

Summary of the July 24, 2002 Nutrient Work Group Meeting

The Nutrient Work Group (NWG) met at the NYC EPA office on July 24, 2002. The work group discussed two major topics at the meeting: 1) The Management Committee's charge to choose an indicator and develop a dissolved oxygen compliance target for 2009; and 2) The scope of work for HydroQual Inc. to apply the SWEM to help the NWG identify dissolved oxygen problem areas in the Harbor and identify the major contributors to the problems.

The NWG felt that it could agree on a numerical indicator (a dissolved oxygen concentration) that represented the attainment of a "fishable" waterbody use. The work group also thought that the NYC Harbor Survey data with other monitoring data being collected could be interpolated and presented on a geographical basis that would allow compliance with the indicator to be expressed in square miles or acres. The work group thought that the area of the waters meeting or exceeding the "fishable" indicator on an annual basis could be used to show water quality trends in a way the general public could understand.

However, the work group saw many difficulties in providing a meaningful long term goal and a 2009 target at this time. The NWG is just starting to define the extent of the dissolved oxygen problems and the major contributors to those problems. The Management committee has to realize it will take some time and possibly more computer simulations to comply with their request.

The NWG also saw difficulties in using an indicator to track the attainment of a goal. Observed dissolved oxygen concentrations can be greatly affected by environmental conditions (currents, weather, etc.). A meaningful dissolved oxygen goal must be in terms of specific environmental conditions. These conditions are usually worse case or critical case conditions. However, once the conditions are set the monitoring data alone can not track the attainment of the goal unless the data happens to be collected under the specified conditions. The water quality picture given by an indicator for any given year or period of years may or may not be indicative of a longer trend.

Robin Miller of HydroQual gave a presentation on the proposed scope of work for applying the system-wide eutrophication model (SWEM) to aid the work group in identifying dissolved oxygen problem areas in the Harbor the major contributors to the problems. She and John St. John answered questions and clarified issues. The presentation reviewed the scope of work outlining the work and outputs HydroQual will supply and identified the information that would need to be supplied by the work group. After some word changes that expressed the progressive nature and the inherent uncertainties of the work the work group approved the scope of work. The word changes did not effect the amount of work, the outputs or schedule presented in the proposed scope. However, the schedule was delayed by two months and the work will begin in September with the next meeting of the NWG. That meeting is scheduled for September 18, 2002.

Actions required:

At or prior to the next meeting, the work group must respond to The Management Committee's request for an indicator.

At or prior to the next meeting, the work group needs to agree upon a format for the SWEM DO outputs. If the right data is not captured and stored during the simulations it is impossible to retrieve it.

At or prior to the next meeting, the work group must choose the loading and hydrodynamic conditions that will be used in the current and future condition simulations.

Attendees:

MarzooQ Al-Ebus	NJDEP
Thomas Amidon	NJDEP
Mick DeGraeve	GLEC/NJHDG
Al Fuchs	NYSDEC
Veronica Hurst	PVSC
Jim Lodge	HRF
Keith Mahoney	NYCDEP
Robin Landeck Miller	HydroQual
Brian Mitchell	IEC
Bob Nyman	USEPA
Philip O'Brien	NYSDEC
Morton Orentlicher	CAC
Boris Rukovets	IEC
John St. John	HydroQual
Antony Tseng	USEPA
Chris Villari	NYCDEP