

New York – New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program

Communications Plan

January 20, 2022 FINAL

Summary

This communications plan is intended to help the New York-New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program (HEP) better engage its target audiences of public and private scientists, estuary managers, and other environmental professionals; elected and appointed officials and their staff; professional environmental educators; members of the media; and students and active members of community and civic organizations.

The overall goal of this plan is to improve access to, and use of, credible science and other information by professionals, decision-makers, and community members in developing and implementing management and enhancement efforts for the estuary. It identifies actions that will guide HEP staff and partners in communicating about the Program and our work to implement the 2017-2022 Action agenda.

To create this plan, Fish Partners, a communications consultant identified 16 specific communication actions that should be undertaken by HEP. Each action was then ranked and discussed by HEP's Management Committee and the Citizens Advisory Committee.

Based on these comments, the 16 communications actions were revised and are presented here with a focus on the seven actions that were deemed most important. These are divided as whether the actions will primarily address longer-term and on-going strategic objectives or tactical shorter-term improvements. In either case, each of these seven actions includes a narrative description of proposed activities, key deliverable leads for those activities, any specific resources needed, and a timeline for implementation.

Longer Term/Ongoing Strategic Objectives

1. Tell the story about HEP and our work more clearly and consistently across all our communications.
2. Develop skills, tools, and strategies to effectively communicate scientific information, especially to policy-makers and environmental managers.
3. Improve coordination, collaboration, and information exchange with peer/partner organizations.

Shorter Term/Tactical Improvements

4. Promote and execute hosted events and gatherings, including online events, at higher and more consistent quality.

5. Fully engage media outlets and forums to create awareness and advance priorities with target audiences.
6. Better monitoring of media, network and industry activity.
7. Better manage relationship records to track and improve interactions.

As detailed in this plan, communication and program staff will work with its committees, technical work groups, and partners to undertake these recommendations as we implement the 2017-2022 Action Agenda and prepare for its revision in 2025.

Implementing these recommendations will enable HEP staff and partners to communicate clearly and effectively about HEP and its CCMP goals and priority actions to the public and stakeholders. As appropriate, the specific and most important 2017-2022 Action Agenda priorities that will benefit from implementation are referenced under each action in this plan. See the final section of this document, 2017 - 2022 Action Agenda Priorities Specifically Supported by This Plan for a complete list that is cross referenced to the relevant communication action.

HEP and its host, the Hudson River Foundation (HRF) have hired a part-time Communications Manager who will be responsible for coordinating and/or executing much of this work on behalf of HEP. The costs of this staff person will be shared equally between HEP and HRF. HEP's contribution starting in 2022 will be about \$ 35,000 per year, including indirect costs and fringe benefits. As noted, HEP and other HRF staff will also be responsible for executing this plan and in some cases, considerable direct costs will be required. These specific needs are identified and as possible, budget needs are estimated.

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Process and Overview of HEP Communications Plan

The New York-New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program (HEP) is a collaboration created by the US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) and the two states, and authorized and supported by the federal Clean Water Act. Its mission is to develop and implement a plan to protect, conserve, and restore the estuary. HEP and its partners work together to address water quality issues, protect and restore productive habitat, manage sediments, improve safe public access and foster community stewardship, and engage the public in decisions about the Harbor. HEP provides a forum to develop and implement actions that improve the health of the Estuary by convening partnerships of interested stakeholders, using sound science to analyze the issues, and working to implement recommendations that are environmentally and economically responsible. HEP's [2017-2022 Action Agenda](#) identifies five long-term goals, 17 objectives, and 40 specific actions that will help enable people and wildlife to benefit from the fishable and swimmable waters called for by the Clean Water Act.

The Hudson River Foundation (HRF) has been hosting HEP on behalf of the US EPA and the other HEP partners since 2014. The Foundation is a non-profit whose mission is to make science integral to decision-making throughout the Hudson River and its watershed and to support competent stewardship of this extraordinary resource. HRF supports scientific research; communication to expand knowledge about the river among the scientific community, policy makers, and the public at large; initiatives to enhance management of the Hudson ecosystem; and education about the River and watershed. HRF's current Strategic Plan states, "As the champion and steward of science-based decision-making, the Foundation is uniquely positioned to provide the kind of public education, continuing education and communications the public needs to parse issues and make informed choices. The Foundation is also uniquely positioned to collaborate with foundations and NGO partners who are similarly engaged in these efforts."

