

1. Welcome and announcements - 78 people attended (see listing below). The meeting opened at 1:35 PM. The meeting was recorded on Zoom. Attendees were asked to sign in through the Chat.

The March 12, 2020 minutes were reviewed. A motion to approve was made by Lucy Johnson, seconded by Dan Shapley. The minutes were approved. (A Nay in the chat box would indicate not approved- no nays were recorded.)

2. Updates:

Committee membership and Staff: Fran reviewed the following.

Barney Molloy has resigned from the Committee. Barney served for many years, working on access issues. His service to the committee was recognized and appreciated.

Estuary Program staff: Kristen Marcell, Climate Change team, has left the program and is headed to the state of Washington where her spouse has taken a position as president of a community college in Moses Lake. Kristen will be greatly missed and was recognized for her work on climate change not only in the Hudson Valley but throughout NYS.

Daniel Rearick was welcomed as the new HRECOS Coordinator. Dan will work from DEC's Albany Central office and is working remotely.

Action Agenda 2021-2025: Internal review and approval of the draft Action Agenda has been delayed due to the COVID situation. Fran will keep the committee updated.

The State of the Hudson report is progressing. The Estuary Program and NY/NJ HEP are working collaboratively on this report.

Grants: The normal schedule of release dates for our 2020 Estuary Grants has been delayed due to COVID. Staff will keep the committee updated. The Tributaries Grant RFA applications were due in January 2020. The announcement of these awards is on pause.

Budget: Andy Bicking stated that NYS's budget challenges are immense. Prior to COVID, the state budget was facing a \$6 billion deficit, (due mainly to Medicare issues), and this has now been worsened by the pandemic. The legislature had built into the budget check-in periods to match revenue with spending at intervals throughout the year, which now offers a bit more certainty during these uncertain times. Much will depend on the Federal response and how much funding is made available to states to support programs. More information on the EPF and other funding issues will be shared as it becomes available.

3. DEC and the Estuary Program moving forward:

Fran reported that Estuary Program staff are working from home with some limited field work being performed. It appears that conducting our education programs through virtual outreach has increased attendance participation in many situations. Some staff are able to do field work, some not.

Staff reported on how their teams are moving forward during COVID. PPT slides were shown during the meeting.

Scott Cuppett, Watershed: Staff are working on projects with modifications.

Trees-4-tribs, is moving forward in a modified version. Staff are not attending plantings in person; however, sites are being provided demos on how to pot-up bare-root plants and can plant on their own. 940 plants were provided to 8 sites this spring, covering 1400 ft. of stream. A similar season is anticipated for the fall.

HRECOS, Dan Rearick, the new Coordinator, has been reaching out to station managers, gaining an understanding of the status of their work, identifying needs, as well as taking on other projects, such as reviewing sections of the State of the Hudson report.

Barrier mitigation. This program is moving forward with modifications. Megan Lung and staff have started their field season and are working with partners including Trout Unlimited and Cooperative Extension.

Work is underway to better understand where eels have been documented in the watershed and what their abundance may have been or may be.

Work is also underway to define how many tributaries there are in the watershed and to determine how best to define what constitutes a tributary. There are 87 named tributaries, and there may be well over 140 total.

Libby Zemaitis, Resilient Communities: The team is adjusting to the loss of Kristin Marcell, with Libby taking on many of Kristin's projects. Work is underway to update the Climate Smart Communities (CSC) adaptation actions through the Climate Change office partnering with the DEC DOW, the EJ office, and state agencies; DOJ, DOS, DOT, Homeland Security, and DOH. She noted that COVID has shown how important it is to plan and brings home to all of us what the concept of resilience really means. Municipal momentum is strong despite the situation, with 18 of 19 Climate Smart Communities completing Climate Smart actions.

A new focus for this team is the impact of heat stress on the Hudson Valley and its implications for social vulnerability and EJ issues. This moment in time offers us an opportunity to become more present and aware of the importance of resiliency planning to our future.

