



New York - New Jersey
Harbor Estuary
Program

**New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary Program
Management Committee Meeting Minutes
February 5, 2009**

The meeting was convened at the Hudson River Foundation at 10:00 and was chaired by Bob Nyman. Participants included: Gabriela Munoz, Ashley Pengitore, John Dobosiewicz, Joe Monaco, Dennis Suszkowski, Pete Sattler, Jeff Myers, John Tavolaro, Eugenia Flatow, Jim Lodge, Charlie DeQuillfeldt, Kerry Pflugh, and Walter Berry and Stephanie Wojtowicz on phone. Guests from Weston and Interfluve: Mark Jaworski, Ryan Brown, Marty Melchior, and Bill Norris.

1. Mark Jaworski and his team from Weston Solutions gave a Powerpoint presentation on Rahway River Fish Passage study that they had undertaken for HEP. The draft final report is posted on the Habitat page of the HEP website. Mr. Jaworski discussed some of the key findings of the study as well as some issues that could impact the success of the fish passage project, should it be built. He noted that there were two main options for construction – a bypass channel (\$300k) and a steep pass ladder (\$400k). He also noted that while eels and other fish are abundant in the area, alewives and river herring were not found during their collections. Other suggestions that were discussed included a possible “imprinting” effort where adult fish from nearby areas are placed into the Rahway system to “kick-start” the local population, and possibly holding a restoration summit to further discuss this and other similar projects. **The small committee that was originally involved with the project will reconvene in the next month or so to plan out next steps.**
2. Gabriela Munoz distributed a hand-out and led the State of the Estuary discussion. The last HEP State of the Estuary report was prepared in 2004 and last year HEP budgeted some funds for a 2009 version. After considerable discussion with the Hudson River Estuary Program, it was decided that a collaborative effort would not be feasible this year as their report is limited on space to expand to adequately cover harbor issues and because their report is too far into development to make major changes. After considerable discussion about “audiences”, distribution, and what the document would look like, the group agreed to use a format similar to the Long Island Sound report, though distribution method was still to be determined. The report will be based on data and contain abundant graphics, pictures, and sidebars and be written for a general audience level. Jeff Myers suggested that we include information about what the program is doing to address the issues. Walter Berry said that the Save the Narragansett Bay report card

would be worth looking at, though it would be difficult for a multi-agency program like HEP to assign grades.

3. Gabriela then continued with a brief update on the financial planning work. She said that a summary paper was presented for the previous meeting and because the MC ran out of time to discuss it at that meeting, a subsequent conference call was held to review it in December. **We will pursue working with a consultant on a finance plan and seek support funds from EPA-HQ.**
4. Bob Nyman handed out and reviewed a brief statement from Nordica Holochuck on the status of three projects: **1. Project Wet Activity Guide** – The Project Wet Steering Committee, coordinated by the Hudson River Estuary Program met in December to scope the activity booklet for kids celebrating the Hudson River. The day long session was led by a Project Wet VP of Publications and writing staff. The committee will review the draft in the coming months. The completed booklet is due to be published and ready for distribution in July 2009. It will feature a 2 page spread highlighting the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary/NYC. **2. Geospatial Workshops** – In September 2009 NYSG in collaboration with NY Aquarium, a second habitat restoration workshop was held for NYC teachers. Through a series of hands-on lessons using current and historic air photos and maps, teachers were introduced to HEP restoration sites and OASIS data. Additional workshops are planned for 2009. **3. Teachers Guide** – Progress on revising has been slower than anticipated. The good news is that the revision of the guide will be completed in February 2009, with the pdf ready to post by months end and printed copies to follow shortly thereafter.
5. John Tavolaro led the discussion the Regional Sediment Management work group based on the attached draft. He noted that the HEP Policy Committee had asked that the MC develop a charge for the new RSM work group. One of the first key issues will be the development of “foundation” documents laying out costs and benefits for various projects. Funding will need to be identified for this effort. **MC members were asked to review the attachment with their PC member and get back to John within 3 weeks. In particular, the State MC reps were asked to confer with their PC reps and come up with a recommendation relative to the State Advocates, as described in the RSM Plan. John will then incorporate that input into a draft charge for full PC consideration.**
6. Bob Nyman reviewed the budget process for the Section 320 funds, which is expected to be about \$600k this year. As was the case with last year’s budget, it will be based on priority actions in the 2008 Action Plan. **At the MC’s request, the HEP Office will summarize the status of financial needs for the various actions and present a list of recommendations for consideration.**
7. Each of the National Estuary Programs undergoes a Program Evaluation every 3-4 years. HEP is in the process of developing the submission package for its review this year. Gabriela will be contacting MC members for information. There will be a site visit sometime this summer.
8. Lisa Baron provided a written update on the Comprehensive Restoration Plan. The DRAFT HRE Comprehensive Restoration Plan is currently being revised and will be available for public release end of February 2009. The document will be

