



New York - New Jersey
Harbor Estuary Program

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE & PUBLIC ACCESS WORK GROUP

of the New York – New Jersey
Harbor Estuary Program

www.HarborEstuary.org

NY-NJ Harbor Estuary Program Citizens Advisory Committee & Public Access Work Group Conference Call: HEP Budget Planning

Thursday, December 8, 2011
1:30 pm – 3:00 pm

MINUTES

The co-chairs of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and Public Access Work Group (PAWG) convened this conference call to start discussing budget needs for broad types of projects that the CAC and PAWG would like the New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary Program (HEP) to support during fiscal year 2012 (i.e., October 2012 through September 2013).

Gabriela and Kate provided a brief background on the process. Briefly, HEP is currently funded by EPA Clean Water Act section 320 funds and follows an established process to define its yearly budget:

1. The Management Committee and Policy Committee select the broad areas (priority actions) to be considered from funding, among those identified in [HEP's Action Plan](#).
2. The HEP Office requests all work groups and committees to submit proposals for projects they would like HEP to undertake within the selected priority actions.
3. The Management and Policy Committees review the requests and select the projects to be included in HEP's budget and the amount for each, based on available funds and other considerations.
4. The HEP Office writes a grant proposal for EPA funds.
5. Once awarded, HEP allocates the funds via contracts and requests for proposals as appropriate.

While currently HEP does not know the level of funding that will be available for FY 2012 and a decision on priority actions to be funded (step 1 above) has not been made yet, CAC and PAWG chairs suggested to start the conversation early, to allow for more meaningful input from their members. More details on this process, and a summary of previous requests and allocations are available from the [CAC's hidden page](#). During our next meeting, we will be discussing these suggestions in more detail. In the meantime, additional input and feedback based on this preliminary list of target budget items is welcome.

Conference call participants then shared several ideas for projects they would like to see funded:

- Merryl Kafka suggested providing training to environmental community centers so they can conduct habitat restoration and water quality volunteer projects. Potential options include funding a sponsor to

Citizens Advisory Committee Co-Chairs

Michelle Doran McBean, Future City, Inc. ✦ 908-659-0689
Roland Lewis, Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance ✦ 212-935-9831

Public Access Work Group Chair

Dorina Frizzera, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

work with Sea Grant or others to develop and carry out the training, or providing funds for a seminar (HEP supported a Community Water Quality training session at Stevens Institute several years ago). Others pointed out that a goal and plan for how the data will be used is important. There may be existing opportunities to provide similar training, support, or coordination, in partnership with experts from EPA Region 2. The HEP office will communicate with EPA Region 2 to get a sense of existing support for these efforts, and how HEP might play a role.

- Bart Chezar proposed providing fellowships for a graduate student to conduct research. Michelle noted that there are already other programs offering fellowships, such as the Hudson River Foundation.
- Rob Buchanan had two suggestions:
 - 1) Support citizen water quality monitoring (not training) to empower community groups to be actively engaged in water quality issues. While it should not be a deterrent, it was noted that any data collection efforts funded by HEP need to develop a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) to document how the data will be collected and its quality ensured. EPA Region 2 (NY and NJ) has staff dedicated to giving technical and QAPP development advice for community organizations. Dan Mundy mentioned another approach: Jamaica Bay Eco Watchers worked with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP) so the agency would install monitoring devices at several locations—the data are publicly available online in real time. Maggie Flanagan pointed out that there is a risk of underfunding these efforts because monitoring equipment can be expensive. Nick Tufaro suggested that there should be some common metrics for these efforts so the data collected can be much more powerful and useful, for example, to identify anomalies. Dorina Frizzera suggested that it would be good to frame the focus on citizen water quality monitoring as an adoption/stewardship of a particular site.
 - 2) Support citizen mapping, so that the stewardship and perspectives of many groups are fostered.
- Roland Lewis inquired about the possibility of funding Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance's City of Water event. While it was acknowledged that this is a great and highly visible event, participants expressed a preference for funding small groups to build their capacity to attend the event. Roland also suggested that funds could go to support one of the satellite locations outside of Governors Island.
- Bart Chezar suggested a workshop to improve the accessibility and interpretation of water quality data.
- Maggie Flanagan expressed interest in continued funding to work on fish advisory issues. Dorina commented that she did not think this was a good use for HEP funds.
- Harvey Morginstin proposed grants to develop designs for specific public access sites. This may be done through the PAWG (or, in some cases, the Restoration Work group) as has been done in the past, such as with HEP's 2011 grant cycle, which included a funding category for new public access site development. Or, there may be new ways to build on this funding area.
- There was some discussion on the amount of public monies spent on port development vs. restoration, both historically and currently. Rob Buchanan wondered if HEP could empower local groups to advocate for more funds spent on restoration rather than development. However, it was pointed out that HEP funds cannot fund direct lobbying or advocacy efforts, but it can fund education and outreach. Merryll Kafka noted that HEP is trying to educate public officials and Bob Nyman added that HEP would attend the monthly meeting of Monmouth County mayors on December 13 and intends to attend other county meetings in 2012. Nick Tufaro suggested putting together educational materials for municipal officials—the idea was generally well received.

