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The Tidal Exchange

~E-news~

Of the



New York-New Jersey
Harbor & Estuary Program

News and upcoming events in the harbor!

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NY-NJ HARBOR & ESTUARY PROGRAM IN TRANSITION

Timing of the transition to the Hudson River Foundation and this year's budget

As you know, in September 2013, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [announced the selection](#) of the Hudson River Foundation as the new host for the NY-NJ Harbor & Estuary Program. This selection followed the June release by the EPA of a request for statements of interest to host the Program outside of the Environmental Protection Agency.

While there are a number of details to be worked out, it is expected that the Hudson River Foundation, located at 17 Battery Place in downtown Manhattan, NY, will begin hosting the Program on April 1st, to be led by Rob Pirani (currently of the Regional Plan Association) as future Director of the Program in its new office.

A preliminary HEP budget for April through September 2014 was presented to the Management Committee during their last meeting on December 10. The budget will support the Program Director, Associate and Restoration positions, the development of a protocol for assessing the habitat value of ecologically enhanced urban shorelines, targeted outreach events, and citizen science efforts. A revised budget will be sent shortly to the Policy Committee for review and approval. It is anticipated that the funds will become available to the Hudson River Foundation by April 1st.

The New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (who currently manages HEP funds) will continue to manage all ongoing HEP grants and contracts through September 2014. In the meantime, the HEP office, NEIWPC, HRF, and EPA continue to work together to ensure a smooth and speedy transition of the Program.

Please stay tuned for further updates.

CULTIVATING OUR URBAN EDGE

New York-New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program to work

with research team to take a closer look at our shorelines

The New York-New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program has selected a team of researchers to move forward with a new project to study our urban shorelines.



Shorelines in our estuary vary widely, but there is little known about the habitat quality associated with various types (photo:Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy)

The team, lead by researchers at Columbia University, the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, Stony Brook University, and the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies, will be working with the NY-NJ Harbor & Estuary Program through the next year to develop a standard protocol for assessing the habitat quality associated with ecologically-enhanced urban shorelines.

In our estuary, we have lost much shoreline and shallow water habitat. In highly urbanized areas, there are challenges to habitat restoration because of existing uses (port, structures, and other social or economic pressures). In these cases, alternative techniques to increase habitat value of urban areas (while supporting a variety of uses) are being proposed or implemented, but their ecological value is not well understood. In concert with a great regional interest in designing differently to better accommodate multiple goals, the research team will develop a standard way to measure the habitat quality of shorelines, and to compare lower impact alternatives to existing shoreline stabilization approaches. As regulators, landowners, and engineers increasingly are faced with reviewing or proposing options, an established method will enable stakeholders to build a library of case studies so that better decisions can be made for our urban shoreline habitat.

The research team will be meeting with the NY-NJ Harbor & Estuary Program and an Advisory Committee for the project in early 2014 and the protocol will be piloted in summer. This protocol will complement other work being conducted in the harbor and [elsewhere](#) on



shoreline habitat, and goals for increasing shoreline and shallow habitat in the [Hudson-Raritan Estuary Comprehensive Restoration Plan](#). Stay tuned for updates as we progress!

Researchers in other regions have studied urban shorelines (photo: UWA). <http://harborestuary.org/video.htm>

Team assembled by Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance to develop guidelines for waterfront design

Simultaneously, the Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance is working on developing [Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines](#) (tentatively termed "WEDG") for the region, taking inspiration from LEED-style guidelines that encourage good design that, in this case, would take into account the many waterfront uses of the harbor as well as ecological considerations. NY-NJ HEP staff are engaging in this effort and will be working with MWA to ensure that knowledge gained through the Program's assessment protocol project will be used to inform these guidelines.



The shoreline at Harlem River Park was designed with ecological as well as public access and navigation considerations in mind (photo: MWA)

WALKING A WINTER BEACH ON SANDY HOOK

By Diana Burich
K-12 Program Coordinator/Sea Grant Program Associate

Thousands of people visit New Jersey's coastal shores each year to enjoy all that they have to offer. Beach bathing, boating, water sports and boardwalk fun are usually on the agenda and are enjoyed by many during the warmer months. As the frost settles in and the days get shorter, fewer visitors are attracted to the beach. Yet the colder months can offer interest and beauty to anyone willing to venture outdoors when Old Man Winter is calling.



Arctic snowy owl at Sandy Hook before Thanksgiving.
Photo: Nature on the Edge of NYC blogspot

Wintertime brings cooler temperatures and stormier weather to our state. Ocean water in the mid-Atlantic hovers around 35 degrees Fahrenheit while the ambient air ranges widely. Nor'easters can blow for days at a time, their long-lasting and far traveling winds blow energy off of the Atlantic Ocean to create tall plunging waves that only the hardest surfers could ride. These forces reshape our beaches, eroding sand in some areas while depositing it in others. Beach combing a day or two after a storm can yield treasured finds like knobbed whelk shells (NJ's state seashell), Northern star coral, Atlantic sand dollars and the ever-elusive piece of blue sea glass. A small population of Harbor seals makes the isolated estuaries of Northern New Jersey its winter home and can occasionally be seen hauled out and basking on the shore. (Remember to keep your distance as marine mammals are not only dangerous when threatened but are also federally protected by law.) Be careful to avoid getting "bombed" with mollusks falling from the sky in gulls' attempts to break them open for a meal!



Harbor seals hauled out to rest at Sandy Hook.
Photo by Joe Reynolds.