available via the Corps and HEP websites and hard copies will follow in March/early April. After the Harbor Estuary Program and other stakeholders have the opportunity to review the Comprehensive Restoration Plan, we will discuss the content and your comments at a variety of venues (HEP Habitat Work Group, HEP CRP Work Group, etc). A HEP CRP Work Group will likely be scheduled for early May 2009. The intention of the HRE CRP review is to continue this collaborative effort among the many Stakeholders to achieve consensus and utilize the CRP as the master plan for ecological restoration in the HRE region. It was noted that Big Duck is working on the communications portion of the plan and is providing branding “Waters We Share”, CRP layout assistance, and a brochure.

9. A discussion was then held regarding a procedure to fill vacant MC membership slots. The CAC is holding an election in the coming weeks and will be asked for input as to how they would like to fill the two, non-co-chair slots. Dennis Suszkowski, the current NY STAC co-chair, will seek a NJ co-chair. They will also discuss and make a recommendation as to the need for STAC bylaws. Kerry Kirk Pflugh will pursue a NJ local government rep. It was also decided that some level of operating procedures for MC membership should be developed at some point. A draft will be circulated for discussion as input is provided.

The meeting was then adjourned.

Health of the Harbor 2009 [title to be defined]

State of the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary

Scope of work

DRAFT

February 3, 2009

Overview

This is the second edition of the Health of the Harbor report. The first edition was published in 2004 and it was an 82-page color report, data-rich, with plentiful statistics and graphics. This report was distributed to xxxxxxxxxxxx people via xxxxxxxx and was also made available online as a PDF.

For the 2009 update, HEP is considering a format similar to that of the Sound Health (LISS). This is a 16-page, full color newspaper insert to be distributed through the Sunday edition of local newspapers (which have larger circulation than week editions). This format would require presenting information in a more condensed form, and to use language appropriate for, and to appeal to a wider audience that will not necessarily know or initially care about the subject. Copies will be distributed to schools, government offices, local parks, community organizations and others, as well as for special events throughout the area. The publication will also be available for download from HEP's website as a PDF.

The report structure could follow the format used by Sound Health, which covers several environmental indicators grouped into major sections:

- Water Quality—including nitrogen pollution and toxic contaminants
- Living Resources (key species)—including shellfish abundance, finfish abundance, and coastal birds;
- Habitats—including altered landscapes and habitat restoration
- Public Awareness

Other topics that have been covered in the 2004 Health of the Harbor and should/could be included in the 2009 update are:

- Pathogens
- Floatable debris
- Sediments
- Public Access

Other topics to be covered (as sections or sidebars):

- Port issues
- Jamaica Bay issues (loss of marshes, CSOs, water quality)
- Raritan Bay issues (shellfishing, desire for oyster restoration)

Each report section also should include sidebar features that provide “color” to the charts and analyses, and in some cases other information such as research related to solving environmental problems.

The possibility of producing a joint “State of the Estuary” report with the Hudson River Estuary Program (HREP) was considered. For this edition, this was deemed not feasible, mainly because of timing issues and space constraints. However, this is an option that should be considered in the future. Challenges include providing meaningful information within the size constraints, and providing site-specific information that people can relate to while educating communities about the interconnectedness of the Hudson and the Harbor. One way to address this may be to have each main section develop a theme with general information and include two sidebars, covering topics and trends specific to each of the two programs. This would provide an opportunity to

emphasize the connection between the upstream and downstream areas of the system. Although it is acknowledged that there is a disconnect between up and downstream populations, HEP and HREP should strive to educate the public about how this is a single, interconnected system, and the many implications this entails. The front cover could show the river and harbor, highlighting key features of several areas along the estuary. The report should also include an overview section of what the HEP (and HREP) is and why environmental indicators are tracked, a page devoted to citizen tips to improve the environment, and a contact list.