In order to facilitate the planning process, CAC members and attendees were asked to submit their ideas in writing (whether or not they had been expressed during the call) by filling out the feedback form that had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Announcements

Merryl Kafka mentioned that she writes a blog on educational updates and asked everyone to submit ideas to her, so she can help spread the word on the good work being done in our region. Merryl's blog can be accessed at <http://educationupdate.com/merrylkafka/blog/> where there is also a link to contact her.

Kate Boicourt reminded everybody to also consider sharing any estuary-related news and events with HEP for inclusion in the e-newsletter.

Roland invited everyone to Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance's holiday party, held that same afternoon at the Seaport Museum.

Dorina mentioned a "Save the Date" for the June 8th, 2012 Sacred Waters Honor Journey, a voyage from rivers to sea to promote stewardship of waters across the world. She suggested that this could be a good opportunity for our Public Access/boating partners to join in. More information can be found online at: <http://honorjourney.org/>

ATTENDEES

Alyson Beha, New Yorkers for Parks
Kate Boicourt, NY-NJ Harbor Estuary Program
Nancy Brous, NYC Water Trail Association
Rob Buchanan, Village Community Boathouse
Bart Chezar, Gowanus Dredgers Canoe Club
Alan Cohn, NY City Department of Environmental Protection
Meredith Comi, NY/NJ Baykeeper
Michelle Doran McBean, Future City, Inc.
Maggie Flanagan
Dorina Frizzera, NJDEP Coastal Management Program
Merryl Kafka, NY State Marine Education Association
Amy Kline, Friends of Brook Park
Roland Lewis, Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance
Harvey Morginstin, Passaic River Boat Club
Dan Mundy, Jamaica Bay Eco Watchers
Gabriela Munoz, NY-NJ Harbor Estuary Program
Denise Nickel, Middlesex County Improvement Authority
Robert Nyman, NY-NJ Harbor Estuary Program
Manuel Russ, Concerned Citizens of Bensonhurst
Adina Taylor, Floating the Apple, Inc.
Nick Tufaro, Middlesex County, NJ Planning Department

HEP's Budget Process for fiscal year 2012-2013
Summary of ideas submitted by CAC members and participants

