

Hudson River Estuary Advisory Committee Meeting

Minutes, approved June 8, 2009

Date: March 25, 2009

Norrie Point Environmental Center, Staatsburg, NY

Attendance: (total 58)

HREMAC Members: (14)

Beers, Allen	Rockland County Environmental Resources
Bicking, Andy	Scenic Hudson
Connors, Bill	Federation of Dutchess County fish and game clubs
Emslie, Bill	Coastal Conservation
Findlay, Stuart	Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies
Griffen, Sara	OLANA Partnership
Matthiessen, Alex	Riverkeeper (John Lipscomb attending)
Molloy, Barney	Historic Hudson River Towns
Mylod, John	M. T. Net Co.
Rumpf, Jeff	Clearwater
Schoeberl, Karl	Central Hudson Gas and Electric
Suszkowski, Dennis	Hudson River Foundation
VanLuven, David	the Nature Conservancy
Van Schaack, Rene	Green County IDA

Ex-Officios: (5)

Baudanza, Tom	NYC DEP
Devine, Bonnie	NYS DOS
Keller, Scott	Hudson River Valley Greenway
Reinhardt, Bob	NYS OPRHP
Rukovets, Boris	Interstate Env. Commission (Brian Mitchell attending)

Guests: (9)

Conover, Dave	Hudson River Sloop Clearwater
Ewald, Bob	Orange County angler
Gill, Huntley	
Keenan, Regina	NYS DOH
Lamberton, Roy	Hudson Basin River Watch
Rueter, Bob	Orange County angler
Shaw, Bill	Hudson River Environmental Society
Vian, Mark	
Weidman, Rebecca	NEWIPPC

DEC:(30)

Adams, Bob	Hudson River Fisheries Unit
Beard, Nancy	Estuary Program - Citizen Participation
Blair, Betsy (Gkeeper)	Hudson River Estuarine Research Reserve (HRNERR)
Bloomfield, Amy	Estuary Program, SCA
Bowser, Chirs	Estuary Program/ Research Reserve

Capprioli, AnneMarie	HRNERR – Administration
Cuppett, Scott	Estuary Program - watersheds
Dunn, Clare	Estuary Program – GIS/data management
Dunwell, Fran	Estuary Program – Coordinator
Fila, Laurie	HRENERR – education
Greiser, Kevin	Estuary Program –riparian buffers
Harrison, Ann (Gkeeper)	Public Affairs
Hauser, Emilie	HRNERR- training
Heady, Laura	Estuary Program – biodiversity
Higgs, Amanda	Hudson River Fisheries Unit
Houser, Rebecca	Estuary Program – education
Kendall, Barbara	Estuary Program – watersheds
Ladd, John	Estuary Program/ HRNERR – aquatic habitat
Mackey, Sherri	Estuary Program – administration
Mapes, Jeff	Lands and Forests
Marcell, Kristin	Estuary Program – climate change
Maresca, Susan	Region 2, Fish, Wildlife, Marine Resources
McAvoy, Jean	HRNERR – education
Miller, Dan	Estuary Program/ Research Reserve – aquatic habitat
Nieder, Chuck	Albany, FWMR, utilities permitting unit
Roessler, Beth	Estuary Program – web support and publications
Shaw, Jill	Estuary Program – Estuary grants
Stanne, Steve	Estuary Program – education
Wilson, Larry	Region 3, Fish, Wildlife, Marine Resources
Zucker, Leslie	Estuary Program, biodiversity coordinator

The meeting opened at 9:20 AM by D. Suszkowski and F. Dunwell. Introductions were made around the room. The minutes from the December 10, 2008 were approved, unchanged.

1) Update Reports

State of the Hudson Report (SOH): S. Stanne, B. Roessler - Staff thanked contributors for their comments on this evolving report. Due to a variety of factors, the SOH will not be a newspaper insert.. Several members commented on the loss of outreach potential by this change and suggested finding other ways to get this information into the press, i.e. press release, press event, cable TV, use of members’ grass roots connections, networking through memberships in other organizations. It was noted that use of newspapers and TV reach a new audience that wouldn’t otherwise see our message.