Other work being carried out virtually includes Phase 2 of the CAD with City of Kingston and Piermont. Kingston reported 132 responses from the public on the beach concepts presented during a webinar on the future of Kingston Point Park. Partners recognized include; City of Kingston, Village of Piermont, Dan Miller, DEC permits, Heather Gierloff, and the design consultants.

At 2 PM, the group observed a moment of silence in recognition of the death of George Floyd and in support of his family.

Heather Gierloff, Habitats: Work is progressing with as much moved to on-line as possible. Progress is being made on the Tappan Zee mitigation, eel passage, ACOE Hudson River habitat study. Other monitoring is impacted due to labs not being open (vegetation and soil sampling). It is difficult to do much of the close in-person work, causing some monitoring delays. There will likely not be a full data record this year and we'll have to determine the impact of that. This is also getting staff to rethink how to monitor in the future. There has been a positive response to the newly completed fishing pier at Ferry landing, Nutten Hook. Overall, she is happy with how the team has adapted and is progressing.

Gregg Kenney, Fisheries: The shutdown has been difficult for this team. However, the staff response has been impressive and limited work has been ongoing on river herring, striped bass, and sturgeon. The new striped bass regulations put in place this season have been well accepted by the anglers who can no longer keep fish over 40". Anglers seem to understand the importance of this and are a conservation minded group on the whole. The team has several manuscripts in process and this work continues. Discussions with interested parties are ongoing to see if the utilities fisheries survey that was discontinued with the shut down of Indian Point can be streamlined and continued. The impact of this year's disruptions in data collection on the models used for fisheries stock assessments will be felt for years to come.

Laura Heady and the Conservation and Land Use Team: Work for this team is continuing and staff are adapting well to on-line platforms for convening meetings as well as providing information and on-line services to partners. Staff offer a monthly webinar series and a new video on the Towns of Wawarsing's natural resource inventory process is now available. Nine municipalities are in the process of developing or completing NRIs. This team is seeing more participation through the use of on-line platforms, with 150 attendees at its monthly webinar sessions. Stay tuned for the new website being developed by Cornell to host conservation planning tools.

Nate Nardi-Cyrus reported that the scenic vista handbook project is moving forward, as well as several estuary grants. The amphibian migration season reporting was down because of COVID.

Chris Bowser, Education Team: This has been a challenging time for the education community. However, all efforts are being made to adapt and stay as connected as much as possible. The eel project was reduced to 2 sites and still produced impressive results, seeing a robust influx of eels into the estuary this year. Live summer programs are being planned to be conducted on-line.

Nancy Beard, Access: Work on access projects is continuing though the implementation of several estuary grants (15 open grants) and the resiliency access handbook project. The COVID pandemic has brought to light just how important our open spaces and river access sites are to the physical and mental health of our communities during this time. Three grants are helping to implement Natural Resource Damages (NRD) projects in Sleepy Hollow along the Pocantico River and Losee Park in Westchester County.

4. 2019 HREMAC Committee Annual Report to Commissioner Seggos: The Committee discussed finalizing the 2019-2020 report to DEC. The letter as drafted has two components: to high light what has been accomplished and broach topics that will require the attention of the Committee, DEC and partners going forward. There was no report completed last year due to the passing of Dennis Suszkowski. It is important to get these compelling points on the record now to the Commissioner about what the Program has accomplished and continue to articulate ongoing issues that will need attention.

Two items were raised during discussion:

1. Clarifying the need to consider all options related to the future of the Erie Canal and the potential for the spread of invasive species between watersheds. While the Committee is not recommending a course of action, the statement will recognize the need to carefully weigh and consider all options and the pros and cons of each, in the process of developing a well justified plan of action. The Committee is not taking a position at this time.
2. Recognize the impact of the COVID pandemic on the Estuary Program, recognizing the need to change how business is and will be conducted for some time, including budget considerations. In

addition, the letter should recognize the work that the Commissioner has done to date to address the COVID situation both personally and professionally.

Rob Pirani requested that language be added to address the surge barrier proposals in the harbor, including the impacts and opportunities that the change in the HATS study's funding (now suspended) bring to the table. Peter Wepler offered to assist Rob with this language.