Proposed by	Priority	Project type	Work Items	\$ (if estimate available)	Comments
Harvey Morginstin, Passaic River Boat Club	1	Restoration of the Nutley Boat ramp on the Passaic River	Restoration: dredge	50,000 (firm estimate)	Removal of 200 CYD of sediment and rock at the base of the ramp and disposal of the material at part of the River mile #3 clean-up was closely estimated by a FL firm at \$50,000.00 . Addition work requires extending the ramp about 16 feet. This entails using prefabricated forms pushed over crushed stone with the backhoe after the removal. Floating docks attached to the sidewall, designed by PRBC engineers. Note: There is a good possibility that two sources will provide \$25,000 each for this project, but one source will only fund the floating docks. A brochure describing this effort will aid in the request from the various parties that must approve the improvement.
			Ramp extention: backhoe	100,000 (Estimate)	
			Docks: Anchored to side walls	100,000 (Estimate)	
Maggie Flanagan	1	Fish Advisory Communication	Additional research on implementation, feedback to agencies	15,000	
	2	Large Public Access event	City of Water Day	50,000	Significant as a harbor wide public opportunity, could be rolled into grants if funding is high and project guidelines allow.
	3	Stewardship and Access grants		70,000	Smaller requests to participate in the larger access event could be considered here.
Harry Bubbins, Friends of Brook Park	1	Bronx Kill Stewardship and Access	Eco tours, train stewards, clean-ups and large event	\$30,000	Prioritize organizations and locations that have not received this funding in the past. Exclude groups that received money in the three years prior. This will broaden the array of stakeholders and strengthen the collective efforts and maximize the impacts.

Proposed by	Priority	Project type	Work Items	\$ (if estimate available)	Comments
Dorina Frizzera, NJDEP and PAWG chair	1	PA/Research/legal Community Resolution		\$10,000	Have attorney or SeaGrant Law draft a resolution in support of Public Access to be adopted by waterfront communities - in addition in support of goals of HEP - recognize their contribution to Harbor.
	2	PA/Stewardship Adopt a public access		\$25,000	\$5,000 grants to local community/neighborhoods to adopt an access site or stretch of shoreline, clean-up, signage, plant identification, water monitoring - partner with others to give training, hold events - showcase as partner in HEP (hey - were's our signage and display poster?)
	3	PA Inventory and assessment		\$10,000	Inventory and assessment (report) of Public Access sites in HEP - how many in each community, on the different tribes, are they actually formal sites or just ability to get to; public, private owned, signage, are there any reaches of the shoreline that don't have access - how far apart. This begins to set the metric for measureable improvements.
NY/NJ Baykeeper	1	Oyster Gardening	Portion of Oyster Gardening Coordinator's salary for maintaining Oyster Gardening Program's 20+ nets and participants; perform classroom outreach; recruit new gardeners; update program materials; cage building and oyster distribution; maintain oyster gardening data; plan and organize lecture series; plan for building of Oyster Gardening Reef and execute	\$17,600	NY/NJ Baykeeper is submitting these projects for funding consideration. Continued support of the Oyster Gardening Program has become an important element of our region's oyster movement. This program engages a broad range of constituents and is an important educational tool. We would like to build off the success of our Restoring the Urban Oyster Conference by holding another conference that will be able to accommodate more attendees and highlight the important oyster research, restoration, and educational work of all our partners in the Estuary.
	2	Oyster Conference	Hall rental; food; supplies; printing and postage; portion of salaries and associated costs	\$26,000	

Proposed by	Priority	Project type	Work Items	\$ (if estimate available)	Comments
Merryl Kafka, NYSMEA	1	Training Seminar for community-based conservation organizations	Staff Training/ Selected equipment for habitat restoration/water Q volunteer projects	\$3,000 - 5,000	Collective training for cohesive and standard testing procedures was an indicated need expressed.
	2	WaterWalk: Educational graphics placed along coastal walkways to promote public understanding of our harbor	Development of stewardship and ecological –themed graphics along prominent outdoor corridors (boardwalks, piers, belt pkwy, etc)	\$ 5,000-10,000	Create outdoor educational corridors in prominent public walkways along waterfronts as a passive public address system. Emphasize coastal resources, ecology and conservation. Corporations can put their logo on it if they pay for robust signage and installation (if permitted).
	3	Create a Marine Resources HEP Convention: Ecological Management and Education	Communicate to h.s, colleges, universities, and NGOs, and federal, state and local agencies involved in marine resources.	\$3,000	Support educational networking, career awareness for young stewards, highlight marine science schools, and feature topics such as: food, transportation, energy, recreation, research of the harbor and coastal waters.
Bart Chezar, Gowanus Dredgers Canoe Club	1	Facilitate general public access to water quality monitoring data			There is now a wealth of data being collected by NYC DEP and Riverkeeper among others. This data is collected and analyzed using rigorous protocols. If we can facilitate people/organizations knowing about this data: where it is what it is and what it means then they can use it to analyze the local conditions of their waters and become advocates for improving it. My belief is that, right now, the problem is not that we don't have data it is that people are not looking at it carefully as to what it means. Perhaps we can sponsor a workshop on this subject to try and facilitate what I am suggesting.

