



New York - New Jersey
Harbor Estuary
Program

**New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary Program
Policy Committee Meeting
May 25, 2005
Final Minutes**

1. The meeting was convened at the Hudson River Foundation Offices at 10:15 a.m. George Pavlou chaired the meeting and led the introductions. He suggested that the Policy Committee (PC) meet more frequently in order to maintain contact with the issues and momentum.
2. The minutes of the May 27, 2004 PC meeting were approved as written.
3. Bob Nyman provided a PowerPoint presentation on the status of the 2005 implementation review, including some accomplishments from the past three years. He noted that the review occurs every three years and is intended to verify that each of the National Estuary Programs is making progress. Future funding is contingent on passing the review. The complete package was submitted to EPA-HQ in February 2005 and will be followed up with a site visit in July 2005. Lynette Stark asked if the states could participate. Mr. Nyman said PC and Management Committee (MC) members were welcome to participate on either or both days.
4. A presentation was then given on the status of HEP's TMDL efforts. Bob Nyman provided an overview and was followed by Matt Schoen (nutrients), Jim Olander (pathogens) and Rosella O'Connor (toxics). When asked about the schedule for completion of the pathogens TMDL, Mr. Olander responded that the current date is 2006, but is probably not an operable date. Kevin Bricke suggested that all three of the work groups revisit the schedule and report back within six months. Lisa Jackson asked at what point in the schedule are policy decisions needed? Those decisions will need to be worked into the schedule. Ms. O'Connor noted that some runs of the CARP model would be undertaken in the late summer. She also noted that the "common currency" for toxics in the harbor was the biota, described in an EPA white paper. This means that load reductions should be linked to achieving acceptable levels of contaminants in the biota.

5. Dennis Suszkowski provided a presentation on CARP. He said that the \$28 million project should be completed by the end of 2005. Component runs and projections should be available by August 2005. The objective of the component runs is to define relative effects of various contaminant loading sources on ambient concentrations in water, sediment, and biota. The projections to the year 2040 will be for current loading conditions and a loading reduction scenario to be determined by the CARP Management Committee.

6. Laura Bartovics provided a handout and described the EstuariesLive event that will be taking place on either September 22 or 23 at Liberty State Park. The one hour broadcast will feature the Harbor and will be available over the web and via satellite downlink. She mentioned that it will be a great way to get the word out about our “urban estuary” and will provide visibility for HEP. She is currently working with a planning committee to work out the details. At least one class of students will be invited to participate on the broadcast. Eugenia Flatow said that the Meadowlands and Jamaica Bay should be included. Ms. Bartovics responded that perhaps a pretaped segment could be done at one of those locations. Carter Craft suggested using ferries to bring people in to create a larger event. Lisa Jackson asked if it would be marketed to urban schools. Ms. Bartovics responded that Kerry Kirk-Pflugh would be working on that aspect of it.

Debbie Mans discussed the new stewardship program that is intended to foster more cooperation among groups. She said that there will be a June 29th summit to reevaluate CAC activities and that a workplan will be developed to address the stewardship goal of the Targets and Goals. Lynette Stark said that other groups need to be involved and Ms. Flatow suggested that the Hudson River Estuary Program and Long Island Sound Study be involved.

7. Bob Nyman presented the draft FY 2005 HEP budget as recommended by the Management Committee. He noted that this year’s funding from Clean Water Act Section 320 was \$511,966 and required a one to one non-federal match. Most of that match will likely be provided by Passaic Valley Sewerage Commissioners. The PC approved the budget as it was presented.

8. Alex Brash provided a status on the PC’s approval of the recommended addition of the Camp St. Edwards habitat site to the acquisition list. Approval had been recommended in February and positive responses had been received from 5 of the 7 PC members. Mr. Pavlou recommended that unless there were any objections, that the site be approved. There were no objections and the site was added to the official list.

9. Jim Tripp and Bill Nurthen distributed a handout and lead a discussion on the status of the Harbor Roundtable. They noted that there has been declining funding for environmental work in the harbor. Nationally, the three top priorities for the Corps were the Everglades, the Mississippi, and Channel Deepening the the Harbor. Unlike the first two, there is no environmental component to the third, the channel deepening. The Port Authority was asked by a number of groups to utilize their expertise to assist the Roundtable to secure additional funding. They said that, unlike for the channel

deepening, a case still needs to be made as to why the environmental restoration is important. Mr. Tripp said they are not trying to reinvent the wheel, but rather to provide advocacy for priority projects. Mr. Creamer said that he had some budget updates and that the lobby effort had worked to some extent. He indicated that both Florida and the Harbor go “adds”. He said that there needs to be an ongoing leadership group to get financing. Ms. Jackson said there needs to be better communication about policy and priorities and that she wasn’t aware of the afternoon Roundtable meeting. Mr. Creamer said that the group needs to become familiar with the process and bridge the gaps. Dr. Suszkowski said that there was a disconnect between the Corps HRE study and the rest of us. He also posed the question of how operational does the Roundtable get and whether it should be independent of HEP. He also said that we need better packaging of programs to advocate for and we need to think bigger. Mr. Craft said that it is not only federal funding that should be sought, but also state and local contributions.

10. Chuck Warren then started the next agenda item by saying that he was the longest serving HEP PC member. He said that there is a need to set in place the ability to implement the policies and that the program hasn’t made the impact it should have in terms of making the harbor a world class estuary. He questioned the relationship of HEP to the Roundtable. He said the program needs to look at priorities and to figure out how to get the resources to do them. He went on to say that participation on the PC seems to be of diminished importance to some entities. He suggested that the Colonel from the NY District of the Corps should be the Corps’ representative and that the Port Authority should be added to the PC. He said that there is a need to better publicize HEP efforts and that the agencies should help out in that effort. He stressed the need for HEP to regain momentum.

Mr. Pavlou responded that previous additions to the PC resulted from formal recommendations from the Management Committee. After some discussion, the PC then charged the MC with framing the issue and developing such a recommendation within 30 days.

Mr. Pavlou reacted to Mr. Warren’s comment about the level of participation of PC members. He said that the current active participants, typically at the deputy level, were like the chief operating officers of their agencies and were effective representatives.

Regarding the setting of program priorities, Kerry Kirk-Pflugh said that work plans need to be developed for the priorities so that the states and other participants can focus their resources on them. The MC was charged with developing a first cut for the PC for their next meeting.

11. It was decided that the PC should meet again in September and the agenda would include follow-up on Mr. Warren’s issues. The meeting was then adjourned at 1:00 p.m.