10 Management Committee members in advance of the meeting. Based on those interviews, he made a number of observations and identified the several themes.

Observations on Structure of Targets and Goals of Different Estuary Programs:

- **NY/NJ HEP:** T&G are largely numeric and tied to underlying statutory and regulatory language and framework; many of the numbers are based on modeling. Benefits of this approach are specific measures, accountability, and brevity. Drawbacks include inaccessibility due to jargon, hard to understand for the general public and elected officials, and difficult for NGO's to communicate to their constituents.
- **LISS:** Are in the form of an agreement that is periodically updated and they are similar in brevity but have annotations on progress. Some are numeric, e.g., reduction of 58.5% of TMDL, but many are framed as impact on uses or task oriented activities, e.g., for pathogens identification and creation of additional no-discharge areas, elimination of chronic beach closures, meeting of the states to try to arrive at consistent fish consumption advisories.
- **Hudson River:** framed as an action plan for 2005 – 2009 using a layered approach (both brief and very long), very much a plain English document. There is one page of all goals that can be a stand-alone, followed by the goal reiterated, the challenge summarized,

accomplishments achieved, then action steps/targets for 2005-2009 and 5-15 year targets. Inherent in these are benchmarks and timelines.

He noted the following themes, opinions and comments from the interviews:

- Quantitative goals need to be updated to reflect new knowledge and information and political reality. For example both New York and New Jersey have or are shifting to enterococci, and away from fecal coliform, as a key measure of water quality.
- T&G need to paint a vision of the future and connect to places and activities, to help energize policy makers, politicians and other supporters. For goals such as fishable/swimmable this might include closure days in addition to the numeric pollutant and pathogen targets. Several people noted the absence of targets relating to fishing. In addition, there was consensus that the current phrasing, but not necessary the substance, needed to be revised to remove the jargon.
- The stewardship targets were felt to be difficult to define and achieve as currently framed and should be revisited.

Discussion of Themes and Targets and Goals

Themes: With respect to identified themes by the policy committee, several members of the group felt that Stewardship not be dropped as a core theme because it is the method by which local stakeholders are engaged. Based on the discussion and interviews the following organizing themes appeared to have broad support because they can be clearly communicated to various constituencies:

1. Pollution
2. Habitat Restoration
3. Public Access
4. Sustainable Commerce
5. Stewardship, Community Involvement and Public Education

Targets and Goals: The group had a wide ranging discussion during which it was clear that they felt rephrasing and reorganizing of the T&G was desirable but creating of an entirely new set was not. Further they felt that adding action steps that describe what needs to be done to achieve the goal was desirable. In discussing how and whether to modify targets and goals the following points, among others, were made:

- Goals need to be measurable and create accountability, underlying activities should help identify who will be undertaking the activity and how it contributes to achievement of the goal. Inherent in this is monitoring, tracking, and reporting on progress.
- The language of the goals needs to be such that a layperson can understand so that the existing goals need less in terms of replacement and more in the form of translation.

Current Goal 3 was identified as an example of a goal that is easily communicated to the public. (“*Public Access: ensure that all residents in the core area of the Harbor have a public waterfront access site within thirty minutes of their home for boating, fishing, swimming and/or waterfront leisure (e.g., walking, bird watching, and picnicking), without harming important habitat areas.*”)

- The process of identifying goals and action steps should be revisited for modification and adjustment on a periodic basis. To the extent that T&G and action steps work within the timelines associated with the political desires to meet the objectives of an administration they will build support for the program.
- As T&G and intervening action steps are accomplished these should be brought to the communications departments of agencies and organizations to enhance understanding and support for the estuary. One member explained that limitations exist for some agencies on what will be released through communications offices, however, other opportunities exist to promote activities, events, and research or incorporate these aspects in interpretive programs help by agencies and entities throughout the estuary. As an example a recent program on Pier 40 was mentioned where divers showed live video of conditions under the pier.
- One member suggested that as targets and goals are analyzed that management zones or regions be explored, e.g., shellfish harvest in a particular location. This can be reported on an annual or bi-annual basis.
- One example cited for a measurable Stewardship action is having municipalities adopt green building standards, implement CSO programs, establish riparian buffers, reduce greenhouse gas emissions. New Jersey has created a “Green Mayors” program that could be adopted by the Management Committee and Policy Committee.

Action Steps:

Bob Nyman and Bill Logue, in conversation with several Committee members, will draft a template for revised T&G for review and discussion using habitat and ecological health as an example. The group scheduled a conference call for 3:00 PM September 25 to review the template.

Clean Sediment and Navigation Work Group Update

John Tavolaro gave a progress update on the Clean Sediment and Navigation Work Group. (Presentation Attached.) He made the following points:

- The reasons for creation of the Work Group include: Impacts of contaminated sediment, sediment deposition, multiple authorities and jurisdictions involved or lack of traditional jurisdiction to resolve issues, and a lack of a regional framework for addressing the issues.

- This situation necessitates a Regional Sediment Management Program in integrate activities within the estuary which have specific targets and goals to improve the ecosystem, public health and the economy. The program must be sustainable and have technical credibility and support.
- Progress to date of the Work Group: After formation the group identified major components (sediment quantity, sediment quality and dredged material), identified eight major objectives and 46 specific recommendations. He briefly reviewed the major objectives and key recommendations. Findings and recommendations are now being drafted.

Mr. Tavolaro noted that in producing the report the group was mindful that it is a management level report and therefore is not a detailed plan of all the steps and rationales. The report will have a similar format to the Hudson-Raritan Ecosystem Management Plan. Details will come later or issues of concern might be addressed in other forums, for example the EPA is now exploring a permitting process for bilge water.

Policy Committee Request for Needs/Priorities for Action

Bob Nyman distributed responses received from Work Groups to the Policy Committee request for priorities. There was a consensus that these items fit well within the context of action steps for the revised T&G. The group agreed that they be reformatted in a consistent manner and circulated prior to the Policy Committee meeting.

Policy Committee Agenda

After discussion the following items were agreed upon as Policy Committee Agenda Items for October 4:

1. Progress Update on Regional Sediment Management Plan – John Tavolaro
2. Presentation: CARP – Dennis Suszkowski
3. Presentation: *Target Ecosystem Characteristics for the Hudson Raritan River Estuary* – Dennis Suszkowski
4. Presentation on direction of T&G revision and suggested priorities.
5. Administrative updates (suggested, but not agreed to):
 - a. Overview of current federal budget climate.
 - b. Government Performance Review Act