



New York - New Jersey  
Harbor Estuary  
Program

**New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary Program  
Policy Committee Meeting  
May 27, 2004  
Draft Minutes**

- 1 and 2. The meeting was convened at the Hudson River Foundation Offices at 1:08 p.m. Kathy Callahan chaired the meeting and led the introductions.
3. There were no additions to the agenda.
4. The minutes from the July 29, 2003 meeting were approved as written.
5. The Policy Committee was then provided with an overview of recent HEP activities via a series of presentations by HEP participants.

Bob Nyman distributed a package describing the Congressional staff briefings that were conducted specifically for the New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary Program (HEP) in early 2004. He noted that the areas that were asked about specifically were habitat, the Passaic River, and public access. Also included in the package were copies of the House and Senate appropriations letters related to funding for the overall National Estuary Program. Those letters were seeking full funding at the authorized level of \$35 million. The Association of National Estuary Programs played the lead role in coordinating those letters.

Steve Romaluski from the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) gave a PowerPoint presentation on the successful effort to make information about HEP habitat sites available on the interactive OASIS website. He noted that because OASIS contains many layers of information from many different entities, that there was a lot of potential for users to better understand how the habitat sites relate to things like transportation infrastructure, parks, etc.

Dennis Suszkowski gave a presentation on the recently released Health of the Harbor report. He noted that it would be nice to update it at some point in the future to

continue the trend analysis. Lynette Stark asked if there was an attempt to overlay the Health of the Harbor with the Targets and Goals. Bob Nyman responded that for the time being, they would be viewed in parallel, but that ultimately it would be desirable to integrate the two efforts. He added that the former was based on existing data sources, while the later was in part on based on desired targets for which there may not be existing data or programs to carry them out.

Beau Ranheim (NYCDEP) and Veronica Crow (PVSC) described the harbor-wide water quality survey that is now being undertaken throughout the New York and New Jersey waters of the Harbor by their respective organizations. Future directions that the NYC effort will likely go in include 24/7 remote monitoring, real time bacteria analyses, and better integration with other regional programs. While it would be desirable to have all the information from both efforts presented in a single report, it is not clear if this will be possible at this time. Ms. Crow noted that the NJ effort by PVSC on behalf of the Harbor Dischargers Group was started in 2000 on a limited basis and was expanded in 2003. She said it was being done on a voluntary basis and was not required by law.

Dennis Suszkowski reviewed the CARP toxics program efforts. He said that \$27 - \$30 million had been invested in the project to date, with 65% of the cost going to sampling and analysis. He stressed that in order for the overall effort to be valid, we must get the loadings right. About 800,000 data points have been collected and a draft vision statement was developed to help guide where the effort goes in the future. Dr. Suszkowski said that advocacy was needed to make any recommended cleanups happen and that an additional \$500,000 per year was needed to refine and update the models. Tom Creamer said that the 50' deepening agreement was being put in place this week. He asked if the modeling could determine where the contaminants in the channel came from. John St. John said yes.

John St. John began the presentation on the status of the water quality modeling work. He noted that SWEM was being used as the framework for all three work groups, nutrients, pathogens and toxics. For pathogens, the group is currently working through a list of tasks and selecting indicators. For water quality classifications, the group must consider what they currently are, and what they may become in the future. Based on preliminary analysis, there seems to be substantial non-compliance with the primary contact standard for Enterococcus. Dr. Suszkowski asked if CSOs were the cause of most of the non-compliance events. Mr. St. John said they were the cause of most, but that stormwater was also a significant source. He said that the calibration should be completed by the end of the year and that cause and effect information should be available by mid-2005. Ms. Flatow asked who would track beach closures. Chuck Warren said that NYC Department of Health maintained that type of information. Kathy Callahan suggested that a smaller group reconvene more frequently to assess standards issues. Mr. Warren agreed with the periodic assessment and asked if the bacterial die-off calculations could be used to reopen a beach. Mr. St. John responded that the Health Department usually resamples after a

high value is detected. Larry Baier said that New Jersey expected similar closure rates with the new standards.

Robin Miller then provided the nutrients overview. She said that it was not likely that water quality standards could be achieved by only focusing on nitrogen or wastewater treatment plants. Both nitrogen and carbon by be assessed for its impact on dissolved oxygen levels. Results from various component runs would be incorporated into full management scenario runs.

Ms. Miller continued with a presentation on toxics and referred to the CARP presentation that Dr. Suszkowski had made. She added that model projections were planned that would provide information on if no management actions were taken, and if a set of yet to be determined management actions were taken.

6. Bob Nyman then presented the FY 2004 HEP budget, as recommended by the Management Committee. He reviewed the process of soliciting budget requests from the various work group chairs and advisory committees and the projects that were being recommended. After a brief discussion, the budget was approved as presented.

7. Mr. Nyman introduced a concept for a possible future press event. The concept included two options, the first focused on the harbor-wide survey and the second on the signing of the Targets and Goals. Lynette Stark suggested that focusing on land acquisition would make for a good event. Ms. Flatow said that it should focus on successes. Dr. Suszkowski said that the news media want to write stories about what's new. The Policy Committee requested that the concept be more fully developed and that we try to do an event later in the year.

The meeting was then adjourned at 4:00 p.m.