Understanding the deep common purpose and audiences of these two entities, and the benefits of sharing responsibility for communications, HEP and HRF have integrated their communications work. This includes building a shared website and content management system, our electronic newsletter and social media, and commonly branding publications, public conferences and seminars. At least 50% of the cost of this effort is being borne by HRF using non-federal funds.

To continue and deepen this collaboration, the Hudson River Foundation issued an Request for Expression of Interest (RFEI) and selected Fish Partners (Fish) to develop a communications strategy to raise awareness of HRF and HEP, our shared work, and the scientific understanding and management needs of the Hudson River and Harbor Estuary. This work was underwritten entirely by HRF.

To help prepare Fish for their work, HEP and other HRF staff developed background documents identifying key audiences and current communication activities. These were reviewed by the HEP Management Committee.

Based on review of HEP/HRF material, interviews with key stakeholders, and participation in a selection of HEP and HRF events, Fish identified 16 specific communication actions that should be undertaken by HEP and HRF. Each action was then ranked and discussed by the Management Committee and the Citizens Advisory Committee. The seven actions deemed most important and relevant are detailed in this report, drawing on language from the Fish Associates report to describe possible tactics. Each of these seven priorities, numbered for convenience, includes a narrative description of possible activities, any specific resources needed, and a timeline for implementation.

Implementing these recommendations will enable HEP staff and partners to communicate clearly and effectively about HEP and its CCMP goals and priority actions to the public and stakeholders. As appropriate, the specific and most important 2017-2022 Action Agenda priorities that will benefit from implementation are referenced under each action in this plan. See the final section of this document, 2017 - 2022 Action Agenda Priorities Specifically Supported by This Plan for a complete list that is cross referenced to the relevant communication action.

Implementing these recommendations will be the responsibility of HEP staff, in coordination and with the guidance of the HEP Management and Policy Committees. HEP and its host, the Hudson River Foundation (HRF) have hired a part-time Communications Manager who will be responsible for coordinating and/or executing much of this work on behalf of HEP. The costs of this staff person will be shared equally between HEP and HRF. HEP's contribution starting in 2022 will be about \$ 35,000 per year, including indirect costs and fringe benefits. As noted, HEP and other HRF staff will also be responsible for executing this plan and in some cases, considerable direct costs will be required. These specific needs are identified and as possible, budget needs are estimated.

Target Audiences, Communications Goal and Priority Actions

This communications plan is intended to help the New York-New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program (HEP) better engage its target audiences of public and private scientists, estuary managers, and other environmental professionals; elected and appointed officials and their staff; professional environmental educators; members of the media; and students and active members of community and civic organizations.

The overall goal of this plan is to improve access to, and use of, credible science and other information by professionals, decision-makers, and community members in developing and implementing management and enhancement efforts for the estuary.

The following seven communications actions have been recognized as being the highest priority for HEP in communicating about the Program and our work to implement the 2017-2022 Action agenda. These are divided as whether the actions will primarily address longer-term/ongoing strategic objectives or shorter-term tactical improvements. In either case, this plan provides a narrative description of the rationale and proposed activities, key deliverable leads for those activities; any specific resources needed, and a timeline for implementation. Communication and program staff will work with HEP committees, technical work groups, and partners to undertake these recommendations as we implement the 2017-2022 Action Agenda and prepare for its revision in 2025.

Longer Term/Ongoing Strategic Objectives

1. Tell the story about HEP and our work more clearly and consistently across all our communications (TIMELINE: 2022-2025).
2. Develop skills, tools, and strategies to effectively communicate scientific information, especially to policy-makers and environmental managers (TIMELINE: 2022-2025).
3. Improve coordination, collaboration, and information exchange with peer/partner organizations (TIMELINE: 2022-2025).

Shorter Term/Tactical Improvements

4. Promote and execute hosted events and gatherings, including online events, at higher and more consistent quality (TIMELINE: 2023-2024).
5. Fully engage media outlets, including social media, and forums to create awareness and advance priorities with target audiences (TIMELINE: 2022- 2023).
6. Better monitoring of media, network and industry activity (TIMELINE: 2022-2023).
7. Better manage HEP/HRF relationship records to track and improve interactions (TIMELINE: 2024-2025).

