



## Policy Committee Meeting Minutes (DRAFT)

April 24, 2018

Hudson River Foundation

### Participants

**Policy Committee:** Chris Daggett (HRF, Chair), Walter Mugdan, (EPA-alt), Lt. Col. Richard Gussenhoven (ACE-alt), Bruce Friedman (NJ DEP-alt), Bernice Malione (PANYNJ), Phyllis Reich (NJ Local Government- alt, phone), Charles Warren (CAC), Dennis Suszkowski (STAC)

**Management Committee:** Clay Sherman (NJ DEP), Rob Pirani (HEP), Peter Weppler (ACE), Jason Fagel (NYSDEC), Judith Weis (STAC), Carrie Roble (CAC)

**Others in attendance:** Fran Dunwell (NYSDEC), John Pietrykoski (PVSC/NJHDG), Rick Winfield (EPA), Jeff Gratz (EPA), Chris Lyon, (EPA), Peter Brandt (on phone), Shino Tanikawa (CAC)

**HRF/HEP Office Staff:** Rosana Da Silva, Isabelle Stinnette, Sarah Lerman-Sinkoff, Clay Hiles, Helena Andreyko, James Lodge, Rob Pirani

- 1. Introductions and agenda review:** Chris Daggett chaired the meeting and welcomed two new people to HEP: Chris Lyon, the chief of staff at EPA and Rosana Da Silva, Water Quality Program Manager at HEP. Introductions were made and the agenda was reviewed.
- 2. Approval of November 9 Meeting Minutes:** The committee reviewed the minutes from the November 9th Policy Committee Meeting.

*Action: The Committee approved the minutes from the November PC Meeting.*

- 3. Review and Discussion of Draft Action Agenda/Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan:** Chris Daggett, HRF and Rob Pirani, HEP

As a reminder, the action items are focused on priorities where HEP can add value. There is a total of 5 goals, 17 objectives and 40 actions. The draft was released at the May 2017 conference for comments and HEP has made changes to the draft action agenda based on those comments and subsequent input from the Policy and Management Committees. Those changes were highlighted in the powerpoint presentation and below.

*Action: The Committee to provide final comments to HEP by May 5<sup>th</sup>. Staff will revise and present the summary of the Actions to the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) on June 4<sup>th</sup>. The final version of the Action Agenda will be presented to the Management Committee*

*on June 13<sup>th</sup>. Any major changes will be presented to the Policy Committee (PC) via email at that time.*

The new draft will provide improved linkages between objectives, challenges, and indicators for measurable progress. The graphic detailing this is being developed.

For water quality, an additional action included the establishment of a No Discharge Zone (NDZ) for vessel waste in the Raritan Bay. Process to establish a NDZ in the Raritan Bay requires the states to petition EPA to designate the NDZ. EPA's protocols would establish a public comment and approval period. NJDEP is comfortable with recreational users, but is concerned for commercial users in the bay and stated the need to meet with commercial users to ensure proper planning is put in place before petitioning EPA.

*Action: EPA to review New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIWPCC) study to affirm available pump out stations satisfactory to commercial user needs.*

*Action: HEP to work with partners, including PANYNJ and Coast Guard, to convene stakeholder meeting with commercial users and state/federal agencies to review NEIWPCC evaluation of establishing a NDZ in Raritan Bay and discuss any concerns.*

Rob Pirani and Rosana Da Silva provided an overview of water quality objectives and current activity. HEP worked with eDesign to build upon NYCDEP's green infrastructure case study in Perth Amboy, NJ, which identified 12 green infrastructure projects to reduce Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) events in subwatersheds. The Water Quality Work Group met on April 11<sup>th</sup> focused on public notification of CSO events by NJDEP, NYCDEP, Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission, and North Hudson Sewerage Authority. Dennis Suszkowski provided an update on HEP's proposed workshop on the ecosystem impacts of tidal barriers. Peter Wepler and Lt. Col. Richard Gussenhoven clarified that the Harbor and Tributaries Study is still in the process of assessing possible designs and operating parameters and that a HEP workshop identifying the possible impacts would be welcome at this time.