After some discussion, Julie Noble motioned: That, to move the completion of the Committee's annual report forward, the letter and the changes proposed at this meeting be accepted on principle, and that Stuart Findlay, Andy Bicking, and Dan Shapely be entrusted to word smith the document to reflect the sentiments expressed today. Rob Pirani and Peter Wepler will provide language specific to the HATS/harbor issue.

Scott Croft seconded the motion. There was no additional discussion. No dissenting votes were cast in the chat box. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Partner Reports on how they are adapting to COVID.

Andy Bicking, Scenic Hudson: Staff are working from home and adapting quickly to this new framework. The organization remains fully staffed. Some parks and lands have been closed to the public due to crowding and social distancing issues, including Mt. Beacon, Hudson Fiord Trail and Hudson Highland State Park. More people seem to be participating online as witnessed on the Danskammer Power Plant issue. New strategies are being investigated for the Restore Mother Nature Bond Act, at: NYRestore.com.

Dan Shapley, Riverkeeper: Riverkeeper has moved this year's Riversweep to 10/17/2020. Community science efforts have been postponed. Water quality concerns are raising the question of whether the COVID virus poses a threat in sewage outflows and has the potential to be transmitted this way. John Lipscomb continues to be on the river doing some sampling. Dam removal projects continue on the Fishkill Creek and Walkill River. There are possibilities here for promoting eel passage in the Fishkill and addressing underlying water quality issues on the Walkill. The "Hudson 7" celebrated their 2nd anniversary. Riverkeeper is keeping an eye on a number of state and federal environmental bills that have been stalled and/or delayed.

Rob Pirani, NY/NJ Harbor and Estuary Program: HEP is working to adapt meeting formats to online. Harbor educators are working on a resource guide for schools and teachers. To date, about 75 resources have been posted that will be available to everyone. The Hudson River Foundation is working on a proposal to assess the scientific needs of researching sewage during COVID as there is not a lot of data and more research, while expensive, can hopefully shed some light on the issue.

Peter Wepler, Army Corps of Engineers: After 19 years, the ACOE Hudson River Estuary Restoration Study Chief's Report has been signed. This report includes 20 restoration actions within a 25-mile radius of the Statue of Liberty. There are \$420 million worth of projects that could be implemented. The report is now with OMB for review. The HRHR is in the final review stage with a target of November/December for a Chief's report. It will be great to have these 2 reports done. Staff are busy with planning projects, and construction projects are ongoing. He thanked the Hudson River Foundation for their work and support on the habitat restoration plan in the early days of that project.

6. Discussion: How we can help each other moving forward? Many of the comments received during this time were focused on the expanded use of virtual platforms for meetings and public

outreach. Comments were also received via the chat. (See below for a summary of key information posted to the Chat.)

-Chris Bowser has found the use of DEC Facebook Live to be a success, the message is not deep but broadly effective and reaches a lot of people. Clearwater Facebook live was very cool.

-Erik Fyfe -Facebook live, google meetings, Microsoft Teams and Zoom all help with outreach. He asked other groups to help spread the word about Clearwater programs, the virtual sails and tideline programs with students, and virtual summer camp options. Fran indicated we would help facilitate this with him.

-Emily Vail, Hudson River Watershed Alliance, thanked the Estuary Program and NEI for their flexibility in grants and funding at this time. She reported that the Alliance is moving forward with their 'Toast to the Tribs' awards event, shifting to a live stream platform. Peter Smith of Passaic Creek Watershed Alliance, the Upper Hudson Watershed Coalition, the Albany Water Department daylighting the Patroon Creek, and HR Sloop Clearwater were the honorees this year. The event was shifted to June 23 to be in alignment with Black Out Tuesday and Black Lives Matter.

The HRWA breakfast series (aka the Watershed Omelet) will continue on a virtual platform as well (2nd Thursdays of the month), and the PACE LULA training series will be conducted as a series of Webinars.

Scott Croft, HRBYA: Scott says this is a great time to buy a boat! Boat clubs are open to varying degrees. Some boaters have not come back this year, but overall, it looks to be a good summer. He encouraged anyone who is out on the river to let him know what they see regarding recreational boating, the good as well as the bad, to help keep him informed.

