



**New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary Program
TOXICS WORK GROUP
Meeting Minutes
March 9, 2001 @ Hudson River Foundation**

(DRAFT August 21, 2001)

Bob Nyman convened the meeting at 10:10 and distributed the minutes from the previous meeting and the revised agenda for today's meeting. Comments are were requested on the minutes in two weeks.

Mr. Nyman then recapped the discussion from the previous Toxics Work Group (TWG) meeting concerning the selection of priority issues by the work group for the HEP annual budget process and work plan. The group decided that it would go through each discussion and then, at the end of the meeting, review suggestions and develop a list of priorities.

At the previous meeting, Mark Riess from EPA had made a presentation about Tributyl tin (TBT) and indicated that it may be a chemical of concern related to disposal of dredged material at the HARS. Gary Buchanan had agreed at that meeting to prepare an issue paper on TBT related to the harbor. Copies of the paper were distributed and the presentation was given. He said that worldwide, approximately 70% of ships use TBT as an antifoulant. In the US, ships must be over 25 meters in length or have an aluminum hull in order to legally use TBT. He said it may also be used in cooling water pipes on shore facilities. Dr. Buchanan indicated that he was not aware of any local shipyards that still applied TBT and that most ships are painted in other ports. He discussed a study which showed that levels in the sediment were elevated near drydocks. At an active drydock when TBT was still widely used in the US, a study showed that levels in the surface water exceeded water quality criteria out to at least 150' from the drydock. In the harbor, sediment levels average 60ppb, well below the draft sediment quality guideline of 243 ppb. There do appear to be hotspots. Notably, levels near the Marine Ocean Terminal in Bayonne had concentrations of 2600 ppb. In other areas near drydocks, levels were about 2 orders of magnitude above the guideline. In the Passaic River, average levels were about 37 ng/g. Blue mussel data from the Upper Bay seems to indicate elevated levels. Levels don't appear to be elevated in finfish. Dr. Buchanan suggested that resuspension of TBT in sediments upon placement at the HARS may be a concern. TBT is not currently monitored for in dredging projects. There is a potential international ban on TBT in 2003. The TWG agreed that further studies were needed to evaluate the concentration and potential impacts in selected areas, including berthing areas and historic and active drydocks. Historical aerial photos could be used to identify locations of old drydocks. **Joe Olha volunteered to look into a potential Corps survey and see how it relates to HEP's needs.**

John Defina then gave an update on the pilot GIS-based toxics track-down that NJDEP is conducting. He said the Meadowlands area is being used to evaluate their techniques. Only digitized data is being utilized, which only reflects a fraction of the sites and available data. There are about 1400 sites within 1000' of water (in the study area?). Characterization of aquifers is being worked on. Digital data is expected to be available for 6000 sites state-wide. Mr. Defina said that, historically, surface water and sediment pathways were not looked at for site remediation. Groundwater and dust were generally looked at first. He noted that Superfund data was not obtained from EPA. Mr. Defina's technique looks at "flow accumulation areas" based on topography (water flows downhill, even if no "streams" appear on maps). He also discussed "classification assessment areas" where natural remediation is expected to occur, and "institutional control areas" where active remediation is needed. The study will result in estimates of gross loadings and movements of toxics to the harbor from hazardous waste sites.

Mr. Defina mentioned a related project that is linked to EMPACT on "Quantitative Environmental Indicators". This could be used for NEPPS tracking within NJDEP, but it needed to be linked to the land and water efforts underway by Joel Pecchioli and Ed Stevenson. The question was asked as to whether the sewage collection systems were digitized. **Jim Lodge was going to ask Dan Zeppenfeld of NJDEP and Al Fuchs was to check for NY City.**

Zoe Kelman distributed copies of the hazardous waste site issue paper that she prepared. She said that meaningful indicators are needed for the public and that there were some ongoing trackdown efforts in the harbor. She cited two efforts as examples of the importance of toxics reduction from outside the harbor- Niagara River where there was a 90% reduction in 10 years, and the GE Hudson River PCB site. Ms. Kelman noted that 60% of the PCBs in the harbor are thought to come from the GE site. Al Fuchs suggested that the situation in the Niagara was very different than the harbor and he questioned the ability and willingness of agencies to carry out a similar effort in the harbor. Ms. Kelman noted the large uncertainties in the estimates of mercury loadings from three separate studies. It was suggested that for various reasons, the numbers may not be directly comparable. Mick DeGraeve suggested that the Linden-Roselle trackdown effort was redundant with the CARP trackdown work. Ms Kelman continued that HEP needs a way to identify priority sites and that for enforcement to be successful, we need to have a method to evaluate all sites, one that is not arbitrary. She continued that the effect of tide on loading needs to be studied and that non-point sources may be significant. The states responded by saying that they didn't want HEP interjecting into their remediation programs. John Defina said that NJDEP is not interested in changing priorities. He continued that NJ's priorities are based on numeric human risk assessments. Bob Hazen added that data management is key, not modeling. The idea is to determine the relative proportion from each source. The group agreed that NPS was an important issue and would discuss it at the end of the meeting.

It was noted that the endpoints work group discussed at the last TWG meeting had not been formed yet. It was also noted that it, along with some other workgroups do not appear on any organizational chart, nor does it have any kind of endorsement from the Management Committee. **Bob Nyman said he would ask Rosella O'Connor about the status of the work group** and that organizational issues were currently being discussed by the Management Committee.

The TWG then reviewed the potential issues that it had discussed and selected four issues to include on its priority list.

The first was an assessment of TBT in dry dock areas. The Corps is currently considering assessing only the channel areas and would not be sampling in the off-channel areas, such as areas adjacent to drydocks. **Bob Nyman said he would draft a letter to John Tavalaro clarifying the TWG's need for information.** NJDEP said they would assist with the identification of drydock locations by examining historical aerial photos.

The second issue deals with reassessing TIE's for the harbor. There is a conference in June on TIEs sponsored by SETAC, but there may be a need to conduct an estuary specific conference. The conference would result in a workplan for future action. **Dennis Suszkowski volunteered to scope out the needs for the effort.**

The third issue addresses CCMP Action T-10, risk assessment and fish advisories. **Dr. Buchanan volunteered to prepare a write-up on what was needed.**

The fourth issue was a follow-up to Ms. Kelman's presentation. There was no clear consensus or recommendation on what needs to be done. **Jim Lodge volunteered to, over the next couple of months, scope out what is needed to better understand the non-point source loadings of toxics issue.**

Bob Nyman said he would add these four issues to the overall list for HEP.

The meeting was then adjourned.