



New York - New Jersey  
Harbor Estuary Program

# PUBLIC ACCESS WORK GROUP

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of the New York – New Jersey  
Harbor Estuary Program

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## **HEP Public Access Work Group Meeting Minutes**

**April 23, 2009**

**River Bank Park Field House**

**Newark, NJ**

**10:00 am**

### **Introduction**

Bob Nyman gave an overall introduction to the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary Program (HEP), its structure, organization, and coverage, explaining how the Public Access Work Group (PAWG) fit into the overall organization of HEP. Bob briefly explained some of the 2008 mini-grant programs used to fund things such as canoeing, fishing, and river tours. Dorina Frizzera asked the purpose of nominating sites. Bob explained that the purpose of nominating sites was so there could be one collective database and map of public access sites within the estuary and to assist conservation-minded organizations in their efforts to conserve, promote and or acquire these sites.

### **OASIS Mapping**

Steve Romalewski presented the new version and features of OASIS mapping (2.0). He will be sending links for a trial version and hopes to launch the new version later this year. HEP has been working with Steve in mapping both public access sites and habitat restoration sites.

### **Public Access Nominations**

#### *Hackensack Riverfront Park*

Gregory Druback of Malcolm Pirnie Inc and Jeff Bottger of T&M Associates presented a brief history of the site (former landfill site in Jersey City), grading plans, and a concept master plan for the site. Some comments from the group regarding water access and habitat restoration were asked. Greg said the proposed plan would include tidal wetland restoration and a river walk. The site was nominated and the motion carried without any objections.

#### *Harlem River Promenade*

Laura Stockstill from the Bronx Borough's President's Office presented the existing and potential land uses of the Harlem River Promenade site. Lots within the site included both public and private ownership. Dorina asked whether nominating private lots without the landowner's knowledge could potentially complicate matters if the lot were to be sought for public purchase. Greg Remaud stated that traditionally the PAWG has focused on sites and water access, not the

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Public Access Work Group Chair

Dorina Frizzera, NJDEP Coastal Management Office ♦ 609-777-3251

details of ownership. After a brief discussion the site was nominated and the motion was carried without objections.

### Riverbank Park Expansion

Carol Johnston of the Ironbound Community Corporation presented the vision for Riverbank Park's expansion in Newark, NJ. The City of Newark is working to acquire the 5 lots necessary for the park's expansion. Plans for current Riverbank Park and future expansion will include access to the water and wetland restoration. The site was nominated and the motion carried without objections.

### Bronx Kill

Rob Buchanan of Village Community Boathouse introduced his organization and their mission – building traditional boats and using them within the harbor. Rob wanted to raise awareness of an issue regarding the Bronx Kill (waterway separating Randall's Island and the Bronx). Rob said that currently Con Ed has 2 concrete encased power lines that carry power from the Bronx to Randall's Island. The height of these concrete conduits can make it difficult to pass through the Bronx Kill because "one has to time the tides just right". Con Ed is planning on putting in 3 more conduits across the waterway at the same height as the existing conduits. The Economic Development Corporation (EDC) is planning on connecting the Bronx Greenway to Randall's Island with a pedestrian bridge. The placement of the existing and new conduits will virtually cut off navigation through the Bronx Kill. Dorina asked if the PAWG wanted to include a waterbody in its nominations as it hasn't been done before. It was decided that as a waterbody there was no need to nominate the site as it is a tidal and navigatable waterway and access should be addressed by that designation. The issue became who is the governing agency over the status of the Bronx Kill as a navigatable waterway and who would have the jurisdiction over the installation of the conduits across the Bronx Kill by Con Ed. Also discussed was whether a letter should be drafted on behalf of PAWG. Bob Nyman would look into who the lead agency concerning the conduits would be and what steps may be taken by PAWG. It was agreed that the site would not be nominated, however the group agreed that at a future meeting a portion of the greenway and access to the Bronx Kill could be nominated.

### Passaic River Blueway

Tom Pietrykoski presented the Lower Passaic River Blueway. Currently he is in the process of developing points of access and opportunities for habitat restoration, but he was looking for comments on how best to proceed. Dorina suggested waiting till next meeting to nominate some sites along the Passaic as water trails. Bob Nyman suggested working on getting Tom's Passaic River data information into OASIS.

### New Items

Bob stated that \$25,000 of Section 320 funding was available for 2009 and asked the group any thoughts they had on how it should be used (mini grants, mapping, etc).

Matt Klinman and Cortney Worrall of the Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance suggested using some of the funds to develop mapping of public access data in a similar style as OASIS but with only public access data, making it more user friendly for those seeking public access

information. Matt mentioned that he had some discussions with Steve Romalewski regarding this idea and that Steve was willing to help. Technical questions were raised regarding whether the format should be OASIS or Google Earth and whether an embedded portal would be available. Follow up and clarification with Steve Romalewski will be required as he was not available during this portion of the meeting.

Cortney suggested looking at the creation of guidelines for waterfront access. Bob asked Kevin Reilly to help with the guidelines.

The group agreed to set aside \$5,000 for the proposed mapping of public access data and the remaining funds to be applied towards mini-grant programs (getting the public to the water).

Bob said HEP is working on getting the RFP out as soon as possible so that events can be planned for during the summer.

Discussions over future meetings and whether the group should meet more frequently than quarterly were raised, however no concrete decisions were made.

A request that more information on the sites being nominated be made before hand to the group was requested in an effort to perhaps speed up meetings.

Dorina said she was willing to commit as permanent chair of the Public Access Work Group. No objections were made and Dorina was unanimously voted in as chair.

### **Note from Dorina**

Thank you to everyone that attended this meeting. The attendance was great and the discussion robust. So much so, that we didn't get to all the items on the agenda. I am truly sorry about that and offer the following suggestion: If you were slated to be on the agenda and we did not get to your topic please submit a summary of the project and your contact information. We will distribute the project summaries and request feedback and promise to put your project on the top of the agenda for the next meeting. I see this Public Access Working Group as an opportunity to share information, garner assistance and build partnerships. I look forward to working with you all in the future.

### **Attendees**

Dorina Frizzera, NJDEP  
Kevin Reilly, HEP  
Nancy Brous, Hudson River Watertrail Association  
Rob Buchanan, Village Community Boathouse  
Harvey Morginstin, Passaic River Boat Club  
Jenny McCormick, NJMSC/NJSG  
Bill Schultz, Raritan Riverkeeper  
Don Chesley, Stevens Institute/South Street Seaport Museum  
Steve Japoli, NJDEP Greenacres  
Thomas Pietrykoski, PVSC/LPWA  
Damon Rich, City of Newark

**Attendees continued**

Jeff Bottger, T&M Associates  
Penny Ludman, Florio, Perrucci, Steinhardt and Fader  
Gregory Druback, Malcolm Pirnie Inc.  
David Cunningham, NJIT School of Architecture  
Leslie Wright, TPL-NY  
Anthony Cucchi, TPL-NJ  
Cortney Worrall, MWA  
Matt Klinman, MWA  
Bob Nyman, UAEPA –HEP  
Rosalie Siegel, PA NYNJ  
Chris Zeppie, PA NYNJ  
Greg Remaud, NYNJ Baykeeper  
Carol Johnston, Ironbound Community Corp  
Steve Romalewski, OASIS/CUNY Graduate Center