

## Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan Actions Education and Outreach

### **E-1. Provide for public input to ongoing program and policy decision-making for HEP**

**Key Elements:** HEP should ensure that there are opportunities for the public to participate in program activities as well as in planning and decision-making. The Science and Technical Advisory Committee and the Citizen Advisory Committee are the primary mechanisms for public participation.

#### **Description of Activities to Date**

All committee and workgroup meetings are open to all of the public. Date and location of scheduled meetings and minutes from past meetings are posted on the HEP website, [www.harborestuary.org](http://www.harborestuary.org). (HEP Office 2009)

HEP CAC meeting venues alternate between the NY and NJ sides of the estuary. In February 2009 new CAC co-Chairs were elected, representing Future City, Inc. and Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance (MWA). The CAC is setting priorities for 2009 based on members' input and will redouble its efforts to broaden community participation. (HEP Office 2009)

The CAC meets on a quarterly basis, and provides reports to the MC from CAC participants. The meetings are timed before the MC meetings in order to solicit information. CAC meetings also provide a forum for the community to hear reports and presentations from HEP members. The CAC also took the lead in organizing "Eco II" a series of 12 public meetings to set HEP priorities in 2001. CAC members are currently exploring possibilities to encourage participation by local stewardship groups. The CAC developed its by-laws to ensure fair and widespread participation by community members and groups.

**Planned Activities:** CAC will continue to meet quarterly and provide recommendations to the MC and PC.  
(HEP CAC 2009)

The CAC formed a Public Access subcommittee that later became a separate, new HEP Work Group. The Public Access Work Group has held several meetings involving the community and leading to the development of public access goals for HEP's Action Plan. (HEP Office 2009)

The NYCSWCD has been very active in the HEP CAC, and the Chair of the NYCSWCD was the NY co-chair of the CAC through November 2003. SWCD was involved in an outreach effort to over 300 stewardship organizations in the Harbor Estuary region and the information was compiled into an on-line database (see E-4). HEP is now pursuing the possibility of working with the USFS on their stewardship project.

(NYCSWCD 2003, HEP Office 2009)

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## **E-2. Build community awareness, appreciation, and understanding of the ecosystem and its importance; and encourage action at the community level.**

**Key Elements:** HEP will continue public involvement and education programs. Action at the community level has been encouraged through a popular mini—grant, and later a stewardship grant program that supported dozens of projects ranging from beach clean-ups to educational field experiences.

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### **Description of Activities to Date**

The HEP CAC brings stewards together to focus on an estuary-specific agenda, and support the work that we are doing in our communities.

**Planned Activities:** The CAC will continue to meet.

(HEP CAC 2009)

HEP awarded \$11,400 to support over 20 community-based public access water activities and programs by local groups throughout 2007 and 2008. The funds were administered by the MWA. (HEP Office 2009)

HEP, provided funds to the Hudson River Estuary Program (HREP) to put together the *Discover the Hudson River-KIDS* (Kids In Discovery Series) Activity Booklet. This is a learning tool for children that covers contents on the River, the Estuary and the Watershed and will help understand the Hudson River as part of an estuary both rural and urban. (HEP Office 2008; HREP—Steve Stanne 2008).

HEP partners regularly engage communities in public programs such as tours, public access events, festivals, and cleanup and restoration activities. Partners include the Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance, American Littoral Society, NY/NJ Baykeeper, Hackensack Riverkeeper, and Future City.