Other communication needs identified by Fish but deemed less critical by HEP's leadership:

- Communicate with greater consistent language, tone, and style.

- Create a clear set of guidelines and descriptions for communicating the HRF and HEP relationship so there is greater understanding of how we work together and why.
- Clarify internal processes and structures to better manage outgoing communications.
- Enhance use of social media to measurably reach target audiences.
- Refine our website to better serve its intended audiences.
- Ensure quality and consistency of the visual look and feel of our materials, so they can be more easily recognized as ours, and help build our brand.
- Enhance skills and capacity to more proactively seek resources from more diverse sources for Action Agenda implementation.
- Better equip HEP partners and participants to advocate for our shared priorities.
- Improve communication skills of staff, so they can more ably share information about the Program and its activities.

Communications Actions

Longer Term/Ongoing Strategic Objectives

1. Tell the story about HEP and our work more clearly and consistently across all our communications.

RATIONALE: To support coherent and intentional communication, HEP will develop core self-description messaging, which serves as a useful boilerplate that can be lightly adapted for many written and spoken communication. This will increase understanding of HEP's unique role among our target audiences.

DESCRIPTION: To meet this need HEP will develop messaging at a summary level, in a single, concise core document (likely one to two pages total) that covers the most important general-purpose messaging areas, in a cohesive narrative format, with focus on those characteristics that make HEP and our work distinct and valuable. This document will serve as a template that provides basic material for subsequent, more in-depth messaging. It will include:

- HEP's work, ways of working, focus areas, roles in the network of organizations focused on NY-NJ waterbodies
- HEP's mission/values/purpose
- HEP's history
- HEP's relationship

Feedback from staff, HEP's core partners, and outside stakeholders should inform finalization of a satisfactory draft of this summary core messaging document, which should then be revisited as appropriate for feedback and updates based on learnings from practical application.

Following the development of core messaging to a threshold of sufficiency, the Communications Manager will begin revising/expanding the current library of basic communication materials that build on the core messaging and more fully or deeply addresses subjects that warrants further description. These will likely include:

- any of the subjects listed above, many of which are likely to appear in other contexts with more detail than would be appropriately included as a section of a one to two page core messaging document;
- descriptions of specific programs, projects, grants, and fellowships;
- biographies of all external-facing personnel;
- histories/stories/narratives documenting significant research projects and major accomplishments;
- graphical presentations of HEP geographic areas of responsibility;
- onboarding information kit for new staff and HEP partners/committee members;
- and the organization's strategic priorities in public-facing formats, for example, an annual report or similar.

The production of these materials should be an ongoing task, and pursued as the communication staff deems appropriate or as they are needed.

KEY DELIVERABLE(S): Summary core messaging document and associated library of basic communication materials.

ACTION AGENDA REFERENCE: This task and deliverables will specifically advance Action Agenda Priority CE-C-1: Sustain website, monthly newsletter, social media, contact database, and other communications tools. Other priorities that will be supported by this include: (WQ-A-2) Work with US EPA Region II to determine best way to translate differing standards and data on water quality parameters of shared waters; (WQ-B-1) Develop factsheets, story maps, and/or other material intended for a broad audience regarding LTCP's, MS4 etc., and participate in public outreach opportunities with partners; (WQ-D-1) Compile, interpret, translate harbor wide water quality data and trends, and produce report; (H-A-1) Increase investment in conservation and restoration projects, and (PA-C-1) Work with partners to develop consistent messaging for the public regarding risks of poor water quality.

RESPONSIBILITY / ESTIMATED ANNUAL BUDGET/ ADDITIONAL DIRECT COSTS: Communications Manager at 20% of effort or \$ 7,000 per year. Graphic assistance as required. For FY 22, HEP budgeted \$ 5,000 for its regular printing and electronic communications needs.

TIMELINE: 2022 - 2025

2. **Develop skills, tools, and strategies to effectively communicate scientific information, especially to policy-makers and environmental managers.**

RATIONALE: For all communication intended for non-scientific audiences, it will be important to develop the capacity to consistently deliver scientific information in a way that is lucid and compelling to its intended audiences.