Estuary Grants: (F. Dunwell): The 10th cycle of estuary grants was received in June 2008. A new approval process put in place in early November has delayed the announcement of the grants. No new information was available at this time. Issue of the 2009 rounds is on hold, as are NYS Dept. of State grants.

Staff Updates: Beth Waterman retired in February, 2009. She will be missed. Bernard, “Barney” Molloy was welcomed as a new member to the committee. Barney represents Historic Hudson River Towns, a consortium of 18 municipalities working to revitalize their

Hudson River waterfronts.

Legislative Report: A. Bicking reported on a recent legislative reception that Scenic Hudson and other HREMAC members (D. VanLuven, B. Molloy, J. Rumpf, S. Griffen) organized for Hudson Valley legislators in Albany in anticipation of allocations for the Environmental Protection Fund and the April 1 budget deadline. The event was well received. F. Dunwell noted there appears to be confusion in Albany about what the various Hudson River programs do and how they are funded.

D. VanLuven announced that Congressman John Hall successfully got \$445,000 appropriated by Congress for the shallow water benthic mapping project after 2 years of trying to get this project going. B. Blair thanked the Nature Conservancy for their hard work on this effort.

2) Eel Mops: C. Bowser engaged the group in making "eel mops", inexpensive artificial habitat trapping devices that are being used by volunteers and school groups in several Hudson tributaries to catch migrating juvenile eels. He also announced a new on-line education initiative that the Research Reserve will be presenting on May 1, "Estuary Live" which will be broadcast into classrooms from Norrie Point.

3) Action Agenda 2010-2014: F. Dunwell provided an overview of the changes that have been proposed in the revised Action Agenda 2010: the goals are virtually the same, except Goals 5 and 6 have been combined and a new Goal 6 on Climate Change has been added. The targets have been updated and reorganized. The concept of "ecosystem services" has been made more explicit.

The following comments were received from the Committee and other participants.

On how high to aim,

- The Agenda targets should aim high. (J. Mylod:, D. Suszkowski)
- Make goals realistic: not too high, not too low -- make the AA the official statement of the state, recognizing what needs to be done to do the right thing. Do not fix AA to the current budget moment; do not play the budget game. (J. Lipscomb: J. Rumpf)
- Create the Vision: clean green prosperous, to inspire, engage people, partners: (J. Rumpf)
- Reality check goals/targets so they aren't so lofty that they miss the people. Balance between too high and what we want to achieve. Need to sell this to the people to support funding for this. (B. Conners)

On the format and size of the document,

- AA is an important document but has become too big. Use it as a guidance tool, a blueprint.
- There is too much detail on program, partners, and demonstration of all successes. Do not lump too much in the Agenda but keep it ambitious.
- ID: 1. what will be done by staff, 2. what will be done by others, 3. what is critical to do, needs partners.
- Use 10 Year report style document to reach Legislators, not the Action Agenda. (D.

VanLuven)

- Consider the reader's attention span to be limited. Consider a 1-2 pager of benefits. Make sure your measurable outcomes are things you can realistically measure.(B. Reinhardt)
- Make the document shorter. Gear it to targeted audience. Page 7, the public and legislature. Convey the message: What if we didn't have this program, what would happen to the River, the Valley? Need to make the case that the Action Agenda is essential if we want to have healthy environment, economy, future, etc. (D. Suszkowski)
- Keep flexibility to adapt management if needed: (K. Schoelberl)
- Include conditional clause, "due to circumstances" to protect if targets are not met due to budgetary circumstances: (B. Emslie)
- Like the new format; good that general format hasn't changed, makes the reader think about next steps: (J. Lipscomb: D. Suszkowski)
- Identify what targets are being met and not being met and why. (A. Bicking)