The states and EPA continue to develop and distribute information on issues such as water conservation, non-point source pollution, etc. (HEP Office 2009)

In the past, NYCSWCD's conducted soil and water monitoring training sessions for teachers and stewards that included sharing information and materials on the estuary. NYCSWCD also used to coordinate a number of outdoor field trips every year to introduce the community to the estuary and its watershed. The NYCSWCD has also been involved in the HEP CAC. As trustee and chair of the City Club's Environment Committee, the Chair of the NYCSWCD organized forums on environmental issues. Currently, NYCSWCD provides assistance on an "as needed" basis. (NYCSWCD 2003, NYCSWCD—Shino Tanikawa 2009)

NJDEP DWM continued use of Americorp to reach community and school groups to inform and distribute information regarding Water Quality and Fish safety issues. (NJDEP 2004)

NJDEP DWM through meetings/presentations and the continued use of Americorp to use the Envrioscape model at community, school and public events to demonstrate point and nonpoint pollution in the Harbor Estuary Area. (NJDEP 2004)

NJDEP DWM continued use the Fish Advisory program in 2004 to post signs in and around the Harbor Estuary area. The NJDEP in 2004 will be reviewing fish tissue data to update the Fish Advisory. (NJDEP 2004)

PVSC has created an Educational Outreach Department to provide in-class lectures to children in grades K-8 detailing Point and Non Point Source Pollution Prevention using interactive environmental models.

**Planned Activities:** PVSC will continue Education & Outreach program within the PVSC service area.

(PVSC—Ashley Pengitore 2009)

In 2003 the HEP Office conducted a Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Workshop. There were 78 participants representing 48 organizations and government agencies that attended the two-day workshop (77%- NGOs, 17%- State/Local/Interstate Governments, 6%- Federal Agencies). The workshop included topics such as current monitoring projects, use of monitoring data, current volunteer programs, and hands-on sampling activities.(HEP Office 2003)

A new HEP traveling exhibit was developed in Spring 2002 and has been used at community events, public venues, and workshops as well as conferences. The HEP office updated the display in Spring 2004 and it includes information on water quality, public access, habitat, and public education and outreach in the Harbor.

**Planned Activities:** HEP will continue to update and use the traveling exhibit and other materials at events as time permits.

(HEP Office 2009)

NJDEP, NYSDEC, IEC, and EPA issue press releases on environmental activities. (HEP Office 2009)

Partners distribute HEP outreach materials at events such as trade shows, conferences, seminars, and environmental events locally and nationally. (HEP Office 2009)

HEP sponsored 18 events in the Harbor for National Estuaries Day 2003. (HEP Office 2003)

HEP Office issues a quarterly newsletter, *The Tidal Exchange*. The newsletter includes articles from HEP partners and it is distributed to the HEP mailing list (over 1800 individuals) as well as through HEP partners. (HEP Office 2009)

HEP distributes posters, brochures and other materials on a regular basis and as requested by community members, and participates in local community events. (HEP Office 2009)

In 2004, PVSC participated in the NJDEP Urban Fishing Program which provides local school children a day of fishing on their nearest waterway. (PVSC—Ashley Pengitore 2009)

The Association of NJ Environmental Commissions (ANJEC), Lower Passaic Alliance, Future City, and the Passaic River Institute at Montclair University, through an EPA cooperative agreement, are conducting outreach in the Passaic Watershed. Partners have identified stakeholders, compiled information about the watershed, produced a variety of materials on stormwater and other issues as well as maps, displays and other resources. This information, which includes actions that individuals may carry out to improve environmental conditions, will be distributed and posted online. The program will be completed by August 2009. (HEP Office 2009)

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### **E-3. Promote understanding of and involvement in the implementation of the CCMP recommendations**

**Key Elements:** The implementation of the CCMP is a cooperative effort among many stakeholders and participation is encouraged. Information about CCMP recommendations and progress are available on the HEP website.

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#### **Description of Activities to Date**

HEP held a series of meetings in 2001 aimed at getting feedback on program progress and prioritization of issues. A summary was produced; *The Successes and Challenges*, highlighting areas where much progress has been made as well as areas that are in need of further work. (HEP Office 2003)

CAC members take part in the implementation of the CCMP, and monitor agencies' work.