DESCRIPTION: The Communications Manager will collaborate with other staff, partners, and grantees to enhance the HEP's skills, knowledge, and capacity to pursue this objective, including:

- Review and be familiar with best practices in science communication and effectively inform policy makers and environmental managers.
- Interview organizations whose work focuses on summarizing and translating science for practical application by various decision-maker audiences, to better understand their strategies and techniques.
- As appropriate for priority subjects and topics, identify and build partnerships with agencies and organizations that have existing capacity to translate and communicate research, policy implications, and management needs to decision-makers.
- Experiment with engaging freelance writers who can effectively translate science for non-science target audiences; work towards developing a network of talented freelance writers who have experience working with the organization and understand its values and goals.

- Conduct interviews with a broad and representative range of individual policy/management decision-makers and staff, to better understand unserved needs and opportunities for improvement, and learn to better develop effective summaries and translations of science. This should include understanding the need for multi-language materials including which languages are of highest priority, connecting with multilingual media outlets, and providing translations during webinars/seminars.
- Solicit ongoing feedback from decision-maker and decision-influencer audiences to evaluate the efficacy of HEP's efforts to meet their needs.
- Start testing and improving new summaries of existing, relevant, under-communicated scientific knowledge (e.g. research translations, monitoring, reporting, analysis) for non-scientist audiences.

The best approach or process to communicate scientific research to its potential users will depend on the specific issue, the intended outcome, and the particular individual and organizational target audiences that need to be reached. Over time, HEP will need to undertake a process of experimentation to develop skill, expertise, knowledge, and judgment in this area. The Communications Manager will play an important role in this process and should collaborate with leadership and staff to experiment with plans and processes to more proactively deliver research findings to their intended audiences. This would include:

- begin planning for the communication of research findings from the inception of each relevant funded study;
- determine priority research projects for communications activities and identify their prospective audiences;
- identify individuals who should be made aware of the project and its potential impact on their work, and who will need to be informed of its findings;
- identify opportunities to leverage partner organizations, networks, and relationships to best reach target individuals;
- determine if elevated media attention/public awareness would be sufficiently helpful to justify targeting such media; if so, develop strategy to promote research to media contacts;
- draft provisional budgets, steps, and timeline for communicating potential impacts and findings to target audiences;
- solicit input from key targets to understand needs and inform best approach to communicate findings;
- keep all of the above targets/partners aware of ongoing progress of research projects as necessary.

The Communications Manager should also evaluate the merits of providing broader communication support to grantee and other researchers, who may serve a valuable role in communicating their research to target audiences and engaging stakeholders considering policy or management decisions. Such support must consider how it complements that offered by the researchers host university or institution.

Such support for grantees and other researchers could include:

- make connections to media platforms, channels, and forums;

- help cultivate relationships between grantees and policy/management decision-makers;
- improve grantees' presentation and interview skills;
- prepare and improve messaging / talking points for specific presentations and interviews;
- develop communication assets (e.g. infographics) for presentations.

The Communications Manager should take a leadership role proactively ideating, testing, and improving current and new event and publication formats. Some current examples relevant to the 2017-2022 Action Agenda and 2025 revision include:

- *Events*: Including briefings for decision-makers covering new science on priority issues and workshops designed to nurture relationships and enhance interaction between scientists, managers, and/or decision-makers (e.g., H-A-3 Develop presentations and participate in outreach to communicate value of ecosystem services to wide spectrum of audiences);
- *Private Meetings*: Private meetings with decision-makers and their staff to brief them on specific pieces of research (HEP-funded and otherwise) that are relevant to their current and upcoming work (e.g.. H-B-2: Assess and interpret shoreline and shallow-water habitat condition and value),);
- *Publications*: Including targeted summaries of findings of relevant research; “state of the science”; and/or future research needs relevant to upcoming management and policy decisions (e.g., 2025 revision of the Environmental Monitoring Plan and State of the Estuary report);
- *Experiment with publication content and format*, including: HTML-first reports for especially timely/high-impact/high-reach research; PDFs designed to be read on screen; video clips or explanatory animations addressing key takeaways; compelling infographics, graphs, or charts; interactive tools and visualizations; and modular reports that allow relevant pieces to be pulled out and shared (e.g., WQ-D-2 Develop briefs and stories about water quality conditions of individual waterways and watersheds));
- *Flagship campaigns*: Multi-faceted campaigns focused on key issues, with a maximum of one to two such campaign issues in process in any single year; such a campaign would likely involve research, research synthesis, (potentially co-authored) policy recommendations, various audience-specific translations, press strategy, and proactive distribution to key audiences.