Proposed by	Priority	Project type	Work Items	\$ (if estimate available)	Comments
Rob Buchanan	1	Support citizen water quality monitoring			Goal is to support data collection (not training) to empower community groups to be actively engaged in water quality issues.
	2	Support citizen mapping			
Nick Tufaro	1	Support projects that lead to education of municipal officials			

Additional comments from Merryl Kafka:

For Priority # 1 : Training Seminar for Community-based Conservation Organizations:

In conversing with local non-profit organizations, such as the Gowanus Canal Conservancy and a community organization in Coney Island, they both want to help restore wetlands with volunteer projects and to instill an awareness in its' local residents. The common need expressed to me was the support to train the staff in water quality and habitat restoration via seminar(s) and field work training. Both groups want to establish active and goal-oriented results in educating its community and improving the waterfront. Gowanus has already established volunteer-based projects and is seeking support to advance this initiative.

Collectively training several community organizations in achieving clean-ups, data collection, population inventories, and water quality assessments with standard tools and techniques would produce a comprehensive view of the state of our waterways with data that is in compliance with QA criteria. The goal is as education, inspirational and transformative in character building as it is in its scientific goals. There are different degrees as to what organizations have in terms of training and equipment. Securing basic training and equipment for such organizations would provide a measure of consistency and performance quality, with participant excitement and community success in understanding and caring for the urban waterfront. Boat houses are in their 3 yr plan for community recreation.

Priority # 2 WaterWalk – An Outdoor Educational Corridor with Graphics.

I started this project while at the NY Aquarium, in concert with the NYSDOT, the NYC Dept of Parks, and the citizen's Bay Ridge Community Parks Group. Currently there are several areas along the Belt Parkway in Brooklyn, from Bay Parkway west, toward the Verrazano Bridge, that have educational/conservation signage. I have watched bikers, skaters, and walkers literally stop in their tracks, or jump off their bikes, to read the graphics that are installed over the rail. The position discourages graffiti, (I have never seen any graffiti over the years) and is non-

invasive without blocking any waterfront views. This has been one of my favorite and more effective ways to reach and inspire the public about our harbor resources and the need to protect them. The signs are baked enamel, weather proof, with lovely original artwork, short text, and powerful messages. I would love to see similar installations along our waterfront, such as piers, boardwalks, and pedestrian paths along the Hudson River that can inculcate the messages HEP is dedicated to, as a form of public education.

Priority # 3 Marine Resources Science Convention

This is a low financial priority, but I always feel that keeping the profile high, touting the marine resources of NY and NJ is important. Conventions can promote educational awareness, career development for both HS and college students, reveal harbor research studies, as well as the essential economical underpinning, and ecological services of our shared waterways. Topics may include all marine resources and affiliations: food, energy, recreation, transportation, etc, etc, careers on the waterfront, nature organizations. I think a small percentage of the general public is aware of the excellent work that HEP stands for.

These are just a few suggestions. I am happy to assist you in any way, with any other projects or assignments, should you require any other information.

Additional Comments from Maggie Flanagan:

Response to challenge question:

If funds allocated are significantly lower, focus on projects with high media potential exposing citizen involvement in the estuary, and on projects that facilitate public feedback to government. Work against further minimization by prioritizing projects that increase awareness among stakeholders and governing committees. This may mean delaying requests for less widely visible items for a year, even though they're of value.

Other comments:

Though not a separate funding item to me, if the group is still interested in pursuing training for stewards, perhaps that work item can be a contextual training on harbor ecology instead of a specific skills training. For example, not teaching how to use test kits for water quality monitoring, but rather explaining what the usual parameters are and what they indicate about the condition of the system, and then connecting participants to further resources for specifics. At a beginner stage, it can be easier to understand a face to face presentation than to understand published scientific documents.