



Management Committee Meeting Minutes

December 5, 2017

Hudson River Foundation

Participants

Management Committee: Rob Pirani (HEP), Peter Wepler (USACE), Lisa Baron (USACE), Clay Sherman (NJDEP), Evelyn Powers (IEC), Meredith Comi (CAC, phone), Shino Tanikawa (CAC), Sean Dixon (CAC), Dennis Suszkowski (STAC), Phil DeGaetano (WQWG, phone), Rick Balla (USEPA), Jason Fagel (NYSDEC), Judith Weis (STAC), Dana Mecomber (PANYNJ), Margaret Flanagan (PAWG), Ursula Howson (NOAA, phone)

Others in attendance: Nesmarie Negron, (USEPA), Greg Alber (NJHDG), Fran Dunwell (NYSDEC/HREP)

HRF/HEP Office Staff: Isabelle Stinnette, Ariane Giudicelli, Sarah Lerman-Sinkoff, Jim Lodge

1. **Introductions and Agenda Review**

2. **USACE Harbor and Tributaries Study:** Peter Wepler presented the HATs study and provided an overview of the project's scope and goals. The study area covers 25 counties in NY and NJ and aims to manage the risk of coastal storm damage and reduce impacts to coastal ecosystems, while enhancing human health and safety. As part of this, the study is looking into potential storm surge barriers while addressing climate and sea level change projections. The analysis is being completed for a 100-year timeframe, but benefits are being forecasted out to 50 years.

They are very mindful of the special resources in the area and the cultural and historic properties and are looking at complementing other ongoing projects. A number of preliminary environmental considerations are being reviewed, including water and air quality, noise and vibration, hydrology, and aquatic species, among others.

The screening of various measures is based on shoreline type. Alternative 2 includes an outer harbor barrier. Alternatives 3a and 3b include multiple barriers and floodwalls, while alternative 5 is shoreline protection only without any large barriers. There is some concern that large barriers could impede flow in the system.

The agency held 3 workshops in early 2017 and will be holding scoping meetings for the general public over the next 7 months.

Action Item: Staff will assess what environmental questions HEP can be helpful with and work with USACE and states to identify next steps.

3. **HRECOS Dashboard:** Ariane Giudicelli gave an overview of the nearly complete HRECOS dashboard, which has been installed indoors at Marist and Norrie Point and will be installed shortly outdoors at Piermont and Pier 84. The dashboard provides real-time data for these 4 stations for all of the parameters monitored at each station. In the spring, the outdoor installations will be evaluated to determine if monitoring messages are clear, science concepts are understandable, and the visitors' appreciation of this information in the context of their visit. This was a pilot project, with the goal of expanded to other HRECOS stations. Following the evaluation, an effort will be made to make the dashboard mobile-device friendly.

4. **Draft Action Agenda/CCMP Revision:** The final draft Action Agenda was presented to the Policy Committee on November 9th and staff are incorporating the comments received. Two key proposed changes include emphasizing the watershed perspective and important of the entire Estuary. While Actions will continue to focus in this Action Agenda in the waters south of the Tappen Zee bridge, HEP will not refer to a core area. To address previous comments, staff has prepared and distributed a new community engagement section that includes actions on citizen science, support for the Urban Waters Partnerships, and the convening educators. It was suggested that there is a need for NJ educators to be involved, and HEP will be reaching out to potential partners.

Action Item: Please submit final comments on the Action Agenda and in particular the new Community Engagement Section by January 16th.

5. **Environmental Monitoring Plan and SOE Report:**
Ariane and Isabelle Stinnette reviewed the status and formats of these documents as well as the final draft list of environmental indicators.

Following comments received at the MC meeting in September as well as review by the STAC, there are currently a total of 47 indicators, with 17 for water quality, 5 for toxics/port and maritime, 18 for habitat and 7 for public access, stewardship, and community engagement. A couple of indicators were removed from the water quality and toxics sections; one indicator was split into two in the habitat section and two new potential indicators were added to the public access section.

The EMP will present metadata in an interactive map format, similar to the CRP website. The details will be worked out with our new contractor, Pratt. The metadata covers who monitors for our indicators of interest, where, when, how and why. Data gap information will also be presented online.

HEP's new website will have a tab for the SOE report. There is the possibility of having interactive data displays for certain datasets, for example EPA's REMAP data. There will be both a full (online) and summary (online and printed) report, and the summary report will link back to the full online report. The chapters will be separated out online. We will incorporate appealing graphics, such as those employed by the Puget Sound NEP and other NEP's. While we are aiming to determine trends for the various indicators, we will still tell stories in the absence of trends. The STAC will be involved in determining if trends are accurate and whether the data are representative.

Comments from the committee included:

- The "number of visitors to boathouses over time" indicator should be reframed as the number of people who got on the water from the boathouses
- For the "total number of bathing beaches; launches; marinas; and/or ferry landings" indicator, some of that access is restricted and is not necessarily always publicly accessible. Consider how to differentiate this work.
- Consider adding water flow as an indicator for climate change
- Consider adding an indicator for CSO events
- Consider how to use PCB data as an indicator – how are navigation goals being met?
- Using the Cary Institute as an additional data source
- Consider adding invasive species as an indicator
- Considering looking at noise and light pollution as stressors as part of the Estuary story
- Collecting supplemental information to explain why certain indicators are not behaving the way we expect
- Consider how to incorporate upriver data in SOE and the Monitoring Plan. NYS DEC can be helpful in providing data.

Action Items:

- *Partner input on "wish list" of monitoring needs in the Estuary for our water quality, habitat and toxics indicators is critical.*
- *Provide input on any particular data analyses by January 16th*
- *Final comments on environmental indicators by January 16th*

6. **Results of the Citizen Science Survey:** Sarah Lerman-Sinkoff reviewed the CAC workplan and citizen science subcommittee goals. Goals include supporting the civic community in helping implement key HEP Actions; a better understanding of the landscape of CS activities in the harbor and identifying means for HEP to build capacity for groups conducting citizen science.

A total of 39 groups filled out the survey and these were separated out into individual programs. The following actions have been identified to help meet needs:

- Creating a heat map of citizen science groups in the Estuary for who is doing monitoring where

- Volunteer recruitment and how to drive more volunteers to do citizen science. This would include providing citizen science training dates and posting them on a platform through other organizations
- Protocol and/or QAPP workshop series
- Collaboration between the restoration work group and citizen scientists to support restoration monitoring

Action Item: Please submit final comments on the Citizen Science elements in the new Community Engagement Section of the Action Agenda by January 16th.