KEY DELIVERABLE(S): Develop, execute, and evaluate three to five events and/or publications that deliver research findings to their intended audiences in an integrated manner.

ACTION AGENDA REFERENCE: This work will significantly advance multiple Action Agenda priorities, especially H-B-2: Assess and interpret shoreline and shallow-water habitat condition and value; (WQ-D-1) Compile, interpret, translate harbor wide water quality data and trends, and produce report; and (WQ-D-2) Develop briefs and stories about water quality conditions of individual waterways and watersheds.

RESPONSIBILITY / ESTIMATED ANNUAL BUDGET/ ADDITIONAL DIRECT COSTS: Communications Manager with considerable assistance from HEP staff as part of their individual annual workplan

elements. Communications Manager at 40% of effort or \$ 14,000 per year. Other costs could include funding for meetings, publications/graphics, and events. In FY 22, HEP budgeted \$ 5,000 a year for its regular printing and electronic communications needs and \$ 17,000 for targeted outreach through its conference and other events.

TIMELINE: 2022-2025

3. Improve coordination, collaboration, and information exchange with peer/partner organizations.

RATIONALE: HEP has a wide variety of important relationships with diverse partner organizations. Sustaining and strengthening these relationships will improve HEP capacity to realize this strategic advantage.

DESCRIPTION: The communication manager will:

- Maintain close relationships with communication teams at partner agencies and organizations to facilitate efficient coordination and collaboration as needed.
- Ensure all peer/partner organizations are aware, on an ongoing basis, of HEP's current and upcoming agenda and activities, and long term ambitions.
- Ensure all relevant not-for-profit organizations clearly understand funding opportunities at HEP, and proper processes to pursue those opportunities.
- Solicit ongoing feedback from peer/partner organizations regarding interactions with and understanding of HEP.
- Collaborate between staff to ensure all peer/partner requests for information and support are discussed by relevant members of the organization and responded to promptly.
- Collaborate with leadership and staff to ensure HEP is aware of peer/partner organizations' current and upcoming agenda and activities, and long term ambitions.
- Collaborate with leadership and staff to ensure HEP is aware of all relevant opportunities for collaboration with and support for peer/partner organizations, and that decisions to pursue such opportunities are made in a coordinated and strategic fashion.
- Collaborate with leadership and staff to identify opportunities for HEP to engage appropriate peer/partner organizations in support of its projects and initiatives, and work with relevant colleagues to do so.

KEY DELIVERABLE(S): On-going reporting and discussion of networking and relationship building with peer/partner organizations to HEP staff.

ACTION AGENDA REFERENCE: This deliverable will specifically advance a number of Action Agenda Priorities including Priority CE-C-1: Sustain website, monthly newsletter, social media, contact database, and other communications tools.

RESPONSIBILITY / ESTIMATED ANNUAL BUDGET/ ADDITIONAL DIRECT COSTS: Communications Manager at 10% of effort or \$ 3,500 per year.

TIMELINE: 2022-2025

Shorter Term/Tactical Improvements

4. Promote and execute our hosted events and gatherings, including online events, at higher and more consistent quality.

RATIONALE: Hosted events are an important communication channel for HEP, and constitute one of the main contexts in which the organization delivers the outputs of its work to audiences.

DESCRIPTION: HEP staff, in particular the Research Assistant, will work with the Communications Manager and HEP will develop an improved toolkit to promote and execute events at higher and more consistent quality. This process will include:

- Evaluate current systems for webinar and conference broadcasts (e.g., Zoom and Cisco Webex; HRF conference room cameras and microphones) to determine if they remain appropriate to efficiently and systematically manage event broadcast and deliver quality experience to participants for virtual and hybrid events.
- Evaluate current system and identify and implement an appropriate event reservation system (e.g., Eventbrite).
- If appropriate, identify and implement alternative webinar broadcast system.
- As appropriate, upgrade audio/video hardware to capture and broadcast presentations at a higher level of quality.
- Develop ways and means of linking the webinar management system, email management system, event reservation system and customer relationship management software.
- Develop, test, and improve techniques and materials for collecting and analyzing attendee feedback and general event evaluation in terms of overall approach, communication before/during/after, event content, quality, and attendance, and any attendee feedback.
- Consider investing in the production of more concise and high-quality, edited takeaway summary videos; at minimum, videos should be titled and begin with the presentation rather than introductory remarks.
- Review and as needed, develop improved communication for attendees, before, during, and after each event, including invitations; save-the-date messages; event reminders; event broadcast access information; post-event video (if it is appropriate to the event's goals); web strategy for post-event video and any other post-event information; debrief/take-home information; and plan and schedule for any important follow-up communication, information, or requests.