**Planned Activities:** The CAC will continue its involvement in the HEP.

(HEP CAC 2009)

HEP participants have conducted several conferences addressing volunteer monitoring, landfill closures, CSOs, bathing beach closure criteria, climate change, and atmospheric deposition. (HEP Office 2009)

Individual and group congressional briefings have been held. (HEP Office 2006)

NJDEP DWM through the Education and Outreach Bureau and the new Stormwater Regulation that are due to be adopted in Feb 2004 has held dozens of meetings with local officials, user groups, elected representatives in the Harbor Estuary Area. (NJDEP 2004)

HEP hosted the 2008 ANEP Fall annual meeting. In addition to NEPs, many HEP partners attended the meeting and had an opportunity to present on their activities and learn about other NEP's efforts as well as numerous collaboration opportunities with other agencies, institutions and organizations. (HEP Office 2009)

HEP co-sponsored MWA's Waterfront Conference to launch a waterfront action agenda. The agenda included waterfront access, education, and other topics in which HEP is involved. HEP also supported a series of workshops leading to the development of the Waterfront Agenda. (HEP Office 2009)

In 2008, a Toxics TMDL Implementation Sub-Work Group was formed to involve stakeholders, including NGOs, in the development of implementation plans for toxics TMDLs for the Estuary.

The Lower Passaic River Restoration Project (LPRRP, a partnership that coordinates and oversees the cleanup and restoration of the lower 17 miles of the Passaic River) and Newark Bay Study (an agreement between EPA and Occidental Chemical Corporation to assess the nature and extent of contamination in the Newark Bay area and develop cleanup plans as needed), put together a joint Community Involvement Plan in June 2006. Both projects maintain websites (<http://www.ournewarkbay.org> and <http://ourpassaic.org>) where the plan, along with informational factsheets and all project-related reports and other information are available, and where people can sign up for email updates. In addition, both projects regularly hold joint meetings to discuss progress with stakeholders. These meetings are open to the public and many local environmental organizations as well as concerned citizens attend regularly. (HEP Office 2009, EPA—Elizabeth Butler 2009)

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#### **E-4. Increase communication and foster cooperation among stakeholders and others involved with ecosystem management, protection, and stewardship activities**

**Key Elements:** The Citizens Advisory Committee and the Science and Technical Advisory Committee provide input to the HEP Policy and Management Committees and serve as a link between the community and the HEP Management Conference.

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#### **Description of Activities to Date**

The CAC distributed a Stewardship Survey to more than 350 organizations. HEP used the resulting information to create the Online Stewardship Network, a searchable database that contains information on a wide variety of stewardship programs and activities conducted by organizations within the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary region. The Online Stewardship Network is designed to help individuals and groups connect with others who have similar interests and goals, and can be accessed at <http://www.harborestuary.org>.

**Planned Activities:** HEP will collaborate with the Open Accessible Space Information System (OASIS) mapping project to expand their Stewardship Map (see below) to include organizations in NJ.

(HEP Office 2009)

US Forest Service, in collaboration with Columbia University, University of Vermont, and many organizational partners, is developing STEW-MAP (the Stewardship Mapping and Assessment Project). This project's goals are to develop a publicly available, online stewardship database of civic organizations working on environmental stewardship in NYC; to map the self-described geographic turf of civic stewardship groups; to map the network connections among stakeholders from the civil society, business and government sectors who are working on stewardship; and to overlay STEW-MAP with pre-existing data on environmental quality and sustainability in the region to these stewardship maps in order to support natural resource management efforts. These data is being added to the OASIS map (<http://www.oasisnyc.net/oasismap.htm>) and will be fully functional shortly. For more information see the OASIS website and [http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/nyc/focus/stewardship\\_mapping](http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/nyc/focus/stewardship_mapping)

(HEP Office 2009)

The CAC does continue to meet. The CAC is also active on the Policy and Management Committee as well as several of the technical committees. CAC members speak for the community at HEP MC and Workgroup meetings. (HEP Office 2009)

The STAC no longer meets as a single committee, but has reorganized to participate in the many technical workgroups. There are two co-chairs of the STAC represented on the Management Committee, one from the Hudson River Foundation and one from Rutgers University in Newark. The STAC also shares representation on the Policy Committee with the CAC. (HEP Office 2009)

The Regional Sediment Management (RSM) ad-hoc Work Group was established by the HEP Policy Committee in September 2005 and replaced the earlier Dredged Material Management Integration Work Group. This new group included representatives of non-government public interest groups, in addition to federal, state, and local agencies. In October 2008, the RSM group completed a Regional Sediment Management Plan that addresses ecosystem protection among other issues. (HEP Office 2009).