Birds are plentiful at the shore in winter. Deciduous plants drop their leaves when diminished sunlight reduces their chlorophyll but the evergreen foliage of coastal Eastern red cedars and American holly offers a safe haven for crossbills, cardinals and sparrows, their "peeps" and "squeaks" carried on Arctic winds. Estuary-dwelling diamondback terrapins hibernate in benthic mud while above them bay waters team with grebes, scaup, buffleheads, mergansers, and brant that spend their days fishing, foraging and roosting. Hundreds of other avian species can be spied with many visitors traveling from as far away as Arctic regions and Europe so be sure to bring along your handy field guide.

Treasures abound along our beaches in winter, so let's all get out there to see what we can find!



Officer's Row Beach and frozen spartina in Sandy Hook.
Photo by Diana Burich

Links for related information:

www.animaltourism.com

www.conservewildlifenj.org

www.monmouthcountyparks.com

www.nj.gov/dep/fgw
www.njaudobon.org
www.njscuba.net
www.njwild.org
www.node.noaa.gov
www.nps.gov

HOLIDAY RECYCLING

Now that the holidays are past, you may find yourself with Christmas trees, as well as old electronic devices. Here are a few options to consider.

Old or outdated electronic devices

- If in good working condition, consider donating to charity. Check out local shelters, nursing homes or social service agencies that may need donations.
- [Freecycle](#) is a network that helps connect those that need electronics with those who no longer need them.
- The [911 Cell Phone Bank](#) re-purposes old cell phones as emergency cell phones.
- [Cell Phones for Soldiers](#) uses recycling proceeds to buy prepaid international calling cards for U.S. soldiers.
- For recycling in New Jersey check out the [E-Cycle](#) program.
- For NYC Dept of Sanitation recycling opportunities [see here](#).
- For options in NY State [click here](#).
- The Lower East Side Ecology Center offers [e-waste collection events](#) and a permanent [e-waste warehouse](#).

Christmas tree recycling:

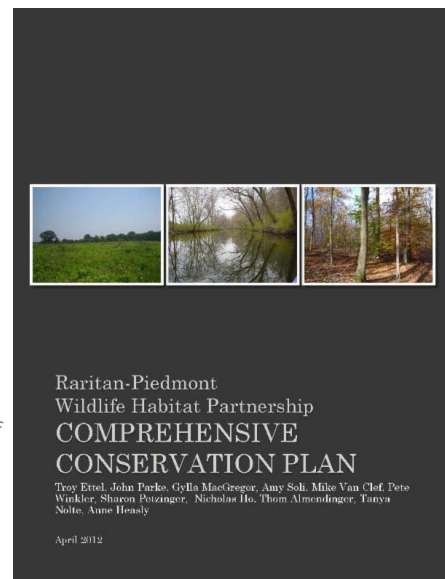
- [NYC Parks' annual MulchFest](#). Jan 11 & 12, 10am - 2pm daily, at one of over 80 designated parks citywide.
- [Mulchfest Gowanus](#) on Jan 12, 11am-3pm.
- For info on tree recycling in New Jersey, [click here](#).

PARTNERSHIP RELEASES COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION PLAN FOR THE RARITAN

The [Raritan-Piedmont Wildlife Habitat Partnership](#) (RPWHP) recently released their Comprehensive Conservation Plan.

The Plan focuses on where and how to conserve the best remaining habitats for wildlife in the Central Piedmont Plains of New Jersey, including grassland, forest and riparian habitats, and taking into account the effects of climate change.

For free copies of the plan or to learn more about the Partnership contact: Anne Heasley, RPWHP Consulting Coordinator at anne@conservationresources.org.



WEIGH IN ON MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL PLANNING

Draft Regional Ocean Planning Framework Available for Public Review

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body (MidA RPB) announced that its Draft Framework is [available for public review](#).

The Draft Framework is intended to provide guideposts for how the MidA RPB would move forward with regional ocean planning by proposing a vision statement, principles, goals, objectives, and a geographic focus.

The public is encouraged to email comments to the MidA RPB (MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov) **through March 31, 2014**. Additional opportunities for public input, webinars and public listening sessions will be announced on the [MidA RPB website](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

For more events, check out our [calendar](#). To post your Estuary-related event in our calendar, [please send us the details!](#) For up-to date events, [like our facebook page](#).

SAVE THE DATES

Jan 24-25: [ANJEE'S 29th Annual Environmental Education Conference](#).

Apr 24: Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance's [2014 Waterfront Conference](#).

June 13: [6th Annual Sustainable Raritan River Conference](#).

FUNDING

EPA's [Environmental Education Grant Program](#). Deadline: February 4, 2014.

The Forest Service's [Community Forest and Open Space Program](#). Deadline: January 15.

EPA's Office of Wastewater Management [Green Infrastructure Technical Assistance](#). Letters of Interest due January 24.

Hudson River Foundation's [2014 Tibor T. Polgar Fellowships](#). Deadline: February 18.

Hudson River Foundation's [2014 Mark B. Bain Graduate Fellowships](#). Deadline: March 17.

NFWF [2013 Hurricane Sandy Coastal Resiliency Competitive Grants Program](#). Deadline: January 31, 2014.

NFWF [Five Star & Urban Waters Restoration Program](#). Deadline: February 5, 2014.

[Georgetown University Energy Prize](#). Letters of Intent Due:

February 2014.

NJDEP's [Nonpoint Source Pollutions Control Grants](#). Deadline: February 21.

[ioby](#) (in our backyards), a community funding platform, accepts applications for environmental projects across the nation on an ongoing basis.

City Parks Foundation: [Community Group Recovery and Capacity Fund Grants](#) Deadline: Rolling

PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITIES

[Draft Regional Ocean Planning Framework](#) is available for public review. Email comments to the MidA RPB (MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov) through March 31, 2014.

INTERNSHIPS

[Seasonal Interns - Hudson River Estuary Program](#). Deadline: January 24.

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