The toolkit will also provide guidance for how HEP staff can work with the Communications Manager to help ensure the intentionality, quality, attendance, and impact of each event in terms of external communications:

- Each event should have a clearly understood set of objectives and performance indicators: *“What is the purpose of this event? What outcomes do we want to see? What are we trying to communicate, to whom, and why? How will we know if we have succeeded? Other than this event and its attendant communication, how else should we plan to communicate this information?”*
- For any event identify priority audiences (groups and individuals): *“Who needs to be here and why? Who would it be nice to have here? Who is missing/we haven’t been able to engage previously?”* For all events, an important consideration will be how the priority

audience helps advance progress towards HEP's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice goals and roadmap.

KEY DELIVERABLE(S): Toolkit for hosted events, including guidance for communications of events.

ACTION AGENDA REFERENCE: This deliverable will specifically advance WQ-D-2 Develop briefs and stories about water quality conditions of individual waterways and watersheds; H-B-2 Assess and interpret shoreline and shallow-water habitat condition and value ; and PA-B-2 Support stewardship activities and public programming through small grants.

RESPONSIBILITY / ESTIMATED ANNUAL BUDGET/ ADDITIONAL DIRECT COSTS: Communications Manager at 10% or \$3,500 a year with the initial help of the Research Assistant to create the toolkit. HEP staff will undertake the planning, execution, and evaluation of events as identified in the annual workplan. Upgrading of audio/video hardware to capture and broadcast presentations at a higher level of quality could range in cost depending on need. A working estimate is \$ 1,000 for purchasing additional cameras to \$15,000 for new audio/visual system. These costs are not currently budgeted but would likely be underwritten by the HRF.

TIMELINE: 2023-2024.

5. Fully engage media outlets and forums to create awareness and advance priorities with target audiences.

RATIONALE: Growing and enacting HEP priorities requires establishing relationships with journalists, researchers, producers, hosts and other decision-makers at digital and print publications, podcasts, blogs, radio shows, and organizations that host events or panels.

DESCRIPTION: Engaging media outlets should proceed with clear reasons, goals, audiences, and outcomes in mind, and not just generally for the sake of "getting press" or "raising the organization's profile".

The Communications Manager will work with HEP leadership to identify an initial set of specific events, research, publications or other priorities for engaging outside media.

With these topics in mind, the Communications Manager will develop a long list of target media and individuals based on input from leadership and research into relevant regional and national media outlets or forums:

- that HEP has participated with in the past;
- that have covered topics of concern to HEP;
- and that reach (and are contextually appropriate to) any of HEP's key target audiences (with emphasis on policy and management decision-makers).

This list will be weaned down, prioritized, and individual targets identified. The communication staff will work with HEP leadership (and where appropriate, solicit input/assistance from other partners) to identify priorities for engaging outside media as well as existing media contacts or most promising paths/opportunities to establish contact. Then, the Communications Manager will cultivate relationships and credibility with these media professionals for a wide range of communication purposes, including:

- Establishing HEP as a direct source and reference for background information on coverage of relevant topics.
- Pitching stories to media professionals related to topics or projects of concern to HEP, partners, and grantees.
- Disseminating relevant funded research to policy-influencing audiences (including connecting researchers with outlets).
- Ensure relevant science is part of conversation around issues, policies, etc.
- Raise visibility/awareness of HEP and cultivate reputation as science leader with target audiences.

Some examples of potentially appropriate outlets:

- Regional and local reporters who focus on environmental, legislative, and other relevant issues;
- National reporters or writers who focus on climate, urban ecology, water and other relevant topics;
- Local and regional public radio and public television reporters, editors, producers, hosts (e.g. WNYC, WAMC, WNJT, WNET);
- More targeted podcasts and radio shows (Resources for the Future podcast, Eco-logic or Green Streets radio hour at WBAI, Yale's On The Environment podcast, etc.);
- Organizers of all events covering relevant issues and topics; over time this could go beyond specific timely natural resource issues, to include broader values like the importance of science in decision-making, or the inclusion of diverse perspectives in science and management, or disciplines like science communication.