On a portion of the District and the HEP Core area, the IEC Boat Inspection Trip, a 6-hour tour, brings all levels of government, elected officials, citizens and the media together to view progress and problems on the ambient waterways. Conducted every August since 1997, attendees view maritime operations and primary contact recreational activities. For the three year period 2006-2008, 260 attendees participated.

**Planned Activities:** Continue to conduct annual Boat Inspection Trips.

(IEC 2003, IEC—Pete Sattler 2009)

IEC took an active role as presenter and co-sponsor for the October 2002, Celebrating the Clean Water Act: 30 years of success in New York Harbor. (IEC 2003)

Annually, beginning in 2002, between September 18 and October 18, the IEC measures in situ water quality parameters and electronically shares the data in support of World Water Monitoring Day. (IEC 2003, IEC—Pete Sattler 2009)

IEC regularly lectures at area schools, colleges, dive and fishing clubs, and community groups about water quality and HEP related issues. Each year (2006-2008) the IEC research vessel, R/V Natale Colosi visits Newark Bay so that Bayonne High School marine science students can get hands on experience with water quality monitoring. On another day, the students visit the IEC laboratory to see how water quality samples are analyzed, how data is generated, recorded and disseminated.

**Planned Activities:** Continue to be available to lecture at local schools and special interest groups.

(IEC 2003, IEC—Pete Sattler 2009)

The NYCDEP's Use and Standards Attainment (USA) Project was recently completed and transitioned into its CSO Long Term Control Plan (LTCP) Project. The LTCP continues addressing CSO abatement and water quality issues through a watershed approach, including any further evaluation of use attainability analyses (UAA) and variances if needed. Both projects have relied on local stakeholder input to help develop individual NYC waterbody/ watershed plans for waterbodies throughout New York Harbor. The stakeholder teams have played an integral part by providing input on desired uses and developing plans for achieving those uses where possible. A website has been created to share data, reports and other materials with the public.

(NYCDEP 2003, NYCDEP—Keith Mahoney & Dorohty Chao 2009, HydroQual—Phil Simon 2009)

HEP's website, [www.harborestuary.org](http://www.harborestuary.org), has grown to include information about the program, many links to other organizations, and a calendar of local events. A portion of the website is dedicated to identifying data that is available on various subjects. (HEP Office 2009)

The NYCSWCD is an active member of the active member of the Storm Water Infrastructure Matters (S.W.I.M.) coalition and Nature Network. The NYCSWCD used to coordinate the Jamaica Bay Task Force, which is currently convened by Jamaica Bay Eco Watchers and the American Littoral Society. (NYCSWCD—Shino Tanikawa 2009)

NJDEP DWM Education and Outreach Bureau along with the Office of Environmental Education are both actively involved with reaching out to grass roots orgs. The big development this year for the NJDEP was the Volunteer Monitoring Program and Data Committee. Many small groups attended and are currently being trained. (NJDEP 2004)

Baykeeper convened meetings with NJDEP and NYSDEC to coordinate activities related to Public Access goals. Baykeeper was originally the lead entity compiling a comprehensive public access baseline for use in tracking success of Program's targets and goals. This task was later continued by the MWA. In collaboration with the Open Accessible Space Information System (OASIS) mapping project, housed with the CUNY Graduate Center, this dataset was integrated with the other OASIS datasets, showing how waterfront access is related to transportation, wetlands, parks and a host of other features. This dataset is publicly available at [http://www.oasisnyc.net/OASIS\\_Waterfront\\_Access\\_2006.htm](http://www.oasisnyc.net/OASIS_Waterfront_Access_2006.htm). (NY/NJ Baykeeper 2003, MWA—Roland Lewis 2009)