*Action: Chris Lyon and other EPA staff encouraged partners to consider leveraging funds to support HEP initiatives, especially where there is a need to address environmental justice communities, and will engage other agencies to pool funds together (as ideas/projects are brought to EPA).*

Isabelle Stinnette provided an overview of habitat and ecological health objectives and current activity. HEP is working on developing migration pathway maps and identifying the opportunities or recommendations for encouraging habitat restoration efforts in those areas. Given existing work already conducted for the Hudson Valley, New Jersey in particular may benefit from identification of these wetland migration pathways.

An overview of public access and stewardship objective and current activity was provided by Sarah Lerman-Sinkoff. A stewardship map was created to connect organizations working on or related to the Passaic River and a boat tour will be provided to stewardship groups on July 24<sup>th</sup>. HEP has submitted a grant to engage youth on river-related activities in partnership with the City of Passaic and the US Forest Service.

The action agenda will be released at HEP's November conference to be held at the US Customs House. A discussion was held regarding federal/state representation and the potential format for the conference. Walter Mugdan and Chris Lyon agreed that EPA would be willing to make a rededication or commitment at the conference. Charles Warren recommended having both state governors come together to highlight post-Sandy accomplishments and anticipation of projects to come (e.g., Long Term Control Plans (LTCP)).

*Action: The Committee agreed to assist HEP in securing speakers for the November Conference and work together on a bi-state announcement.*

**4. Funding update:** Rob Pirani, HEP

HEP has been working to follow up on the findings from the *Options for Funding Priorities* report prepared by its consultant and refined by a committee chaired by Chuck Warren. The report was accepted by the Management Committee in September 2017 and presented to the Policy Committee for comment in November. Specific sources of funds being addressed with partners include the PANYNJ Hudson Raritan Estuary Resources Program; the New York State Environmental Protection Fund / Hudson River Estuary Program; and working with the Hudson River Foundation to secure/align philanthropic funds in a manner similar to the Long Island Sound Futures Fund. *Chris Daggett noted that he will be working with HEP to identify how best to approach a range of philanthropy organizations to help support public access and stewardship initiatives.*

**Draft 2018-2019 Workplan and Budget:** Rob Pirani, HEP

Rob shared the draft 2018-2019 workplan and budget with the committee. Congress approved a \$600,000 budget for HEP and other national estuary programs. EPA may be able to provide addition funding to support the Passaic and Bronx/Harlem River Urban Waters Ambassadors to continue to support the public access and stewardship objective. Final budget for approval will be requested in June.

**5. Progress on roadmap for supporting development of consistent standards:** Walter Mugdan, EPA

EPA has been in discussions with both states regarding consistency of water quality standards. A short-term action plan has been drafted and feedback has been received from New Jersey, but they are still awaiting a response from New York. Once feedback is received, EPA will finalize the

plan which will aim to take smaller incremental steps to achieve consistent standards. EPA is hoping that this draft will be an active document utilized by the agency and states. Existing efforts to improve water quality were noted: LTCPs in NJ will improve the harbor and reduce pathogens; NYC has two outstanding LTCPs (open waters and Jamaica Bay); NYSDEC's PCB tracking and efforts by NJDEP in Hackensack River along with the superfund efforts on the Passaic River will also improve water quality. Bruce Friedman highlighted the need for water quality to be a focus for the agency. Judith Weis highlighted emerging concerns such as pharmaceuticals and microplastics.

*Action: EPA to work with the two states to finalize a draft action plan for supporting the development of consistent standards.*

*Action: EPA to collect information on emerging pollutants of concern and outline recommendations of how to move forward with addressing them.*

## **6. Other business:**

The next Policy Committee meetings will be held in November at the conference.

Dennis Suszkowski announced the Hudson River Environmental Society's 2018 Hudson River Symposium focused on Contaminants in the Hudson River and Watershed: A Look at the Status, Trends, and the Response of Natural Resources. The conference is being held on May 2, 2018 from 9 AM – 5:30 PM at the State University New Paltz's Student Union Building.