KEY DELIVERABLE(S): Database of media contacts; Placement of stories and other similar evidence of media engagement.

ACTION AGENDA REFERENCE: This task will specifically advance Action Agenda priorities WQ-B-1 Develop factsheets, story maps, and/or other material intended for a broad audience regarding LTCP's, MS4 etc.; WQ-D-1 Compile, interpret, translate harbor wide water quality data and trends, and produce report; WQ-D-2 Develop briefs and stories about water quality conditions of individual waterways and watersheds; and H-A-1 Increase investment in conservation and restoration projects.

RESPONSIBILITY / ESTIMATED ANNUAL BUDGET/ ADDITIONAL DIRECT COSTS: Communications Manager at 10% of effort or \$ 3,500 per year. Communications Manager will be assisted by other HEP staff and partners as appropriate. In particular, communications with media can be supplemented with assistance from EPA Region 2 public affairs.

TIMELINE: 2022 - 2023

6. Better monitoring of media, network and industry activity.

RATIONALE: Staying aware of all events, issues, topics, subjects, or activity related to HEP's focus areas and action agenda items will improve the positioning of HEP in the media and the effectiveness of direct communications.

DESCRIPTION: There are a wide range of available software (including many free options) that can help the organization efficiently and systematically monitor media and communication channels for relevant information. All of these tools generally work on the principle of automatically monitoring various channels (websites, news, social media channels, blogs, discussion boards, books, images, videos) and aggregating content based on user-determined alerts for keywords, combinations of keywords, phrases, and hashtags.

The Communications Manager will assess how best to right-size this effort, based on the potential volume and ultimate purpose of this information, and will work with the Research Assistant to use appropriate tools and processes to:

- Learn what anyone is saying about HEP (by tracking terms like all variations of HEP names, all variations of any of the names of supported or co-managed programs or initiatives, any publicly visible senior personnel, all variations of grantee / grantee research names).
- Supplement existing awareness of any ongoing events, issues, topics, or subjects that are organizational priorities or relevant to the organization's work.
- Track activities of peer/partner NGOs, agencies, elected officials, on issues, grantees and their organizations.
- Learn from the practices of analogous or model organizations.
- Identify potential new partners, audiences, or funding sources, or any other individuals or organizations that HEP would like to build or deepen relationships with.
- Identify important influencers.
- Track performance of any HEP-published or collaborated content, including media hits and downloads.
- Identify opportunities for communication, collaboration, or support.

The Communications Manager will build on current efforts to develop an appropriate suite of digital tools and tactics to do this efficiently, broadly, and systematically.

KEY DELIVERABLE(S): Develop monitoring tools and tactics, execute and report results to HEP management.

ACTION AGENDA REFERENCE: This task will advance a number of Action Agenda Priorities including Priority CE-C-1 Sustain website, monthly newsletter, social media, contact database, and other communications tools.

RESPONSIBILITY / ESTIMATED ANNUAL BUDGET/ ADDITIONAL DIRECT COSTS: Communications Manager at 5% of effort or \$ 1,750 per year with the help of the Research Assistant at a comparable level. New subscriptions and tracking software as needed; these costs are minimal and would be borne by the HRF.

TIMELINE: 2022-2023

7. Better manage relationship records to track and improve interactions.

RATIONALE: Adoption of a contemporary, cloud-based customer relationship management (CRM) that links to the management systems for email, event reservation, and webinar broadcast can allow for the practical management of those relationships, and the measurement of success against goals with each audience.

DESCRIPTION: There are a wide range of CRM software with commensurately wide-ranging cost, complexity, and level of expertise necessary to setup and maintain. The HEP Director will work with HRF Executive Director, Office Manager, Communications Manager, and the research assistant to evaluate anticipated needs. This could possibly include engaging a consultant to conduct a needs assessment to identify an as-simple-as-possible solution for those needs. Once a determination has been made, the office manager and research assistant will oversee the process of improving use of and possibly integrating current mailing lists, attendee lists, Microsoft Access, and leadership's personal contacts. The CRM database, email management system, webinar management system and event reservation system (along with any other relevant systems used for regular contact with audiences) should be linked, and kept current.