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## **E-5. Promote individual and group involvement and sponsorship of education and stewardship activities to clean up and restore the ecosystem**

**Key Elements:** HEP promotes education and stewardship activities through its ongoing grants programs (first the mini-grant and then the stewardship grant program) and sponsoring special events when possible, including National Estuaries Day events. Community groups and citizens should participate in watershed planning and ecosystem activities, such as storm drain marking and beach cleanups.

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### **Description of Activities to Date**

CAC members are involved in education and stewardship related activities in their communities.

*Planned Activities:* CAC member will continue their work in these areas.

(HEP CAC 2009)

The HEP Public Involvement & Education Mini-grant Program provides funding to groups for projects. In 2002, 11 grants (max \$4,000) were awarded for a total of \$36,700. In 2003, 11 grants (max \$5000) awarded for a total of \$50,000. In 2004, a total of \$45,400 was awarded for 10 projects (max \$5,000); in 2005 \$52,100 were awarded for 13 projects (max \$5,000); in 2007, a total of \$97,800 was distributed among 3 projects, each involving several partners. In 2008, per advice of the MC, instead of a mini-grant program, more substantive projects were funded: a total of \$90,000 was awarded for 4 different projects, with a maximum award of \$30,000.

*Planned Activities:* \$40,000 is available for the 2009 HEP Stewardship Grant Program.

(HEP Office 2009)

HEP awarded \$11,400 to support over 20 community-based public access water activities and programs by local groups throughout 2007 and 2008. The funds were administered by the MWA. (HEP Office 2009)

In the past, the NYCSWCD had several programs combining stewardship and education, such as the training teachers and stewards to monitor their local natural resources, training most of the NYC Urban Park Rangers in soil and water monitoring, the NYCSWCD's Floatables Monitoring/Beach Cleanup Program, and the Harlem Hudson program. NYCSWCD continues to conduct the Envirothon program, which mixes hands-on science activities with critical thinking about environmental resources, and participate in other events as presenters, such as the GLOBE Summer Institute at Queens College. (NYCSWCD 2003, NYCSWCD—Shino Tanikawa 2009)

NJDEP DWM through the 319h Federal Clean Water Act grant program and the Education and Outreach Bureau gets groups and organizations to participate in restoration, protection and monitoring.

*Planned Activities:* In 2004, 10 more groups were involved in this process.

(NJDEP 2004)

NJDEP DWM currently runs the Fish Advisory program, which complements the HEP goals for public information and safety. (NJDEP 2004)

The NJDEP DWM currently supports many different Watershed groups and presents many different Monitoring Workshops in the Harbor Estuary area. (NJDEP 2004)

HEP sponsored 18 events in the Harbor for National Estuaries Day 2003. (HEP Office 2003) HEP is no longer directly involved, but Future City and other HEP partners continue to run these events. USACE regularly participates in these events, and HEP also joined the National Estuaries Day 2008 held in Elizabeth, NJ. (HEP Office 2009)

HEP partners regularly engage communities in cleanup and restoration activities, including the American Littoral Society, NY/NJ Baykeeper, and Hackensack Riverkeeper. (HEP Office 2009)

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## **E-6. Enhance educational opportunities for all education levels**

**Key Elements:** HEP will encourage development and implementation of an estuary-wide education program. Activities and outreach materials should be integrated with educational programs. Requests from the public for information should be filled.

