

## NY-NJ HEP Water Quality Workgroup Meeting Notes

Date: 6/2/2016

Time: 10:30 am –2:30 pm

Attendees: Ashley Slagle (PVSC/NJHDG), Rick Winfield (EPA), Rosella O'Connor (EPA), Brent Gaylord (EPA), Clay Hiles (HRF), Jeff Myers (NYSDEC), Mick DeGraeve (GLEC/NJHDG), Dennis Suszkowski (HRF), Evelyn Powers (IEC), Rob Pirani (HEP), Debbie Mans (NY/NJ Baykeeper), Phil DeGaetano (NYSDEC), Marco Al-Ebus (NJDEP), Pilar Patterson (NJDEP), Roop Guha (NJDEP), Keith Mahoney (NYCDEP), Pinar Balci (NYCDEP), Rachel Host.

### 1. Welcome, Introductions and Overview of Agenda

- Dennis Suszkowski is continuing to act as chair of the group.
- The primary goals of this meeting include determining next steps for HEP relative to the development of our Action Agenda and discussing preliminary ideas for consideration by HEP's Policy & Management Committees.
- Mick DeGraeve and John Waldman will present on their progress on the HRF/HEP funded Impact Evaluation of Projected DO Deficits in the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary project over lunch.

### 2. Discussion of HEP's role in facilitating communication and coordination

- Questions raised by the Workgroup:
  - i. The workgroup first needs to decide what we are communicating on and where we are heading. We should agree on a role for HRF/HEP. How can this group serve both the technical and public role? What is our long-term objective for communicating to the public how we're doing?
  - ii. What will the public see once all of the LTCPs are complete and implemented? What will the water quality be at this point?
  - iii. How will the States handle standards/criteria issues? For example if one State decides to move forward with a TMDL while the other decides on developing site-specific criteria –can this group agree that this is ok even though the end goal is the same?
  - iv. What is the new science (if any) in terms of criteria development?
  - v. Could this group assist in crafting new wet-weather standards for secondary contact?
- Opportunities/Thoughts/Aspirations – comments from the Workgroup:
  - i. This group should be sharing information between NY & NJ and the lessons learned.

- ii. This workgroup should be building on collaboration – we are making progress & HEP can communicate this to the public. This group shouldn't necessarily steer the conversation but we can connect the conversations.
- iii. Education of the public on standards and what they mean. For example, the public doesn't understand why the fish advisories in the Raritan Bay are different in certain areas – there's an invisible line separating NY & NJ. This group should explain why the standards are different.
- iv. The public has no idea there is raw sewage being discharged into the water. This group could develop a one-stop location for the public to get all of the CSO information. We could perhaps have a website for the NY side too, similar to what NJ does. In NJ there are sensors on the CSOs so any flow is measure in real-time.
- v. Education on LTCP benefits is needed and there is especially a need to reach out to lower-income populations. At the end of the day, the LTCPs come down to the cost & we need buy-in from the public for this. The workgroup and HEP should be collaborating with Jersey Waterworks & other groups sharing information with the public.
- vi. By 2020, we will know what has to happen in NJ with every permittee in order to meet the goals of the Clean Water Act. However, this does not mean that we will know how to achieve the standards.
- vii. Ensure consistent messaging across states on criteria, goals & monitoring & translate this to uses for the public.
- viii. HEP can come up with a communication tool for the public using EPA's "smashdown" lists and sound science criteria – HEP would not be coming up with new criteria but a method for sharing this information in a clear easy to understand way.

### 3. Opportunities for effective data sharing and information exchange

- Questions raised by the Workgroup:
  - i. What are the effects of controls on shared waters such as the Arthur Kill?
  - ii. There is a significant amount of data being collected in the region. How can this group springboard off of these efforts?
- Opportunities/Thoughts/Aspirations – comments from the Workgroup:
  - i. Synthesis of the information on LTCPs and CSO controls between NYC & NJ.
  - ii. Re-boot the Harbor-Wide Water Quality Monitoring Report efforts.
  - iii. Compile a list with all relevant water quality criteria/standards for inter-agency communication.
  - iv. The workgroup should have a GIS file with all of the NYCDEP sampling locations.
  - v. PVSC is conducting intensive sampling for their pathogens model which will help with site-specific criteria or a UAA; NYC's loadings are needed for this.

#### 4. Priorities for research and filling in knowledge gaps

- Questions raised by the Workgroup:
  - i. Is any of the harbor-wide monitoring redundant? Do any of the site locations need to be re-visited?
  - ii. Is our sampling representative for fish propagation and recreation? I.e. spatially & temporally?
  - iii. For pharmaceuticals, what's the technology available to treat? We need that information before we can set limits for these constituents.
  
- Opportunities/Thoughts/Aspirations - comments from the Workgroup:
  - i. Look into the possibility of re-distributing sampling locations (this can be followed up on with the Shared Waterways Monitoring Workgroup).
  - ii. There is a successful PCB program in the Delaware River Basin (DRBC) where action levels have been established as well as for other toxics. Camden sampled their sewer system and conducted trackdown. They found that they can eliminate 90% of the sources. Permits are not feasible because the limits are too low to be achievable. HEP should work with NY to do something similar in the Harbor Estuary (could also come up with action levels for pharmaceuticals/pcps/etc.). HEP could focus on source control upstream in the Passaic & conduct Harbor-wide trackdown studies.
  - iii. The workgroup needs to get the Health Departments involved if our focus will be pathogens, as they are responsible for a lot of the sampling.
  - iv. Shorelines & shallows should be the focus in terms of monitoring, access & fish propagation.
  - v. The Monmouth County Health Department has lost money to sample non-bathing beaches.

#### 5. Follow-up, next steps, and items for the group to think about: *Please forward any thoughts or ideas on these topics to Ariane*

- The workgroup did not get the chance to cover any specific topics related to nutrients or shellfish today and there is still much to be discussed.
- Our next meeting will be held in August following the July Policy Committee meeting. We will be reviewing a refined list of priorities and discussing HEP's role in advancing these priorities over the next 5 years.