Regarding the Goals and Targets, Priorities,

- Articulate what each target will buy in terms of "benefit" What will be delivered to the people of NYS .
Need to deliver tangible benefits. Think for goals = benefits. Quantify what could be delivered. Think in terms of job creation, eco-economy, and commercial viability; (Andy Bicking: J. Rumpf)
- include a concluding statement; what will implementation of the Action Agenda result in: beneficial economic impact on the economy: (B.Molloy)
- Goals 9 & 10: refer to specific projects, too ambitious in specifics here. Could just refer to smart growth principles.(B. Molloy)
- Identify your critical actions. Identify who would be disappointed if certain actions did not happen. Take a look with the plan and identify your priorities, given limited funding and staff. (S. Griffen)
- Don't change long range targets, but consider shifting time line. Key is to identify and prioritize activities. Understand, if you don't do something, what will be affected. (D. Suszkowski)
- Consider who could pick up the tasks not undertaken; i.e. partnerships, leverage costs: (A. Bicking)

Emerging Issues, Gaps, other comments,

- Goal 2: Near shore mapping and climate change migration will need funding.
Shoreline modification: more input needed here into what could be done.
Progress could be derailed by invasive species; what has yet to show up, how to respond: (S. Findlay)
- Under restoration, add this in as potentially needing funding.(D. Suszkowski)
- No agreement in Watershed/Tributaries subcommittee on Action Agenda. Strong link with public
Source water protection – DOH project plan for everybody .How to apply Action Agenda to real world: Perhaps include a matrix of actions; potential lead agency, potential partners.
Need to do a reality check on the goals. More comments coming by April 24: (R. VanSchaack)

F. Dunwell asked for any additional comments by April 24, 2009.

4) Building Public Awareness for the Estuary Program and its Goals

The Committee discussed 3 questions: How can the committee help build broader public awareness of the Program; where can outside partners help with the goals of the Program, and What are the pressing issues that need increased public attention. The following is a summary of the comments discussed:

- Greenway, DOS and Estuary Program need to clarify, up front who's doing what, grants, etc. to dispell public confusion about what the different agencies offer. This needs to be consistent across the agencies. (S. Keller, B. Devine, A. Bicking)
- Reach the general public through the schools (B. Ewald)
- Use the upcoming release of the State of the Hudson, link the SOH to committee member websites, do an e-mail blast to all with the link. Get the press out there on the SOH, TV, newspapers. The media likes to focus on the problems, tell the story of how to fix the problems, emphasize initiatives that are going right. (C. Bowser, D. Suszkowski, S. Stanne)

5) Spring 2009 Estuary Program Volunteer Opportunities:

Estuary staff high-lighted opportunities for committee members and others to get involved and volunteer in spring programs:

- River Herring monitoring: Amy Bloomfield, SCA intern, described the River Herring migration volunteer monitoring program that has grown to 13 sites spanning the river from Albany to Rockland County. (See power point presentation)
- Woodland Pool Conservation: Laura Heady, discussed local efforts that are growing in popularity to identify important habitats and significant road crossings that threaten spring migrations of amphibian as they travel from the forests to woodland pools where they breed. During "big nights", volunteers record migration numbers at road crossings and help animals make it across to their destinations. (See power point presentation)
- North American Amphibian Monitoring (see power point presentation) L. Heady presented this project for A. Dewan, This project is being initiated in the Hudson Valley and uses roadside survey of calling frogs as a technique to identify important amphibian habitat breeding areas.
- Trees for Tribs: Kevin Greiser, urged committee members and others to join in on "Potting Day", April 24 and 26, where trees and shrubs will be potted for this season's riparian buffer project sites. The program is in its 3rd year and has grown significantly (see power point presentation)
- A. Harrison mentioned the New York Commission on Community Service at NYVolunteer.org. This site lists projects and helps link up people with projects.

6) Old Business/New Business:

B. Blair acknowledged David VanLuven (TNC) for helping get the federal funding appropriation for the shallow water mapping, noting this project will help with sediment - contaminant issues, sea-level rise and storm surge issues in the future. D. VanLuven then announced that the Nature Conservancy has made the difficult decision to discontinue the Hudson River Program after 3 years. F. Dunwell thanked David for his many contributions to the Committee and the Estuary Program.

The meeting adjourned 12:10 pm.
recorder.

Respectfully submitted, Nancy Beard,