Margie Turin, Lamont Doherty: Margie raised the question of how best to track engagement, and participation, during this time. She would like to hear from others about what's helpful, what works, what doesn't, what have others been doing. More than just metrics, she is interested in impact, gauging the usefulness of our efforts.

Stuart Findlay stated that IES is using pre and post surveys with their virtual research interns. IES has run these programs before and can compare previous experiences with this new situation. The bench mark has shifted a bit and it is hard to compare the past with this years' experience.

IN the Chat box: Additional information was provided in the on-line chat:

A.Bicking: A recent statement from Scenic Hudson relevant to recent events:
<https://www.facebook.com/ScenicHudson/photos/a.63438474678/10158465097624679/?type=3&theater>

Ingrid Haeckel: webinar series link: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5094.html#Training>

Ingrid Haeckel: Forest Index fact sheet:
https://www.nynhp.org/sites/default/files/ForestIndex_FactSheet_FINAL.pdf

Ingrid Haeckel: Important Areas fact sheet:
https://www.nynhp.org/sites/default/files/FactSheet_IAs_4-16-20_FINAL.pdf

Ingrid Haeckel: Wawarsing CEA video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=PrB-0CvRNJM>

Sarah Mount: Virtual River resources: <https://wri.cals.cornell.edu/udson-river-estuary/education/virtual-river-students-teachers-and-families/>

Sarah Mount: Here's the link to a Radiolab episode on eels: <https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/radiolab/articles/silky-love>

Chris Bowser: DEC has a Caregivers Resource page that includes a lot of good educational and support links: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/education/119886.html>

Roland Lewis: Please check out and consider joining the Rise To Resilience campaign <https://rise2resilience.org/>. Just launched June 1st with over 60 organizations aboard and growing. Contact Kate Boicourt kboicourt@waterfrontalliance.org for more information.

Stay tuned for the release of our Access Task Force report and call to action to make our waterfronts more equitable and accessible for all. Contact Sarah Dougherty sdougherty@waterfrontalliance.org for more information.

Robert Pirani: Here is the link to the educational guide <https://www.hudsonriver.org/article/educational-resource-guide>

Russell Urban-Mead: Listening to this HREMAC meeting leads me to believe there may be some good COVID-watershed speaker topics worth putting into our schedule. Please contact me or Emily Vail with suggestions. Thanks! Russell rum@chazencompanies.com

Megan Lung: There is a funding opportunity out through the NEP Coastal Watersheds Grant Program, LOI are due August 7th 2020 <https://estuaries.org/initiatives/watershedgrants/>

Libby Zemaitis: Correct link: <https://tinyurl.com/CSCvideoCEA>

7. Conservation Land Use Project Update Presentations: Two short project updates were presented.

Nate Nardi-Cyrus presented a PPT on the Scenic Vistas Handbook Project (NEI contract). The Estuary Program contracted with Saratoga Associates to develop a Scenic Vista Guidebook for landowners along the estuary. The project also includes 3 demonstration sites and 2 training sessions. One of the sites featured is the Hoyt House on the Mills Norrie State Park property where work has proceeded to clear a Hudson River vista. Another one is planned is at Blythewood, scheduled for the Fall 2020.

Laura Heady presented the video: "Wawarsing Case Study: Conserving Nature in Your Community: Critical Environmental Areas." This video chronicles the development of a Natural Resource Inventory between a private landowner, Colony Farm, and 2 towns that share a common resource.

In closing, Fran Dunwell and Stuart Finlay reflected that it was year ago that Dennis Suszkowski passed away. He was a great friend to the Hudson estuary community, Chair of the Committee for more that 30 years, and is still remembered and missed.

The meeting adjourned at 3:41 PM. Motion to adjourn was made by Scott Croft, seconded by Andy Bicking.

Respectfully submitted, Nancy Beard, recorder.

Attendance: 78 people signed into the meeting.