KEY DELIVERABLE(S): Evaluation and improvement of current relationship management systems, including possible acquisition of new CRM software.

ACTION AGENDA REFERENCE: This deliverable will specifically address (CE-C-1 Sustain website, monthly newsletter, social media, contact database, and other communications tools.

RESPONSIBILITY / ESTIMATED ANNUAL BUDGET/ ADDITIONAL DIRECT COSTS: HRF Office Manager and Research Assistant. Initial evaluation and simple improvement in workflow for the current system will require minimal HEP staff effort. For the Communications Manager, this is estimated at 5% of effort or \$ 1,750 per year with a comparable involvement by the HEP Outreach Coordinator. HRF Office Manager and Research Assistant costs will be borne by the Foundation. Any acquisition of CRM software, staff training, and transfer of existing data would involve significant staff commitment and direct costs on the part the of the HRF and HEP. Direct implementation and subscription costs are estimated at between \$ 10,000 and \$ 20,000 per year.

TIMELINE: 2024-2025

2017 - 2022 Action Agenda Priorities Specifically Supported by This Plan

1. (WQ-A-2) Work with US EPA Region II to determine best way to translate differing standards and data on water quality parameters of shared waters, including how to communicate those conditions and goals to stakeholders and the public. (Communications Action # 1)
2. (WQ-A-3) Work with agencies to publicize No Discharge Zone initiative when it is adopted. (Communications Action # 2)
3. (WQ-B-1) Develop factsheets, story maps, and/or other material intended for a broad audience regarding LTCP's, MS4 etc., and participate in public outreach opportunities with partners. (Communications Action # 1, 5)
4. (WQ-B-4) Convene to share knowledge and best practices regarding CSO notification events, and identify pilot projects (Communications Action # 2)
5. (WQ-D-1) Compile, interpret, translate harbor wide water quality data and trends, and produce report. (Communications Action # 1, 2, 5)
6. (WQ-D-2) Develop briefs and stories about water quality conditions of individual waterways and watersheds. (Communications Action # 2, 4, 5)
7. (H-A-1) Increase investment in conservation and restoration projects. . (Communications Action # 1, 5)
8. (H-A-3) Develop presentations and participate in outreach to communicate value of ecosystem services to wide spectrum of audiences. (Communications Action # 2)
9. (H-B-2): Assess and interpret shoreline and shallow-water habitat condition and value. (Communications Action # 2, 4)
10. (PA-B-2) Support stewardship activities and public programming through small grants (Communications Action # 4)
11. (PA-C-1) Work with partners to develop consistent messaging for the public regarding risks of poor water quality. (Communications Action # 1, 2)
12. (PA-C-2) Revise, update, produce harbor-wide paddling guide (for general public). (Communications Action # 2)
13. (CE-A-1) Identify, create, and/or publicize shared protocols for habitat and water quality monitoring by civic organizations. (Communications Action # 2)
14. (CE-A-2) Support community based organizations with their communication needs, helping them develop strategies for visualizing Citizen Science data and helping community-based

organizations tell compelling stories about their local waterways and ecosystems. (Communications Action # 2)

15. (CE-B-1) Support Federal Urban Waters Federal Partnerships. (Communications Action # 2)
16. (CE-C-1) Sustain website, monthly newsletter, social media, contact database, and other communications tools. (Communications Action # 1, 2, 3, 6, 7)
17. (CE-C-2) Convene local and regional environmental education organizations to share best practices, and with them build system to communicate and share resources. (Communications Action # 2)

Acknowledgements

This report was prepared by Robert Pirani, Jon Kramer, and Rosana Da Silva with assistance from the rest of the staff of the Hudson River Foundation / New York-New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program and HEP partners, especially Lingard Knutson and Vince Bacalan from US EPA and Shino Tanikawa from the HEP CAC. The descriptions of the specific priorities were drawn from the report by prepared by Fish Partners for the Hudson River Foundation. HEP's Management and Citizens Advisory Committees assisted with the prioritization of the potential actions.

Although the information in this document has been funded wholly or in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency under agreement to the Hudson River Foundation, it has not undergone the Agency's publications review process and therefore, may not necessarily reflect the views of the Agency, and no official endorsement should be inferred.