Target Audience

Several audiences can be targeted:

- Distributed as an insert in a Sunday newspaper, *Health of the Harbor* can educate a mass audience, not traditionally reached by HEP
- It can be disseminated through the same channels as the *Tidal Exchange* newsletter (HEP's mailing list, HEP partners showcasing the publication at visitor and other centers, and HEP website), which include elected officials
- Additional copies can be distributed to educators for use in junior high school, high school, and college classrooms
- The publication could be further distributed at public events and fairs

In trying to get the attention of a mass audience that may not be aware of, or initially interested in, environmental issues in the Estuary, the publication needs to be eye-catching, including colorful photos, well-designed graphics, and interesting features.

Goal & Objectives

Goals:

- Bring awareness in the general public about the challenges facing the NY-NJ Estuary and foster stewardship
- Provide the general public with a non-technical report on the status and progress in the environmental health of the Estuary

Objectives:

- Educate the public about the key environmental indicators used to analyze environmental progress
- Provide an environmental reference guide for the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary that could be used as a classroom resource
- Provide information that explains the purpose of the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary Program
- Provide information about the public's role in efforts to clean up and restore the Estuary
- To ensure that the above objectives and goals are met, create a well-designed report that will be read by its intended audience.

RSM DISCUSSIONS - CHARGE TO THE RSM WORKGROUP HEP MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING FEB 5, 2009

ISSUES FOR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:

- Who is on RSM Workgroup and how are they selected?
- Who leads RSM Workgroup?
- What is our recommendation to Policy Committee relative to State Advocates?
- How do we pay for development of “foundation documents” (Implementation Plan that includes timelines, costs, benefits and tasks)?

ISSUES FOR RSM WORKGROUP:

- Who leads the sub-groups (Quality, Quantity and Dredged Material)?
- What is the process to set priorities among the recommended actions?
- What is your plan for a robust public involvement program?
- What is the estimated cost for development of the “foundation documents”?

PROPOSED CHARGE TO THE WORKGROUP:

The Regional Sediment Management Workgroup mission is to implement the recommendations of the NY & NJ Harbor Estuary Program’s Regional Sediment Management Plan (RSMP). Integral to this mission is incorporation of the State RSM Advocates and a robust public involvement program into the Workgroup’s activities. In order to accomplish this, the Workgroup must:

- *Establish the Core and Sub-Workgroups in accordance with Appendix 2 of the RSMP*
- *Develop a process to set priorities for action for the RSMP recommendations that takes into account public input, and set those priorities*
- *Develop a scope of work and cost estimate for development of the foundation documents needed to fully implement the RSMP (an Implementation Plan that includes costs, benefits, required tasks and timelines for implementation), which takes into account the prioritization of the actions and incorporates development of a robust public involvement program*
- *Coordinate these activities through the Management Committee to the Policy Committee of the NY & NJ HEP*
- *Develop the Implementation Plan subject to receipt of funding*
- *Carry out those elements of the Implementation Plan that the Policy Committee has approved and for which funding has been provided*

HEP Management Committee Membership Discussion

The following is a list of current **Management Committee** members.

Robert Nyman, USEPA
Walter Berry, USEPA-ORD
Douglas Adamo, USDOJ
John Tavolaro, USACE
Ashok Deshpande, NOAA
Jeff Myers, NYSDEC
Fred Anders, NYSDOS
Kerry Kirk Pflugh, NJDEP
Sheldon Lipke, NJHDC
Keith Mahoney, NY Local Govt
vacant, NJ Local Govt
Howard Golub, IEC
Joseph Monaco, Port Auth
vacant, CAC
Bill Sheehan, CAC
Michelle Doran McBean, CAC
Eugenia Flatow, CAC
vacant, STAC
Dennis Suszkowski, STAC

It is in the interest of HEP and all its participants to have engaged committee members. Upon reviewing historical HEP documents, there does not seem to be a procedure in place for replacing vacant or inactive MC membership slots. Therefore, a discussion will take place at the Feb 5, 2009 MC meeting to begin addressing this. Some points to consider:

- There are 4 members of the CAC on the MC. The two CAC co-chairs are clear appointments, but there is no procedure for appointing the other two representatives.
- There are two STAC members, one from NY and one from NJ. These positions are traditionally held by PhDs from either academic or non-profit organizations. The NJ position is currently vacant.
- Identifying a NJ local government representative has been problematic. Suggestions welcome.
- In the past, for agency representatives to the MC, the program director would seek suggestions from other MC and Work Group members and approach those agencies directly. Continue?
- A number of MC members have participated very little in the past year or so. A procedure should be set up to define/encourage active participation and/or replacement of less active members.

Action: After discussion at the Feb 5th meeting, a draft MC membership procedures paper will be distributed for further discussion.