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### **Description of Activities to Date**

HEP produced a Teacher's Guide to Water Education Resources in the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary Region in 2001. The teacher's guide was updated in 2003 and was named, Exploring Estuary Education, which included a directory of organizations that have education programs as well as lessons plans. (HEP Office 2003) The guide has been widely distributed and was very well received. Working in collaboration with NY SeaGrant, a third revision of the guide is expected to be completed and distributed in early 2009. (HEP Office 2009)

HEP, provided funds to the Hudson River Estuary Program (HREP) to put together the *Discover the Hudson River-KIDS* (Kids In Discovery Series) Activity Booklet. This is a learning tool for children that covers contents on the River, the Estuary and the Watershed and will help understand the Hudson River as part of an estuary both rural and urban. (HEP Office 2008, HREP—Steve Stanne 2008).

HEP is co-sponsoring the Hudson River Foundation (HRF) 2009 Seminar Series on a variety of Estuary-related topics (HEP Office 2009)

HEP has co-sponsored two GIS workshops for educators to encourage use of geospatial tools in the classrooms to engage learners in habitat stewardship issues.

**Planned Activities:** Four additional workshops will take place during 2009. (HEP Office 2009)

HEP, in partnership with the NJ Marine Sciences Consortium provided funds for the creation of 4 rain gardens in NJ by Future City, Inc, a local environmental organization and HEP partner. In addition to its environmental benefits, this project had a strong educational component for the whole community, including the development of multiple educational materials, used in local events, and hands-on training by relying entirely on local students, workers, and other community members (trained and supervised by knowledgeable project partners) for the construction and maintenance of the gardens. (HEP Office 2009)

Through its Stewardship and Small Grants Programs, HEP has provided a total of \$50,000 for the development and implementation of standards-based curriculum materials. The ensuing NY-NJ Harbor Education Program includes classroom and field sessions for grades 4–8 and teacher professional development sessions. (HEP Office 2009)

Several other projects partially funded by HEP include educational components for children and/or adults, including the NY Oyster Program, the Friends of the Estuary Program (FOTE), and many others listed in HEP's website (<http://www.harborestuary.org/stewardshipgrants.htm>)

**Planned Activities:** HEP expects to continue to support educational efforts through its grants programs.

(HEP Office 2009)

The NJDEP and DWM through the Volunteer Monitoring Program, Project WET (Water Education for Teachers) and Americorp reach out and develop education programs for the stakeholders of NJ in the Harbor Estuary area. (NJDEP 2004)

See description of past and current programs by the NYCSWCD under E-5 (NYCSWCD 2003, NYCSWCD—Shino Tanikawa 2009)

The DWM and the Americorp program provide materials and activities for kids from K-12 and the DWM's Project WET trains teachers to educate and involve their students on water and Harbor related issues. (NJDEP 2004)

All HEP materials are available at the Hudson River Foundation and the HEP office (HEP Office 2003). The new HEP website contains this information, providing electronic versions when available and/or directing to HEP staff to request hard copies. The website is continually updated to add new materials and scanned historical documents. (HEP Office 2009)

The public can reach HEP staff in several ways, including mail and email addresses, online forms, and a general HEP phone line (212-637-3816). These are posted on HEP's website and/or published in the Program's newsletter. (HEP Office 2009)

The NJDEP and DWM currently have two phone lines. 877-WTRSHED and 877-WARNDEP. (NJDEP 2004)

HEP provides speakers to various functions as necessary. (HEP Office 2009)

NJDEP's Office of Environmental Education has a Speakers Bureau. (NJDEP 2004)

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### **E-7. Secure additional funding and raise awareness of funding sources to increase public involvement and education activities.**

**Key Elements:** Outside funding sources and opportunities should be sought for the HEP program. Outside funding sources could be grants and foundation funding. Increasing funding for the HEP mini-grant program should be a priority.

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#### **Description of Activities to Date**

HEP continues to provide updates on funding sources that relate to implementation of HEP programs. (HEP Office 2009)

In addition to HEP's stewardship grant program, other groups, such as NYSDEC through the Hudson River Foundation, have grant programs such as the New York City Environmental Fund (see also H-9). (HEP Office 2009)