



New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary Program Management Committee Meeting Minutes of 6/18/98

(Draft Dec 28, 1998)

The Management Committee approved the minutes from the last meeting and tentatively approved the minutes of the last Policy Committee pending comments from NJDEP.

New Jersey's revised FY 98 HEP Work Plan was accepted. Comments are still be accepted for New York's HEP Work Plan. NYSDEC must still identify who and where the State Coordinator will be.

Discussion on Human Health Indicators - STAC chair provided list of 12 proposed indicators which was pared down from a list of 45 indicators. MC members recommended adding habitat indicators and viruses to disease-causing agents. Comments on the indicators were due by the end of June. EPA will be funding this project with \$36,500 of funds from the Clean Water Initiative, a HEP budget item separate from the state work plans. This information plus the tracking report could be used in the 1999 State of the Estuary Report. At the next Management Committee meeting, a full discussion on how to produce the State of the Estuary Report will ensue.

Concern raised about the lack of a dredging chapter. It has been a long time since the CCMP was approved and issues have dramatically changed since then. EPA on the hook to produce this chapter. There is a question whether the CCMP or the DMMP is going to drive dredging issues. The final DMMP is due by the end of the year. This needs further discussion.

Need final approval on the budget by the Policy Committee. A check off the box will be sent to all PC members. There will be no formal meeting to approve the budget.

Discussion on the HEP Office - Since the CCMP states that we will have an office, then we must decide how best to do this. EPA suggested that one option was to follow the LISS Model but that the location would be at EPA Region 2 offices. EPA would provide a director, but would require about \$90,000 from the HEP budget for technical staff and clerical staff. An alternative would be to solicit an outside office. The CAC was strongly in favor of an independent HEP office, wherever, and staffed by a minimum of two people (a Director and Technical Outreach and Education Officer) with two phone lines (one in NY and one in NJ). ISC said to keep the present allocations to the states and look elsewhere than the HEP budget for funds for the office.

Funds could be raised for the office or a member item could be sought. EPA could also arrange for an IPA go to another organization as the Director. Office staff should be civil service with benefits. Maybe funds could be found in the NEPPS agreements with the states. The MC agreed that the Director should speak for HEP, needs to be independent but takes direction from the HEP (need to clearly define independent). COAST offered to examine their space at various universities for a HEP Office but wants a needs list for the office. They have Internet and GIS access. The functions and the reporting of the office also needs to be more clearly defined and linked to products or actions such as restoration and acquisition activities. Both states supported the LISS office model but must seek funds elsewhere for it and the office must not overlap with state functions. The HEP office should be responsible for getting all HEP actions completed in the CCMP. Gene Flatow was concerned with fund-raising activities for the Program Office and competing with the NPO's, fund-raising by the CAC for outreach and fund-raising by the STAC for research. Fund-raising would not be a function of this office. EPA will redraft the proposal and it will be discussed at the next all day MC meeting. EPA is concerned that an office creates a higher level of expectation and therefore needs minimal funding to succeed. The CAC recommended starting an office with only a Director and raise the rest of the funds to support the office. EPA did not support this but is still willing to supply office space. Further discussion is definitely needed.

CARP Discussion - NY has \$12.4M for an ambient data collection, USACE will fund the data management system at \$300K, (\$500K requested) and there are still questions about the NJ program. The STAC chair will meet with both state Commissioners to discuss the monitoring plans, internal coordination within the states and between the states, and how the \$30M worth of data collected through this effort is going to be interpreted. The two states are coordinating these activities through Paul Gally in NY and Mary Downes-Gastrich in NJ. NY will start monitoring in September 1998 and implement eight contracts. NJ wants the work plan based more on actions rather than research, modeling and monitoring. NJ will collect USGS loadings data by segment and depositional area data but need to hire someone on to handle. A Modeling Workshop at HRF was planned for 7/23 and 7/24. NY has hired 2/3 of the 23 new dredging hires with Port Authority money to conduct this program, will target sediment and resource quality, and will target easy wins at junkyards to implement BMPs. The USACE has the \$300K obligated to Battelle for the data management and have set up an advisory committee. Everyone agrees that CARP coordination should be handled through the HEP subcommittee SCRWG. One objective of the CARP is to develop a TMDL and to estimate when sediments will meet standards and criteria. The CAC minutes of all the committee meetings to stay in touch with all of these issues.

Habitat Discussion - The Habitat Committee has ratified the list of New Jersey acquisition and habitat restoration sites and are seeking MC approval. EPA requested a few weeks to review the list prior to accepting and forwarding to the PC for approval. EPA has some legal issues with respect to the list. EPA abstained from voting on the list but the rest of the MC approved the list. (The Port Authority was not present for the vote.) The successful Landfill Restoration Symposium was discussed. Over 260 people attended. Positive results were reported on planting trees and native plants on landfills as well as improving/remediating landfill

contaminants. At present, landfill regulations for closure require only the use of non-indigenous grass species. The Committee is evaluating monitoring protocols for restoration and is specifically examining the NYC Parks protocols. The Jamaica Bay Issues Map should be produced shortly. EPA agreed to distribute letters from Bernie Blum. Mr. Blum is concerned over Dubos Point and Arvene seabird habitat restoration sites. They are listed on the habitat restoration map but are not priorities. He believes that open marsh water management could be easily applied at these sites. He is dissatisfied with the lack of government action on these sites.

The upcoming Policy Committee is set for September 24 in Room 27D from 10 am to 1 pm. The MC needs to draft up an agenda. Recommendations should be sent to Bob Nyman.

The next Management Committee meeting is set for September 17. EPA requests that all the committee chairs prepare memos on status of their committees. This meeting will run from 10 am to 4 pm. Potential agenda items could include priorities and the NYC consent orders.