HREMAC Members:

Allan Beers	Rockland County Coord. Environmental Resources
Andy Bicking	Scenic Hudson
Janet Burnett	Rockland County recycling
Scott Croft	HR Boat and Yacht Club Assoc.
Stuart Findlay	Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies, and Committee chair
Erik Fyfe	Clearwater
Dan Shapley	Riverkeeper, Inc. (for Paul Gallay)
Lucy Johnson	Vassar College Lifetime Learning, HV Consortium, HRES
Roland Lewis	Waterfront Alliance
Suzette Lopane	Westchester County Water Agency
John Mylod	MT Nets
Julie Noble	City of Kingston, (for Mayor Steve Noble)
Shino Tanikawa	NYC Soil and Water Conservation District

Ex-OFFICIOS:

Peter Brandt	US EPA
Diana Carter	NYS OPRHP
Chris DeRoberts	NYPA
Jamie Ethier	NYS DOS
Nicolette Witcher	Hudson River Park Trust (for Noreen Doyle)
Rob Pirani	NY/NJ - HEP
Audrey Van Genechten	NYS Dept. of Health
Peter Weppler	US Army Corps Engineers
Jessica Kounen	New York Sea Grant
Dan Jeanson	Hudson River Valley Greenway (for Scott Keller)

Guests:

Helena Andreko	Hudson River Foundation
Mark Castiglione	Capital District Regional Planning Commission
Nikki Chung	Scenic Hudson
Phil DeGaetano	consultant
Rosa DaSilva	Hudson River Foundation
Alana Gerus	NYS DOH
Clay Hiles	Hudson River Foundation
Brian Gramlich Rahm	Cornell University
Simon Gruber	Orange County consultant
Liz LoGiudice	Columbia County
Chris Nack	Syracuse ESF, fisheries
Capt. Aram Setian	HR Fisherman's Assoc.
Pat Sullivan	Cornell University
Emily Vail	HR Watershed Alliance

Clay Hiles	Hudson River Foundation
Mary McNamara	Esopus Watershed
Russell Urban Mead	Chazen Companies, Hudson River Watershed Alliance
Aisha Sexton-Sims	US EPA, New York Watershed Management Section Chief
Scott Silver	Audubon (Constitution Marsh)
Margie Turrin	Lamont Doherty
Emily White	Bard College
Peter Zaykoski	NEIWPC

DEC, Estuary Program staff and SCA interns:

Nancy Beard	Estuary Program, administration and access
Jessica Best	Hudson River Fisheries Unit
Chris Bowser	Estuary Program, Research Reserve, education
Ann Marie Caprioli	HRNERR, grants administration
Emma Clements	Estuary Program, Grants assistance
Scott Cuppett	Estuary Program, watersheds
Fran Dunwell	Estuary Program, Hudson River Coordinator
Sarah Fernald	HRNERR, research
Heather Gierloff	HRNERR, Research Reserve Manager
Ingrid Haekel	Estuary Program, Conservation and Land Use
Laura Heady	Estuary Program, Conservation and Land Use
Amanda Higgs	Hudson River Fisheries Unit
Rebecca Houser	Estuary Program, Education
Gregg Kenney	DEC, Hudson River Fisheries Unit
Mark Lowery	DEC, Climate Change
Megan Lung	Estuary Program, SCA intern
Sherri Mackey	Estuary Program, administration
Susan Maresca	DEC, Region 2, permits
Dan Miller	Estuary Program, habitat restoration
Chelsea Moore	Estuary Program, SCA intern
Sarah Mount	HRNERR, Education
Nate Nardi-Cyrus	Estuary program, land use conservation, scenery
Maija Niemisto	Estuary Program, HRNERR
Anna Palmer	Estuary Program, SCA intern
Rich Pendleton	Hudson River Fisheries Unit
Susan Pepe	Estuary Program, Grants administration
Dan Rearick	Estuary Program, HRECOS
Beth Roessler	Estuary Program, Trees for Tribes
Maude Salinger	Estuary Program, communications
Angela Schimizzi	DEC, marine permits
Becky Thomas	Estuary Program, Contracts Administration
Kelly Turturro	DEC Albany, Region 3 Regional Director
Libby Zemaitis	Estuary Program, resilient waterfront communities